



BETTER ATHLETES
BETTER PEOPLE



How Coaches Can Ensure Parents That Safety Matters To Them

This resource stems from a question submitted to the Ask PCA blog. Responses come from our experts including PCA Trainers, who lead live group workshops for coaches, parents, administrators and student-athletes.

"What is the best way to encourage young kids to take part in contact sports, and how do you assure parents safety is the most important thing to you as a coach?"

PCA Response by Joe Terrasi, Lead Trainer

With our modern medical knowledge and the intense focus on the dangers of head trauma at all levels of football, parents are understandably concerned. Their concern and caution can easily translate to reluctance and concern in young athletes considering the sport.

Two of your best allies in promoting safe football are the NFL FLAG football program and USA Football. NFL FLAG football has made a strong commitment to teaching love of the sport and development of fundamentals in a limited-contact setting. PCA National Partner USA Football has done an extraordinary job providing professional development and certification in safe, technically-sound teaching through their Heads Up Football program.

It is crucial that you pay attention not only to your own safety education but that you also provide learning opportunities to players and parents. Seeing your commitment to safety and education will be a great comfort to parents looking at football as an option for their children.

Positive Coaching Alliance principles are also a great way to demonstrate your commitment to safety and to build a healthy program culture. Honoring the game by respecting its ROOTS (the Rules, your Opponents, Officials, your Teammates, and your Self) has a strong payback in terms of safety as well as sportsmanship.

Help parents and athletes learn that the rules are in place to ensure a contest that is both fair and safe. Remind them that we care about the well-being of all youth athletes - including our opponents. Let them know that officials are charged with upholding the rules for our children's safety. Teach teammates to support and value healthy play. The hardest part is modeling how you respect yourself when there are tough decisions to be made by showing that nothing takes priority over athlete safety - even winning.

Thank you for your commitment to youth sports!

To read more questions and answers like this, or to submit your own question to the Ask PCA blog, visit: www.positivecoach.org/ask-pca

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