

What
to expect
from the
All Star
experience
A PARENT'S GUIDE



Welcome to the USASF

Whether trying cheer or dance for the first time or competing on an elite team, All Star can provide a lifetime of great moments — and fun — for athletes and families. The USASF is here to inspire, engage and empower our members. We provide exclusive access to events, programming and resources that shape and enrich the All Star experience for athletes of all skill levels. As the national governing authority for All Star Cheer and Dance in the United States, the USASF is here to help you make the most of your All Star experience!

Athlete Safety Is Our Focus

We champion the care, safety, development, inclusivity and diversity of All Star athletes. Athletes 1st is an all-encompassing focus on the athlete that includes sport safety, safety while training, minor athlete abuse and misconduct prevention, and the personal development and well being of the athlete. By networking with experts in child sexual abuse prevention, and sharing programs and resources, that rely on these pillars, the USASF is committed to utilizing our platform for minimizing the risk of child sexual abuse. When we foster an environment of shared responsibility for the athletes we serve we can effectively teach life skills that they can utilize far beyond cheer and dance.



About the USASF

The U.S. All Star Federation (USASF) was founded in 2003 with the core principle of making All Star a safer sport by establishing fair and consistent rules and competition standards. The organization credentials coaches, certifies legality officials, sanctions events and maintains and adjusts (as needed) safety guidelines, all with the goal of providing the safest possible environment for cheer and dance athletes to train and compete.

We are a not-for-profit corporation established in Tennessee and are governed by bylaws, officers, a board of directors, and 15 standing committees. The day-to-day operation of the USASF is handled by full-time, part-time and volunteer staff.

Our Mission

The USASF supports and enriches the lives of our All Star athletes and members. We provide consistent rules, strive for a safe environment for our athletes, drive excellence and promote a positive image for the sport.



Make All Star fun for Your Child

Any extracurricular activity can be a big commitment for families and we're delighted that your child has chosen All Star! The benefits of All Star are many and as a parent you want to provide the best physical, mental and social environment for your child. In addition to skills training, All Star provides enrichment and growth opportunities on and off the floor.

Your child's All Star experience will be influenced by many factors, but nothing will influence that experience more than you. As a parent, you are the most influential figure in your child's development, both as an athlete and as a person. Embrace that opportunity.

Remember :

- Let kids be kids. Fun should be paramount.
- Be supportive. Be disciplined. Be respectful. Manage your emotions and set a good example that teaches your child to do the same.
- Don't bully or harass. Speak out if you see bullying or harassing behavior from others.
- Focus on the process, not the outcome, and teach your child to do the same.
- Praise your child's effort more often than their performance.
- Keep All Star in perspective. Encourage your child to be well-rounded with interests both on and off the floor.
- Enjoy the All Star experience with your child. Life moves fast and time passes quickly. Soon your child will be grown and you'll wish you could return to these days, if just for a moment.
- So savor these seasons, don't rush them. Make the experience one that you'll remember fondly together years from now.

Free athlete protection training for parents

The U.S. Center for SafeSport™ offers a FREE *Parent's Guide to Misconduct in Sports*. This course explains the issues of misconduct in sports and helps parents ensure their children have a positive and safe experience.

The USASF also provides free Safe@All Star training to help parents gain the education and confidence to protect your child from sexual abuse.

If you're a parent looking for resources on keeping your athlete safe, you can access this training at no cost. For more information and access, please visit [ATHLETES 1st](#).



Your Member Benefits

For USASF athletes, membership begins with the Professional Responsibility Code, which affirms our commitment to our Athletes 1st initiative. With an all encompassing focus on athlete protection, safe training, overall well-being, healthy competition and sportsmanship, Athletes 1st is the USASF framework that allows athletes to develop life skills that last beyond cheer and dance.

- Membership in the largest network of All Star athletes and industry professionals who strive to provide a safe environment and positive experience for all participants.
- Free athlete protection training and education through Safe@All Star.
- Access to the safest training and highest performance standards in All Star.
- Eligible to participate in USASF-sanctioned events.
- Enrollment in the USASF Member Perks Program offering discounts on everyday purchases and exclusive offers from USASF's partners from the All Star community.
- Eligible to participate in enrichment, leadership development and scholarship opportunities.
- \$50,000 excess accidental medical insurance.
NOTE: Coverage only applies to on-site practices and competitions at USASF-sanctioned events and at supervised practices and instruction in member clubs.
- \$5 million catastrophic accident insurance.
NOTE: Coverage only applies to on-site practices and competitions at USASF-sanctioned events and at supervised practices and instruction in member clubs.
- Eligible to compete in qualifying events which may lead to participation in The Cheerleading Worlds and Dance Worlds competition. Age and division requirements must be met.
- Annual digital subscription to *Inside All Star* by Inside Publications and USASF.

What is the Professional Responsibility Code?

The **PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY CODE** (PRC) establishes written principles that guide the conduct of all USASF members. The PRC is offered to affirm to all members of the USASF the intent and the will of the USASF leadership to safeguard the best interests of All Star Cheer and Dance by having its members act professionally and responsibly at all times. These guidelines are established to maximize the integrity and legitimacy of the All Star industry and to safeguard the athletes who participate. Additionally, USASF members are expected to respect and protect human and civil rights and not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.



USASF MEMBER PERKS PROGRAM

Start saving today!
Go to USASF.abenity.com
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For ALL USASF members!
DISCOUNTS on hotels, pizza, movie tickets, oil changes, amusement parks and more! PLUS! EXCLUSIVE offers created just for YOU by USASF's partners and affiliates.

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN CAN DEVELOP IN A HEALTHY WAY UNLESS THEY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE VALUE APART FROM ANYTHING THEY OWN OR ANY SKILL THAT THEY LEARN. THEY NEED TO FEEL THEY ENHANCE THE LIFE OF SOMEONE ELSE, THAT THEY ARE NEEDED. WHO, BETTER THAN PARENTS, CAN LET THEM KNOW THAT?

-FRED ROGERS

THE ROLE OF THE PARENT

The role you play is more important than any job a program owner or coach has! You are molding your child into the person he or she will become in life. You know your child best, and here are tips for continuing to be their strongest support.

ASK ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S GOALS. Some athletes want to cheer in college or dance professionally. Once you know this, you can help create a plan to get them there. This may mean extra classes, private lessons or developing a plan with your athlete's program owner or coach. If your child is involved in All Star primarily for enjoyment, you may want to facilitate ways to incorporate fun aspects. Ideas include camps, encouraging team friendships or attending open gyms and master classes. It's important to know your child's goals as they are not always same with yours.

BE AWARE. Adolescents deal with so much today. Be aware of your athlete's mood, behavior changes and social media presence. Each of these can show signs of poor body image, abuse or mental illness. Your program owner should have access to resources provided by the USASF that cover athlete protection, nutrition and injury and illness prevention. The more supportive you are of your athlete, the more he/she will share with you. Encourage your athlete in all aspects of life and help him/her problem solve. Know that your program appreciates that you share your daughter or son with them. They could not create great athletes without your help in making them great people.



@ THE GYM OR STUDIO

The key to your role at the gym or studio is knowledge! The most common disconnect between parents and coaches/program owners stems from not understanding how or why things are done.

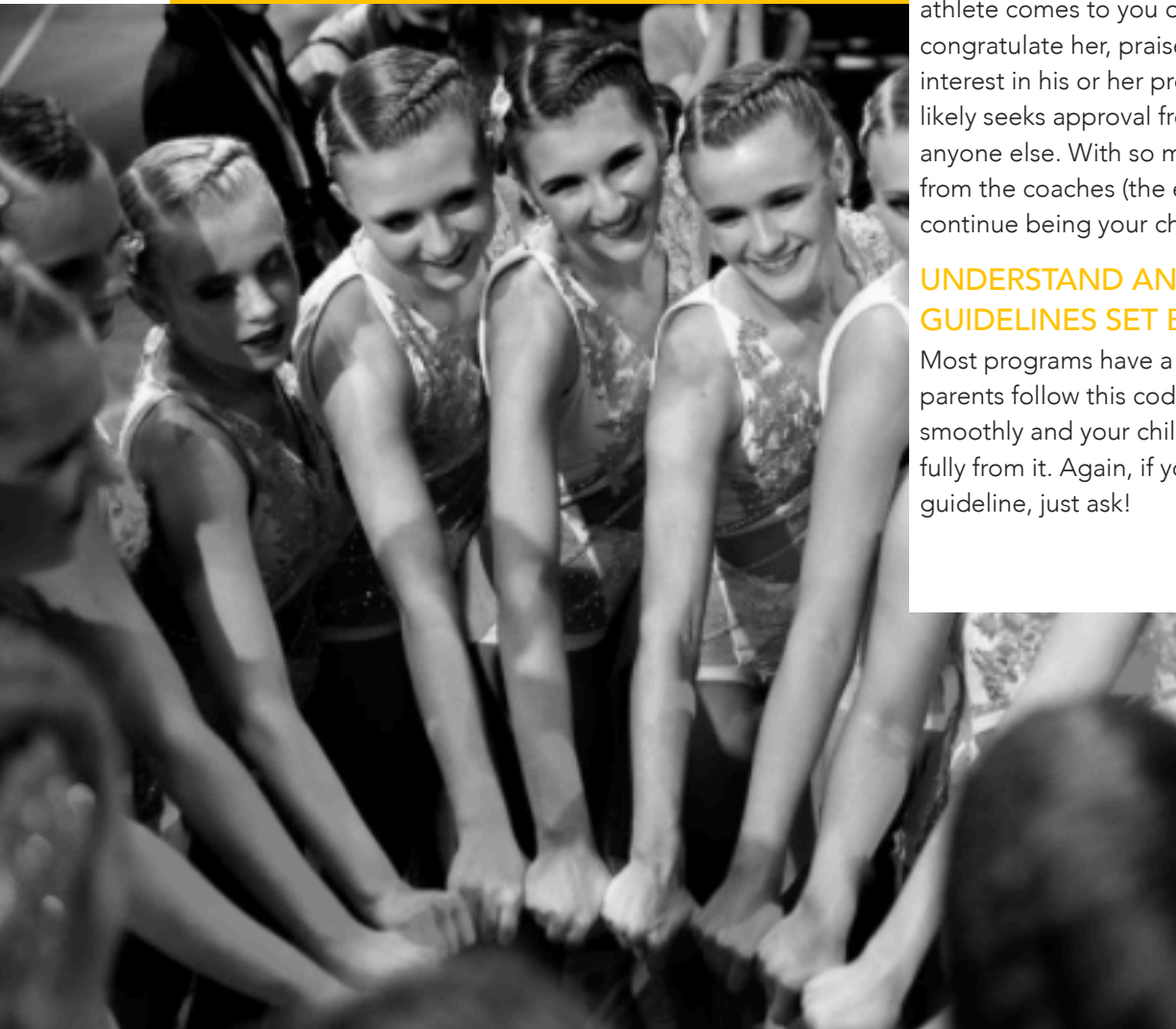
ASK QUESTIONS! If you don't know why your athlete is being asked to do a certain drill, why he or she has a certain position in the routine, or even why they are asked to wear a certain outfit, just ask. Direct and honest lines of communication between parent and coach are so important. You may even encourage your athlete to ask their own questions. This serves a dual purpose — you're getting answers and your child is learning how to communicate with persons of authority. Asking questions and sharing concerns in positive ways will create a support system where coach, program owner and parent are all on a united front.

TRUST. The coaches and program owners have a lot of experience in the field of cheer or dance, so it's often best to trust their decisions and methods. Being a parent in the industry is a difficult role because it's all about knowing when to trust and when to question. That's something only you know, and it could be different from parent to parent.

STAY POSITIVE. The sport of cheer and dance takes a lot of hard work! When your athlete comes to you during or after a practice, congratulate her, praise him and show your interest in his or her progress. Your child most likely seeks approval from you more than anyone else. With so many corrections coming from the coaches (the experts), you should continue being your child's strongest ally!

UNDERSTAND AND FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES SET BY THE PROGRAM.

Most programs have a code of conduct. If all parents follow this code, the program runs smoothly and your child will be able to benefit fully from it. Again, if you don't understand a guideline, just ask!



@EVENTS

As a parent you have the best and most important role at the competition! You are there to support your athlete. The coaches coach and the athlete needs to focus on his or her performance. You are in charge of enjoying being a mom or a dad!

Here are some things to consider on competition day:

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR CHILD IS WHEN HE OR SHE IS NOT WITH HIS/HER TEAM? Safety is our number one concern, and knowing who is overseeing your athlete throughout the day is your responsibility. Ask your program owner to provide you with their protocol for competition day safety. As an added layer of safety, the USASF partners with Safe@All Star which features an app that enables professionals to use crowdsourcing technologies to help with a search should a child become missing.

ENCOURAGE YOUR ATHLETE BEFORE HE/SHE PERFORMS. Try to refrain from referencing specific skills, fears or the routine. Your athlete needs a reminder of your unconditional love and support.

SHOW YOUR LOVE AND PRIDE after he or she performs and after an awards ceremony. Regardless of performance or results, try to focus on the way your athlete makes you feel when he or she performs. Recognize your athlete's hard work in preparation for this day, not just her hard work on the competition stage. Remember that NO ONE rivals the intensity and passion with which you love your child. So he or she needs your unconditional love and support all day!

This is your day to celebrate the gift that is your child! The coach is the one to provide the technical overview of the performance. What they need most from you is a hug!



TIPS FOR PARENTS

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE AT AN EVENT. As exciting and as emotional as it can be, the coaches and the program owners are at work. Approaching the program owner or the coach while they are working is not always the ideal time to get the answers to your questions.

CONSIDER UTILIZING THE 24-HOUR RULE. Wait 24 hours prior to approaching or asking the program owner or coach specific questions about their performance. Waiting 24 hours allows the emotions to settle and provides a better opportunity for open dialogue. Most program owners and coaches are more than willing to answer any questions, so be sure it is presented in a manner in which they can provide you the most informative answers.

RESPECT BOUNDARIES WHEN COMMUNICATING. The program you selected is a business, therefore, communicate using standard business methods. The program owners will define the best form of communication, so respect their protocol. Texting and social media may be convenient, but they are not a standard method for effective communication.

WHEN IN DOUBT ABOUT ANY DECISIONS regarding the program or your child, refrain from negative talk with other parents. These kinds of conversations can often be detrimental to the athlete, team and program. Be a team player and an example for your child. Bring all questions or concerns to the attention of the program owner or director.

KEEP CONVERSATIONS ABOUT OTHER CHILDREN AND OTHER PROGRAMS TO YOURSELF. You never know who is sitting behind you at an event. Sportsmanship and common courtesy teach children vital lessons in respect and integrity.



Competition Prep & Safety

Competition Preparation

- **TIMING.** Plan enough time to eat, dress, arrive and park at venue and meet the team. Use the x1.5 rule: If you estimate all of this will take two hours, allow three. If you arrive early, your athlete can relax, watch the competition, get something to eat, etc.
- **BRING CASH.** Some competitions are CASH ONLY admission.
- **AWARDS.** Make sure you know what time awards are and what time you are expected back for awards.
- **HAIR & MAKE-UP.** Make sure you know how hair and make-up should be done. If you need help, reach out to a veteran parent.

Competition Health & Safety

- **EAT RIGHT.** Your athlete needs to eat a good meal right before meeting with his/her team. The warm-up and competition can take a few hours, so your athlete may not be able to eat during that time.
- **INFORM THE COACH.** Make your coach aware of any health issues that your child may have: asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, anxiety, etc. Provide supplies or medications your child may need, such as an inhaler, epipen, etc.
- **KEEP YOUR BELONGINGS.** Keep your athlete's valuables with you. Most competitions do not provide a secure place for athletes' belongings in the warm-up room or while they compete.
- **ASK QUESTIONS.** When you drop off your athlete, will a coach be there to take responsibility for your child? Are athletes supervised at all times? Is there a buddy system in place?
- **KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE.** Know where to meet your child after he or she performs. YOU are responsible for your child at the competition.
- **BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS AT ALL TIMES.** Provide an emergency plan for your child in the event they are separated from their coach, team or you.

USASF Guidelines

- **NEVER LEAVE A MINOR ATHLETE** unattended or unsupervised.
- **KNOW THE SCHEDULE** provided by the coach to insure your athlete is present for all practices and/or team meetings.
- **COVER UP.** When not in the warm-up room or on the competition floor, all athletes in crop tops must cover bare midriffs.
- **DO NOT BLOCK** the judges' view of the performance floor with tablets, cameras or signs.
- **NO ONE IS THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE** when it comes to using no-entrance areas, approaching judges stands or climbing over barriers. Many event producers can or will penalize your child's team for your inability to follow posted rules that are there for your safety.
- **LEARN THE FLOW** of the fan-viewing section and do not block aisles. Know the meeting places designated by the coach that are in compliance with the venue space.
- **COMPETITIONS ARE RECRUITING-FREE ZONES!** Avoid making contact with athletes and parents from other programs in an effort to bring them over to your program. Enjoy the event! Be the friendly group that other parents aspire to be. Support your child and coaches so they have the most successful competition possible and let your child enjoy their moment in the spotlight!



Travel Prep & Safety

Plan Ahead

It's a good idea to make travel plans several months in advance. Work with your program director to obtain travel dates and hotel information. Know exactly what time your program expects your athlete to arrive at the competition.

Hotels

Determine which competitions will require a hotel stay. Before making arrangements, check with your program owner to determine if there are specific housing requirements for the competition. For example:

- Does the event producer require teams to book hotels through a specific housing company?
- Does your program owner already have a block of rooms for the team?
- Can you book independently from the program?
- When is the awards ceremony for your team's division? Awards ceremonies sometimes occur late on the last night of the competition.

Flights

Determine which competitions will require a flight, check rates early and consider booking at least three months in advance. Check with your program director to learn the requirements and timelines for travel. For example:

- When is your team's last at-home practice or show night before the competition?
- Are you required to arrive the night before the competition?
- When is the competition awards ceremony? Many occur late on the last night of the competition.
- Consider booking flights that can be changed, allowing you more flexibility. Being flexible is key to planning.

Travel Safely

WHEN FLYING

- If possible, book a flight that arrives the day before the competition. This allows time to handle delays or cancellations. Plan ground transportation along with your flight (shuttle, taxi, or rental car).

- When flying during winter months, try to avoid airports prone to weather delays or cancellations.
- The week of travel, keep an eye on the weather for all cities you will be traveling through. Check in advance for possible reroutes due to weather.
- Arrive at the airport two hours before your scheduled flight.
- If you have flight issues, airline employees will do their best to help you arrive at your destination, especially if you remain professional. Try multiple forms of communication if you have several people in your party. Have one person call the airline and another work with the airline staff at the airport. One method may work better than another at finding a solution.
- Pack your uniform, costume and anything you absolutely NEED in a carry-on bag and it have with you at all times!

WHEN DRIVING

- A good rule of thumb is to take the estimated travel time and multiply it by 1.5 — if it takes six hours to drive somewhere, allow at least nine hours.
- Make sure your car is safe to drive. Check the oil, tire pressure and have inspections up-to-date.
- If you are running late, communicate with the coach or program contact as soon as you know things are not going as planned so that they have as much advance notice as possible.
- Bring cash as many venues have cash only parking.



Did you Know?

The US All Star Federation requires that each USASF member program have a **TRAVEL POLICY** that is published and provided to all participants, parents, coaches and other adults that are traveling with the program.

A travel policy provides guidelines so that care is taken to minimize one-on-one interactions between minors and adults while traveling. Further, the policy directs how minor participants will be supervised between and during travel to and from practice and competitions. Adherence to travel policies helps to reduce the opportunities for misconduct.

Some travel involves only local travel to and from local practices, games and events, while other travel involves overnight stays. Different policies should apply to these two types of travel.

Ask your program owner or director where to find the travel policy for your club. For more information on this and other policy requirements refer to the USASF **PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY CODE**.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR



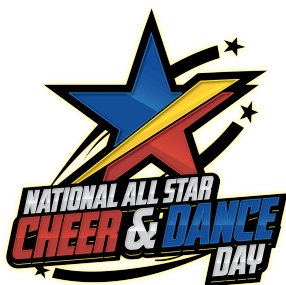
2021 USASF NATIONAL MEETING

July 24-25, 2021

Sheraton Charlotte Hotel
555 South McDowell Street, South Tower
Charlotte, NC

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION.](#)

The USASF National Meeting 2021 provides opportunities for those at every level to connect with others who passionate about All Star Cheer and Dance. With one unified conference, the USASF National Meeting is where you'll build valuable relationships, learn from top leaders, pick up new skills and ways to explore your leadership potential. Discover how powerful it is when the All Star community comes together to be a part of the best event to learn, connect and celebrate. For owners, coaches, athletes and parents.



NATIONAL ALL STAR CHEER & DANCE DAY

September 18, 2021

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION.](#)

Learn the 2021 National All Star Cheer & Dance Day choreography! NASCCD unites programs and athletes across the country. Bring your friends and celebrate All Star cheer and dance!



THE CHEERLEADING & DANCE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

April 23-25, 2022

Walt Disney World Resort
Orlando, FL

THECHEERLEADINGWORLDS.NET
THEDANCEWORLDS.NET



The United States All Star Federation and the International All Star Federation host just two competitions a year – The Cheerleading Worlds™ and The Dance Worlds™. Event producers of premier championships from all over the world sponsor their best teams to compete at these international competitions.

Pathway to Enrichment

The USASF has enrichment opportunities to develop the leadership potential in your athlete and elevate their All Star experience. To explore your resources, log in to your athlete's membership profile to find ATHLETE RESOURCES.

Athlete Leadership Workshops

BOLT/MARCH

USASF member athletes entering grades 9-12 are eligible to participate in the exclusive BOLT/MARCH leadership training opportunity. BOLT/MARCH workshops activate young cheer and dance leaders to become strong peer role models who:

- put team first,
- fully commit to their All Star program, and
- learn to make the choices that lead to accomplishment.

Developed and led by alumni of the USASF Mentoring Leaders program, BOLT/MARCH helps set young athletes on their path to success. The BOLT/MARCH experience can lead to next-level opportunities such as eligibility to:

- apply to participate as an athlete presenter at the Regional Advisory Board meeting in their region the following spring.
- serve on the Athlete Advisory Council.



Scholarships

The USASF Scholarship Fund was established in 2008 to recognize and reward outstanding All Star Athletes. Thanks to our generous sponsors, the USASF Scholarship Fund awarded \$55,000 in 2021. Applications are open to USASF member athletes who are college-bound seniors participating with any USASF member program. Applicants are not required to cheer or dance in college.



What's Your IQ What's Your IQ Jr.

Elevate your Integrity Quotient with this monthly activity that builds individual character and team unity! Athletes and coaches introduce a new word each month that supports the overall theme of "Integrity." This activity encourages conversation in gyms studios about how athletes, teams, coaches and owners can exemplify and encourage others to demonstrate that month's word.



Project Love

USASF is excited to partner with Project Love in the *I Pledge to Stick Together Against Bullying* campaign. This initiative stresses that each child is treated the way we all want to be treated – with kindness, caring, respect and empathy.



Healthy fuel for Healthy athletes

BEFORE

3+ Hours Before



Healthy meal or snack that includes whole grains, fruits, and vegetables to fuel muscles



Water

30-60 Minutes Before



Fruits like bananas, clementines, or apples



Water

Ideas for 3+ hours before



- Tuna or turkey sandwich with carrots
- Peanut butter and banana sandwich
- Eggs and whole wheat toast with melon slices

DURING

During Practice



+



Fruit, if needed

Water

sports drinks
not recommended

Hydration Tips

- Drink 16 ounces of water one hour before exercise.
- Drink four-eight ounces of fluid every 15-20 minutes during/after practice.
- One to two gulps = one ounce.

Ideas for practice breaks



- Orange or apple slices
- Strawberries
- Melon
- Sugar snap peas
- Pepper strips

AFTER

Recovery or Cool Down



+



Healthy meal or snack within one hour after training

Water

Ideas for recovery



- Fruit smoothie
- Hummus and carrots or cucumber
- Yogurt with banana or granola

- Avoid eating fried or fatty fast foods that take a long time to digest, using energy your muscles need to help you train or compete at your best.
- Save the treats for a special occasion!
- Healthy foods will replenish muscles and help you stay energized for your next activity.

Competition Days



- Less than one hour before competition? Have a fruit or vegetable as a snack like a banana, apple, or carrot sticks.
- Two hours or more downtime? Pack a healthy meal that includes fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and skip the concession stand treats.



Visit www.CoachingHealthyHabits.org for additional resources.

What to know about injury

Contrary to media hype that exacerbates the level of danger associated with All Star, this sport contains a very similar risk to all other sports. As with all sports, there is physical activity and physical contact, both which could cause injury. It is important to know how to detect, treat, and prevent an injury.

COMMON INJURIES AND TREATMENT

ACHILLES TENDONITIS

Achilles tendonitis is an inflammation of the tendon in the back of the ankle that connects the muscle for pointing your foot. As the Achilles is active during relevé and pointing the foot, this overuse injury is quite common in dancers, especially those utilizing improper technique or participating in excessive training. Gradual onset of pain and tenderness just above the heel which may feel better when warmed up, but worse with jumping or relevé. Prevention includes stretching your Achilles with your foot in parallel and strengthening your quadriceps/hip/core to decrease force absorption at the ankle. Treatment consists of correct training technique and calf stretching. It's important to treat early as to prevent tendon rupture!

ACL TEAR

This is a complete tear of the anterior cruciate ligament. This is usually caused from landing short or over rotating during a tumbling pass. Treatment is almost always reconstructive surgery and/or physical therapy.

CONCUSSION

A jostling of the brain inside the skull which can cause bruising and blood vessel and nerve damage. Some symptoms include nausea, headache, dizziness, sensitivity to light or noise, blurred vision, headache, and/or memory loss. This needs to be diagnosed by a doctor and usually requires at least two weeks of no physical activity or pushing through the pain. This is extremely unsafe for the athlete. Not allowing yourself to full recovery could worsen the injury.

LOWER BACK INJURY

(muscle strain, ligament sprain, fracture, disc disorders)

Because our sport stresses flexibility so much, back pain is extremely common. Back pain does not always signal a serious injury, but it could depending on severity. Sprains and strains usually respond to rest and/or physical therapy. If back pain is persistent, an xray and/or MRI should be done. Proper conditioning of the hamstrings can help alleviate lower back injury.

Did you Know?

USASF-credentialed coaches are required to complete THE BASELINE COURSE which provides information on assessing and/or handling athletes with concussions, cardiac issues and overheating.

SHIN SPLINTS

(tibial stress syndrome)

This is characterized by pain along the shin bone caused by increased activity. It can be treated by rest, ice, and exercise routine modifications.

SPRAINS

A sprain is stretched or partially torn ligament (wrist, ankle and knee are most common). They are characterized by tenderness, swelling, and bruising. The best treatment is rest. The athlete should not participate in any activities that are causing pain to the area. A doctor will prescribe a reduction of activity, usually anywhere between one and six weeks and ice. Symptoms may be treated and if non-athletic activities are painful, a brace or cast may be worn. Many lower body injuries can be alleviated by wearing an arch support

TENDINITIS

This the swelling of the tendons (usually knee, wrist or Achilles) created by the repetitive stress of jumping and/or landing. Treatment consists of stretching, strengthening exercises, and activity modification. If it is severe, a break from activity could help.

TRIGGER TOE

(flexor hallucis longus tenosynovitis)

Trigger toe is another overuse injury common in dancers that causes inflammation and damage to the muscle that is active during pointing the toes. Pain begins along inside of ankle and under the foot while pointing which may also feel like the big toe is stuck. You can minimize the risk of trigger toe by thoroughly warming up before each practice or performance. Prevention is practicing correct form with your relevés and not crunching your toes to force a point. Treatment includes correct training technique, stretching and massage.



INJURY PREVENTION

Take precautionary measures when trying something new. An athlete should MASTER a skill prior to attempting on a more difficult surface. Mastery means you are able to perform the skill 10 out of 10 times.

SURFACE PROGRESSION COULD LOOK LIKE THIS BUT MAY BE ALTERED BASED ON THE INDIVIDUAL AND/OR AVAILABILITY OF THESE SURFACES.



- A spotter can/should be used as a precautionary measure in case something were to go wrong. He or she should not be doing the skill for the athlete. This is not safe for the athlete or the spotter. An athlete should request a spotter for safety purposes when attempting a new skill on a new surface.
- Take adequate breaks to reduce fatigue and replenish fluids. Exhaustion can lead to injury.
- If an athlete has a recurring injury (such as ankle weakness, etc.), a brace or tape can be used to stabilize and reduce the risk of re-injury. This should be coupled with exercises to strengthen the ligaments and tendons.
- Do not push through the pain. Because of the nature of our sport, in that we don't often have alternates, many athletes have felt pressure by their coaches/parents/themselves to push through the pain. This is extremely unsafe for the athlete. Not allowing yourself to full recovery could worsen the injury.
- Make sure first aid is readily available.
- Warm up muscles with light aerobic exercise to get the muscles warm. Do not do a heavy stretch until post workout. Consult with a coach prior to attempting a skill to make sure muscles are strong enough to be able to potentially execute the skill. An athlete should have mastery of all skills in the skillset for the level prior to the skill he or she is wishing to obtain.



What to know about illness



COMMON ILLNESSES

ATHLETE'S FOOT is a fungal infection that causes mild but annoying skin rashes. It easily spreads in damp environments, such as public showers or locker rooms. Keep feet clean and dry by washing them daily and drying completely with a clean towel and avoid sharing. Choose cotton socks or ones made of fabric that wicks away moisture. Use an OTC powder/spray every day to help reduce sweating.

BACTERIAL INFECTIONS such as strep throat, can and should be treated by antibiotics. If your athlete has a bacterial infection, he or she may be contagious until 24 hours after starting the course of antibiotics. Since this sport requires close physical contact, the athlete should not practice so that others are not infected.

LICE is a parasitic insect that is spread by direct physical contact between two individuals or by sharing hairbrushes, towels, hats, etc. Symptoms are an itchy scalp and sores on the head or neck. There are treatments but a professional should go through the head and check for nits (eggs) and cut out any live ones. The gym should require a doctor's note that certifies that an athlete is lice-free to the best of their knowledge as lice can spread quite quickly.

MONO is an infection that can go unnoticed. It is only contracted by transfer of saliva. Symptoms are fatigue, sore throat, fever, headache, possible swollen spleen, etc. The virus has an incubation period of four to six weeks. The most common complication is an enlarged spleen that could be at risk of rupturing. Due to the nature of our sport (like when a flyer is caught in a prone position), All Star athletes are at a higher risk for rupture if the spleen is enlarged. This is why athletes with Mono absolutely should not participate in practice until cleared by a doctor.

VIRAL INFECTIONS like the common cold, cannot be treated with antibiotics and just have to run their course. The athlete may or may not be contagious. Most doctors recommend to stay away from others until the fever has subsided as a fever usually indicates infection.

PREVENTION

You obviously can't guarantee your athlete will not contract one of these, or other illnesses, yet you can take some preventative measures.

- Make sure your gym does not allow knowingly contagious athletes in the facility.
- Pack your athlete's bag with tissues and hand sanitizer and encourage the use the sanitizer before eating.
- Educate your athlete not to share hair brushes/headbands/hair ties, clothing or towels.
- Educate your athlete not to share drinks with others even if they don't seem ill.

The Parent Glossary - Cheer

Here's a brief glossary of very commonly used terms in All Star Cheer. For a more extensive list, refer to the USASF Rules site at USASF.net.

BASE: The athlete who lifts or supports the weight of another athlete.

BASKET TOSS: Two bases interlock wrists to make a woven square. The flyer steps on this and is thrown. She may or may not perform tricks while suspended, depending on the skill level of the athlete/team.

CRADLE: When a flyer dismounts to a face-up position caught by a base or bases.

DISMOUNT: The way in which the flyer comes down from a stunt.

DOUBLE-BASED STUNT: When only two people are basing a flyer.

EXTENSION/EXTENDED STUNT: Also referred to as a "full," when a flyer's feet are positioned at extended arm length of the base(s).

FLYER, TOP GIRL, PARTNER: The athlete being lifted by the bases.

FULL/DOUBLE FULL: A single or double twist performed simultaneously with the layout.

HANDSPRING: Performed forward or backward when an athlete flips by jumping from feet to hands and returning to feet.



INVERSION: When an athlete's waist and feet are above his/her head.

JUMP: An airborne position not involving flipping. There are different types of jumps with varying degrees of difficulty.

LAYOUT: Performed forward or backward when an athlete is straight-bodied while flipping.

MOUNT: The way in which a flyer goes into a stunt.

PREP/PREP-LEVEL: Also referred to as a "half," when a flyer's foot is positioned at the shoulder level of the bases.

PYRAMID: Two or more connected stunts.

RELEASE MOVE: When a flyer is airborne, released from base(s).

RUNNING TUMBLING: Tumbling performed with a running entry.

SINGLE-BASED STUNT: When only one person is basing a flyer.

SINGLE-LEG STUNT: When a flyer is standing on one leg in a stunt.

SPONGE: When a flyer dismounts to a waist level stunt and then is placed on the ground.

STANDING TUMBLING: Tumbling performed without running or forward momentum.

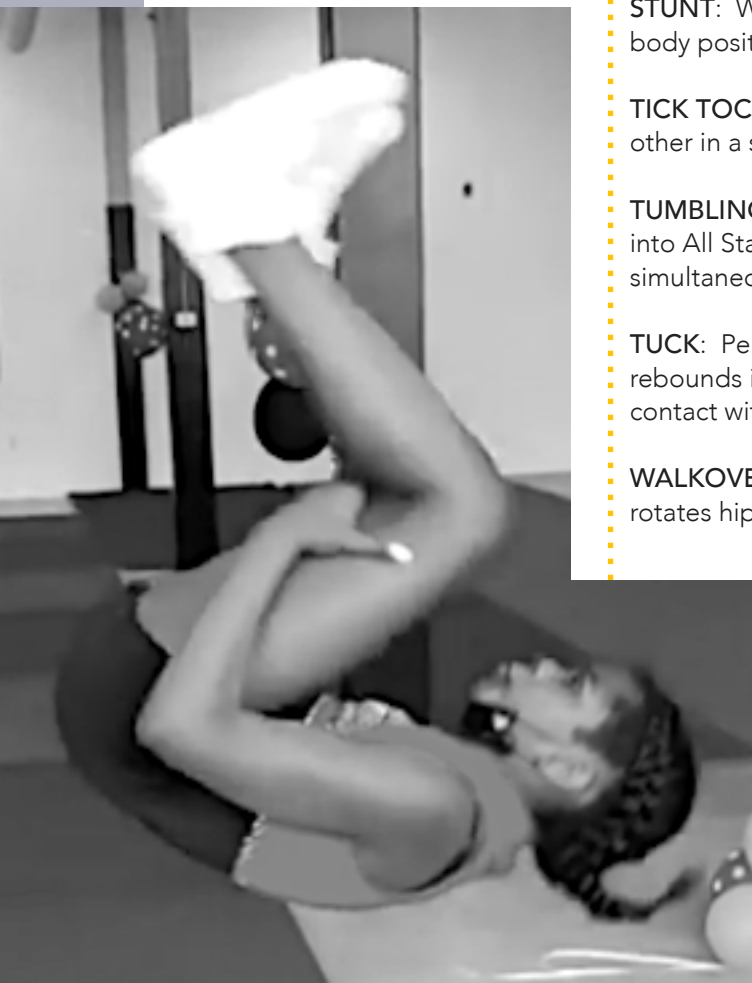
STUNT: When athletes lift other athletes and these athletes perform body positions and skills while suspended.

TICK TOCK: When the flyer switches weight from one foot to the other in a stunt.

TUMBLING: The "floor" portion of gymnastics which is incorporated into All Star. It is an individual activity but can be performed simultaneously among athletes.

TUCK: Performed forward or backward when an athlete jumps or rebounds into an inverted tucked position and does not have hand contact with the floor.

WALKOVER: Performed forward or backwards when an athlete rotates hips over head without losing contact with the floor.



The Parent Glossary – Dance

Here's a brief glossary of very commonly used terms in All Star Dance. For a more extensive list, refer to the USASF Rules Glossary at USASF.net.

AIRBORNE (executed by individuals, groups or pairs): When the dancer is free of contact from a person and the performance surface.

AIRBORNE HIP OVER HEAD ROTATION: (executed by Individuals): When the hips continuously rotate over the head and there is a moment of no contact with the performance surface (Example: round off or a back handspring).

CONNECTED/CONSECUTIVE SKILLS: When the dancer executes skills without a step, pause or break in between. (Example: double pirouette or double toe touch)

CONTACT (executed by groups or pairs): When two (or more) people physically touch each other. Touching hair and clothing does not qualify as contact.

DANCE LIFT (executed by groups or pairs): When a dancer is elevated from the performance surface by one or more dancers and set down. A dance lift is comprised of an executing dancer(s) and a supporting dancer(s)

DISMOUNT (executed by groups or pairs): When the executing dancer(s) returns to the performance surface or upright position with or without assistance from a supporting dancer(s) without assistance from a supporting dancer(s) with whom there was prior contact.

EXECUTING DANCER: A dancer who performs a skill while being supported by a pair or group of dancer(s).

FOUETTÉ À LA SECONDE: A stationary turn done in a series in which the working leg makes a circle in the air and extends at a 90° angle from the supporting leg remaining parallel to the ground as the dancer turns with a plié and relevé at each revolution.

HANDS-FREE POMS: Poms specifically made so that performers do not have to hold the poms but rather they are affixed to the performers hand. Proper use means bars cannot be in palm of the hand and only an elastic band can be between the supporting hand and performance surface.

HIP OVER HEAD ROTATION (executed by individuals): When a dancer's hips rotate over the head in a tumbling skill (Example: back walkover or cartwheel)

INVERSION/INVERTED: When a dancer's waist and hips and feet are higher than his/her head and shoulders.

What's in a Name?

An All Star Dance team is defined first by division, then size and finally category. For example: Senior Small Jazz or SSJ.

DIVISION

The composition of a competing group of dancers:
Tiny, Mini, Youth/Youth Coed,
Junior/Junior Coed,
Senior/ Senior Coed, Open

SIZE

Small 4-14 members
Large 15+ members

CATEGORY

The style of a performance piece or competition routine:
Jazz
Pom
Hip Hop
Contemporary/Lyrical
Kick
Variety

JETÉ [juh-TAY]: When the dancer takes off from one foot by brushing the feet into the ground and swiftly 'whipping' them into the position and then landing on one foot. A jeté can be executed in various directions, sizes and positions

LEAP: When the dancer pushes from a plié (bend) off of one foot, becomes airborne, and lands on one foot.

PASSÉ [pa-SAY]: When the working leg bends and connects the foot to, or near, the knee of the supporting leg; meaning to pass. Passé can be executed with the hips parallel or turned out.

PARTNERING (executed by pairs): When two dancers use support from one another. Partnering can involve both Supporting and Executing skills.

PIROUETTE [peer-o-WET]: (*axis rotation*). When the dancer bends (plié) and rises (relevé) to one leg (supporting leg) making a complete rotation of the body; meaning to whirl. A pirouette can be executed in a variety of positions.

PLIÉ [plee-AY]: A preparatory and landing skill in which the dancer bends, softens his/her knees; meaning to bend.

RELEASE (executed by groups or pairs): The moment when the executing dancer is free of contact from the performance floor and the supporting dancer(s).

RELEVÉ [rell-eh-VAY]: When the dancer lifts up to the balls of his/her feet; meaning to rise.

SUPPORTING DANCER: A dancer in groups or pairs who support or maintain contact with an executing dancer.

WINDMILL: When a dancer spins from his/her upper back to the chest while twirling his/her legs around his/her body in a V-shape. The leg motion gives the majority of the power, allowing the body to flip from a position on the back to a position with the chest to the ground.



The All Star Structure

CHEER AND DANCE TIERS

All Star Cheer and Dance are divided into categories by age and experience so that an athlete may participate in a way that fits them perfectly. USASF member programs may offer teams in any or all of the following divisions:

FUNDAMENTALS: fun and non-competitive for first-time All Star athletes.

NOVICE: focuses on strengthening technique and performance skills to prepare for prep or elite teams.

PREP: a competitive team with limited tumbling, less time and cost commitment.

ELITE: high-performance level with strong cheer training and solid technical ability.

THE LEVELS

When All Star began as a sport, there were no levels, minimal rules and vastly fewer teams. Now there could be as many as 1500 teams at an event! Levels are necessary to differentiate skill level in all aspects of All Star, mostly pertaining to tumbling and stunting. Below are the levels and BRIEF examples of some skills you may see in each level:

LEVEL 1: cartwheels, round-offs, forward and backward rolls, front and back walkovers, knee or waist level single-leg stunts, two-footed preps, straight cradles

LEVEL 2: back handsprings, front handsprings, Level 1 tumbling connected to a handspring, prep level single-leg stunts, extended two-footed stunts, half-twisting mounts, barrel rolls, begin basket tosses

LEVEL 3: running tucks, standing series back handsprings, jumps connected to standing back handspring, full-twisting mounts to prep, full-twisting dismounts, extended single-leg stunts

LEVEL 4: standing tucks, running layouts, full-twisting mounts to extended two-footed stunts, double-twisting dismounts from two-footed stunts, release moves to extended single-leg stunt

LEVEL 5: standing tumbling to layout and running tumbling to fulls, full-twisting mounts to extended level, begin double-twisting mounts, twisting release moves to extended level, double-twisting dismounts from extended single-leg

LEVEL 6: standing and running tumbling to double fulls, double-twisting mounts/dismounts and advanced release moves.

LEVEL 7: tumbling is comparable to level 6, free-flipping mounts, flipping tosses, 2.5-high pyramids (an athlete holding another athlete who is holding another athlete)

What is All Star Prep?

All Star Prep divisions enable athletes to participate with less time and cost commitment. Many programs offer Prep for half-year teams and some use it as an introduction to prepare athletes for traditional teams. The differences between All Star Prep and traditional All Star include:

- The routine is only 2:00 minutes as opposed to 2:30.
- No basket tosses allowed.
- At a two-day competition, Prep only competes one of the days.
- Scoring may not be as strict for Prep, possibly enabling a team to max out in a category without a full-team skill.

TEAM PLACEMENT

The previous page includes examples of the most common skills you may see in a routine at each level. Please remember a few things about your daughter/son's placement on a team (age/level):

1. Each gym is different and has its own mission. An athlete's team placement may be based on the needs of the program and perhaps on athlete turnout. Ensuring the gym is the right fit for your child may be more important than a specific team placement.
2. Age, tumbling ability, stunting ability, loyalty and work ethic, are all factors that may affect team placement.
3. If you are unsure of why your daughter/son was placed on a particular team, just ask! Your athlete's level of stunting could be different than his/her level of tumbling which would definitely make placement ambiguous.
4. Not rushing your athlete before he/she is ready to progress will help alleviate anxiety and allow him/her to maintain his enthusiasm for the sport. If your athlete repeats a level, it DOES NOT mean he/she failed. Very often, children execute the minimal requirements of a certain level one season, but are able to demonstrate more advanced tumbling, stunting and technique the next season.

COMPETITIONS

There are many companies — or event producers — that offer USASF-sanctioned competitions. A USASF-sanctioned event has access to resources to provide the safest and healthiest competitive atmosphere and best possible on- and off-the-floor experience for athletes. Sanctioned events offer:

- Consistent rules, age requirements and regulations at each event that ensure fair play.
- Monitoring of warm-up rooms and backstage areas through the USASF rostering process.
- Required background screenings for adult athletes, owners, coaches, personnel and event staff.
- USASF-trained and -certified legality officials who are on-call or in-person to provide rulings in real time at all sanctioned events.
- A properly equipped EMT or athletic trainer present and available to handle emergencies.
- Accidental medical and catastrophic accident insurance coverage in effect for USASF member athletes and coaches injured at sanctioned events.





SCORING

In general, a team is judged on the following categories and score sheets can vary among event producers.

CHEER

- **STUNT:** execution, difficulty, creativity
- **PYRAMID:** execution, difficulty, creativity
- **RUNNING TUMBLING:** execution, difficulty
- **STANDING TUMBLING:** execution, difficulty
- **BASKET TOSSES:** execution, difficulty
- **DANCE**
- **SHOWMANSHIP**
- **ROUTINE COMPOSITION**

DANCE

- **CHOREOGRAPHY:** composition of movement (musical interpretation, originality); staging/visual effects (formations, transitions); and difficulty.
- **EXECUTION:** uniformity; spacing, movement proficiency and dynamics; and technical elements and skills.
- **PRESENTATION:** communication (expression, energy) and suitability (genre, family)

DEDUCTIONS AND USASF RULE VIOLATIONS

Deductions are points that may be taken away from the final score due to one of the following occurrences in a routine and vary among event producers. Here are a few common areas for cheer deductions.

- **FALLS**
- **BOUNDARY VIOLATION**
- **TIME LIMIT VIOLATION**
- **SAFETY VIOLATION:** A skill that is performed is not in accordance with the USASF rules for that level.
- **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:** Coaches, athletes or spectators associated with a particular team demonstrating unsportsmanlike conduct.

What are

Exceptional Athletes?

USASF's Exceptional Athlete Division empowers individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities with an "I can do" attitude. The CheerABILITIES and DanceABILITIES programs for the Exceptional Athlete: are safe, fun and good exercise; improve flexibility and strength; enhance independence and self-confidence; provide a place for positive social interaction; and provide peer support and shared experiences among families.



What does it mean?

Here's a quick look at terminology you may find frequently used by the USASF and throughout All Star.

USASF ALL STAR CLUB / PROGRAM

A USASF ALL STAR CLUB or PROGRAM is an organization, gym or studio that participates in USASF-sanctioned events. USASF member programs must:

- have an active USASF membership;
- have at least one owner/coach;
- have at least four member athletes;
- have proof of liability insurance;
- accept and follow the guidelines and standards of the USASF Professional Responsibility Code; and
- have policies in place to address: athlete sexual abuse prevention, electronic communication, bullying, travel and billeting.

USASF COACH

A COACH is an individual who actively coaches All Star athletes and is associated with a U.S. All Star gym or studio. A USASF coach must:

- be an active member of the USASF;
- be at least 18 years old;
- have an NCSI background screening with a green light determination;
- be SafeSport Trained™ and Safe@All Star trained.
- accept and follow the guidelines and standards of the USASF Professional Responsibility Code.

CREDENTIALLED

CREDENTIALLED is a term used to describe a cheerleading coach*. A credentialed coach has demonstrated that they have the knowledge required to teach skills at the level they are coaching. Credentialing is not a requirement to become a USASF coach member. However, a Cheerleading Worlds coach must be credentialed in either building, tumbling or both up to the level in which their team is competing.

During the credentialing process, a candidate must demonstrate to the credentialing instructor that they know how to teach a skill — primarily the most difficult skills allowed in each level. A candidate must pass the credentialing requirements of one level before advancing to the next higher level.

Credentialing does not guarantee safety, it does not replace the importance of first aid and CPR training and does not diminish the importance of other courses or clinics that help train coaches to be good leaders, be organized, use safe training practices, etc. Credentialing simply assesses whether or a coach has the knowledge to teach the required skills at any given level. This does not negate the importance of credentialing, but should assure members and parents that a credentialed coach knows how to teach the skills required for a team's given level.

** During the 2021-22 competition season, the USASF will begin offering a credentialing program for dance coaches.*

CERTIFIED

CERTIFIED is a term used to describe a USASF LEGALITY OFFICIAL. A legality official plays an integral role at USASF-sanctioned events by ensuring fair competition for all participants. Much like a referee in a basketball game or an umpire in baseball, a legality official brings legitimacy and integrity to the sport by enforcing the rules of All Star. A legality official is not a scoring judge as the USASF does not certify, train nor govern any aspect of competition scoring.

GREEN LIGHT

The United States All Star Federation has taken important steps to ensure the highest level of safety within our All Star member organizations. One of these steps is a required background screening with a GREEN LIGHT determination for an adult member who accompanies a team into a warm-up or backstage area at all USASF-sanctioned events. This includes owners, coaches, volunteers and non-coaching staff members associated with a program. Additionally, adult athletes are required to be screened before eligibility status is granted.

The United States All Star Federation is proud to partner with the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI), which facilitates all background screenings of our adult members. This includes a comprehensive screening program using NCSI's full-service product and a simple red light/green light determination report issued in accordance with the criteria chosen by the USASF. Only those applicants receiving a green light report will be considered for eligible membership.





ATHLETE PROTECTION EDUCATION

To be considered for membership in the USASF, all owners, coaches, adult athletes and personnel members are required to complete ATHLETE PROTECTION EDUCATION through SafeSport™. This is in addition to other eligibility requirements.

Safe Sport™ Trained is the best-in-class online course that provides an in-depth foundation in abuse awareness and prevention:

- Mandatory Reporting: Understanding Your Responsibilities
- Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education
- Emotional and Physical Misconduct

PENDING CONFIRMATION

To be in compliance at USASF-sanctioned events, all athletes are required to have birth certificates (or another state-issued proof-of-age document) uploaded to their membership profiles. Once a document has been uploaded, the athlete's age-verification status will state PENDING CONFIRMATION. We have a team that works to manually verify each birth certificate which can take time. A pending confirmation is perfectly fine and does not prevent an athlete from

being placed on a roster or competing. Should there ever be an age challenge at a competition, a member of our team would be able to access the athlete's birth certificate in the USASF membership system and provide age verification.

Once a birthdate has been confirmed, the uploaded document is no longer stored. If you have questions about providing proof-of-age documents, please email allstar@usaf.net.

ADULT ATHLETES

The USASF member database calculates athlete age based on the birth year. ADULT ATHLETES are athletes who are at least 18 or will turn 18 on or before May 31 of the current membership season. For example, an athlete born February 14, 2004 is considered an adult athlete during the 2021-22 membership season because they will turn 18 during the current competition season. Adult athletes are required to complete background screenings and athlete protection education before competing at USASF-sanctioned events.





Child Sexual Abuse

About the Issue

Child sexual abuse is one of the most prevalent public health issues facing society today. Child sexual abuse can occur anywhere. It happens in places like homes, neighborhoods, schools and youth sports environments, but it also occurs online, such as child pornography or communicating in a sexual manner by phone or internet.

One in 10 children will be the victim of sexual abuse before their 18th birthday. Child sexual abuse takes many forms, and they aren't just physical. At its core, sexual abuse is any sexual act between an adult and a minor, or between two minors when one exerts power over the other. It also includes non-contact acts such as exhibitionism, exposure to pornography and voyeurism. To prevent abuse, we have to break through the stigma and shame and talk about how it happens.



Step up and speak out

A parent's guide to selecting youth organizations

Between All Star practice, school and piano lessons, your child is frequently in the care of many different adults. By stepping up and speaking out to youth serving organizations in your community, you have the power to protect your child and countless others against child sexual abuse. Organizations should be ready and willing to talk about their prevention measures. Following are some proactive questions to help you start the conversation.

IS THERE A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?

Youth-serving organizations should have clearly defined child protection policies.

DOES THE POLICY INCLUDE LIMITING ISOLATED ONE-ON-ONE SITUATIONS?

One-on-one time is important to a child's emotional growth and development, but it does not have to happen behind closed doors. One-on-one interactions should take place in an open, observable and interruptible setting.

HOW ARE EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS SCREENED?

Employee screening best practices includes an in-depth application, personal and professional references, criminal background check, and an extensive interview.

DO OLDER AND YOUNGER CHILDREN INTERACT, AND IF SO, HOW?

Supervising contact between children and older/bigger youth requires structure and adult supervision. There should be separate areas and activities for different age groups. Make it clear that you would always like an adult present with your child.

ARE THERE CLEAR PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPICIONS OR INCIDENCES OF ABUSE?

Push for organizations to provide mandated reporter training for their staff. Over half of all mandated reporters fail to report suspicion of abuse. In most cases they are simply confused or uninformed about their responsibilities. You can help by sharing this information. If you have reason to believe abuse is occurring at an organization, trust your intuition and make a report.

MORE QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS:

- Are parents encouraged to drop in at any time?
- Can parents tour the facilities?
- Are your staff and volunteers trained in sexual abuse prevention and response?
- Do you have a code of conduct? May I have it?
- How are your policies disseminated and to whom?
- Are the children aware of the rules?
- How are older youth and adult athletes screened, monitored and supervised?
- Do you train, allow and empower your staff and volunteers to report suspicions of sexual abuse?
- If a staff member or volunteer violates the child sexual abuse prevention policy, what procedures and penalties will they follow?

Source: DARKNESS TO LIGHT <https://www.d2l.org>.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE
THE ANSWERS TO
ANY OF THESE
QUESTIONS, YOU DO
NOT HAVE TO LEAVE
YOUR CHILD.

Did you Know?

The USASF requires each USASF member program (gyms/studios) to have a YOUTH SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY with clear, written guidelines that prohibit adults who have contact with minors from engaging in conduct that is either inappropriate and/or illegal. The policy requires that each member program:

1. post the YOUTH SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION & POLICY & PROCEDURES for participants, their guardians, coaches and staff to see and ensure that they are meeting those standards.
2. share and make available resources for parents to educate themselves.
3. host an annual sexual abuse orientation meeting with all coaches, parents and volunteers. At minimum, programs will educate parents on the availability of:
 - Safesport Tool Kit for parents: <https://resources.safesport.org/toolkits/Parent-Toolkit-Complete/index.html>
 - FREE online parent training at athletesafey.org
 - Darkness to Light: <https://www.d2l.org/>
 - Stewards of Children Prevention Toolkit App
 - USASF SafeSport code and the USCSS policies document that is available to all USASF members.

Each USASF member program is required to follow the MANDATED REPORTER LAWS of their state. A mandated reporter is someone required by law to report if they suspect or know that child abuse is occurring. It is the responsibility of the program administrator and/or owner to:

1. know the laws that are specific for their state.
2. post the legal requirements and reporting procedures for their state for all coaches and adult staff to reference.
3. conduct an annual staff meeting that includes training on the legal requirements and reporting procedures for their state.

YOUTH SEXUAL ABUSE
PREVENTION POLICY &
PROCEDURES
Scan this code with
your smartphone.





Identifying Child Sexual Abuse

Signs that a child is being sexually abused are often present, but they can be indistinguishable from other signs of child stress, distress or trauma. Knowing what to look for can help.

Signs of child sexual abuse can be physical and/or emotional, with physical signs being less common. Emotional signs can range from “too perfect” behavior to withdrawal, depression or unexplained anger. It’s important to remember that some children may show no signs at all. There are also red flag behaviors you can identify if you know what to look for to help intervene in the grooming process.

EMOTIONAL SIGNS

Emotional and behavioral signs or changes are more common than physical signs and can include:

- anxiety and depression
- sleep disturbances, including nightmares or night terrors
- change in eating habits
- unusual fear of certain people or places; reluctance to be alone with a certain person
- changes in mood that may include anger, aggressiveness towards parents, siblings, friends, pets
- rebellion or withdrawal; runaway behavior
- change in attitude towards school or academic performance; lack of interest in friends, sports or other activities
- unexplained or frequent health problems like headaches or stomach aches
- poor self-esteem; avoidance of relationships
- self-mutilation or change in body perception, like thinking of self or body as dirty or bad; suicidal thoughts
- regression to previously outgrown behaviors, for example, bedwetting or thumb sucking
- abnormal sexual behaviors or knowledge of advanced sexual language and behaviors
- too “perfect” behavior or overly compliant behavior

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE


Direct physical signs of sexual abuse are not common. However, when physical signs are present, they may include bruising, bleeding, redness and bumps, or scabs around the mouth, genital or anus. Urinary tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases and abnormal vaginal or penile discharge are also warning signs. There are other indirect physical signs that include:

- persistent or recurring pain during urination or bowel movements
- wetting or soiling accidents unrelated to toilet training
- sexually transmitted diseases
- chronic stomach pain
- headaches

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF AN ADULT IS TAKING TOO MUCH INTEREST IN YOUR CHILD?

CHILD GROOMING is a deliberate process by which offenders gradually initiate and maintain sexual relationships with victims in secrecy. On the surface, grooming a child can look like a close relationship between the offending adult, the targeted child and (potentially) the child's caregivers. By recognizing grooming behavior you can intervene. Here are examples of red flag behaviors:

- special attention/preference to a child
- gift giving
- touching or hugging the child
- sympathetic listener
- offers to help the family
- gaining access via the internet

To learn more about child grooming and see examples of red flag behaviors,  [CLICK HERE.](#)

Source: DARKNESS TO LIGHT <https://www.d2l.org> National Helpline: 866.For.Light



Athletic Performance Standards Social Media Best Practices

WHAT ARE THE USASF ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS?

The USASF is dedicated to the safety of all athletes both on and off the competition floor and to fulfilling the mission to promote and project a positive image for All Star.

We invited all professional fields in the All Star community to partner with the USASF in athlete protection through the development of the ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS (APS). Member owners, coaches, event producers, suppliers and non-member suppliers have pledged their support of the APS which includes policies, rules and guidelines for:

- uniforms
- choreography and music
- makeup, hair and hair accessories
- media and photography

While the USASF cannot fully guarantee safety on and off the mat, our polices, rules and guidelines are designed to minimize the risks. With a careful balance of understanding, we must recognize the risk, be responsible in providing education and safeguards and allow the presentation of the sport to remain true to its roots.

Minimizing the risk for exploitation is everyone's responsibility. A component of the Athletic Performance Standards is to offer athletes and parents best practices for social media.

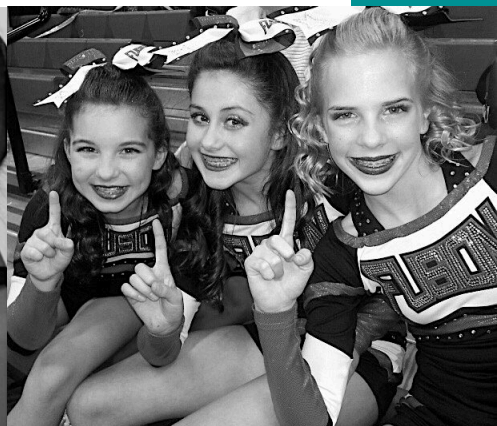
SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

DO

- Keep social media pages settings on private. Remember, all posts are permanent and can be easily hacked and shared.
- Turn off geo-tagging/location services on social media posts.
- Only "friend" people you actually know in real life.

DON'T

- Share personal information.
- Make plans to meet someone you met on social media.
- Share your passwords, even with friends.
- Post provocative images/videos.





SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

- Post photos with friends instead of selfies to minimize others capturing your photo and manipulating it for exploitative purposes.
- Share images that are viewed as athletic or artistic and include context to help deliver the intended message. (ie, #Strong, #Determined, #Focused) Posting pictures without context opens the door for manipulation of the photo.
- Amplify the athleticism and artistry of All Star and ensure picture selections are age appropriate.

REPORT IT DON'T IGNORE IT

Telling a safe adult about something unsafe that is happening, or that happened in the past, to get you or someone else help is called REPORTING.

- Report harassment or stalking to local law enforcement.
- Reporting unsafe behaviors is important. Sometimes, teens think that telling is snitching, but if you are reporting red flags, it is not.
- Report images or exploitation to the CYBERTIPLINE: 800-843-5678.
- Report inappropriate content, such as bullying, hate speech, obscenity, to the social media platform AND block the poster.

Other digital dangers related to online predators include, but are not limited to:

- receipt of private or direct messages from someone you do not know
- anyone asking for your personal information
- someone pretending to be someone they are not
- seeing a website or post with inappropriate or explicit pictures or of someone hurting another person
- receipt of an inappropriate picture
- exploitation of minors online

Use your social platform to be an ambassador of the sport.

Consider these guidelines before you post:

Is it age-appropriate?

Is it athletic?

What does it amplify?

→ TELL A SAFE ADULT AND REPORT

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children missingkids.org

REPORT IT 24-HOUR HOTLINE cybertipline.org 800-843-5678

Use the CYBERTIPLINE to report child sexual exploitation.

Reports may be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Your digital reputation will follow you forever, in sports and in life. Make sure anything you post or share is something you want attached to your name forever.

RECOGNIZE THE RISKS

- The more you use digital devices and put yourself out there publicly, the more likely it is that you will encounter problems or unexpected consequences.
- Images that highlight an individual's flexibility and show private parts, even when clothed, are known to be highly sought after and more easily photo-shopped/manipulated by those with ill intent than group or wide-angle shots of similar skills. If you opt to post a photo of a skill, be sure the picture is taken from an angle that does not allow for the manipulation of the photo.
- Having friends or followers online that you don't know can be dangerous. Know the risks. Predators will friend people and pretend to be someone else to establish a relationship and trust.
- Your digital reputation will follow you forever, in sports and in life. Make sure anything you post or share is something you want attached to your name FOREVER.
- Athletes and parents are an integral part of the efforts to protect athlete.
- Education is the key to empowering one another as we navigate our interconnected global world.

ASK THE EXPERTS

Athletes and parents are an integral part of the efforts to protect athlete. Education is the key to empowering one another as we navigate our interconnected global world. If you're looking for resources on keeping your athlete safe, please visit [ATHLETES 1st](#).



We recognize that 2020 was challenging beyond measure. We endured an abruptly interrupted competition season, witnessed the cancellation of events intended to unite the All Star community and were unable to celebrate some of life's most important milestones as a result of a global health crisis. And, just as we were beginning to recover, our world was yet again upended with a reckoning as it related to racial equity and social justice. One that involved difficult conversations about police

Diversity, equity, inclusion and sensitivity

In a sport where everyone's value is derived by what they do on the floor no matter what they look like, I was naive to think that this mindset spilled over to all areas of the spirit industry. Hearing stories of so many people who felt this was not always the case, compelled me to be a part of the change so that everyone would feel included and represented moving forward.

-Peter Lezin
Brandon All Stars;
USASF DEIS
Committee Chair



killings, town halls, rallies and riots. We understood that words of grief and support for change were not enough. It was time to move from conversation to action.

As an organization, the USASF has never been afraid to take necessary action. We have tackled the topics of gender identity and sexual abuse and exploitation by connecting experts in those fields with our members to provide awareness, education, tools and resources. We even established more stringent requirements for membership. And, while conversations surrounding race can elicit a range of emotions, we have been addressing this area too.

The USASF's core priority is our members and we are committed to ensuring diversity, inclusion and equity. Our conversations started long before last summer and we continue this important dialogue. With support and guidance from leaders at Black Girls Cheer and Cheer Leaders' Alliance, as well as many of our USASF program owners, coaches and athletes, we began working to better understand the emotions and experiences of our black members in the current climate.

One important outcome of those conversations is the USASF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND SENSITIVITY sub-committee. This committee focuses on issues of diversity and community within All Star and makes recommendations with the intention of promoting better understanding between and within the membership to be a more inclusive sport for all.

Our world has changed, and as we move forward, we will work together to address the challenges that face us while continuing to achieve our mission to support and enrich the lives of our athletes and members. All Star is a sport that welcomes and embraces everyone. Every race, size, gender identity and ability. We invite you to bring who you are. There's a place for everyone.

Learning
All Star
safely
is our
goal



All Star
FUNDamentals

MEET THE SUPERHEROES OF ALL STAR



They will help YOU become an All Star Superhero too!

Seek. Explore. Learn about All Star through FUNDamentals!

With our Super Heroes of All Star, your preschooler will fall in love with All Star in a learning-only, non-competitive environment. In 12-weeks, athletes master the skills of FUNDamentals Cheer 1, 2 and 3. By the time they reach Cheer 3, they will have been introduced to and learning Elite Level 1 skills. And when they're ready for something a little more challenging, your program director can help them find their best fit — whether it's in a skills and tumbling class or on a competition team. Ask your program director if there's a FUNDamentals team at your gym or studio.

There's a star in all of us!

Working to protect our athletes

Crowdsourcing is the practice of obtaining information or input into a task or project by enlisting the services of a large number of people, especially from the online community. Safe@AllStar takes crowdsourcing to a more impactful level with mobile technologies that better facilitate information sharing between members of the community and law enforcement. Safe@AllStar's revolutionary technologies will soon educate, train and enable USASF members to make wiser, safer decisions.

It's a child's job to play, explore and discover. It's our job to keep kids safe so that they can grow, learn and develop to their fullest potential. As champions in promoting athlete protection, the USASF continues to strive to provide the safest possible training and competitive environment for our most precious members. Through a new partnership with Safe@AllStar, the USASF now offers additional prevention and education to our ongoing athlete protection programs.

Through this partnership, Safe@AllStar provides safety and security services to include: the Safe@AllStar mobile app; child sexual abuse awareness and prevention training; and ongoing consulting, response and resolution to support the athlete protection measures used by the USASF.

Safe@AllStar uses a comprehensive approach to prevention and protection and uses crowdsourced safety applications to reduce the risk of opportunistic crimes and sexual exploitation of youth.

"As a father, I had the unfortunate experience of discovering that my daughter had been contacted by an online predator," says Ken Newman, chief executive officer, Safe@AllStar. "I knew something should and could be done to better protect our youth."

With extensive experience in law enforcement, Newman took a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to youth protection, safety and security. He assembled a team of educators and top security experts, including several former U.S. Secret Service agents, to develop and introduce high levels of education and protection on to the cheer and dance community.

"Our sole priority is to protect young athletes," says Jason Russell, president of Safe@AllStar. "We're honored to have the opportunity to partner with the USASF and contribute to their mission to create the safest environment and promote a positive image for the sport."

"This partnership is an important new benefit for our members that will improve the safety and peace of mind of our USASF athletes and parents," says Alison Stangle, interim executive director, USASF. "We look forward to collaborating with our coaches, program owners and event producers using Safe@AllStar's initiatives to ensure a safe environment for all our athletes."



Reporting Concerns of Abuse and/or Policy Violations

The U.S. All Star Federation (USASF) is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for participants' physical, emotional, and social development and promoting an environment free from abuse and misconduct. We recognize it can be difficult to report an allegation of misconduct and are striving to remove barriers to reporting.

The USASF with USA Cheer developed the **UNIFIED REPORTING FORM** for the cheerleading and dance community as a tool for understanding and reporting allegations of both abuse and policy violations.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Report to local authorities immediately:

- Sexual abuse, physical abuse or criminal activities involving a minor

MANDATED REPORTING LAWS

A mandated reporter is a person who, because of his or her profession, is legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities. These laws are in place to prevent children from being abused and to end any possible abuse or neglect at the earliest possible stage.

Members of the USASF who suspect sexual or physical abuse or misconduct involving a minor are required to report the allegations to law enforcement before they report it to the USASF.

HOW TO REPORT

STEP 1: Contact law enforcement or local child welfare agencies designated

to receive and investigate reports of suspected child abuse and neglect: [STATE CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT REPORTING NUMBERS](#)

STEP 2: Contact the organization or entity that employs the accused if it will not compromise the safety of the reporter or alleged victim(s).

STEP 3: Complete the USASF/USA Cheer **UNIFIED REPORTING FORM**.

IF A MINOR IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OR ABUSE IS OCCURRING, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

USASF/USA CHEER

UNIFIED REPORTING FORM

Contact the USASF for issues concerning:

- Physical Abuse or Misconduct
- Emotional Abuse or Misconduct
- Bullying, Threats or Harassment
- Hazing

HOW TO REPORT

Complete the USASF/USA Cheer **UNIFIED REPORTING FORM**.

USASF CLUB/PROGRAM

Contact your club or program for issues concerning:

- Facility cleanliness
- Equipment issues
- Financial disputes
- Scores
- Competitive progression concerns/team placement
- Employment concerns
- Business practices between the consumer and provider

U.S. ALL STAR FEDERATION

Contact the USASF for issues concerning:

- Professional Responsibility Code violations [read more](#) *
- USASF age grid or roster violations
- Sanctioned event requirement violations by programs, owners, coaches, athletes or personnel
- Sanctioning standard violations for events hosted by Event Producer members
- Athletic safety while training such as not following concussion protocol or return-to-play guidelines

* You must be a current member of the USASF to file reports of Non Compliance of the Professional Responsibility Code

HOW TO REPORT

Contact a USASF Regional Director. [FIND A USASF REGIONAL DIRECTOR](#).

USASF PARENTING RESOURCES

Visit the USASF website for an abundance of parenting resources such as these:

- WELLNESS ESSENTIALS offers a series of short videos on USASF's YouTube channel:
PARENT PARTNERSHIP
A PARENT'S ROLE AT COMPETITIONS

SUBSCRIBE

We encourage you to SUBSCRIBE to the ALL STAR CHEER & DANCE PARENT CONNECT newsletter to keep up with the latest All Star news.



OUR TRUSTED RESOURCE PARTNERS

- MONIQUE BURR FOUNDATION teaches how to prevent, recognize, and respond appropriately to bullying
- NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR YOUTH SPORTS
- PLAY SPORTS COALITION promotes the benefits of youth sports and advocates for policies that advance our field.
- POSITIVE COACHING ALLIANCE promotes a positive, inclusive sports culture that develops social and emotional skills, molds character and prepares them for competition and for life.
- RISE provides resources to help eliminate racial discrimination in the sports community
- SAFE@ALLSTAR educates, trains and enables others to make wiser, safer decisions.
- THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT is committed to building a sport community where participants can work and learn together free of emotional, physical and sexual abuse and misconduct.

Knowledge
is the
Key
to growth

Stay Connected

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