

# PARENTS: KEEP YOUR KIDS SAFE ONLINE DURING COVID-19



The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many of our lives to a screeching halt, particularly in the sports community. It is important to acknowledge that that life is more difficult and there are many of us, athletes included, who continue to work.

As many of you already know, online communication poses unique safety risks. Youth and people with disabilities already experience high rates of abuse<sup>1</sup>, and increased time online may heighten these risks.

## The U.S. Center for SafeSport recommends parents keep these guidelines in mind:

- **Restate family values and expectations about appropriate behavior.** Talk about how you expect your child to behave and how they should expect to be treated by others.
- **Learn about the apps and websites your child is using, including how to control the privacy settings.** The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has a library of [internet safety resources](#) for adults and children.
- **Create clear guidelines about use of technology in your family's current context.** Include any new apps or platforms being used and set parameters around unsupervised use of technology.
- **Talk with your child about the potential for peer-to-peer abuse and adult-to-athlete abuse.** The Center has a variety of free parent and age-appropriate youth resources that can help.
- **Have your child use webcams (especially during private lessons) in a common area or a room with the door open. Bedrooms or bathrooms are discouraged.** Make sure they are aware of what and who is visible in the webcam or video shot. Cameras should also be covered when not in use.

<sup>1</sup>Approximately 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys are likely victims of sexual abuse (source: David Finkelhor, Director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center. University of New Hampshire). A child is bullied every 7 minutes, and 90% of LGBTQ students experienced harassment at school and online (source: StompOutBullying.org). People with disabilities experience rape and sexual assault at more than twice the rate of those without a disability (source: 2009 Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report on Crime Against People with Disabilities).

- **Maintain open lines of communication with your child and pay attention to their emotional state.** Staying connected with friends and teammates is incredibly important for their mental health but can also open the door to hurtful and abusive behavior. Even if you are with your child all day, ask them about their day and check-in with them.



## RESOURCES

- [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children - Protecting Your Kids Online](#)
- [RAINN – Social Media Safety \(includes information about security settings for popular apps\)](#)
- [National Network to End Domestic Violence: Technology Safety -Online Privacy and Safety Tips](#)
- [Cyberbullying Research Center - Livestreaming: Top Ten Tips for Teens](#)
- [Connect Safely - Tips for Safe Social Networking for Teens](#)
- [Think You Know - A Short Guide to Live Streaming](#)
- [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#)