



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

From the time they toddle in to the time they vault or handspring out, young athletes deserve a safe environment to learn technique, develop their athletic skills and have fun. Clubs without proper safeguards in place can unknowingly increase the risk for child sexual abuse. As a parent, there are a few questions you can ask your club to ensure your children are safe from more than just a tumble from the equipment:

Q1: WHAT IS YOUR EMPLOYEE AND VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROCESS?

On its own, a simple criminal background check is not an adequate screening tool because most offenders have not been caught or convicted. Supplementing a criminal background check with in-person

interviews and reference checks for all staff and volunteers provides a more comprehensive screening process.

Q2: DO YOU HAVE WRITTEN STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, AND OLDER YOUTH WHO SERVE CHILDREN?

Written standards of behavior that encourage athlete development and competitive spirit through methods such as praise and achievement-based rewards, while prohibiting risky behaviors such as isolated, one-on-one interactions and favoritism, are important and can be enforced by both staff and parents. These standards should be posted and easily accessible by staff, parents, and gymnasts.

Q3: ARE YOUR STAFF TRAINED TO RECOGNIZE SUSPICIOUS SITUATIONS AND BEHAVIORS, AND TO RESPOND APPROPRIATELY IF SEXUAL ABUSE HAPPENS?

All club staff and volunteers should be trained to report standard of behavior violations and suspicions or discovery of abuse using a designated reporting process.

Parents play an important role in keeping gymnasts safe from sexual misconduct and inappropriate behavior. Familiarize yourself with your gym's policies, procedures and protocols, and raise any questions you have. Visit www.D2L.org to learn more.

