



RAF Mildenhall Youth Sports Program

Coaches Handbook

Policies and
Procedures Guide
2021 Edition

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AF CYP 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.

Youth Sports Program Philosophy & Goals

At RAF Mildenhall, the Youth Sports Program develops programs Children's ethical, social, physical, intellectual and psychological development all with the purpose of having fun and enjoyment, while at the same time nurturing each child's capacity to learn life-skills. The emphasis of youth sports is on skills development, co-operation, teamwork and maximum participation. The Air Force Youth Sports program follows the National Standards for Youth Sports and develops programs that are consistent with the philosophy outlined in those standards.

At RAF Mildenhall, the Youth Sports Program has embraced the philosophies set forth in "**National Standards for Youth Sports,**" a publication compiled by the National Alliance for Youth Sports based on an assembly of 48 of the nation's leading experts representing a vast variety of disciplines affecting youth sports.

Coaches, volunteer and paid, are an extension of the youth program staff. They represent the integrity of the program being conducted and must support program objectives and policies. Coaches must be aware of the positive and negative impacts they can have on their players. Coaches must maintain an atmosphere which promotes the philosophy of the youth sports program. Coaches must be responsible to young athletes, parents, officials, and other coaches for:

- Being knowledgeable of the policies and procedures pertaining to the youth sports program.
- Providing a safe environment during practices, games, and related functions.
- Acquiring necessary training to coach young athletes.
- Being knowledgeable of the rules.
- Communicating with parents.
- Serving as a role model.
- Reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Adhering to the National Standards for Youth Sports.

Key Contacts

Notify Open Recreation personnel or immediate supervisor @ 238-KIDS. Mildenhall Youth Programs staff will notify the Youth Program Director of the incident within 30 minutes of occurrence.

Program Director Robert Ramirez 238-7078
Sports Directors David Wilcox/James Ussery 238-7974/0098

Within 24 hours after the incident an Incident Report will be filed to HQ USAFE/SVPCC for all incidents involving a trip to the hospital.

Please notify the league if your child has a pre-existing medical condition (i.e. allergies, medications, physical impairments, etc.) on the registration form.

The league will then inform the coach of the situation. This is essential in order to determine the severity of an accident and to assist the medical personnel who respond to the scene.

Coaches must walk the playing area prior to the beginning of any game or practice to look for dangerous materials or hazards.

Any and all accidents should be reported to the Youth Programs staff by the coach, no matter how serious.

Medical Emergencies/Incident Notification

Volunteer coaches have a specific responsibilities related to safety and welfare of young athletes. Everyone involved in the program from coaches to assistants to team parents should be familiar with the following precautions.

In The event of an emergency or accident, the following steps should be taken:

- Assess the situation. **DO NOT PANIC**. Administer first aid only if you are qualified.
- Have an adult stay with the injured person at all time.
- If additional assistance is needed, **Call 911** for on base emergency services to include ambulance, police and fire. If off base **DIAL 999**. Provide the dispatcher with the following information:
 1. Your name and Position.
 2. Exact location including bldg. number, field location and best access route to scene.
 3. Victim's current condition.
 4. Nature of the injury and circumstances creating it.
 5. Stay on the phone until you are told to hang up.
 6. Phone number you can be reached at.
- Return to the injured party in case you are needed for other assistance.
- Meet the arriving emergency vehicle and medical staff.
- Immediately call the parent or guardians identified on your team roster or the Emergency Contact and Consent form provided for that child.
- Report the accident to the Youth Sports staff member and or the Youth Sports Director and complete a written accident report form AF Form 1187 within 24 hours.
- Call the parents and or guardian of the child to get a status report on the condition of the child and include in your report.

REMEMBER

- At **NO TIME** should you offer a diagnosis or express personal opinion as to the extent of the injury suffered by the child athlete.
- Coaches are responsible for keeping the Emergency Contact and Consent form for each player with them at all times.
- Coaches are responsible for having the provided first aid kit with them at all practices and games. Coaches should regularly survey the contents and make sure that it is complete and not running low on stocked items. Do not rely on other individuals to have first aid supplies available. If your first aid kit are running low request refills and replacements from the Youth Sports Director.

Inclement Weather Policy Procedures

Safety of the athletes, coaches, parents, and spectators is the first priority. Coaches must utilize your best judgment in ensuring that all involved are safe. When in doubt always err on the side of caution.

During outdoor sports seasons, youth sports staffs are responsible for terminating practice sessions when weather conditions are perceived to be a threat to safety. In the case of actual games, the game officials at game time, or league administrators prior to starting, are responsible for terminating play.

Because of the particular dangers associated with thunderstorms, coaches and officials will immediately remove teams from fields to a safe area indoors when thunder is heard or lightning is seen.

Indoor sports generally are not affected by outside weather conditions; however, road conditions can become hazardous and make getting to that venue a dangerous endeavor. Therefore we utilize the same system prescribed by the Security Forces for determining whether travel is warranted or permissible. Coaches must use this system to determine whether practice sessions and or games should be conducted.

- Under green road conditions, road conditions are safe for travel; practices and games go as scheduled.
- Under yellow or **amber** road conditions, caution must be exercised in travel.
- Practices mayor may not be canceled. Under amber conditions permission is granted by the Youth Sports Director to proceed, but with caution.
- Under **red** road conditions, only essential travel is authorized. All scheduled youth sports activities will be canceled whether it is games or practices.

Youth Sports coaches must monitor conditions during activities such as practices and games, for changing road conditions. A change to red road conditions requires all activities to terminate to allow for safe travel home.

The Mildenhall Law Enforcement (LE) desk has the most accurate road and driving conditions available. Coaches should contact them for the up-to-the-minute road conditions status by calling; 238-3541 on base, or 01638-543541, off base.

The Youth Sports Director has the authority to cancel games due to inclement weather or other unforeseeable circumstances before game play begins. Coaches should contact the appropriate Youth Sports Directors office listed below if there is a question regarding weather or driving conditions, in the area where game is to be conducted. Once the team has traveled to, or game play has begun, the head official on site and or League administrator will make the cancellation determination.

For game play status outside the local area for those traveling teams call the following Youth Sports Office: Mildenhall 238-5437.

The Mildenhall Youth Sports Office Phone Number is duty phone 238-7974 or on the youth sports mobile cell #079990-0143/07931-695914

INCLUSION POLICY

RAF Mildenhall Youth Sports program is open to dependents of active duty, reservist, retirees, and DoD / NAF civilian employees of all the armed forces / military branches of service in accordance with AFI 34-262 *Services Programs and Use Eligibility*, AFI 34-144 *Child And Youth Programs* regardless of race, creed, gender, economic status, or ability. Youth must be currently in grades kindergarten through twelve (12) to be eligible. Eligibility for Youth Sports programs and / or certain age divisions may be extended to the non-military community on a space available basis when otherwise the activity would not be able to be offered. Youth with special needs are encouraged to participate in all Youth Sports and Fitness programs when they can be reasonably accommodated. Parents must inform staff and coaches of the need and annotate it on their registration form.

Prohibition of Substance Abuse and Smoking

Coaches and parents must be educated about all drugs, including performance enhancement chemicals. Leagues should have policies dealing with drug, tobacco and steroid use and emphasizing prevention through education. Parents, league administrators, and coaches should be taught what to look for in abuse of these drugs and know how to access community resources for assistance on drug-related problems.

- Parents must encourage a drug, tobacco and alcohol-free environment for their children.
- Mildenhall youth sports programs will assist parents in this effort by offering youth sports programs in which:
- Leagues adopt rules prohibiting the use of alcohol, illegal substances or tobacco by coaches, league administrators, or game officials at all youth sports events.
- Leagues provide coaches and parents educational information on identifying signs and symptoms for substance use by children.
- Leagues establish policy and implementation procedures for immediately dealing with substance use by coaches and players and communicate these policies to coaches, players, and parents.
- Leagues continually encourage dialogue between coaches, players and parents about the need for alcohol, tobacco and drug-free environment for children.

Child Maltreatment Identification and Reporting

The Youth Sports Director is responsible for the implementation of these procedures. Volunteer coaches will be trained prior to their acceptance as a youth sports coach in the signs of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and physical and emotional neglect and will ensure the procedures in this document are followed to include reporting procedures.

Physical Abuse

What to look for: Frequent bruises in non-accidental area (face, back, back of legs), small bumps, bite marks, larger bump marks such as those created by an iron.

What to do: The coach noticing the marks will fill out a Youth Flight Accident Report Form (AF Form 1187). If the volunteer coach has asked the parent about the marks, the parents' response will be included in the report. The report is to be given to the Director of Youth Sports for further action.

Sexual Abuse

What to look for: Stained or bloody underwear, pain or itching in genital area, difficulty sitting or walking, pain during urination. Psychological symptoms may include, fear of men or adults, preoccupation with bodily functions.

What to do: If physical marks are observed, coach should complete an accident report form.

Emotional Abuse

What to look for: Symptoms are vague and subjective, but can best be described as a child with very low self-esteem. A child may cower down when spoken to in tones above the norm. A child may appear excessively shy and or aloof.

What to do: Sometimes the parent is not aware that the nurturing needs of the child are not being met. Address the parent about your concerns for the child and get their feedback. Report the outcome of the meeting and your concerns to Youth Sports Director, using AF Form 1187.

Neglect

What to look for: Dirty clothes, dirty child, sores or broken skin. A child that is inappropriately dresses for the time of year. Note if a child is frequently left waiting after practices are over.

What to do: All volunteer coaches must report a suspected neglect case to the Director of Youth Sports. Do not confront the parents about you concerns in this situation.

Protecting Ourselves from Unwarranted Accusations of Abuse

- No youth sports volunteer coach may be alone with a child at any time.
- Never use verbal language that is abusive or non-verbal gestures that are offensive.
- Physical forms of discipline including running laps for punishment will NEVER be used.
- Congratulatory gestures will be limited to the upper-back, hands and head regardless of a child's age.
- Patting a child on the behind may be mis-interpreted, thus better left out.
- Transporting children in your personal vehicle alone will not be permitted unless you have the express written permission of that child's parent.

Line-of-Sight Supervision: The line-of-sight supervision (LOSS) requirement applies to all youth program volunteers. When on duty, volunteers must always be accompanied by another adult who has completed all required background checks. LOSS ensures youth safety and protects you the volunteer coach from false allegations.

DoD CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE PHONE NUMBER:

877-790-1197 US or 571-372-5348 Overseas

Excused Absence

Do to military commitments/medical emergencies at some point you not be able to fulfill your coach responsibilities, in these cases please notify the Youth Sports Coordinator or the Youth Center of your delay or absence as soon as possible so the sports director can arrange coverage for your team. (Refer to Key contact listing)

Administration of First Aid

Everyday millions of children participate in organized sports. They score goal, steal bases, hit home runs and – unfortunately – get injured. Cuts, scrapes, bumps, bruises and other minor injuries are as much a part of youth sports as grass stains, high-fives and end of season hot-dog and pizza parties. A wide variety of injuries are small and not life threatening. However volunteer youth coaches and parents need to be prepared to respond and to provide proper treatment, no matter how minor or major the injury happens to be. The importance of having a properly stocked first-aid kit on hand at every practice and game is obvious as having the equipment bag, scorebook, or after practice snack. It is important that the coach or assistant coach be diligent in bringing that kit to every practice and game.

Some tips to keep in mind regarding general safety and the first-aid kit include:

- The first aid kit materials should be housed in a waterproof type container and clearly identified.
- Designate someone before the season begins to be the one who will make the emergency contact call in the event of a real emergency.
- Tape a copy of the emergency Plan Procedures to the inside of the First Aid kit for quick reference.
- The coach should know every item in the kit and survey the contents regularly.
- Always have a couple of ice packs on hand so that sprains and bruises can be properly cared for.
- Always use the sterile gloves provide when dealing with cuts and scrapes.
- Always have a full supply of gauze pads, Band-Aids and athletic tape.
- Helpful items to include in the first aid kit include a flexible splint or SAM splint, nail clippers, scissors, tweezers and a small pen flashlight.
- Before the line-up card is filled out or the equipment bag unpacked, coaches should be sure to make an inspection of the field or playing surface before any child goes out onto it.
- If it's an outside sport you should look for rocks, glass, holes in the ground, debris on the field and anything else that may injure the child.
- If the sport is being played indoors, check the floor for dust, dirt or sand and any wet spots that a child could slip on and result in an injury.

The bottom line is, you need to do everything you can to minimize the risk of injury for the children. Since injuries cannot be completely eliminated from sports, it's critical to be prepared and able to treat them when they do arise.

Positive Guidance Techniques

No single guidance strategy works for every youth or every situation. The chosen strategy should fit the youth, the behavior, and the situation. Here are some positive guidance strategies:

- Discuss a youth's inappropriate behavior while out of earshot from the rest of the group or team. Ask the youth if he/she understands his/her inappropriate behavior.
- Help youth understand the consequences of their inappropriate actions and help them to determine a way to make amends. Offer choices and give the youth the opportunity to make suggestions on how to make amends.
- Suggest a physical outlet such as the repetitious performance of a sport specific skill to release the pent up energy and emotion that is being released inappropriately.
- Help youth learn and use appropriate conflict resolution strategies to resolve disagreements through negotiation, mediation, and consensus decision making.
- Always intervene when it appears to be necessary in order to prevent injuries.
- Reinforcement of positive behavior, encouragement, and words of praise are regularly practiced.
- Anticipating problem triggering situations; Reducing expectations to youth's level; Soliciting cooperation; Involving youth/teens in rule limit setting.
- Recognizing youth or teens who exhibit the appropriate behavior; Using physical proximity or appropriate touches (pat on the back, etc.)
- Involving youth or teens in discussions on how to handle inappropriate behavior;
- Providing several alternatives to undesirable behavior.
- Affording each youth or teen a chance to regroup, regain control and be responsible for his or her actions.

Youth staff and volunteers must demonstrate the use of positive guidance techniques and require that parents assisting them in the conduct of practices and games also use positive guidance techniques. Coaches are to use positive guidance techniques which help youths develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights and property of others. Techniques include talking with the youth, helping the youth use negotiation to resolve conflicts, temporarily removing the youth from the situation for a few minutes, and limiting the youth's participation in the activity.

Under no circumstances will physical punishment or verbal abuse be allowed.

Unacceptable guidance techniques include but are not limited to: slapping, spanking, hitting, kicking, biting and pinching. Screaming, name calling, scolding, belittling and shaming are not tolerated. Withholding food, water or the right to use the rest room, shutting youth or teens in closets, gagging or taping, etc., are not acceptable discipline methods. Staff and volunteers who fail to use appropriate guidance techniques are subject to disciplinary actions, IAW prescribed personnel procedures, which authorize suspension and/or removal. Staff and volunteers are required to report to the Youth Sports & Fitness Director, facility manager or supervisor on duty every instance during which another employee, volunteer and/or parent is observed using unacceptable discipline methods.

Sportsmanship

By participating in our program as a volunteer coach, you are committing yourselves to fulfilling our mission, philosophy, goals and objectives, which among them include a responsibility to promote good sportsmanship and fair play.

In the process of sports participation, youth develop behavioral attitudes that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. These attitudes are built and formulated in much part, on the attitudes, actions and values displayed by coaches, team parents and league administrators. Through the interactions of adults and children, adults provide the example that young athletes will someday emulate and follow. Therefore it is highly important that we adults emulate the highest level of sportsmanship that is possible and become a great example for our youth. **So what are the characteristics of good sportsmanship?** As defined by the NAYS sportsmanship is *"Following the simple tenants of treating others with common decency and civility. It is using the common formula of doing what we know is humanly moral to others."* Doing what is humanly moral to others then, requires motives, intention as well as actions. It is best and very simplistically framed in the "Golden Rule- which is to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

- **Good sportsmanship is best defined in the context of competitive games.** In sports we strive for the non-moral yet tangible goals of success, admiration and respect. This challenge pits one opponent against another with the ultimate quest of obtaining these goals. This challenge is governed by a framework of rules. Our appreciation for these rules and the rightness and wrongness by which we follow them can also be described as our appreciation for the opponent. If we violate or use the rules for our own benefit, we in essence violate our opponent. Good sportsmanship therefore is characterized by a steadfast appreciation for the rightness of following the rules which govern the play of a sport.
- **Good sportsmanship is more than just a strict obedience to the rules;** it also requires a mutual admiration and respect for the opponent. In the competition then we should view the opposition as an ally, as a cooperative individual, with whom we will work together to obtain the highest level of competition. Just as steel sharpens steel when it is beaten upon, we should view our opponent as an equal force who will sharpen our skills and talents in the heat of competition. In the ideal sense, competition is "the mutual quest for excellence through the challenge." **Good sportsmanship therefore is the recognition of an opponent as an equal ally to oneself in both skill and ability, with who the mutual goal of obtaining the highest level of competition is of foremost importance so as to improve one's own skill and abilities.**
- **Finally good sportsmanship recognizes that when we put ourselves against an equal and challenging force that the outcome of the struggle is not always as we would like it to be.** Thus very real emotions of sorrow and pain may accompany the outcome for some. A good sportsman does not belittle an opponent in this condition but instead acknowledges and even exalts the opponent for their challenging competition and congratulates the opponent for being a complete and worthy adversary who gave 100%. By doing so, admiration, respect as well as success are shared by both opponents. Good sportsmanship then is characterized by a congratulatory response to ones opponent for raising the level of the competition to the highest degree because of their complete effort and individual skill. The very best sportsmen do this no matter which side in the outcome of the game they were on, win or lose.

Teach these three tenants of sportsmanship and others you can think of, while you instruct the youth who are under your leadership. Be their example through your own actions as well as through your verbal instruction and guidance about what Good Sportsmanship really means.

Removal Procedures and Suspension

It is our policy that participation in youth sports is a positive experience for children. Behavior that is deemed inappropriate for programs serving youth by coaches, parents, children, game officials and any youth sports spectator will not be tolerated. It should be noted that the Installation Commander will suspend the participation of any youth and or adult found using alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products in YP facilities or functions such as youth sports events

Types of Inappropriate Behavior

- Poor Sportsmanship
- Fouls or abusive language
- Vulgarity or obscene gestures
- Physical violence
- Use of Tobacco/Alcohol or Drugs
- Child endangerment
- Threatening words/actions or harassment

Possible Disciplinary Actions

- **Warning**
- **Probation**
- **Season Suspension**
- **Entire Assignment Suspension**

Removal or Suspensions The Child & Youth flight chief may delegate disciplinary actions related to removal of a youth, coach, parent or spectator to the youth director or youth sports director. If delegated, the youth director or youth sports director is authorized to remove any anyone for failure to follow the guidelines in the youth sports program or for failure to adhere to acceptable behavior for as outlined in AFI 34-144.

MINIMUM PLAY RULES

PLAYING RULES

Our recreational sports leagues are built as steppingstones into the sport to allow for maximum participation and children to have positive first experiences with sports. Each year as the child moves up into the next age division, the child's knowledge of the game is increasing and more implementation of the National Federation of State High Schools Association rules are incorporated.

ELIGIBILITY

Youth eligible for youth programs as authorized in AFI 34-262, Services Programs and Use Eligibility, may participate in organized youth sports programs. All players must be properly registered with the Youth Sports & Fitness Office before participating in any practices and games. A player will be considered properly registered when a properly completed registration form, a current physical form, payment and proof of age have been placed on file.

EQUAL PLAYING TIME

Opportunities to participate in youth sports must be available for young athletes at all levels of playing ability. Each child must be given equal opportunity to play in every game. The youth sports and fitness director will establish specific guidelines for youth sports and modify rules to meet certain criteria for particular sports and age groups.

In all leagues (on/off installation), a minimum play rule is required for all youth regardless of ability. Youth, 5-12 years of age, must be permitted to play at least half of every game.

SEASON LENGTH/FREQUENCY

Guidance AFI 34-144 length, frequency is also based on available facilities.

Listed below are the maximum allowed per AF standards:

| Ages | Practices | Practice | Duration |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| 5-8 Year Olds | 2 per week | 45-60Min | 8 Games |
| 9-10 Year Olds | 2 per week | 45-60Min | 8 Games |
| 11-12Year Olds | 2-3per week | 45-60Min | 8 Games |
| 13-15Year Olds | 2-3per week | 60-90Minutes | 8 Games |
| 15-18Year Olds | 2-3per week | 90-120Minutes | 10-12Games |

TEAM STRUCTURE AND PLAYER ASSIGNMENTS

TEAM STRUCTURE

The system used for player selection will be as fair as possible to all teams and Individual players. The children will be divided by age group as determined by the age determination date set prior to the registration period. Then the respective teams will be divided by individual ages, then by girl/boy and then by skill level. Teams will be divided evenly. Head/Assistant coaches' children will be placed on their respective teams. The youth sports director and youth sports coordinators will conduct the team selection.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS ASSIGNED

Maximum number of players assigned to a team shall not exceed more than 4 children above the required number of participants (i.e. 5v5 = 9 man team roster, 6v6 = 10 man team roster, 9v9 = 13 man roster, 11 v 11 = 15 man roster) Once rosters are full and distributed to coaches no changes will occur. This varies with each sport and is at the discretion of the youth sports director.

PLAYER ROSTERS

After players are selected, each coach must be furnished a roster and the registration forms of all players assigned to his or her team. The coach must have this information at all scheduled games and must make it available to any league official or opposing coach upon request. **No child shall practice with any team that has not been officially registered in the Youth Sports.**

ENROLLING MORE THAN ONE CHILD IN SAME AGE DIVISION

When enrolling more than one child in the same age division, clearly annotate on the registration form (Sibling Enrolled Same Age Division) in order for them to be placed on the same team.

SPECIAL REQUESTS

Requests for certain coaches, teams, or to be placed on a certain team with friends will not be accepted. Players returning from last season WILL NOT be automatically placed on the same team they played on last year. Only the head coach and 1st assistant coach are guaranteed to have their children on their team. Requests for specific practice days will be honoured when possible but are not guaranteed.

WAITING LISTS

A waiting list will be activated upon reaching the maximum number of participants in an age division. The waiting list will be utilized to fill slots on first come, first serve basis as needed. At midpoint of the season, the waiting list will close and no children will be added to the team. When contact is initiated with parents to accept or deny the slot offered, the parent will have 24 hours or close of the following full business day to either accept or deny the slot. Contact will be made verbally (both at work phone and/or home phone), as well as by email (if we have it on file) in order to ensure that the parent has the proper notice. If contact cannot be made via phone in a 24 hour period, such will be annotated and child will be removed from the waiting list.

AGE GROUPINGS AND FOCUS

First Steps Introductory Program, Developmental

5-6 Division Developmental

7-8 Division Instructional

9-10 Division Organizational (Team Building)

11-12 Division Skill Enhancements

13-15 Division Complex Skill Enhancement/Game Strategy

No scores or standing are kept in age 5-6 or 7-8 Divisions.

Playoffs are held at the discretion of the Youth Sports & Fitness Director.

How Youth Programs Ensure Safety in Sports

The policies and guidelines outlined here below are to be followed in order to minimize the risk of abuse and neglect and to protect adults from false allegations. They are designed as protective measures for sports practices, games and other sporting events.

- Each team must have a head coach and an assistant coach, so two adults are always present at practices, games, and events.
- All coaches are certified and receive training in first aid, coaching, and child abuse identification, reporting, and prevention.
- In most cases two or more teams are scheduled to practice at one time in the same area so at least four adults attend each practice.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved - as spectators, team parents, league administrators, and/or fundraisers.
- Playing fields and facilities are inspected for safety hazards before every fitness and sports activity. Coaches will help us accomplish this task by reporting verifiable risks
- Players use appropriate equipment and protective gear that are examined regularly by both volunteer coach and league administrator to ensure they are safe.
- Coaches are removed if they knowingly require or allow a youth to play with a serious injury or knowingly create an unsafe environment for play.
- A stocked first-aid kit is made available to every coach at the beginning of the season and is carried to every practice, game and sporting event by the coach.
- There are emergency plans established for handling injuries, hazards, and any inclement weather conditions.
- Practices and games are canceled during lightning, when it becomes dusk, when road conditions warrant no travel and when the site intended for use is in disrepair.
- Coaches may not give a ride to a youth who is not their own child without the express written permission from the parents of that child. If a youth is not picked up after a practice or game, and the parents of that child cannot be reached, the coach must first attempt to call an emergency contact person for that child, and or the Law Enforcement Desk. Finally, notify the league administrator of your attempts and actions.
- Emergency Information and Consent forms permitting emergency medical treatment should be completed by the parents of every child and kept and carried by the coach to every game and practice.

Child Appropriate Programming

All children are individuals with their own particular likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. However, generally speaking, they possess certain characteristics that are dictated by their age. A good coach should be aware of these typical traits:

- **Children age six and under** - If your team is made up of children in this age group, it is likely to be their first experience with a team sport. Your goal should be simply to introduce them to the sports most basic elements. Most of all keep it easy and FUN I make sure that they are having a good time. Spend time playing lots of games and do not treat conditioning and stretching too seriously.
- **Children ages seven through ten** - Most of the children in this category begin developing interests in a wide range of activities. For many, playing sports is important, and they want to do it well. They want to develop a level of proficiency and be made to feel they have certain value and worth to the team. If you are coaching these kids, your focus should be on basic skill development. Provide them with challenges that help to increase their performance ability but which are also achievable and there are high rates of success associated with doing them. Note the various individual differences of the players' abilities and coach to these differences. Use a lot of supportive encouraging feedback and constantly give praise and constantly recognize the positive contribution the individual makes to the team.
- **Children ages eleven to thirteen** - Typically, kids this age already possess the basic skills needed to play the sport, but they want to improve them. As a good coach, it's your responsibility to coordinate practices that are stimulating and focused on sharpening the players' existing skills. Providing for healthy competition is another way to encourage this growth. These kids are also at an age when the need for personal identity is heightened more than ever before. Get to know the kids on an individual level and relate to them not just as athletes that show up on the practice and game field but as real people. It is also at this age that sports become enormously important to their personal identity. It is near the end of this age period that children who have achieved a level of proficiency will continue on with sports participation and those who did not achieve proficiencies will drop out. The key as a coach therefore is to focus on the aspects of skill building, which will in turn provide self-confidence and self-esteem to the individual players. Communicate the importance of values such as sportsmanship, discipline, determination, respect, responsibility and leadership to the players.
- **Young adults fourteen to eighteen** - Teenagers are often the most difficult kids to coach. It is usually a turbulent time in which they require authority but crave independence. Don't be surprised if you meet kids in this age group who possess know-it-all attitudes and frown upon adults who give advice, instruction or constructive criticism. The key is not to feel threatened. The key is to listen to them and let them know that you value their opinion, suggestions and other input regarding the team. Keep the lines of communication open. For example you might ask which drills they think are best to perform during practices. During games you may ask which approach they think might work best given certain situations. They will appreciate your interest, and it will help keep them focused and involved in the action.

Guiding Youth Behavior

The Department of Defense prohibits use of discipline strategies that could cause physical or emotional harm. Using inappropriate discipline can lead to your dismissal from your position as a volunteer coach and/or possible allegations of child abuse.

Prohibited discipline strategies include:

- Spanking, slapping, hitting, pinching, shaking, or any other form of physical touch when meant as a form of punishment or discipline.
- Verbal abuse, threats, derogatory remarks, and loud screaming directed to a youth about their performance, appearance or attitude.
- Binding, trying to restrict movement, or placing a youth in a confined space.
- Withholding snacks or drinks, clothing, or shelter.
- Leaving a youth unsupervised.
- Exercise of any form or nature such as laps or pushups when used as discipline.

How Punishment and Discipline Differ

Punishment means controlling behavior through fear. Punishment may seem to be effective because it frequently stops negative behavior. But these results are usually temporary, however, and punishment often leads to or reinforces low self-esteem and anti-social behavior.

Discipline means guiding and directing youth so they can learn self-discipline. It relies on positive guidance strategies that prevent problem behaviors and teach youth to make their own decisions, tell the difference between right and wrong, solve problems, and correct their own mistakes.

The DoD encourages use of positive guidance strategies that promote self-discipline, the ability to control one's own behavior. Self-disciplined youth can set and accomplish goals and tend to be more successful in school and life.

Improving Your Practice

PRE-PRACTICE

At the field:

- Check the condition of the playing area for any safety hazards.
- Discuss your practice outline with other coaches.
- Have the player's warm-up on their own while waiting for others to arrive.

PRACTICE (1-1% hour session)

- 5 -7min Player meeting. Check equipment and clothing, discuss the last practice or game, and explain the days practice objectives.
- 10-12 min Warm-Up. Stretching and cardia-conditioning.
- 15-20 min Practice previously learned skills.
- 20-22 min Teach and practice new skills (controlled scrimmage etc)
- Have a specific purpose or topic for the practice (e.g. base running, corner kicks, defense, offense etc.).
- 5-7 min Cool down with light running or jogging.
- 5-7 min Player meeting. Comment on the practice, give hand-outs, sportsmanship recognition, discus any needed items with parents.
- **BE POSITIVE IN PRACTICE!** Give supportive and encouraging comments to players rather than critical and degrading!

POST .PRACTICE

- Collect the equipment and bag it up.
- Pick up trash around the field. Have players help out.
- Check area for clothes and equipment left behind by players.
- Provide additional assistance to individual players.
- Say hello to parents - tell them something nice about their child.

GENERAL NOTES

- Never cancel a practice or game without sports office permission.
- Start and end practices on time.
- Be on time for practices and games as best as possible. Parents will appreciate it.
- Don't overdo scrimmages.
- Have an extra water break on exceptionally hot days. **NEVER LIMIT WATER INTAKE.**
- **KEEP PRACTICES AND GAMES FUN!!! FUN!!! FUN!!!**

REMEMBER

- Take no more than 3 minutes to explain a skill or task
- Give every child at least 3 opportunities to attempt the skill or task
- Give every child at least 3 positive comments or praises
- Emphasize the good things with inflection and animation in your voice and point out mistakes with a low verbal tone and without anger.
- Finally coaches, remember to allow your players to be involved in making decisions about how practices will be conducted and games played.

Conducting an Effective Parents Meeting

To have a successful season you must have the parents on your side. Parents must be an asset not a liability, a supporter not a detractor, with you and not against you. One of the first things you must do to reach this goal is to conduct a parents meeting. The following outline is a simple guide to help you conduct an effective parent meeting.

TELL THEM WHO YOU ARE

- Introduce yourself and your assistant coach
- Tell them about yourself, your sports experience, and coaching experience.
- Tell them why you are coaching, i.e. love of the game, child playing, etc.

FIND OUT WHO THEY ARE

- Ask them about their sports experience. You may find a good assistant coach this way.
- Ask them if they wish to take an active role as a team parent and identify things needed such as; providing snacks after games, bringing water, keeping the score book or time clock at games, initiating a phone tree, team banner creation, fund raising for parties and trophies.

TELL THEM ABOUT YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- How will you handle practices; location & time, duration, structure?
- How will you handle games; provide a game schedule?
- How will you handle winning and losing?
- How will you handle bad officiating calls made at games?

SHARE WITH THEM YOUR BASIC RULES

- What happens if a kid misses a practice or is late for practice?
- What happens when a kid acts out or is disruptive at practice?
- Share your expectations of them as a parent, being on time to pick up their kids, no coaching from the stands, no yelling at umpires, etc.
- The prohibited use of tobacco or alcohol at games and practices.

SHARE WITH THEM YOUR GOALS AS A COACH

- How much time will their kids play regardless of their abilities?
- Every player learns and develops in the fundamentals of the sport.
- Every kid finishes the season having had FUN and wants to return

OUTLINE THE SEASON

- When are practices and games?
- When is Opening Day and what is it?
- Are there any playoffs and or All-Star teams?
- Is there any specialized equipment they need to provide for their child?
- What equipment will you provide as the coach?
- How can they get in touch with you or others on the team, provide a roster.

If parents are made aware of your coaching philosophy, rules and have been given some basic information about the upcoming season, they are more likely to support you. Do this and you won't have parent problems, you'll have parent partners and support.