

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and it is important to review recognizable red flag behaviors of abuse. All coaches and team leaders have the responsibility to recognize, respond to and report abuse. Remember, being able to recognize signs of abuse is a critical step in its prevention.

USA Swimming's top priority continues to be creating healthy and positive environments free from abuse for all its members. By using the many [resources available](#), you too can help set healthy boundaries. Although it is not always easy to spot behavioral, emotional or physical abuse, there are some red flag behaviors that can help adults recognize and respond appropriately.

Here are some red flag behaviors to be aware of when adults spend time with children:

- Not respecting boundaries or listening when someone says "no."
- Engages in touching after a child or child's parent(s)/ guardian(s) has indicated it is unwanted.
- Trying to be a friend rather than filling an adult role.
- Not having age-appropriate relationships.
- Talking about their own personal problems or relationships.
- Spending time alone together or making excuses to be alone.
- Unusual interest in a child's sexual development, including commenting on sexual characteristics or sexualizing normal behaviors.
- Spending a lot of time with a particular child.
- Engaging in horseplay or roughhousing with children.
- Touching outside the boundaries of what is considered to be normal coaching instruction.
- Showing extreme jealousy of other individuals in a child's life, including friends and family.
- Trying to initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for children outside of club programs and activities.
- Gift-giving, providing special favors or showing favoritism.

Remember, it is not always easy to recognize abuse and it can be even more challenging to step in if you suspect something isn't right. If a child tells you someone is making them uncomfortable, listen, even if they cannot tell you anything specific.

If you aren't sure whether concerning behavior should be reported, contact local law enforcement or child protective services. In addition, you can reach out to USA Swimming's Safe Sport staff at SafeSport@usaswimming.org and the U.S. Center for SafeSport [here](#).

To find more information about reporting, including your mandatory reporting requirements, please visit USA Swimming's website at usaswimming.org/report.

Free training for parents and athletes can be found at USA Swimming's LEARN website [here](#).