



PARENT NIL SAFETY GUIDE

Protecting Your Child. Preparing for Opportunity
A Resource for Parents of High School Athletes
Navigating Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL)

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Dear Parents,

As your Athletic Director at [Your School Name], my utmost priority is the well-being and holistic development of every student-athlete. The world of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) has brought exciting new opportunities to high school sports, but also new complexities. You, as parents, are the most critical members of your child's support team.

This guide is designed to empower you with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate NIL safely and strategically. It's not just a list of dos and don'ts; it's a comprehensive resource to help you protect your child's future, ask the right questions, and become an informed advocate in this evolving landscape. We are here to support you and your family every step of the way.

Sincerely,
[Your Athletic Director's Name]
Athletic Director
[Your School Name]





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WHY NIL MATTERS TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

The landscape of student-athlete opportunities has fundamentally shifted. Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) legislation allows student-athletes to earn compensation for their personal brand, endorsements, appearances, and more. What began in college has rapidly extended to high school athletics in many states, including [mention if your state has active high school NIL laws, e.g., 'our state'].

As a parent, your role is more critical than ever. Whether your child is already being contacted about potential brand deals, is actively building their online reputation, or is simply dreaming of playing in college, NIL affects your family now. This guide will help you understand the opportunities, identify potential risks, and feel confident in helping your child make informed decisions that align with their values and long-term goals.





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COMMON NIL RISKS EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

The excitement around NIL can sometimes overshadow potential pitfalls. Being aware of these common risks is your first line of defense in protecting your child's future.

- **Predatory Contracts and Unfair Deals:**

- **What it is:** These are agreements that look appealing on the surface but contain hidden clauses, vague terms, or disproportionate demands. They might ask for lifetime rights to your child's image, require them to post inappropriate or misaligned content, or include unfavorable revenue splits. Be wary of deals that offer upfront cash without clear expectations or ask for exclusivity without significant compensation.
- **Red Flags to Watch For:**
 - "We'll just take a percentage of whatever you make." (Often too high, vague on services provided).
 - Demands for exclusive rights to your child's NIL for an extended period.
 - Lack of transparency on payment schedules or deliverables.
 - Promises of large sums of money without clear justification or a detailed proposal.
 - Pressure to sign quickly without allowing for legal review.
- **Why it's Dangerous:** Such contracts can limit future opportunities, legally bind your child to unfavorable terms, and even expose them to financial or reputational harm.





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- **Eligibility Violations & Compliance Issues:**

- **What it is:** Each state high school athletic association, and the NCAA for college-bound athletes, has specific rules regarding NIL. Violating these rules—knowingly or unknowingly—can lead to severe consequences, such as being banned from school sports, losing athletic scholarships, or even impacting future college eligibility.
- **Why it's Dangerous:** Even minor infractions can derail an athlete's career and academic future. Rules often cover what activities are allowed, how compensation can be received, and prohibitions on using school logos/uniforms in deals.
- **Example:** Accepting payment for an endorsement that promotes a product banned by your state's high school athletic association, or using your school's mascot in an advertisement without explicit permission.

- **Unreported Income & Unexpected Tax Trouble:**

- **What it is:** Any income earned through NIL—no matter how small—is generally taxable. Many parents and young athletes are unaware of this. Failure to report NIL income can lead to penalties, fines, and surprise tax bills from the IRS or state tax authorities.
- **Why it's Dangerous:** This can create significant financial strain, negatively impact credit, and lead to legal issues down the road. It's crucial to understand that even non-cash compensation (like free products) can be considered taxable income.
- **Example:** Receiving a free pair of shoes from a brand in exchange for a social media post, which might be considered taxable income if its value exceeds a certain threshold.





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- **Social Media Exploitation & Reputational Damage:**

- **What it is:** The digital world is powerful, but it also carries risks. This includes brands pushing students to post inappropriate, controversial, or misaligned content that could damage their personal brand or violate school values. It also involves "agents" or scouts contacting athletes directly through DMs without verified identities or legitimate intentions.
- **Why it's Dangerous:** What goes online, stays online. A single misstep can lead to reputational damage that impacts college recruitment, future NIL opportunities, and even career prospects. Predatory individuals can also use social media to gain inappropriate access or exploit young athletes.
- **Example:** Being pressured to post a photo wearing a controversial brand, or engaging with an unknown 'scout' who asks for personal information or inappropriate content.





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WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO PROTECT THEIR ATHLETE

Your active involvement is the single greatest safeguard for your child in the NIL era. Here are key actions you can take:

- **Start With Your School's NIL Policy and State Rules:**

- **Action:** Contact your Athletic Director to understand [Your School Name]'s specific guidelines regarding NIL. Ask if the school has an NIL Advisory Board or designated resources. Research your state's high school athletic association (e.g., [Your State Athletic Association, e.g., NCHSAA]) rules on NIL for high school athletes. These rules govern what's allowed and what's not.
- **Benefit:** Understanding the rules from the start helps you prevent eligibility violations and ensures your child's activities align with school and state regulations.

- **Support Their Personal Brand Development:**

- **Action:** Help your child understand that their personal brand is their story – one they get to write, not one the internet defines for them. Encourage positive digital habits, thoughtful content creation, and consistent values across all online platforms. Discuss what they want their legacy to be.
- **Benefit:** A strong, authentic personal brand built on positive values attracts genuine opportunities and protects your child's reputation. It gives them control over their narrative.





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WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO PROTECT THEIR ATHLETE

- **Ask About Every Deal – Get Everything in Writing:**

- **Action:** If your child is approached about a NIL opportunity, ask questions. Lots of them. Demand to see any and all contracts or agreements in writing. Do not rely on verbal promises. Key questions include: Who is paying? For what specific service or content? How long is the agreement for? How is my child protected? What are the deliverables? Are there termination clauses?
- **Benefit:** A written contract protects both parties by clarifying expectations, compensation, and legal terms. It is essential for safeguarding your child's rights and ensuring fair treatment.

- **Understand the “True Cost” of NIL:**

- **Action:** Beyond just the dollar amount, evaluate the hidden costs or impacts of a NIL deal. Will this deal demand too much time, affecting academics, training, or family time? Does it genuinely reflect your child's character and values, or is it just for money? Could it negatively impact their recruiting process if a college dislikes the association? Is this worth it – long term – for their overall well-being and future?
- **Benefit:** This holistic evaluation ensures that NIL opportunities contribute positively to your child's life and future, rather than becoming a distraction or a detriment.





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WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO PROTECT THEIR ATHLETE

- **Get Financial & Legal Guidance Early:**

- **Action:** Don't wait until a large deal comes along. Connect with trusted professionals for advice. Ask your Athletic Director or coaches if they offer workshops on budgeting, taxes, or entrepreneurship. For any earnings, even seemingly small ones (e.g., over \$600/year), consult a qualified financial advisor and tax professional. For contracts, seek review from a sports or entertainment attorney.
- **Benefit:** Professional guidance protects your child from legal and financial missteps, ensures proper tax compliance, and helps them make smart decisions about managing and investing any NIL income for long-term security.





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HOW TO BE AN ADVOCATE, NOT JUST AN OBSERVER

Your role extends beyond protection; it's about active advocacy for your child and your school community.

- **Attend School NIL Education Sessions (or Request One):**

- **Action:** Be present at any NIL workshops, webinars, or information sessions offered by [Your School Name]. If your school hasn't offered one, express your interest to the Athletic Department.
- **Benefit:** Staying informed is the best way to keep up with evolving rules and best practices, making you a more effective guide for your child.

- **Share Your Concerns Early with Coaches or ADs:**

- **Action:** Don't hesitate to bring any questions, concerns, or unsolicited NIL offers to your child's coaches or the Athletic Director. You are not alone in navigating this.
- **Benefit:** Open communication helps the school understand emerging trends, address potential issues quickly, and provide accurate





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- **Help Build Your Athlete's "Inner Circle":**

- **Action:** Encourage your child to surround themselves with a team of trusted adults who can offer diverse expertise—mentors, teachers, coaches, and professionals. This is not just about followers or fans; it's about building a genuine support network.
- **Benefit:** A strong "inner circle" provides comprehensive advice, ensuring your child receives well-rounded guidance from various perspectives.

- **Don't Chase NIL Deals. Help Your Child Build Value First:**

- **Action:** Resist the temptation to aggressively pursue every potential deal. Instead, focus on helping your child excel in their sport, maintain strong academics, develop their character, and build a positive, authentic personal brand.
- **Benefit:** When your child builds genuine value, influence, and a strong reputation, the meaningful opportunities will come naturally, and they will be better prepared to handle them.





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5 QUESTIONS PARENTS SHOULD ASK BEFORE SIGNING ANYTHING

Before your child signs any NIL agreement, take a pause. Discuss these critical questions as a family, and if necessary, with legal counsel.

1. Is this legal under our school and state rules?

- Why this matters: High school NIL rules vary by state and can be strict. Violating them could impact your child's eligibility for school sports or future college scholarships. Always verify.

2. What exactly is my child being asked to do, and is it appropriate?

- Why this matters: Understand the specific deliverables (e.g., number of posts, appearances, content creation). Ensure the activities align with your child's values, age, and comfort level, and will not negatively impact their reputation or time commitment.

3. Who owns the content being created, and how can it be used?

- Why this matters: Some contracts may seek broad ownership of content, limiting your child's ability to use their own image or likeness in the future. Ensure you understand the terms of usage and duration.

4. Are we being paid fairly – and when?

- Why this matters: Compensation should be clearly defined (e.g., flat fee, per-post, royalties). Understand the payment schedule and what happens if deliverables are not met. Research market rates for similar deals to assess fairness.

5. Do we have this in writing, and have we had it reviewed by a lawyer?

- Why this matters: Verbal agreements are unreliable. A written contract protects everyone. More importantly, have an independent attorney specializing in sports or entertainment law review any contract before signing, to ensure all terms are fair and understood.





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BONUS: THE 3 C'S OF NIL PARENTING

These principles will serve as your compass in the NIL journey:

- **Clarity:** Know what NIL means, what it doesn't mean, and precisely what's allowed (and not allowed) by your school and state athletic association. Seek out clear information.
- **Communication:** Maintain open and regular dialogue with your child about their NIL goals, online activities, and any opportunities or concerns. Also, communicate openly with your Athletic Director and coaches.
- **Consistency:** Be the calm, guiding voice amid external hype, pressure, and social media influence. Consistently reinforce your family's values and your child's long-term well-being above short-term gains.





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FINAL WORD TO PARENTS

NIL can be an incredible opportunity for your child to learn, grow, and benefit from their hard work and dedication. However, like any new frontier, it requires careful navigation.

Your child doesn't just need a contract; they need a coach, a protector, and a mentor. That's you.

[Your School Name] is here to help. Ask questions. Stay involved. Keep your athlete focused on long-term success, character development, and true purpose, not just short-term hype.

