

TEAM SUMMIT COLORADO

Here are ways you can have important conversations with kids in sports.

1. Use conversations in carpools, on the sideline, before or after practice, and among other kids to learn about coach and team dynamics. You might hear something that gives you an opportunity to privately ask your child more specific questions later.

Learn about coach and team dynamics through casual conversations.

Try to tune into group conversations or comments your child makes with teammates. Use what you hear as a way to follow up later.

"I heard you guys laughing about something Coach said—what happened?"

"You seemed quiet after practice today—was anything different with the team or coach?"

"What's something your coach said today that made you feel good or excited?"

2. Check in regularly with your child and coaches after practices and games. Be present, make eye contact with coaches and players, and let your child know that you really are interested.

Use simple, open-ended questions that show you care without pressuring them.

"What was your favorite part of practice today?"

"Did anything happen today that made you feel proud or a little unsure?"

"Who did you spend the most time with at practice? What were you two up to/working on?"

3. Check in with your child before team-related travel so they understand the expectations. Also, check in afterward to learn how comfortable they were in the vehicle and overnight. Confirm that room arrangements were carried out as planned.

Help them prepare and reflect by asking about both logistics and comfort.

"Do you know who you'll be riding with or rooming with? How do you feel about that?"

"Was the trip what you expected? Did anything surprise you or make you feel uncomfortable?"

"Did you get enough sleep in your room? Did everyone stick with the plan?"

4. Pay attention to your child's cues so you can distinguish whether a frustration or concern is related to their own performance, lack of interest in a sport, or how they were treated by a coach or teammate.

Use their emotions as a signal, but ask gently without assuming.

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"You seemed a little frustrated after the game—was that because of how it went, or something else?"

"Was there something today that made you feel left out or treated unfairly?"

"Do you still feel excited to play, or has something been bothering you about the team?"

COMMUNICATING ABOUT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:

- As you see fit for your parenting style, make discussing sexual topics and boundaries a normal part of your home environment and conversations. You can introduce relevant news stories to generate a dinner table or carpool discussion about safety.
- Talk with your child about what to do if a coach or older kids ask them to keep something a secret from you or other trusted adults. Encourage them to tell you, even if the secret is something they feel confused or ashamed about.
- Make it part of your routine to check in on your kid's relationship with their coach. Listen to your kid's reports for any behaviors (positive or negative) that sound alarms, particularly if they are being singled out and given special treatment.

13 yr+: . Remind your kid that sexual or romantic relationships between adults and minors (like a teacher/coach and student/kid) are never appropriate, these relationships cross important boundaries and are against the law. Talk to your teen about the importance of asking for consent before (and during) any sexual activity. Someone who is incapacitated by drugs or alcohol cannot give consent. Anyone can withdraw their consent at any time

6-12 yr olds: Reinforce that no one is allowed to speak to them or touch them in a sexual manner. Teach them what that means and why it's important.

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AGES 13+ *One-page conversation guide for teens*

Be Direct, Respectful, and Clear "I want to talk to you about something that happened on ski team. A coach hurt a child during a team trip. These things can be hard to talk about, but I want you to feel safe asking questions or bringing up concerns."

Discuss Consent and Boundaries

- "Consent means giving permission, and it has to be clear and ongoing. Someone can change their mind at any time."
- "If someone is drunk, high, or afraid, they can't give real consent."
- "Romantic or sexual relationships between adults and teens, or kids, are never okay. That crosses a line and it's illegal."

Ask Thoughtful, Non-Judgmental Questions

- "Do you ever feel like an adult or coach is acting weird or crossing a line?"
- "Have you seen anything with friends or teammates that made you uncomfortable?"
- "How do you think teams and coaches could do a better job of keeping kids safe?"

Encourage Speaking Up

- "You always have the right to say no, even to adults."
- "If you or a friend is ever in an uncomfortable situation, call me and tell someone close by right away. I will believe you and help you figure out what to do."

Recognize Power Dynamics

- "People in charge, like coaches, sometimes use their power to manipulate others. If something feels off, trust that feeling."

Know the Resources

- Offer access to a school counselor, therapist, or SafeSport hotline if needed.
- Remind them they're not alone and remind them they have trusted adults around them.

Reinforce the Message

- "Your safety and well-being matter more than any activity, coach, or team. Nothing is more important than you knowing you're safe and supported."

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AGES 6–12 One-page conversation guide for younger children

Start with Simple, Calm Honesty "I want to tell you something serious. A coach on the ski team hurt a child, and that's never okay. I just want you to know that if anything ever makes you uncomfortable, I'm always here to talk and help."

Reinforce Body Autonomy and Safety

- "Your body belongs to you. No one should ever touch it in a way that makes you feel confused, scared, or yucky."
- "If someone does something that feels wrong, even if they're a grown-up, it's okay to tell me right away."

Ask Gentle Questions

- "Has anything ever happened on your team or trip that made you feel weird or uncomfortable?"
- "Are there any rules your coaches have that you don't understand or think are unfair?"
- "Is there anything you've seen adults do with kids that didn't seem right to you?"

Talk About Secrets and Trust

- "Safe adults don't keep secrets with kids. Surprises are okay, but secrets about touch or time alone are not."
- "Even if someone tells you not to tell, you still can and should come to me."

Build a Circle of Safety

- "Let's think of three adults you trust that you can always go to if you need help—me, a teacher, a family friend, or someone else."

Let Them Know You'll Always Believe Them

- "If you're ever scared or confused about something, I will believe you. You'll never be in trouble for telling me."