

ANDREWS YOUTH SPORTS COACHES HANDBOOK



Coaches Handbook

Mission Statement: Youth Programs provides a safe enriching, supervised environment for children and youth during out of school time. Individual interests, experiences, abilities and needs guide the programming. Children have the right to be heard, listened to and influence decisions. We promote experiences and opportunities that enhance rather than duplicate the school day. Our programs maintain an atmosphere that encourages flexibility and allows for freedom of choice within appropriate guidelines. We strive to reinforce family values and emphasize the uniqueness of each child by promoting positive attitudes and validating self-worth. We accomplish this mission through a devoted team of trained professionals and parents whose goal is the growth and development of our children within a happy, safe and caring atmosphere.

Vision Statement: To embrace youth development principles and developmental assets as the foundation for programs and opportunities, which inspire all youth to explore their interests, develop independence and gain life skills in a positive environment through programs facilitated by trained professionals.

Andrews Youth Sports Mission Statement: To assist DoD military and civilian personnel in balancing the competing demands of the accomplishment of the DoD mission and family life by managing and delivering a system of quality, available, and affordable programs and services for eligible children and youth birth through 18 years of age. Andrews Youth Sports is dedicated to providing first rate, wholesome and safe youth programs to the Andrews Air Force Base community. Our programs will promote and enhance the overall physical, social and emotional well-being of its participants through a trained and educated staff in a fun, positive and healthy environment.

The Andrews Youth Sports program is a recreational league that encourages everyone to participate regardless of ability. The emphasis is placed on a fun youth sports experience that allows children to develop a lasting passion for the sport. Sports, by nature, are competitive and players and coaches set out to win their games. However, this program has modified game rules to make the experience less competitive, where winning is part of the process, but not the only goal. In this program, a minimum play rule is used guaranteeing players playing time.

Inclusion: It is the policy and goal of Air Force CYP to make reasonable accommodations which support inclusion and participation of children /youth with and without disabilities. CYP programs must be inclusive of children/youth (entering or already enrolled in the program), including those with identified disabilities as well as special learning, medical and developmental needs. CYPs must follow the most recent AF CYP Inclusion Action Team Instructional Guide.

Program Philosophy: The purpose of the youth sports program is to offer a wide array of organized sports activities for youth to help them develop desirable physical skills and to mature emotionally and socially. The sports program provides opportunities for children to have contact with other youths, volunteer leaders, and youth program staff. It also provides opportunities for parents to socialize with other parents and for adults to contribute to the Air Force community by serving as volunteers in youth programs.

Job Description: Volunteer coaches will coach a coed team between the ages of 5 and 18. They will be considered a role model for all athletes assigned to their team. Therefore, sportsmanship, fair play, adherence to all rules and by-laws, and 100% commitment are required. Each coach will be given a copy of the job description and a signed copy will be kept in their file. As a volunteer for Andrews Youth Sports Program, coaches are considered an extension of the staff. Therefore, they must conduct themselves in the same manner as they would on their own job. In the same respect, they will receive adequate training to make their experience as a volunteer coach an enjoyable one.

Background Check Requirements & Exclusion: Each coach is required to have specific documents on file prior to coaching. These documents include a background check and CPR/First Aid. Background checks are completed to determine whether an individual has prior instances of reported misconduct involving youth, family violence, assaultive behavior, substance abuse, larceny, or related misconduct; a child abuse and neglect conviction; conviction of a felony or other crime of violence; or adverse information which affects their ability or suitability for work with youth. Our youth program requires installation records checks (IRC) to be conducted on all volunteers. This precaution ensures that no persons with questionable histories work in DoD youth programs.

Child Abuse Prevention & Reporting: The following information was adapted from “A Guide for Volunteers, Identifying, and Reporting Child Abuse in Youth Program Settings”, Department of Defense Youth Program Child Abuse Prevention Training Series.

Introduction – As a volunteer, you are someone who wants to make a difference in the lives of youth. DoD Youth Programs recognize and value the important contributions made by volunteers. One of our responsibilities is to ensure that all volunteers understand, recognize, and report the signs of possible child abuse and neglect. DoD considers this responsibility to be so important that youth program volunteers are considered mandatory reporters who Must report suspected child abuse and neglect. An alert volunteer might see signs of a physical injury or notice when a youth’s behavior is unusual or out of character. If these signs lead you to suspect abuse or neglect, you must report it to the Family Advocacy Program (FAP).

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT-

-What is child abuse and neglect? It is any action by an adult who is responsible for the care and well-being of a child or youth under the age of 18 that causes physical or emotional harm to the child. It can result from acts – doing something to injure – or omissions –not taking actions necessary to protect. It can be episodic – a single incident – or chronic – a pattern of behavior that continues over time. There are four types of abuse and neglect: physical abuse, physical neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse or neglect.

-Where does abuse and neglect take place? It takes place in a youth’s own home and the offender is a parent or other family member. Out-of-home (sometimes called extra familial or institutional) child abuse and neglect occurs outside the home and usually involves one or more youth and an adult in an oversight role.

-What is the typical profile of an offender? There is no typical profile of adults who abuse youth. They represent both genders, a variety of cultures and ethnic backgrounds, and a range of socioeconomic groups. In a youth program, abusive adults may work with youth, supervise the program, provide training, or carry out a supportive function. Child molesters are more likely to plan their abuse than persons who harm youth in other ways.

RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT – There are physical and emotional signs of all four kinds. The signs of each type of abuse and neglect are described below.

What are the indicators of physical abuse? Physical abuse includes burning, kicking, biting, punching, twisting or shaking a limb, hitting, or otherwise harming a youth. When punishment leads to medical treatment, it is inappropriate. Hitting with a fist or an instrument such as a belt would usually be considered abusive. Physical abuse can result in minor injuries such as cuts and bruises or major injuries such as brain damage and broken limbs.

Injuries from typical activities and sports usually appear on the shins, elbows, knees, and/or forehead. Injuries from physical abuse usually appear on the soft tissues of the face, back, abdomen, buttocks, upper arm, thighs, ankles, backs of legs, or genitals.

Physical abuse can be identified through behavioral indicators. Here are some examples:

- A youth tries to conceal injuries by wearing long sleeves or long pants in warm weather.
- When questioned about an injury, gives a confusing explanation, or changes the story when asked by someone else.
- Seems frightened of one or both parents or refuses to join in activities led by a specific staff member.
- Inflicts pain of self or others.
- Seems withdrawn or appears to lack self-esteem and confidence.

What are the indicators of physical neglect? Physical neglect tends to be chronic. It includes failing to provide adequate or proper food, appropriate shelter, clothing, health care, supervision, or education, when the responsible adult has adequate financial resources to meet these needs. Youth who spend too much time alone and do not have responsible adults involved in their daily lives, may be victims of neglect.

Physical indicators of neglect include poor hygiene, clothing inappropriate for the season or weather conditions, inattention to medical and dental health needs, and developmental disorders. Behavioral indicators of neglect include chronic hunger, frequent truancy and tardiness, chronic fatigue or listlessness, and evidence of alcohol or drug use.

What are the indicators of sexual abuse? Sexual abuse can take many forms, all of which involve using a child or youth for an adult's sexual gratification.

Physical signs of sexual abuse include difficulty waking; torn, stained, or bloody underwear; pain or itching in the genital area; pregnancy; bruises or bleeding of external genitals; and sexually transmitted diseases. Most signs are temporary, so it is crucial to react quickly if you suspect sexual abuse.

Behavior indicators of sexual abuse tend to last longer and are more conspicuous. Consider the possibility if:

- The child understands more about sex than is appropriate for his/her age.
- Is reluctant to be left alone with a particular person.
- Wears lots of clothing.
- Is afraid of being touched.
- Seems worried when the subject of sexual abuse comes up.

What are the indicators of emotional abuse or neglect? Emotional abuse or neglect includes active, intentional blaming, belittling, ridiculing, and disparaging of a youth that contributes to low self-esteem, undue fear or anxiety, or other damage to psychological well-being. It also includes passive or passive-aggressive inattention to emotional needs, nurturing, or psychological well-being. It is the most difficult form of abuse to identify because the signs are rarely visible.

Although emotional maltreatment does occur alone, often it is related to physical and / or sexual abuse. Emotionally maltreated youth are not always physically abused. Victims of physical abuse are almost always emotionally maltreated.

What is the role of cultural differences? Youth who attend DoD Youth Programs reflect our nation's cultural and ethnic diversity. Child-rearing practices, goals for youth, and expectations for behavior vary among families, cultures, and ethnic groups. Legal definitions of child abuse and neglect are not flexible; however.

What can you learn in conversation with responsible adults? During routine conversations, parents might describe family life, discuss discipline methods, or ask for help. Co-workers could disclose attitudes and actions towards one youth or youth in general. Child abuse and neglect may be indicated if an adult constantly:

Blames or belittles a youth.

- Views a youth as very different from his or her siblings.
- Labels a youth as "bad," "evil", or a "monster".

- Finds nothing good or positive in a youth.
- Show a lack of concern about a youth.
- Refuses to discuss a youth's misbehavior.
- Appears to abuse alcohol or other drugs.

What signs of abuse or neglect apply to youth programs? The DoD prohibits corporal punishment of a child and all sexual contact between any staff or volunteers and a youth. You must report such inappropriate and possible abusive behaviors. The DoD also prohibits poor practices that could lead to child neglect. Here are some situations that may indicate child abuse and neglect in a youth program setting:

- A youth frequently refuses to participate in activities led by a specific adult.
- A youth shows extreme fear of a staff member.
- Youth are unsupervised for long periods of time.
- A youth says he was hurt by a staff member or volunteer.
- An adult regularly shows favoritism and gives special attention to one youth.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Who must report suspected child abuse and neglect? Every Service and civilian member of the military community is required to report *suspected* cases. All DoD Youth Program volunteers are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and neglect. ***You do not need to wait or look for proof before reporting your suspicions to the FAP.*** It is NOT your responsibility to investigate or determine guilt or innocence. Investigating and proving child abuse and neglect cases is the job of the FAP, law enforcement personnel, and the courts.

Most states define Youth Program volunteers as mandated reporters who are immune from civil liability for making a good faith report of child abuse and neglect, even if the case is not substantiated. If someone does sue you, the court will dismiss the case when they learn you are a mandated reporter who reported in good faith to the FAP.

How do I know when to report? No single sign is a conclusive indicator of abuse. A youth's personality, temperament, and resiliency can affect his or her response to abuse and neglect. Some youth disclose or show signs of their maltreatment immediately. Others show no visible signs and suffer silently for long periods of time.

You **MUST** report to the FAP if:

- A youth tells you something that leads you to suspect abuse or neglect.
- You have seen a pattern of physical or emotional signs that cause you to suspect a youth has been abused or neglected.
- A parent or co-worker tells you he or she harmed a youth.

If you are concerned for a youth's well-being, but do not think your observations warrant a report, call the FAP and ask for assistance. Such consultations are not considered to be reports of abuse and neglect. The FAP staff will help you decide what to do.

How do I file a report? Once you suspect abuse or neglect, you **MUST** report it immediately. Write down what you say and heard by describing:

- Physical and behavioral signs of abuse or neglect exhibited by the youth.
- Unexplained changes in the youth's behavior.
- Interactions between an adult (parent or staff member) and youth that could be emotionally harmful.
- Disclosures the youth made to you freely and spontaneously.

Your Youth Program and Family Advocacy Program have procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Here is the typical process:

Step 1: Call the FAP and give the following information:

- Name of victim
- Name and contact information for parents and guardians
- Reasons for suspected abuse or neglect
- Description and location of physical injuries
- Information freely disclosed by the victim
- Current location of victim

Step 2: Inform your supervisor, who will notify his / her superiors of your report.

After a report has been received, the FAP must report immediately and directly to the local child protection agency in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the installation and local authorities and as required by state laws.

What happens after a report is filed? The FAP notifies members of the Case Review Committee (CRC) and coordinates with law enforcement authorities to investigate the case. They collect sufficient information to make a clinical determination of the case as substantiated / unsubstantiated. At the same time, the FAP takes steps to protect the youth and assist the family.

When a report of suspected abuse involves a staff member or volunteer, the alleged offender is reassigned to a position without youth contact until the CRC makes a determination about the case. If the CRC determines a staff member's actions were poor practice rather than child abuse, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken. If the allegation is substantiated, the individual can face disciplinary and / or legal action.

How can I handle my feelings about filing a report? You may be reluctant to report your suspicions because you are afraid of being wrong or that reporting will mean trouble for the youth, the responsible adult(s), or yourself. You may think there is a reasonable explanation for the injuries or unusual behavior. You may fear that parents of other youth in the program will think you are incompetent or an alarmist. Discuss these and similar concerns with your supervisor and ask for support.

It may help to remember the report is NOT an accusation. It is a request for help on behalf of the youth. If abuse is not reported, it tends to happen again and again, with each incident becoming

more serious than the last. By reporting your suspicions, you are protecting youth and helping families or co-workers get assistance.

How can I maintain confidentiality? All child abuse and neglect cases are confidential. Reports should be seen by and discussed with only those who need to know. Friends, co-workers, even the press, may ask you about the case. Do not discuss the case with anyone.

What can I do if a problem is not resolved? Child abuse and neglect are an unfortunate reality. Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse are the main categories of abuse. Neglect is the failure of a parent or guardian to adequately provide for a child's basic needs of life. Volunteer coaches are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. In addition, all active duty members and civilian employees of the Air Force are mandated to report all reasonable suspicions of suspected family maltreatment to the Family Advocacy Program **(240-857-9680)**. Individuals may report to the youth sports director, the youth director, or Family Advocacy. Suspected child abuse and neglect and safety violations at DoD youth program settings should first be reported to the appropriate installation and local authorities. However, if a problem is not resolved, you can call the DoD Child Abuse / Safety Violation Hotline. Your report can be anonymous. The hotline is not used to report spouse abuse.

**DoD Child Abuse / Safety Violation Hotline
1-877-790-1197**

All Policies: See Policies and Procedures Manual as these addendum to this coaches handbook.

Rules & By-Laws: There are a set of rules for each sport and each season. Rules are drafted and then discussed further in detail at all of the coaches meetings. Copies of all rules will be given to coaches at coaches meetings and are maintained in the sports continuity book.

Length of Practice & Number of Times Team Can Meet Per Week:

PRACTICES/GAMES/SEASON

The following are the length of practices and number of times teams can meet per week

AGE GROUP	PRACTICES PER WEEK	LENGTH OF PRACTICE	GAMES	LENGTH OF SEASON (WEEKS)
6-8	2	45"-60"	1	6 (+2 pre season)
9-10	2	45"-60"	1-2	6 (+2 pre season)
11-12	2-3	45"-60"	1-2	10(+2 pre season)
13-14	2-3	60"-90"	1-2	10 (+2 pre season)
15-18	2-3	90"-120"	1-2	12 (+3) pre season)

PLAYER PARTICIPATION: IAW with AFI 34-144, all youth 5-12 years of age will be permitted to play at least half of each game. Coaches and Assistant Coaches will be held responsible for tracking youth participation in each game. Personnel from JBA Youth Programs will monitor games to ensure these rules are followed. In the event all participants are not permitted to play a minimum of half the game, the following actions will be taken:

1st Offense: The Youth Sports Director will provide one reminder of the rules to the coach/assistant coach and retrain both prior to the next game. The retraining will be documented in the training files of the coach and assistant coach.

2nd Offense: The Coach will be suspended from the next game and will meet one on one with the Youth Programs Director to explain why the rules are not being implemented. The Youth Programs Director will provide retraining yet again, with a warning to the coach that should the behavior continue the coach will be suspended from the rest of the season.

3rd Offense: The Coach will be suspended for the rest of the season. Prior to being allowed to coach again, the coach will be required to provide a written letter stating how they will ensure the rules are enforced in future games. If reinstated but found negligent in following the rules during another season, the coach will be removed immediately and a recommendation to prohibit the individual from coaching in JBA Youth Sports will be forwarded to the 11 MSG Commander for approval.

Should the coach/assistant coach be found negligent in following the rules during another season, the coach will be removed immediately and a recommendation to prohibit the individual from coaching in JB Andrews Youth Sports will be forwarded to the MSG Commander for approval."

The Youth Sports Director will require coaches to have a parent volunteer track each child's playing time during each game. The playing time data will be submitted to the Sports Director at the end of each game and reviewed to ensure all youth played at least half of the game. If any deviations are found the Youth Sports Director will meet with the coach to determine if there was a particular reason for the deviation (ie: some youth not allowed present; parent request for youth not to play in a game).

Required Training: All coaches, assistant coaches, and sports specified volunteers are screened, trained, and certified. All youth sports coaches and assistants are certified by NYSCA or similar organization. All coaches, assistant coaches, volunteers, and league administrators are trained in the following areas: psychological needs of children, positive guidance techniques, safety, physical injury prevention, coaching, liability, steroid use, nutrition, child and adolescent development, diversity, sexual harassment, CPR, and First Aid. Certified coaches are provided additional training to enhance their coaching ability and to maintain annual certification. All coaches, assistant coaches, and specified volunteers are required to sign a code of ethics. Coaches are evaluated and given feedback throughout the season and documentation is kept on file.

Removal of Coaches: The youth director or youth sports director is authorized to remove any coach for failure to follow the guidelines for coaches' duties in the youth sports program or for failure to adhere to acceptable behavior for coaches. As the center hosts many organized activities throughout the week, the Youth Center has a Code of Conduct that will apply to all adults who attend, supervise or otherwise host an activity. An adult participating in or observing any center activity will adhere to a code of conduct that presents a positive role model.

Acceptable/Unacceptable Behavior – Coach/Player/Parent/Spectator

Establishing and maintaining the highest standard of conduct must typify all behavior in the youth sports program. Inappropriate behavior for programs serving youth by coaches, managers, players, parents, and administrators will not be tolerated. Poor sportsmanship, cursing, vulgarity, or obscene gestures are not permitted on the part of any individual. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at any function or activity sponsored by the youth sports program. The youth sports director should solicit help from coaches and parents to provide a smoke free environment at all youth sports events. Youth participating in youth sports activities should not be exposed to second hand smoke. Smoking by staff, coaches, and youth during any practices or competitions is not permitted. Misuse or abuse of playing Equipment; negative comments about coaches, players, or officials: prolonged disputes with officials; and throwing objects onto or into the playing area will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

Player Suspension

- ALL AGE GROUPS: any action of any person, which is considered detrimental to the league, will be held answerable to the League Staff, which has the authority to suspend any participants whose actions are judged to be such.

- Any player ordered out of the game for fighting by a referee is automatically suspended for their teams next played game. The record of ejection will be entered in the score book and signed by the referee.
- Coaches wishing to bench a player for disciplinary reasons must inform the opposing coach before the game starts or at the time of his intent to do so if the decision is made during the course of the game.
- The following are reasons (but are not limited to) for which a player may be disciplined for games:
 - **Talking Back:** There is major difference between asking a question out of ignorance and telling an adult “what one will and will not do”. The focus is on the latter.
 - **Poor school performance academically or behaviorally.**
 - **Foul language/cursing for any reason.**
 - **Malicious play:** Revenge or purposely attempting to hurt someone.
 - **Unsportsman like conduct** against opponents, teammates, coaches or referees.
 - **Parental Request:** If a parent makes a request to the coach to sit their child out of a game as part of their own discipline for behavior reasons.

Whenever playing time is limited for disciplinary reasons the coach must:

The coach notifies the League Staff at least one day prior to the day of the game and obtains approval to invoke this rule.

Once the approval from the league staff is obtained the coach must inform the player and his/her parents of the reason he/she is being disciplined and the specific consequences prior to the day of the game.

The coach notifies the opposing coach and the scorekeeper of this disciplining action. (The scorekeeper should make a note in the score book referencing this action and both coaches will initial the note.

Note: Reducing or eliminating playing time must be done consistently under this exception.

Players are not to be treated differently based on their ability. Intentionally asking a player not to show up or asking a player to show up late will not be tolerated and will cause a team to forfeit the respective games(s) and cause for expulsion of the coach from the league.

Sportsmanship: The qualities and conduct befitting a sportsman or sportswoman. The standards of conduct are implemented to insure that youth participating in FMPF programs engage in age-appropriate social/recreation activities in an environment that is safe, supervised and designed to strengthen each child’s sense of self-worth. In all instances, an internal Behavioral Record will be completed by the staff member, signed by the supervisor on duty, signed by the child’s parent if necessary and forwarded to the facility manager on the next duty day. The facility manager will be notified any time that security forces (SF) is called for

assistance. The facility manager will, in turn, brief the chain of command. The following conduct is not appropriate in FMPF programs and will result in staff intervention: obscene language/gestures, violent overtures, yelling, throwing objects, verbal harassment and inappropriate physical contact.

Substance Use/Abuse

Substance use/abuse (drugs, to include performance enhancing drugs, alcohol, or tobacco) discovered at any point in the season will result in immediate dismissal and will be reported to law enforcement officials.

Award & Recognition: Only participation awards are given in youth sports programs. The Youth Center will host an end of season party that is open to all players and their families, at which time medallions will be presented to all players.

Emergency Procedures

Emergencies and accidents are a reality of youth sports. Injuries will occur and some are serious enough to require an emergency treatment. In the event of an emergency, coaches must use the following steps:

1. Assess the situation. Do not panic. Administer first aid only if qualified.
2. Have an adult stay with the injured person at all time.
3. If additional assistance is needed, Call 911 (9911 if on base for base response using a cell phone).
4. Meet the emergency vehicle if necessary.
5. If parents/guardians are not available, make contact and advise of the circumstances.
6. Report to the youth sports director and/or director immediately.
7. Follow up with parents/guardians to ensure everything is okay with the child.
8. Complete the accident report form and submit to youth sports director.

REMEMBER:

- At no time should an unqualified person offer a diagnosis or express personal opinion as to the extent of the injury.
- Coaches are responsible for keeping emergency phone numbers and medical release forms on their players at all times.
- Coaches are responsible for having a first aid kit at all practices and games. Regularly check supplies in the first aid kit and contact the youth sports director when supplies are low.

Hazardous Weather

Sudden severe weather and extreme weather conditions are a reality and will, in some way, affect both practices and games. Sudden severe weather, such as lightning storms, strong winds/tornados, hail, torrential downpours, etc., will require the coach (es) and adults to take appropriate action. In most cases, seeking safe shelter, such as vehicles and/or buildings, and waiting for the severe weather to pass will suffice. In the rare case of a tornado or flood, seek safe shelter at the Youth Center or the closest secure structure.

Extreme weather conditions, such as extreme cold or heat, require appropriate responses. In cases of extreme heat, the base weather warnings/recommendations will be followed.

Appropriate action includes, at a minimum, limiting physical exertion, drinking plenty of fluids, such as water and/or Gatorade, and taking frequent rest breaks. Extremely cold temperatures and/or wind chills or snow covered fields will result in cancellations

Coach Recruitment/Selection/Training

Coaches are recruited on an on-going basis. A majority of the coaches are recruited during the registration process as many parents volunteer to coach their own children. The youth sports director and the director select coaches. Coaches must complete a volunteer application and successfully complete a local background check (Installations Records Check). In addition, coaches are interviewed prior to being placed in a coaching position. All coaches must complete required training, which currently includes the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) training and CPR/1st Aid.

The coaches' meeting is held after registration has closed. Several tasks are accomplished during the coaches meeting and include such items as appointing coaches to teams, drafting the teams, establishing practice schedules, reviewing rules and by-laws, issuing equipment, etc. The coaches' meeting is the most important step in starting the season, because it creates the foundation for the season.

Excused absences

Excused absences from practice (s) are permitted when family obligations conflict with practice schedules. Coaches will not penalize players who are unable to attend practice (s). Parents are able to report schedule conflicts on the registration form, which can then be used during the coaches' meeting and establishing practices days/times.

AIR FORCE CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS POSITIVE GUIDANCE AND APPROPRIATE TOUCH INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

September 2013

1. **TRAINING OBJECTIVE:** To assist Child and Youth Programs (CYP) personnel (CYP staff and managers, Family Child Care (FCC) providers and coordinators, contract workers and volunteers) in building relationships with children/youth through appropriate adult-to-child interactions.
2. **PURPOSE:** To outline appropriate adult-to-child interactions in CYP.
3. **OVERVIEW:**
 - a. Children/youth need guidance from adults to keep them safe, encourage development of self-control, self-reliance and respect for the rights of others. These skills are crucial to their future success as adults. Guidance of child/youth behavior is ongoing and requires skill and patience.
 - b. For guidance to be most successful, it needs to occur in the context of a caring and supportive relationship. It's important that the CYP personnel get to know and understand the child/youth's typical behavior. Effective guidance takes place when children/youth know and trust adults caring for them and the adults show children/youth their concern for them is unconditional.
 - c. CYP personnel must recognize children/youth as individuals and respect differing abilities, temperaments, activity levels, and developmental characteristics. No one specific guidance technique will work for every situation; therefore approaches will need to be adapted for each child/youth.
 - d. Touch is as necessary as food or water for children/youth to thrive and grow physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally. Appropriate touch respects the personal privacy and space of children/youth; is nurturing (hugs, giving high-fives, etc.); keeps children/youth safe (separating physically conflicting children/youth, examining

cuts/bruises/unusual marks, administering first aid to injuries); and assists with hygiene (face and hand washing, diaper changing, etc.). Remember, the age and individual needs and preferences of the child/youth should always be considered when determining if a touch is appropriate.

- e. All CYP personnel must receive training on positive guidance techniques and appropriate touch and sign a written statement of understanding during New Employee/Provider Orientation. Annually thereafter, CYP personnel must receive training on positive guidance techniques and appropriate touch. All training is documented on the AF Form 1098, *Special Task Certification and Recurring Training*.

- f. Incidents of inappropriate guidance/touch are reported, using the *AF CYP Reportable Incidents Report Form*, to the Flight Chief, Family Advocacy, Squadron Commander/Director, Major Command Specialist/Installation Support Division, Air Force Personnel Center Directorate of Services Child and Youth Programs, and Headquarters United States Air Force Child and Youth Programs within 24 hours of occurrence.

4. APPROPRIATE GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES:

- a. **Consider Possible Reasons for Behaviors:** Behaviors are a form of communication. Due to the limited language and experiences of a child/youth, sometimes their actions speak louder than words. Avoid blaming the child/youth for the challenging behavior and look to identify the root cause of the behavior.
- b. **Listening:** An important element of communication is the ability to listen to the messages a child/youth is telling us. Adults should not only listen with their ears, but also “listen” with their eyes. Focus on body language, tone of voice, facial expressions, etc. to truly understand what children/youth are trying to communicate.
- c. **Understanding Development:** Knowing what to expect developmentally for children/youth helps to ensure adult expectations are appropriate. Knowing the ages of stages of child/youth growth and development helps adults ensure that they offer children activities and materials that are stimulating rather than frustrating. Children/youth gain competence and confidence in mastering tasks and facing challenges.
- d. **Providing Opportunities for Choices:** When appropriate, provide choices rather than directions to children/youth. Remember the developmental age of the child/youth when offering choices. Older children/youth do better with more open-ended choices (ex: “What would you like to do today?”), while younger children may need limited choices. (Ex: “It’s cold outside. Do you want to wear your sweater or your jacket?”)
- e. **Establishing Limits and Rules:** Create realistic and developmentally appropriate limits and rules which focus on taking care of “self, others and the environment and materials.” Involve children/youth in the development of rules and limits and communicate them clearly. Consider posting rules or scheduling a time to discuss/remind children/youth. Older youth and teens need clear limits with consequences other than expulsion. Youth and families should receive a copy of the program’s written code of conduct to ensure their understanding of expectations.
- f. **Anticipating and Preventing Challenging Behaviors:** Plan environments, activities, and projects based on the foundation of child/youth development. Use visual cues such as a schedule, sign-up sheet, rebus cards or pictures to reinforce expectations. Anticipate how children/youth may respond to certain stimuli or situations. Plan ahead to prevent problems.

- g. **Indirect Guidance:** Indirect guidance allows children/youth to know what the expectations are without a great deal of direction from adults. For example, if children/youth are given the opportunity to work the CD player, is there a way for them to know what an acceptable volume is? By simply marking a red line on the volume control, children/youth have a visual reminder about what is an acceptable volume.
- h. **Reinforcement:** Reinforce positive behavior using encouraging words. Be specific in your reinforcement and explain what the child/youth has done (ex. “You did a good job rearranging all of the art supplies. I really appreciate that you took the time organize the area.”) These words describe the actions the adult is praising instead of simply saying “Good job.”
- i. **Redirection:** Redirection is used to get a child/youth to “redirect” his/her thoughts or actions into a more appropriate activity. “You can run while you are on the playground. Do you want me to put some music on so you can dance?” “The locator board tells us the playground is full. I will keep my eye on the board and let you know when there is an open space. While you are waiting, there is a great cooking activity going on in the cafe.”
- j. **Intentional Environments:** The learning environment is an important and powerful teaching tool. If the environment is set up with the knowledge of how children/youth learn and develop, it can positively support teaching and learning. Staff/providers observing challenging behaviors should consider how the daily schedule, transitions, room arrangement or materials may be contributing factors.
- k. **Logical and Natural Consequences:** Consequences are positive or negative outcomes of an action. Natural consequences occur on their own. They are not controlled or manipulated by anyone, they simply just happen. For example: A child or youth who does not eat lunch is hungry later. Logical consequences are situations engineered by the person in authority and they are logically connected to the wrong. It is logical because it "fits" the offense. For example: If a child spills paint, it is not logical for him or her to have to leave the art area or to be lectured. These responses lack a follow-on connection to the occurrence. Cleaning the floor and refilling the container are both logical and educational. Children/youth that experience natural and logical consequences develop self-discipline and inner strength. They also learn to respect order because they see that following rules leads to better living as opposed to being in fear of punishment.
- l. **Conflict Resolution:** Conflict resolution is a time to find solutions, understand each person’s perspective and share feelings. It is not an opportunity to have one person win and the other lose. Conflict resolution is a very effective guidance tool because it allows children/youth to practice negotiation, compromise, listening skills, empathy, self-calming techniques and assertiveness without aggression.

- m. **Providing Language to Identify Expressions of Emotions:** One of the most important social/emotional development skills we can teach is helping a child/youth move from physical reactions to verbal responses that communicate their feelings/needs. They must be able to connect and communicate with others in order to be successful in current and future relationships. Younger children might have difficulty identifying a feeling and may benefit from prompting or exploring feelings. (Ex. Does that make you feel sad?)
- n. **Modeling Prosocial Behaviors:** CYP personnel promote prosocial behavior by interacting in a respectful manner with children/youth, families, and co-workers. Examples include: discussing behavioral challenges privately, ensuring each child/youth has the opportunity to contribute to the group, building a classroom/home community, assisting children/youth in conflict and countering bullying behaviors.
- o. **Be in Control without Being Overly Controlling:** Consistency is very important; however, it is equally important to have flexibility. Once in a while, it is OK to give in about the small stuff, provided that it is not something dangerous. For example, teens passionately expressing their opinion about procedures in the program, even when they are not the opinions of the adults, could result in a life skill regarding compromise and respecting differences. Drug and alcohol use, on the other hand, are non-negotiable. Know that sometimes the best response is to ignore a behavior.
- p. **Restraint:** As a last resort, restraint is used ONLY when children/youth are endangering themselves and/or others. Restraining a child/youth requires careful action by CYP personnel and should only be used when a child is unresponsive to all other guidance techniques. The intent of restraining is to keep a child/youth safe and to assist with calming the behaviors. It is critical for the CYP personnel to remain calm, use a soothing tone of voice, know when to call for assistance and ensure the child is not hurt.

5. INAPPROPRIATE GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES:

- a. CYP personnel never use threats or derogatory remarks about children/youth or their families.
- b. At all times, children/youth should be free from criticism, repression and punishment. Therefore, the following techniques are unacceptable for use by any adult (including parents) in CYP. NOTE: This list is not all-inclusive. Remember, any act that risks harming a child/youth physically or psychologically is not permitted in CYP.
 - Spanking, slapping, biting, hitting, pinching, yanking, shoving, shaking, pulling hair or any other form of physical abuse
 - Threats, name-calling, sarcasm, belittling, teasing or any other form of verbal abuse
 - Isolation away from adult contact/sight
 - Confinement in closets, boxes or similar places
 - Binding to restrain movement of mouth or limbs
 - Withholding or forcing meals, snacks, toileting, outdoor play experiences or rest time
 - Allowing children/youth to remain in soiled or wet clothing

- Intimidating a child with facial expression, tone of voice or a physical presence (ex. standing over them, finger pointing)
- Touching children/youth in uncomfortable or inappropriate ways, such as: tickling, kissing, forced goodbye hugs/kisses, fondling or touching genitals (except when necessary to clean a child who has soiled himself/herself)
- Coercion or other forms of exploitation of a child's lack of knowledge

6. BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLANS:

- a. It might be time to consider a behavior support plan when children/youth display behaviors that are consistent, intense and/or put themselves or others at risk. The plan should include a mix of strategies which build relationships between the child/youth, staff and family, reduces the need for conflict, and teaches them to be successful in their relationships with others.

- b. A behavior support plan should be developed with the understanding that adults (including parents/guardians) in the life of the child/youth recognize the individual needs and challenges of the child/youth and are going to provide support and understanding to assist in their development of social and emotional skills. There will need to be changes and compromises in order for a plan to be effective. In addition, everyone will have to be accountable for trying new things. A good plan outlines everyone's responsibilities and provides the time for change to occur.

- c. CYP Managers and Training & Curriculum (T&C) Specialists support staff/providers, parents and children/youth by increasing observations, debriefs, and parent conferences to facilitate successful implementation of the plan, processes and strategies. Managers and T&Cs also play an essential role in obtaining outside resources to provide additional support such as the Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC), Kids Included Together (KIT), School Liaison Officers (SLO), Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Coordinators and installation CYP Medical Advisor.

I have received training and understand I must follow the requirements outlined in the Air Force Child and Youth Programs Positive Guidance and Appropriate Touch Instructional Guide. I will receive annual training on positive guidance and appropriate touch. All training will be documented on the AF Form 1098, *Special Task Certification and Recurring Training*.

Printed Name

Date

Signature

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