



TOGETHER WE CAN

Inside is information you should know and specific things you CAN and MUST do to reduce the likelihood that an abusive situation may develop. These ideas are appropriate for our sport and in general for other youth-oriented activities.

Every member of the water ski community MUST play a role in preventing sexual abuse and misconduct.

- Coaches/mentors, ski schools, and clubs MUST keep their students safe.
- Athletes, with their parents, MUST keep themselves safe
- All of us working together, along with USA Water Ski, MUST keep our athletes and sport safe.

**YOU
HAVE A
ROLE TO
PLAY**

U.S. Center for SafeSport

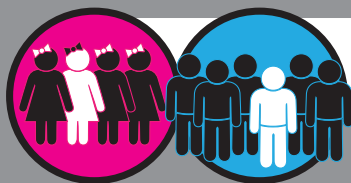
There is a **new partner** in our Safe Sport efforts – **the U.S. Center for SafeSport**. The Center will provide education and training on both abuse prevention and response, and has exclusive authority to investigate and resolve possible sexual misconduct violations for all National Governing Bodies in the U.S. Olympic movement.

Please join us, because TOGETHER WE CAN AND MUST protect children through a safe environment.

For information on USA Water Ski's SafeSport program, visit www.USAWATERSKI.org and click on the SafeSport Program link.

Sexual abuse and misconduct

Sexual abuse and misconduct is a societal issue that knows no social or economic barriers.



One in ten children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday.

More than 90% of abusers are people children know, love, or trust.



source D2L.org

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?

GROOMING – provided by Jennifer Mitchell and Rosemary Webb Co-Presidents of Child Lures Prevention / Teen Lures Prevention

Most abusers use a subtle and gradual process known as “grooming” on children and their families to gain access to, and control of, children. Grooming is typically done over weeks, months or years to slowly lure and manipulate children into abuse. On the surface, grooming can appear quite innocent and may even give the perception that the individual works well with children. Therefore, everyone MUST become familiar with and watchful for common grooming techniques such as:



Befriending the youngster and their family to slowly gain trust. Giving gifts, money, trips, and/or performing special favors for the youngster.



Encouraging harmless secrets, laying the foundation for future sexual secrets.



Taking pictures/videos of the child.



Communicating with the boy or girl excessively; texting, emailing or calling.



Making alcohol/drugs available to the youth.



Desensitizing the child through nonsexual touching, “accidental” touching of privates and/or walking in on bathroom or dressing time.



Playing body contact games with children, like tickling, back rubs or wrestling.



Introducing pornography to initiate sexual interest or normalize the behavior.

The vast majority of professionals are committed to the safety and well-being of children.

Those who abuse youngsters are the exception. As parents and involved adults, you have an active role to play in children's personal health and safety. It is important for children to know not to keep secrets, even seemingly innocent ones. And when something doesn't seem right, it's important to report it right away.

Signs of abuse

Physical signs of sexual abuse are usually not observable (especially to adults other than parents, guardians and health professionals), but may include pain, injury, bleeding, discharge or disease. Behavioral and emotional signs are typically more evident, and can include:

- Sudden:
 - withdrawal from close ties.
 - change in eating habits; drastic weight loss or gain.
 - inability to concentrate.
- Uncharacteristically aggressive or disruptive behavior.
- Marked fear/reluctance to be at a certain place, or alone with a certain person.
- Repeated health complaints, i.e. stomachaches, headaches.
- Depression, lethargy and weeping.
- Noticeable change in dress; may include baggy, dark clothing.
- Interest in or knowledge of sexual matters beyond the boy's or girl's years.
- Touching other kids sexually or acting out sexually, using sexual language.



Any one sign doesn't mean that a boy or girl has been sexually abused, but the presence of several gives reason to ask questions and consider seeking help.

Everyone MUST become familiar with and watchful for common signs of abuse.



CLUBS

COACHES

Keep our athletes safe

Water Ski Clubs

- Establish standards of behavior for all participants.
- Clearly communicate standards to athletes, coaches, staff, volunteers and parents.
- Welcome parents' questions and concerns.
- Enforce standards consistently and uniformly.
- Address any reported or observed violation immediately.
- Follow hiring and training best practices for staff/volunteers.

Coaches/Directors

- Avoid being alone with a child.
- Do not engage in communications or interactions that are inappropriate to the coach-athlete relationship.
- Do not have physical contact with athletes that is not reasonably intended to coach, teach or demonstrate a skill or to prevent or lessen injury.





ATHLETES

PARENTS

Keep ourselves safe

Athletes

- Know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching.
- Don't be alone with a coach or older youth.
- Do not "friend" or have social media interactions with your coach.
- Identify a trusted adult to whom you can talk.
- Do not have contact with your coach outside of training and organized events.

Parents have a role

- Talk to your children about appropriate boundaries.
- Choose an activity after carefully screening the organization.
- Review the organization's safe environment policy and know its safe environment strategies.
- Observe your child's participation.
- Report any questionable activities.

Questions to ask when selecting a youth-serving organization

- How are the staff and volunteers selected?
- Are background checks, as well as personal and professional reference checks, mandatory for all staff?
- Are staff trained in abuse prevention and response?
- What types of policies are in place to prevent child sexual abuse?
- What is the policy for one-on-one time between adults and children?
- How are older youth monitored and supervised when working with younger children?
- What is the policy for reporting abuse? When a report is made, how are parents notified?
- How are policy violations handled?



USA WATER SKI

Keep our athletes and sport safe

USA Water Ski

- Educates the water ski community regarding sexual misconduct, grooming behaviors and signs of abuse.
- Implements grievance procedures when notified of persons not meeting membership standards.
- Maintains a list of persons permanently ineligible for USA Water Ski membership.
- Complies with the policies and procedures of the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Everyone

- **If you suspect child abuse, IMMEDIATELY contact law enforcement or child protection services, as well as U.S. Center for SafeSport.**
- Prioritize a safe environment for all water ski participants.
- Comply with legal reporting requirements.
- Know the signs of abuse and common grooming techniques.
- Do not be afraid; do not be silent – if you see or suspect something, say something.



OFFICIALS

Reporting

To Law Enforcement

You should be familiar with mandated child abuse reporting laws in your state. The Administration of Children & Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services maintains the Child Welfare Information Gateway at childwelfare.gov. The Gateway includes information on mandatory reporting along with specific state laws.

Understanding and knowing what you are required to do before you become aware and/or suspect abuse is important because timing may be critical, especially for victim(s).

If you suspect child abuse, IMMEDIATELY contact law enforcement or child protective services.

To U.S. Center for SafeSport

All individuals, regardless of membership in USA Water Ski, are encouraged to report suspected violations of the Center's SafeSport Code. Certain individuals (including, for example, members within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USA Water Ski, persons USA Water Ski authorizes, approves or appoints to a position of authority over athletes or who will have frequent contact with athletes, or others designated by USA Water Ski) are required to report suspected SafeSport Code violations related to or accompanying sexual misconduct.

Individuals should report directly to the Center. To report, call 720.524.5640 or visit safesport.org

KNOW WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE *-provided by Darkness to Light*

When a child discloses abuse, it is very important to listen to the child without judgment, anger or disbelief. Tell the child you believe him/her and it is not his/her fault. Listen attentively and ask only open-ended questions, like "then what happened"? Do not ask leading questions as this can confuse the child's memory of events and could contaminate the investigation. The information most helpful in making the report is what happened, where it happened, and by whom. Do not probe for details. It is best for a trained investigator to gather all the facts. Do not give the child false assurances or promise to keep the information confidential, but praise the child for telling you. Then, contact your local child protective services or law enforcement to make the report. Regardless of whether you are mandated by the state you live in to report child abuse, any responsible adult with knowledge or reasonable suspicion of abuse can and should report it to the proper authorities.

TOGETHER WE CAN

Protect Children Through a Safe Environment!

Challenging individuals to hold themselves accountable and recognize what they CAN and MUST do is an important step toward preventing sexual abuse of children. Everyone must play a role in protecting children.



U.S. CENTER FOR
SAFESPORT

[SafeSport.org](https://www.SafeSport.org)



DARKNESS TO LIGHT
END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

[D2L.org](https://www.D2L.org)



Child Lures® Prevention
Think First & Stay Safe!



Teen Lures™ PREVENTION
Promoting Healthy Relationships.

[ChildLuresPrevention.com](https://www.ChildLuresPrevention.com)

Thank you to USA Gymnastics for sharing their resources and supporting our SafeSport efforts.

USA
WATER SKI