

Colorado Youth Soccer
KIDSAFE Program

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What is the KIDSAFE Program?

US Youth Soccer has adopted the KIDSAFE Program to promote the health, safety and protection of players in the game of soccer. Colorado Youth Soccer (CYS) and affiliated Clubs have adopted this policy as a matter of governance within the United States Soccer Federation. Even though adoption of the policy is a matter of governance, the practices set forth within the KIDSAFE Program just make good sense.

KIDSAFE promotes the position that reasonable efforts will be taken by Members of USSF, USYSA, CYS and affiliated Clubs to exclude from program responsibilities any person with a legally documented history of child molestation or other record that would bring an unnecessary risk to the health and safety of the program participants.

CYS has adopted a program which requires all coaches, administrators and employees to agree to be subject to a legally sensitive background check before or during the program's operations. Persons wishing to apply for a position of coach or program administrator within US Youth Soccer, CYS or affiliated Clubs must complete an Employment/Volunteer Disclosure Statement. The information contained within this form is utilized to complete a formal background check of the applicant/volunteer's history. When background checks yield problems areas additional information is collected and a decision made on retention of the individual. Any person applying for employment/volunteer position within CYS or affiliated Clubs that is found with a legally documented history of child molestation is immediately released. The person's name and documented history is entered into a State, Region and National data base to prevent the person from applying at another Club.

KIDSAFE Education

Although background checks are effective to identify repeated offenders, they are not "fail safe." Background checks identify those that have been charged and convicted. To address this, the KIDSAFE Program instills education to create a culture of safety from the bottom up. We all have roles in promoting the concepts of KIDSAFE.

Education of the risk is based on the following personality traits:

- The fixated, seductive pedophile – may be fixated on age, type. Creates relationships with child and parents. Manipulative.

- Molester – the “nightmare.” May watch and wait. May look for unsupervised children. Not connected with the team. Parents must challenge strangers looking at their children
- Sexual Exploiter – preys on older players. May make sexual behavior part of team culture.

KIDSAFE Basics are segmented into three categories; Coaches, parents and players.

Coaches Education – understanding the basic KIDSAFE role of the coach

- Coaches should never be alone with a player. Always have another adult or player with you.
- Don’t allow yourself to become a “baby sitter.” Parents have the responsibility to be timely with their player.
- Proper conduct with players is essential. Setting a good example provides both soccer and life learning experiences for both parents and players.
- Establish a “buddy system” for players in unfamiliar environments. This applies to training, home/away match sites and tournaments. Players should not be left “on their own” in unfamiliar surroundings.
- Coaches should always keep clear boundaries between adults and players

Parents Education – understanding the basic KIDSAFE role of the parent

- Have an open dialogue with your children – let them know you respect & believe them.
- Don’t use your coach/team as a babysitter; be accountable to ensure your player is taken to and picked up for training and games without relying on the coach.
- Help your coach be safe. Be there, but don’t interfere.
- Be aware of surroundings and people around your children.
- Talk to your child about the responsibility to behave and then look in the mirror and talk to yourself about the responsibility to behave.
- Don’t compromise your child’s safety.
- Keep clear boundaries between adults and players.

Player Education – understanding the basic KIDSAFE role of the player

- Trust your instincts – if it doesn’t feel right, leave.
- Use the “buddy system” in unfamiliar environments.
- It’s okay to tell your parents of uncomfortable situations with adults, regardless of who the adult is – Darkness to Light concept.
- Hold your parents responsible and accountable to ensure you’re picked up from practice and other events on time!
- Respect the game & everyone involved in it.
- It is okay to say “no.”
- Keep clear boundaries between adults and players.

Watch for more information on KIDSAFE and Risk Management in future Goal Post Scripts. Our Goal is to create a culture of safety from the bottom up.