

**Kicking ‘No Touch’ Discourses into Touch: Athletes’ Parents’ Constructions of
Appropriate Adult (Coach)-Child (Athlete) Physical Contact**

Thomas Gleaves, Locality Officer ‘I Will If You Will’, Bury Sport and Physical Activity Service, Bury Council, Bury, UK, and Melanie Lang, Department of Sport and Physical Activity, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK.

Corresponding author:

Melanie Lang, The Wilson Centre, Department of Sport and Physical Activity, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK.

Email: langm@edgehill.ac.uk

Tel: 01695 584302

Submitted 08/02/16

Accepted for publication 03/03/17

Kicking ‘No Touch’ Discourses into Touch: Athletes’ Parents’ Constructions of Appropriate Coach-Child Athlete Physical Contact

Abstract

It has been suggested that sport is increasingly becoming a ‘no-touch zone’ as some coaches, driven by a desire for self-protection, restrict their use of physical contact with (child) athletes in the belief that this reduces their risk of being accused of abuse. Research on coach-athlete physical contact is limited, however, and no studies have yet explored how athletes’ parents understand such behaviours. This paper reports on a study that investigates athletes’ parents’ perspectives of appropriate coach-child athlete physical contact within youth swimming.

Parents constructed physical contact as necessary and legitimate in three specific contexts and drew on children’s rights principles to rationalize this. This paper discusses the significance of this and explores the benefits of adopting child-centred coaching practices.

Keywords: coach-athlete physical contact, touch in sport, safeguarding and child protection in sport, children’s rights, youth swimming

Introduction

Since the introduction of child protection regulations in British sport in the early 2000s following the creation in 2001 of the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU), British sport has placed itself at the vanguard of safeguarding children from harm in sport (Brackenridge, 2001; Lang & Hartill, 2015a): national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) are now obliged to embed safeguarding and child protection policies to receive state funding (CPSU, 2006, 2007); coaches with regular contact with children are required to have a criminal history check through the Disclosure and Barring Service, and to attend child safeguarding and

protection awareness training so they can recognize and manage suspicions of abuse and poor practice (Lang & Hartill, 2015a); and the government has established an independent body, the CPSU, to regulate and advise on safeguarding and child protection issues within sport (Lang & Hartill, 2015a).

However, as Brackenridge (2005, p. 200) notes, the introduction of safeguarding and child protection regulations into sport is:

... a delicate balancing act. ... Doing too little, adopting a permissive approach, leaves children open to abuse; yet doing too much, adopting a prescriptive approach, can give rise to accusations of interference and bureaucracy.

In recent years, scholars have identified concern and confusion among some coaches about safeguarding and child protection regulations. For example, studies have suggested that some coaches and other adults working *in loco parentis* within sport construct themselves as both potential abusers *of risk* to children and as potential victims *at risk* of being accused of abuse (Lang, 2010, 2015a; Piper, Garrett, & Taylor, 2013; Piper, Taylor, & Garrett, 2012). As a result, studies have suggested that some coaches are adopting 'defensive' practices, and some academics argue coach-(child) athlete physical contact is becoming universally constructed as problematic:

... touching a young sports person has been redefined as dubious and dangerous.

Coaches now operate within a framework of regulations and guidelines, which create anxiety and even fear, as well as confusion about proper practice. (Piper, 2012a, p. 2)

However, research on coach-(child) athlete physical contact in sport remains limited – there have been no quantitative studies to determine how widespread concerns are among adults in sport environments, and little is known about whether there are differences among the views of adults across the different socio-cultural contexts of specific sports; among coaches of different ages, ethnic backgrounds or qualification levels; or among coaches working with athletes of different ages, ability levels, sex, ethnic background or with disabilities. Equally, to date no studies have investigated children and young people’s views of appropriate physical contact or explored whether children and young people agree with the oft-made assertion (see for example, Hardman, Bailey, & Lord, 2015; Piper, 2015a; Piper et al., 2012, 2013) that safeguarding and child protection regulations are damaging children and their relationships with adults in sport. In addition, literature to date has focused on the behaviours and perspectives of coaches at the expense of other key stakeholders in the ‘athletic triangle’ (Smith, Smoll, & Smith, 1989), namely athletes and their parents.

The study reported here is significant in that it attempts to fill this gap by investigating, for the first time in a sport context, the perspectives of parents of (child) athletes regarding coach-child athlete physical contact. The study explored youth athletes’ parents’ perspectives of appropriate coach-child athlete physical contact within youth swimming. The views of athletes’ parents on this topic are important given that coaches feel they are most at risk of being accused of abuse from athletes’ parents (Lang, 2009) and, consequently, suggest they regulate their own behaviour in line with dominant notions of child safety more rigorously when being observed by parents compared to other adults (Lang, 2010). Youth swimming, in particular, was chosen as the locus of this inquiry for several reasons: swimming is the most popular participation sport (Sport England, 2015), and the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) has one of the longest established safeguarding and child protection strategies of any NGB. Moreover, physical contact between adults and

children and young people has a long tradition in swimming teaching and coaching, for safety purposes and to develop stroke techniques that comply with the laws of the sport.

The Politics of Adult-Child Physical Contact in Sport

As noted above, recent research has identified how some coaches, driven by a desire for self-protection, adopt worst-case scenario ‘defensive’ coaching practices such as the avoidance or restriction of physical contact with (child) athletes in the belief that this reduces their perceived risk of being accused of abuse (Lang, 2010, 2015a; Piper et al., 2012, 2013, 2015). As a consequence, it has been suggested that (youth) sport is increasingly becoming a ‘no-touch zone’ (Lang, 2010, 2015a; Öhman & Quennerstedt, 2015; Piper et al., 2012, 2013):

... ‘no touch’ is becoming ... the most practical way of minimising risk to the individual teacher [or coach], regardless of whether is it pedagogically appropriate or desirable. (McWilliam & Sachs, 2004, p. 21)

Piper and Stronach (2008), for example, identify concerns among primary and secondary school teachers about touching children, for example, to pick up a child who has fallen over or to apply a plaster to an injured child’s limb. Meanwhile in the first study to identify adults’ concerns in sport, Lang (2010, 2015a) found that swimming coaches from across the performance spectrum were concerned about being accused of abuse and felt under constant scrutiny from the panoptic and synoptic ‘gaze’ of numerous unnamed ‘Others’ (Foucault, 2003; Mathiesen, 1997). As a result, the coaches in the study conformed to what they considered ‘common-sense’ understandings of a ‘safe’ coach – by ensuring they were perpetually visible and limiting their use of physical contact with children in the belief that doing so minimized their potential for being accused of abuse. Studies in other sports have

since reported anxiety among coaches about coach-(child) athlete physical contact, and have identified coaches avoiding and/or restricting their contact with (child) athletes and avoiding other behaviours they consider ‘risky’, in some cases even expressing reluctance to touch a child to assist when their life was in danger (Piper et al., 2012, 2013). This is despite evidence that unfounded allegations of any kind, and particularly those relating to child sexual abuse, are extremely rare both in and beyond sport (Brackenridge, Bringer, & Bishopp, 2005; Children, Families and Schools Select Committee Inquiry, 2009; Lang, 2012).

Several academics argue that adults’ concerns about physical contact with children and other perceived ‘risky’ behaviours are caused by the balance of child protection regulations within sport shifting too far towards prescription and over regulation (see, for example, Hardman et al., 2015; Piper et al., 2013, 2015; Toftegaard Støckel, 2015), fuelling a ‘moral panic’ regarding the safety of children and (re)producing social anxiety about child abuse. Almost a decade ago, Hartill and Prescott (2007) found that some Child Protection Officers in British rugby league clubs were reluctant to raise the issue of child protection out of concern that doing so would create a moral panic and deter coaches and players. While there is no evidence of a drop in the number of coaches since the introduction of safeguarding and child protection into British sport in the early-to-mid 2000s, and there are some positive signs of increasing acceptance of safeguarding children within British sports organisations (see for example, CPSU, 2013; Hartill, Lang, & Ashley, 2014), some continue to argue that child protection is damaging sport. Piper and colleagues, for example, argue developments in safeguarding and child protection in sport are “intrusive” (Piper, 2015a, p. 12), “restrictive” (Piper et al., 2013, p. 27) and “prohibitive” (Piper et al., 2013, p. 586). Similarly, Hardman and colleagues (2015, p. 151) claim that:

... the first wave of child protection policy initiatives do not reflect a proportionate, targeted and enlightened understanding of relationships between sports coaching and child well-being. Instead they have cultivated an atmosphere of anxiety, fear mistrust, confusion and demoralization amongst coaches.

Frequently, the CPSU is criticized for creating and/or fuelling coaches' concerns. Piper (2015b, p. 178), for example, argues that the establishment of a specialist agency to oversee and advise on child protection within sport is unnecessary over-regulation on the basis that "data indicate that most people very seldom encounter abusive coaches and abused children"¹. Along with a handful of other critics of safeguarding and child protection regulations in sport, Piper and colleagues argue such measures are "blinkerered, simplistic and misguided" (Piper, 2015a, p. 1) and a "crude and prescriptive injunction" on coaches' practice (Piper, 2015a, p. 12) that is "sterilizing and depersonalizing the nurturing and educative [coaching] process" (Piper, 2015a, p. 8). The result, it is almost universally claimed, is that coaching is becoming "impoverished and dehumanized" (Piper, 2015a, p. 12), causing "serious collateral damage" (Piper, 2015a, p. 1) for adults and children in sport, namely rendering coaches unable to carry out their role effectively, with "negative implications for ... the development of healthy relationships between adults and children" (Piper et al. 2012, p. 342; see also, Hardman et al., 2015; Piper, 2007, 2015a, 2015b).

An Alternative Perspective

Despite the above criticisms, regulations introduced by the CPSU actually go beyond the supposed "narrow and selective focus" (Piper et al., 2013, p. 596) of child protection that is often claimed. Rather, in line with updated legislation and the introduction in the early 2000s of more preventative services for all children as signalled in the document Every Child

Matters (Chief Secretary to the Treasury, 2003) and its related legislation The Children Act 2004 (Department for Education and Skills, 2004), the CPSU aims to *safeguard* children and young people and promote their rights in and through sport. ‘Safeguarding’ is broader than ‘child protection’ and includes requirements to:

... prevent impairment of [children’s] health and development, and ensure they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully. (Department for Children, School and Families, 2010, p. 27)

Consequently, the CPSU’s strategy incorporates requirements that go well beyond a strictly protectionist approach, aiming for example to “create safer environments for children, where they can enjoy and get the very best from their involvement in sport” (CPSU, 2006, p. 3) and incorporating principles of children’s rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations Secretary General, 1989), which the United Kingdom (UK) ratified in 1991. For example, CPSU guidelines for sports organizations require that “managers and senior staff promote a culture that ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals” (CPSU, 2007, p. 17).

While it is acknowledged that there are limitations to the CPSU’s approach (not least a lack of robust prevalence and incidence data and of research to evaluate the effectiveness of the CPSU’s strategy; see, for example, Hartill & Lang, 2014; Hartill & O’Gorman, 2015), blaming the CPSU and the introduction of safeguarding and child protection regulations for coaches’ concerns misrepresents the issue and fails to acknowledge the impact of wider societal discourses, organizational change and the policy implementation process. For example, the current high media profile of sexual abuse in and beyond sport, which began in

2012 when claims surfaced against the recently deceased British TV presenter and charity fundraiser Jimmy Savile², have raised the profile of child abuse and particularly child sexual abuse – the Savile case, for example, has been credited with prompting a 9% rise in reports of sexual offences across the country (Harmes, 2013). This and a string of other well-known figures convicted of child and adult sexual offences in the UK since Savile – pop star Gary Glitter (real name Paul Gadd), celebrity publicist Max Clifford, artist and singer Rolf Harris, radio DJ Chris Denning, to name but a few (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2014, 2015a, 2015b; Evans, 2015) – have undoubtedly bolstered the profile of sexual offences, and particularly child sexual abuse, increasing public consciousness about the topic. Meanwhile, the high-profile coverage of current and historical cases of child (sexual) abuse in the media including, in some cases, articles written by academics in the popular press (see, for example, Piper, 2007, 2012b), serve to contribute to the (re)production of the ‘regime of truth’ that positions adults as risky to children. This has the potential to ratchet up coaches’ awareness of such concerns and, ironically, their perception of the need to adopt ‘defensive’ practices.

Equally, studies of organizational change and the policy implementation process in and beyond sport suggest the process of implementing new policies and embedding change in large-scale institutions such as NGBs is fraught with difficulty and can take considerable time to achieve. For example, it has long been recognized that individuals charged with implementing new policies are often sceptical and hostile to the introduction of new policies and may be unclear about or lack confidence in implementing them (Bloyce, Smith, Mead, & Morris, 2008; Lipsky, 1980; Pitchford, 2005). This is particularly the case when policies require significant change to established practice, and when those charged with implementation perceive that the policy introduces responsibilities they do not consider legitimate. This appears to be the case in sport; studies within sport have found that coaches are lacking in knowledge and confidence about safeguarding and child protection, and that

some coaches and other sport stakeholders are reluctant to accept that children's welfare is a legitimate part of their responsibility (Hartill & Lang, 2014; Pitchford, 2005), despite legislation that makes it clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, including those involved in sport (Department for Education and Skills, 2004).

It is equally well established that individuals charged with implementing new policies resist doing so when they are underpinned by changes to legislation or government agendas, over which those tasked with implementation have little control (Bloyce et al., 2008; Pitchford, 2005; Tummers, 2011). This was the case with the introduction of safeguarding and child protection regulations into sport which were, in part, introduced due to changes in the Children Act 2004 (Department for Education and Skills, 2004). These factors, coupled with the fact that coaches had limited input into the policymaking process, may go some way to explaining the hostility among some coaches to the still (relatively) new safeguarding and child protection agenda in sport, and may contribute to their misunderstandings about and concerns over coach-(child) athlete physical contact. Indeed, as Brackenridge (2005) suggested more than a decade ago, such challenges to traditional coaching practices and pro/prescriptions on coaching practices and freedoms are likely to have influenced coaches' views.

The social and historical context of sport is equally important in this regard. The introduction of safeguarding and child protection regulations into sport in the early 2000s represented a sea change for sport, which had previously been largely omitted from government legislation on children's welfare (Brackenridge, 2001; Lang & Hartill, 2015a). The change required for sport, then, was significant and engenders substantial cultural change from all stakeholders requiring, for example, that coaches (re)consider their behaviour and coaching practice in light of what is best for children, rather than for themselves. It is possible that some coaches are disgruntled and threatened by this challenge to their well-established

coaching practices as well as to their traditional autonomy, authority and power. Viewed in light of these understandings, then, the anxiety expressed by some coaches regarding physical contact with (child) athletes is perhaps a natural consequence of complex processes (Elias, 1986) involving coaches who are “seek[ing] to protect, maintain and advance their own individual and/or collective interests” (Bloyce et al., 2008, p. 377).

Öhman and Quennerstedt (2015, p. 13), meanwhile, offer another alternative explanation for coaches’ concerns about physical contact. They, like sociologists of childhood Kitzinger (1988) and James, Jenks and Prout (1998), argue that dominant constructions of children as vulnerable, results in children’s protection being privileged over their other rights and, as a consequence, protectionism and the management of risk come to dominate the thinking of those who work *in loco parentis*. Öhman and Quennerstedt (2015, p. 3) argue, therefore, that there is a “need for alternative perspectives on physical contact in order to achieve a more multifaceted discussion and understanding of ‘touch’ [and] ‘safety’” in sport. This paper goes some way to responding to this call by exploring, for the first time, how parents of child athletes construct appropriate and inappropriate coach-child athlete physical contact in swimming.

The Study

The study was underpinned by a poststructural epistemology that understands ‘touch’ and its meanings as discursively constructed, constantly shifting, not ‘natural’ but produced, and governed by particular rules, inclusions and exclusions, in and through the power-knowledge nexus (Foucault, 1972). The aim of the study was to explore how youth swimmers’ parents’ construct appropriate coach-child athlete physical contact within the context of competitive swimming. Given the exploratory nature of the project, a qualitative approach was used to produce a detailed understanding of athlete’s parents’ views on appropriate physical contact

and the reasons behind these to attempt to ‘see’ the issue through their eyes (Robson, 2011). Data was generated via in-depth interviews with parents of child swimmers at a single ASA-affiliated swimming club in the north of England. Access to the swimming club was negotiated by the first author, Thomas. As both a swimmer and swimming coach in the region, he was known to the club and to coaches and parents there prior to the research and so benefited from what McNeill (1988) calls an ‘insider identity’ within local swimming culture, which facilitated the process of gaining access to the club. Once the club chair and committee had agreed to allow access to parents at the club, Thomas distributed information sheets to 10 parents of youth athletes present at club training over a two-week period. Parents who wished to be involved in the study then contacted him to arrange an interview date. The study was approved by the authors’ departmental ethics committee and the participants and club were assured anonymity; pseudonyms are used throughout this paper.

In total, six interviews were conducted in a private meeting room at the swimming club. Participants were aged between 40 and 60 years old and two were male and four female. All participants had at least one child aged under 18 years old at the club, with three having two or more children there. Two of the participants had experience in child welfare beyond swimming – participant 1 (pseudonym Oliver) was a solicitor who had dealt with cases of child sexual abuse, and participant 3 (pseudonym Susan) worked in the police. In addition, participant 2 (pseudonym Rebecca) volunteered at the club as the welfare officer, though she had taken on this role despite having no background in the area. The other four participants had no career experience in the field of child welfare in or beyond sport.

With the consent of those involved, interviews were audio-recorded and lasted up to one and a half hours each. A semi-structured approach was adopted to allow flexibility in the questions asked and to enable the researchers to ‘dig deeper’ into participants’ responses (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Interview questions covered parents’ understandings and opinions of

the coach's role in safeguarding and protecting children, the contexts in which coaches might use physical contact with child swimmers and the thought processes they used to determine the in/appropriateness of this.

Interviews were transcribed as early as possible after taking place and were subject to inductive analysis to identify the dominant themes inherent in them (Goertz & LeCompte, 1993). This involved reading and re-reading the text and unpacking relevant patterns, themes, and interrelationships (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Simultaneously, segments of text were coded into emergent themes, which were repeatedly examined for similarities, differences and patterns. To help explain the themes arising, analytical memos were also used to note “preliminary and tentative connections to various theoretical concepts” (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 18). Through this process, themes became increasingly refined, finally resulting in those discussed below.

Coaches' Responsibilities for Safeguarding Children

While coaches have traditionally been positioned in both coach education courses and academic literature as technical experts whose role is limited to the transference of skills, tactics and knowledge with the aim of developing athletes' potential (Chan & Mallett, 2011), athletes' parents went beyond such rationalistic constructions. Instead, they identified coaches' *primary* responsibility as ensuring their child(ren)'s welfare:

Amy: [Coaches] need to be an emotional support for the child ... so not necessarily just the technical side but for the well-being of the child, the welfare of the child, and be able to relate to the child on a one-to-one basis for the child to feel very comfortable with the coach, so they would open up you know if there were any

problems ... So not necessarily just the technical side but [also] for the well-being of the child.

Oliver: Safety is probably the most important thing of the lot, to protect the child. ...

Coaches [should have a] paternalistic relationship with their athletes, like a teacher or father – they are [working] *in loco parentis*. They are taking the role of the parent in the care of the child in swimming, and they have supervision of the child, to get the most out of the child, to get the child to respond and trust them and for that child to feel safe in their care. ... Child protection is essential.

John: Safety, that's absolutely key, paramount. The coach has got to make sure that they're safe. ... Everything. Welfare is absolute key. For instance, if a child turns up regular with bruises ... rashes or something ... and obviously emotionally as well, if they feel the kid's not very good in their self. ... The coach is like a teacher, really ... they're responsible for their whole welfare.

The Children Act 2004 (Department for Education and Skills, 2004) makes clear that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard and protect children, including coaches and others in sports organizations. Indeed, as key individuals “with clear, recognized legal, professional-ethical and cultural responsibility for the safety, health, development and well-being of the child” (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, para. 33), coaches are legally as well as morally responsible for safeguarding children from harm and promoting their physical and mental well-being. Parents recognized this and cited coaches as agents responsible for safeguarding and protecting the children with whom they work, often comparing the coaches' role to that of a teacher. Parents also recognized that sport, because of its number of youth

participants and perhaps because it adopted child welfare regulations only (relatively) recently compared to other child-related settings, may be attractive to those intent on gaining access to children and young people for abuse. Consequently, parents welcomed the introduction of safeguarding and child protection regulations into sport:

Oliver: A lot of those who want to abuse children will often do careers or jobs which enable them to come into contact with children ... so an abuser may want to be a coach so they can gain access to children. ... I think it needs to be regulated in some way, which it is. ... I think regulations definitely need to be there because of cases [of abuse] we have had in the past that have been well documented. ... There does need to be something in place.

Deconstructing Physical Contact

Recognition of the importance of safeguarding and child protection and of the coach's role in this underpinned parents' constructions of appropriate physical contact with children. Parents acknowledged there are different forms of physical contact and noted that understandings of its appropriateness are, therefore, contextually specific:

Oliver: There are circumstances one can envisage where one thing might be entirely appropriate but others where it would not. ... If a coach lifts a girl out of a swimming pool, putting his hands under her arms, possibly touching the breast area ... it may be an entirely appropriate action. ... It all depends on the circumstances. ... If it is necessary for some particular reason that they do, then they should. ... I think people can distinguish between what is abuse and what is appropriate in the circumstances.

Susan: It's *how* you touch them and *why*. So if you were dragging Sarah out, say she was diving in and she whacked her head. ... I'd like to think they'd pull her out in any capacity and if it was touching on the chest while someone was pulling her out, that's fine. ... You've got to look at the circumstances as to where and why they touch them.

Physical contact, or touch as it is more commonly referred to by most academics and the parents in this study, has a multiplicity of functions (Edwards, 1981; Field, 2003). Edwards (1981) identified a typology of nine types of contact used in interpersonal situations, which could include coaching environments: 1) information pick-up touch, 2) movement facilitation touch, 3) prompting, 4) aggressive touch, 5) nurturing touch, 6) celebratory touch, 7) sexual touch, 8) cathartic touch, and 9) ludic (playful) touch, such as that used when playing games. In particular, parents identified three circumstances in which they deemed coach-child athlete physical contact to be legitimate. These broadly aligned with Edwards' (1981) information pick-up touch, movement facilitation touch, nurturing touch, and celebratory touch: The three circumstances deemed legitimate were when physical contact was used: 1) to prevent, minimize or treat physical harm to a child, 2) to teach a child a sport-specific technique or skill, and 3) for pastoral care or moral support purposes. In terms of preventing, minimizing or treating physical harm to a child, parents regarded this as a central part of a coaches' responsibilities and deemed coach-child athlete physical contact in such circumstances necessary if coaches are to effectively meet this responsibility and safeguard children:

Susan: [If a child has fallen over on poolside], I'd put that under welfare because she's fallen, so checking she's alright, helping her back up is fine. ... It might be that she fell and she needs first aid. ... To lift Sarah up and get her back on her feet, ensure

she's OK, I see nothing wrong with that. ... Or it may be that Sarah has injured herself. ... I think that's part of the coach's role.

Natalie: If you've literally seen your child fall over, you would think, 'That's a good Samaritan', whether it be your coach or whether it be somebody else who might be an adult, poolside attendant etc. It boils down to health and safety.

Secondly, parents identified physical contact as a useful and effective pedagogic tool to teach or develop the specific skills of swimming, such as stroke technique and, therefore, saw this function of physical contact as a necessary and legitimate part of coaching practice:

Rebecca: It's part of their job ... in particular for teaching them to swim – so you can position the arms, the head, the legs where they should be, and the waist – sometimes you need to hold them in the water. ... For actual teaching purposes I think that would be acceptable.

John: If you're teaching a kid to dive, if you're teaching someone arm rotation or a certain stroke technique, I think there has to be a bit of touch with it. ... [Or] with kick technique ... it's not easy to be able to tell someone what position their leg needs to be in. I think to keep saying, 'Turn your leg out,' 'Turn your leg out', well what does, 'Turn your leg out' mean? Does it mean bend your knee? Does it mean twist your knee? Unless you can physically put it in that position, you can't see what they mean.

Amy: If someone's not getting right butterfly arms and can't feel the pull, sometimes you need to show them, you know, to physically feel the resistance against them. I think [physical contact] is essential then. ... I think [coaches] should have the freedom

to be able to do that. ... When athletes need technical help and they can't feel it themselves, touch is acceptable.

Finally, parents also noted that physical contact can function as a powerful form of non-verbal communication and is therefore useful in developing positive, caring social and personal relationships (Field, 2003). To this end, they constructed physical contact as appropriate if the intention was to provide psychological or moral support for a child:

Natalie: It [contact] is fine in support or recognition of what [a child] has achieved or in sympathy, you know, if they're upset over something, like a 'Well done', a congratulatory hug. ... Either it's more of a reassurance – 'Yeah you've done good' – or 'Come on let's go and have a talk about it. Let's see where we went wrong. Let's see what we can improve on', that kind of thing. ... If you're consoling a child because they're so upset, it's sympathy for the child, and I think sometimes a hug just gives them that bit of understanding that the coach understands what they're going through.

Susan: It wouldn't bother me [on seeing a coach hug a child because they were upset] ... because I'd like to think it was someone looking after her welfare, saying to her, 'It's alright it doesn't matter that you lose, it's taking part'. ... I'd just be thinking, 'That's someone showing an interest in Sarah, trying to say, 'It doesn't matter [that you lost]', so her confidence isn't dented. ... I think you do it naturally. I think it's just a human reaction.

Much of the previous research in sport has failed to differentiate between the different functions and forms of physical contact (i.e.: Hardman et al., 2015; Piper, 2015a; Piper et al., 2012, 2013, 2015; Toftegaard Støckel, 2015; see Lang, 2015a for more on this point), although some researchers have begun to identify different uses of physical contact in physical activity settings. Lang (2015a) and Öhman and Grundberg-Sandell (2015), for example, note that physical contact is an effective pedagogic tool when teaching or developing sport-specific skills and can be used for pastoral care purposes to, for example, congratulate or commiserate with a child who has performed well/badly. Meanwhile, Öhman and Grundberg-Sandell (2015) also describe Physical Education teachers using physical contact to prevent injury when pupils are performing potentially dangerous moves, for example, in gymnastics. The parents in this study similarly recognized that such contact was useful and legitimate primarily when it was used for one of the three functions identified above: 1) to prevent, minimize or treat physical harm, 2) to teach a sport-specific technique or skill, or 3) to demonstrate caring and/or moral support.

Children's Rights, Physical Contact and Child-Centred Practice

In particular, parents drew on children's rights principles in constructing legitimate forms of coach-child athlete physical contact, in line with the current safeguarding agenda and the embedding of the UNCRC (United Nations Secretary General, 1989) within UK child welfare legislation and practice. The guiding principle of the 'best interests of the child' (United Nations Secretary General, 1989) was used as a benchmark by parents for determining whether coach-child athlete physical contact was appropriate in any given context:

Susan: The circumstances have to dictate how you define someone's behaviour. It's the circumstances. ... I'd like to think there that something's happening for the sake of

my child, for what's best for her, so I think there's quite a lot of examples where it's ok for a coach to [touch] ... [if] it was reasonable and helped her, it's fine.

Rebecca: When they're being taught right as little ones ... you know, the actual showing the strokes and everything in the water, I wouldn't have a problem with that. Obviously older ones, the coaches don't really need to be in the water with them, if they were that would be a bit odd. ... It shouldn't happen really [as] there's no reason for it, there's no benefit to the child.

The principle of the best interests of the child, which endeavours to rebalance the low priority traditionally afforded to children's interests compared with adults, is one of four guiding principles³ in the UNCRC (United Nations Secretary General, 1989) and has been included within UK child welfare legislation and procedures since the government ratified the UNCRC in December 1991. However, sport has been slow to embed this and other elements of children's rights legislation into its policies and procedures (David, 2005), although in recent years some attempts have been made to redress this. As a result, sports organizations in the UK and elsewhere have begun to shift to what Gilbert, Parton and Skivenes (2011) call a 'child-focused orientation' to children's welfare that includes foregrounding children's rights, including the central principle of the best interests of the child (see Lang, 2015b, and Lang & Hartill, 2015b for more on this). Indeed, despite criticisms of the CPSU and its role in engineering so-called 'no touch' policies and practices in sport (i.e.: Hardman et al., 2015; Piper, 2015a; Piper et al., 2012, 2013), the CPSU does not – and never has – prohibited coaches or other adults from engaging in physical contact with child athletes. Rather, guidelines from the CPSU have consistently recognized that physical contact between coaches and child athletes is sometimes necessary and legitimate within sports coaching

practice (see for example, CPSU, 2012, 2015). In its briefing paper *Physical Contact and Young People in Sport* (CPSU, 2015, p. 1), for example, which was written by the CPSU in response to coaches' questions about physical contact with athletes, the CPSU notes that:

... there may be a number of circumstances in a sports context when it is appropriate for an adult to touch (have direct physical contact with) a child ... [such as] when necessary to:

- Develop sports skills or techniques
- Prevent an injury or accident from occurring
- Meet the requirements of the sport
- Comfort a distressed child or to celebrate their success

Similarly in swimming, the ASA child protection policy *Wavepower: 2012-2015* (ASA, 2012, p. 116) notes that "reasonable and appropriate" physical contact is acceptable when working with youth athletes, and provides guidelines for coaches on, for example, how to use contact appropriately to teach young swimmers' correct stroke technique and prevent accidents. Rather than a wholesale prohibition on coach-child athlete physical contact in sport, then, CPSU and ASA guidelines have as their underlying principle the instrumental right that all actions concerning children should take full account of children's best interests (United Nations Secretary General, 1989). For example:

Physical contact should take place in the interests of and for the benefit of the child, rather than the adult involved. (CPSU, 2015, p. 1)

Any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern. (ASA, 2012, p. 118)

Indeed, parents not only regarded physical contact with athletes as appropriate provided it was in the child's best interests, they also constructed a failure to use such contact in such circumstances – whether to teach sport-specific skills, prevent or manage injury or harm or for pastoral care purposes – as neglectful and a dereliction of a coach's responsibilities both as a coach and an agent for safeguarding children's welfare:

Susan: If Sarah was unconscious and needed CPR, I'd probably sue someone if they did nothing and Sarah suffered, if they didn't help her ... because I'd think it left Sarah dead and/or brain damaged.

Amy: I think it would be absolutely ridiculous to leave the child by themselves if they fell over. ... I think it's paramount that the coach goes and helps the child. It's part of their job.

John: I'd love to know how you could coach a kid without touching. ... I think it could impair them definitely if they [coaches] don't touch and they wouldn't be doing their job. ... I don't think they've got any option to *not* touch the children.

Problematizing the Moral Panic Around Physical Contact

Physical contact, then, can be both a useful and effective pedagogic tool for coaches, and it may also be required to prevent and manage physical harm and to facilitate positive professional relationships with (child) athletes (Lang, 2015a, 2015b). Some form of physical

contact is therefore both likely and legitimate if coaches are operating in the child's best interests. The parents in this study acknowledged this, and while they were aware of the moral panic around adult-child physical interactions and of coaches' understandings of themselves as 'risky' to children, they were also highly critical of this:

Oliver: I don't think it's appropriate for a coach or anyone else's first reaction to be, 'This child is in trouble - what effect is it going to have on *me*?' Their first reaction should be about the child, the safety of the child. The child should come first. ... It becomes a nonsense if the coach won't intervene because they are scared of what would happen to *them*.

Susan: If Sarah banged her head on the pool and she was unconscious and [needed] CPR, I'd dread to think that someone says, 'I can't do that because someone will think that I'm groping her or fondling her.' ... You have to look at the examples we know about and put in to perspective: How many kids are actually coached whether it was tennis, rugby, whatever? And how many coaches are accused? ... There's the risk of it actually happening and there's the *fear* of a risk, and the two are different things. [Coaches'] fear of it happening is far greater than it actually happening. But if you went 'round life with all this fear – say that you were going to get knocked over by a bus, you'd never cross the road, would you? People need to be realistic about it.

Parents, then, problematized the moral panic around coach-child athlete physical contact and were critical of coaches who put their own interests ahead of the interests of athletes'. Rather, the parents adopted a measured view on the likelihood of coaches being accused of abuse when carrying out their duties appropriately. In this way, these parents'

views reflect the reality of unfounded allegations of child abuse: such allegations remain rare (Children, Families and Schools Select Committee Inquiry, 2009; Lang, 2012) – one study of referrals to the Football Association over a 40-month period found that of 132 allegations, only one, for physical abuse, was unfounded (Brackenridge et al., 2005), an incidence rate of 0.02%.

It is also important to note that no allegation of child abuse can be considered unfounded until it has been investigated and proven as such; after all, the response of those accused of abuse is often (false) denial (Mildred, 2003). Equally importantly, although unfounded allegations are assumed to be made by individuals with malicious intent, they may occur for a variety of reasons, including misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Meanwhile, unproven cases of child abuse are likely to be far more common given the difficulties in investigating child abuse and securing evidence that reaches the threshold for pursuing a criminal case (Jütte, Bentley, Miller, & Jetha, 2013). In other words, while we recognize that physical contact with children can be used to physically abuse children and to desensitize them to sexual abuse as part of the grooming process (McAlinden, 2006; Roberts & Vanstone, 2014), we also think it is important to draw attention to the reality that far more children are likely to be abused and either not report this or see their perpetrator released without a conviction than adults are to experience an unfounded allegation of child abuse.

The focus on unfounded allegations, then, in coaches' minds, in the media and in much of the research published on coach-(child) athlete physical contact to date, misrepresents the reality of child abuse and, in so doing, not only has the potential to raise an element of doubt about all allegations but also diverts attention away from the more prevalent issues of substantiated and non-reported cases of child abuse. In problematizing the 'moral panic' around coach-child athlete physical contact and critiquing coaches' belief that physical contact is risky *for them* and therefore to be avoided, the parents in this study adopted a child-

centred view of coaching practice that focused on coaches' duty of care to child athletes. This sits in stark contrast to much of the previous literature in this area, which has focused on coaches and has tended to offer a one-dimensional *adult-centric* and negative view of coach-(child) athlete physical contact (see for example, Hardman et al., 2015; Piper et al., 2012, 2013).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has reported, for the first time in a sport context, child athletes' parents' understandings of appropriate coach-child athlete physical contact within youth swimming. Parents' identified coaches' primary responsibility as ensuring their child(ren)'s welfare and welcomed the introduction of safeguarding and child protection regulations into sport. They acknowledged the different forms and uses of physical contact and recognized that understandings of in/appropriateness are contextually specific, identifying three circumstances in which they deemed this legitimate: 1) when physical contact was used to prevent, minimize or treat physical harm to a child, 2) when it was used to teach a child a sport-specific technique or skill, and 3) when it was used for pastoral care or moral support purposes. In determining appropriateness, parents drew on children's rights principles, constructing coach-child athlete touch as appropriate provided it was in the child's best interests, and identifying a failure to use physical contact in the three circumstances cited above as neglectful and a dereliction of coaches' professional, and sometimes legal, responsibilities. Parents were aware of the 'moral panic' around adult (coach)-child athlete touch but were critical of coaches who avoided or restricted their use of physical contact in order to protect themselves at the expense of the impact on the children with whom they worked, considering this a dereliction of coaches' professional and moral duties.

While the exploratory nature of the study and the small sample size mean any attempt to generalize these findings to sport or swimming as a whole must be treated with caution, the findings are, nevertheless, instructive. The study offers a first insight into athletes' parents' perspectives of in/appropriate coach-child athlete physical contact, providing a useful starting point for future studies in this area and an important contrast to much of the (largely negative) published research to date that has focused on coaches' perspectives of physical contact with children and young people. Concerns about coach-(child) athlete physical contact, whether presented in research literature, the media or discussions with coaches, are commonly predicated on the impact of safeguarding and child protection regulations on *adults* rather than on *children*. Such concerns fail to acknowledge that safeguarding and child protection regulations were introduced to protect children, *not* adults, following a series of high-profile cases of coaches sexually abusing children (see, Lang, 2015b and Lang & Hartill, 2015a). Simplistic, under-theorized and adult-centred accounts of coaches' concerns in the research literature and the media have the potential to (re)produce damaging negative constructions of coach-(child) athlete physical contact, in turn exacerbating the moral panic about unfounded allegations of child (sexual) abuse. As such, it is crucial that future research focuses on developing nuanced and theoretically underpinned analyses of the different dimensions of physical contact and the varying contexts in which it is used in sport (see, for example, Lang, 2015a).

In addition, problematization the term 'touch' itself – the term almost exclusively used in academic literature on this topic to date – is necessary in recognition of the myriad forms of physical contact, intentions behind such contact and contexts in which such behaviours may take place. Alongside this, studies that explore and theorize adults' (coaches, parents etc.) practices and perspectives on adult-child athlete physical contact across different socio-culture sporting contexts are required to begin to offer explanations and concrete suggestions

for how best to ensure children and young people experience sport safely while adults are confident in carrying out their professional duties. Central to this new research agenda is the inclusion of children and young people's views in research on coach-child athlete physical contact, and safeguarding and child protection regulations in sport more broadly. As such, research that investigates the perspectives of child athletes regarding physical contact in sport is crucial to understand their feelings, to unpick whether or not they have similar concerns to (some) coaches, and to understand how they construct in/appropriate physical contact and their preferred forms of physical contact during instruction.

The parents in this study adopted a child-centred view of coaching practice that focused on coaches' duty of care to child athletes and was underpinned by children's rights principles, specifically the tenet of 'the best interests of the child' (United Nations Secretary General, 1989). While there are well-reasoned criticisms of the 'best interest' principle (see Freeman, 2007), not least that it is often adults rather than children who are charged with determining what constitutes children's 'best interests', such an approach nevertheless offers the potential to challenge concerns about the introduction of safeguarding and child protection regulations, including those relating to coach-child athlete physical contact. It is therefore important that coaches are made aware of the findings of this study and, as has previously been suggested (see, Lang, 2015a), are encouraged in coach education courses to problematize the moral panic around coach-(child) athlete physical contact. Equally, it is vital to educate coaches and other adults in sport on the principles of children's rights and the implications of child-centred thinking for sports practice.

Embedding the principle of the best interests of the child into practice has the potential to both put children and their welfare at the heart of sporting practice and to help adults in sport better understand and be confident in their work with children and young people. Considering coach-child athlete physical contact through this child-centred lens, for example,

would encourage coaches to reflect on why such contact is being used and in whose benefit, who is making the decision on this, how the behaviour might affect the child(ren) involved, whether the child (and their parent(s)) understand why physical contact is being used, and whether they have consented to its use. Using this approach leads to an understanding that physical contact between adults and children is both acceptable and, indeed, sometimes necessary if it has a beneficial impact on the child (rather than the coach) and if the child has been an active participant in the decision. Such considerations may challenge some traditional coaching practices, but the best coaches are likely to be willing to reflect on their practice and change what they do if it is in the best interests of the children and young people for whom they dedicate so much of their time.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. While most coaches no doubt have positive intentions and most children in sport have positive experiences, data indicates the level of harm experienced by children in sport is significant. A 2011 retrospective survey of more than 6,000 young people's experiences of sport in the UK when they were children, for example, found that 75%

reported experiencing emotional harm, 29% sexual harassment, 24% physical harm and 3% sexual harm (Alexander, Stafford, & Lewis, 2011).

2. Sir Jimmy Savile was a British TV presenter, charity fundraiser and celebrity, and is now considered “one of the UK’s most prolific known sexual predators” (Gray & Watt, 2013, p. 24). In 2012, the police launched an investigation into historical abuse by the star following the broadcast of a programme alleging sexual abuse and rape by Savile in the 1970s. Savile is suspected of offences against some 450 children and adults between 1955 and 2009. He died in 2011 so cannot be prosecuted.
3. The other guiding principles in the UNCRC are: 1) non-discrimination, 2) participation, and 3) survival and development.

References

- Alexander, K., Stafford, A., & Lewis, R. (2011). *The experiences of children participating in organized sport in the UK*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/experiences-children-participating-organised-sport-uk-summary-report.pdf>
- Amateur Swimming Association (2012, September). *Wavepower 2012-2015: ASA child protection in swimming- procedures and guidelines*. Retrieved from
http://www.carnforthotters.co.uk/PDF%20uploads/Section_4%20Guide%20for%20Teachers%20and%20Helpers.pdf
- Bloyce, D., Smith, A., Mead, R., & Morris, J. (2008). ‘Playing the Game (Plan)’: A figurational analysis of organizational change in sports development in England. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 8, 359-378.

- Brackenridge, C. H. (2001). *Spoilsports: Understanding and preventing sexual exploitation in sport*. London: Routledge.
- Brackenridge, C. H. (2005). Dream makers or dream breakers? In C. H. Brackenridge, A. Pitchford, K. Russell, & G. Nutt (Eds.), *Child welfare in football: An exploration of children's welfare in the modern game* (pp. 197-206). London: Routledge.
- Brackenridge, C. H., Bringer, J., & Bishopp, D. (2005). Managing cases of abuse in sport. *Child Abuse Review*, 14(4), 259-274.
- British Broadcasting Corporation (2014, May). *Max Clifford jailed for eight years for sex assaults*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27259318>
- British Broadcasting Corporation (2015a, February). *Gary Glitter jailed for 16 years*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31657929>
- British Broadcasting Corporation (2015b, December). *Ex-DJ Chris Denning jailed for sex abuse*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30504632>
- Chan, J. T., & Mallett, C. J. (2011). The value of emotional intelligence for high performance coaching. *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, 6(3), 315-333.
- Chief Secretary to the Treasury (2003) *Every child matters*. London: Chief Secretary to the Treasury.
- Child Protection in Sport Unit (2006). *Standards for safeguarding and protecting children in sport* (1st ed.). Leicester: Child Protection in Sport Unit.
- Child Protection in Sport Unit (2007). *Standards for safeguarding and protecting children in sport* (2nd ed.). Leicester: Child Protection in Sport Unit.
- Child Protection in Sport Unit (2012). *Physical contact and young people in sport*. Retrieved from http://www.wru.co.uk/downloads/PhysicalContact_wdf60646.pdf

- Child Protection in Sport Unit (2013). *Sports Safeguarding Children Initiative: Mid-project progress report*. Leicester: Child Protection in Sport Unit. Retrieved from: file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/ssci-midterm-report-2013%20(1).pdf
- Child Protection in Sport Unit (2015). *Physical contact and young people in sport*. Retrieved from <https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2013/physical-contact-and-young-people-in-sport/>
- Children, Families and Schools Select Committee Inquiry (2009). *Allegations against school staff*. London: The Stationary Office.
- Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011). *Convention on the rights of the child: General comment no. 13*. Retrieved from http://www.unicefirc.org/portfolios/general_comments/CRC.C.GC.13_en.doc.html
- David, P. (2005). *Human rights in youth sport: A critical review of children's rights in competitive sports*. London: Routledge.
- Department for Children, School and Families (2010). *Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*. London: Department for Children, School and Families.
- Department for Education and Skills (2004). *The Children Act 2004*. London: Department for Education and Skills.
- Edwards, D. J. A. (1981). The role of touch in interpersonal relations: Implications for psychotherapy. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 11, 27-29.
- Elias, N. (1987). *Involvement and detachment*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Evans, M. (2014, June). *Rolf Harris guilty of child sex abuse*. Retrieved from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/10915195/Rolf-Harris-guilty-of-child-sex-abuse.html>
- Field, T. (2003). *Touch*. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.

- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archeology of knowledge*. London: Tavistock.
- Foucault, M. (2003). *The birth of the clinic*. London: Routledge.
- Freeman, M. (2007). Article 3: The best interests of the child. In A. J. Vande Lanotte, E. Verhellen, F. Ang, E. Beghmans, & M. Verheyde (Eds.), *A commentary on the United Nations convention on the rights of the child* (pp. 25-63). Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Gilbert, N., Parton, N., & Skivenes, M. (2011). *Child protection systems: International trends and orientations*. New York: Open University Press.
- Goertz, J., & LeCompte, M. (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. New York: Academic Press.
- Gray, D., & Watt, P. (2013). *Giving victims a voice: Joint report into sexual allegations made against Jimmy Savile*. London: Metropolitan Police Service/NSPCC. Retrieved from http://www.nspcc.org.uk/news-and-views/our-news/child-protection-news/13-01-11-yewtree-report/yewtree-report-pdf_wdf93652.pdf.
- Gratton, C., & Jones I. (2010). *Research methods for sports studies*. Routledge: Oxon.
- Hardman, A., Bailey, J., & Lord, R. (2015). Care and touch in trampoline gymnastics: Reflections and analysis from the UK. In H. Piper (Ed.), *Touch in sports coaching and physical education: Fear, risk and moral panic* (pp. 151-166). London: Routledge.
- Harmes, L. (2013, July 1). Jimmy Savile: Recorded sex crimes up 9% since scandal. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23001428>
- Hartill, M., & Prescott, P. (2007). Serious business or ‘any other business’? Safeguarding and child protection policy in British rugby league. *Child Abuse Review, 16*, 237-251.
- Hartill, M., & Lang, M. (2014). “I know people think I’m a complete pain in the neck”: An examination of the introduction of child protection and safeguarding in British sport

- from the perspective of national governing body Safeguarding Lead Officers. *Social Sciences*, 3, 1-22. Retrieved from <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/3/4/606>
- Hartill, M., Lang, M., & Ashley, N. (2014). *Safeguarding and child protection in Rugby League: A research evaluation*. Ormskirk: Edge Hill University Press.
- Hartill, M., & O’Gorman, J. (2015). Evaluation in safeguarding and child protection in sport. In M. Lang, & M. Hartill (Eds.), *Safeguarding, child protection and abuse in sport: International perspectives in research, policy and practice* (pp. 181-191). London: Routledge.
- James, A., Jenks, C., & Prout, A. (1998). *Theorizing childhood*. Polity Press: Cambridge.
- Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2004). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Jütte, S., Bentley, H., Miller, P., & Jetha, N. (2013). *How safe are our children?* London: NSPCC.
- Kitzinger, J. (1988). Defending innocence: Ideologies of childhood. *Feminist Review*, 28, 77-88.
- Lang, M. (2009). *Swimming in the Panopticon: An ethnographic study of good practice and child protection in competitive youth swimming*. Unpublished PhD thesis: Leeds Metropolitan University.
- Lang, M. (2010). Surveillance and conformity in competitive youth swimming. *Sport, Education and Society*, 15, 19-37.
- Lang, M. (2012). *The extent of coaches’ concern about being accused of abuse: A quantitative study*. Presented at the International Convention on Science, Education and Medicine in Sport pre-Olympic Congress, Glasgow, Scotland, 22nd July 2012.
- Lang, M. (2015a). Touchy subject: A Foucauldian analysis of coaches’ perceptions of adult-child touch in youth swimming. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 32(1), 4-21.

- Lang, M. (2015b). *Adult-child touch in sport: Challenging coach anxiety through a children's rights approach*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzC7RCVxwE&feature=youtu.be>
- Lang, M., & Hartill, M. (2015a). Safeguarding and child protection in sport in England. In M. Lang, & M. Hartill (Eds.), *Safeguarding, child protection and abuse in sport: International perspectives in research, policy and practice* (pp. 13-22). London: Routledge.
- Lang, M., & Hartill, M. (2015b). What is safeguarding in sport? In M. Lang, & M. Hartill (Eds.), *Safeguarding, child protection and abuse in sport: International perspectives in research, policy and practice* (pp. 13-22). London: Routledge.
- Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*. London: Russell Sage.
- Mathiesen, T. (1997). The viewer society: Michel Foucault's 'Panopticon' revisited. *Theoretical Criminology, 1*, 215-234.
- McAlinden, A.-M. (2006). 'Setting 'em up': Personal, familial and institutional grooming in the sexual abuse of children. *Social and Legal Studies, 15*, 339-362.
- McNeill, P. (1988). *Doing social research*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- McWilliam, E., & Sachs, J. (2004). Towards the victimless school: Professionalism and probity in teaching. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 3*, 17-30.
- Mildred, J. (2003). Claims-makers in the child sexual abuse 'wars': Who are they and what do they want? *Social Work, 48*(4), 492-504.
- Öhman, M., & Grundberg-Sandell, C. (2015). The pedagogical consequences of 'no touching' in physical education. In H. Piper, (Ed.), *Touch in sports coaching and physical education: Fear, risk and moral panic* (pp. 70-84). London: Routledge.

- Öhman, M., & Quennerstedt, A. (2015). Questioning the no-touch discourse in physical education from a children's rights perspective. *Sport, Education and Society*. doi: 10.1080/13573322.2015.1030384
- Pitchford, A. (2005). Coaches. In C. Brackenridge, A. Pitchford, K. Russell, & G. Nutt (Eds.) *Child welfare in football: An exploration of children's welfare in the modern game* (pp. 124-134). London: Routledge.
- Piper, H. (2007). The case against no-touch policies: A Manifesto Club think piece. *The Manifesto Club*. Retrieved from <http://www.manifestoclub.com/files/Heather%20Piper.pdf>
- Piper, H. (2012a). *Hands-off sports coaching: The politics of touch ESRC end of award report, RES-000-22-4156*. Swindon: ESRC. Retrieved from <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-000-22-4156/outputs/Read/efb4b74d-0b38-4cce-8c77-2c24f489d036>
- Piper, H. (2012b, July 3). Why treat coaches as potential paedophiles? *Spiked online*. Retrieved from <http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/12579#.VRKX4PysU7k>
- Piper, H. (2015a). Child protection in sports coaching and physical education. In H. Piper (Ed.), *Touch in sports coaching and physical education: Fear, risk and moral panic* (pp. 1-13). London: Routledge.
- Piper, H. (2015b). Fear, risk and child protection in sport: Critique and resistance. In H. Piper (Ed.), *Touch in sports coaching and physical education: Fear, risk and moral panic* (pp. 187-183). London: Routledge.
- Piper, H., Garratt, D., & Taylor, B. (2013). Child abuse, child protection and defensive 'touch' in PE teaching and sports coaching. *Sport, Education and Society*, 18, 583-598.
- Piper, H., Taylor, B., & Garrett, D. (2012). Sports coaching in a risk society: No touch! No trust! *Sport, Education and Society*, 17, 1-15.

- Piper, H., Taylor, D., & Garrett, D. (2015). Hands off PE teaching and sports coaching in the UK. In H. Piper (Ed.), *Touch in sports coaching and physical education: Fear, risk and moral panic* (pp. 14-34). London: Routledge.
- Piper, H., & Stronach, I. (2008). *Don't touch! The educational story of a panic*. London: Routledge.
- Roberts, S., & Vanstone, M. (2014). A child sexual abuse research project: A brief endnote. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 23*, 745-754.
- Robson, C. (2011). *Real world research*. London: Sage.
- Smith, R. E., Smoll, F. L., & Smith, N. J. (1989). *Parents' complete guide to youth sports*. Virginia: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.
- Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product*. London: Routledge.
- Sport England (2015). *Active people survey*. Retrieved from <http://www.sportengland.org/research/who-plays-sport/by-sport/>
- Toftegaard Støckel, J. (2015). Exploring the appropriateness of contemporary child protection measures in Danish sport. In H. Piper (Ed.), *Touch in sports coaching and physical education: Fear, risk and moral panic* (pp. 118-134). London: Routledge.
- Tummers, L. (2011). Explaining the willingness of public professionals to implement new policies: A policy alienation framework. *International Review of Administrative Sciences, 77*, 555-581.
- United Nations Secretary General (1989). *Convention on the rights of the child*. Retrieved from www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b38f0.html.