



# Greenwood Family YMCA

## Youth Sports

### Guidelines, Code of Conduct, Liability



#### WELCOME TO YMCA YOUTH SPORTS

Your son or daughter is entering the most unique—and the best—sports program offered in America. We're confident YMCA Youth Sports are the best designed sports programs for young people ages 4 to 16 available anywhere.

Our objective for YMCA Youth Sports is to help young athletes not only become better players but also better people. We recognize that not every athlete can be on the winning team, but every kid can be a winner in YMCA Youth Sports. That's why our motto for the program is Building Winners for Life.

#### YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PARENT

All parents want their kids to do well and have fun in the activities they pursue. We want you to be actively involved in positive ways with your child's sport experiences in YMCA Youth Sports. To do that, you need to first understand your responsibilities as a parent of a child in YMCA Youth Sports:

1. Encourage your child to play sports, but don't pressure. Let your child choose to play—and to quit—if he or she wants.
2. Understand what your child wants from sports, and provide a supportive atmosphere for achieving these goals.
3. Set limits on your child's participation. Don't make sport everything in your child's life; make it a part of life.
4. Make sure the coach is qualified to guide your child through the sport experience.
5. Keep winning in perspective, and help your child do the same.
6. Help your child set challenging but realistic performance goals rather than focusing only on "winning the game."
7. Help your child understand the valuable lessons sport can teach.
8. Help your child meet responsibilities to the team and to the coach.
9. Turn your child over to the coach at practices and games—don't meddle or coach from the sidelines.
10. Transport your child(ren) to and from practices and competition. In cases where transportation is provided by the YMCA, passengers are expected to obey bus rules and to return in the same manner unless prior arrangements have been cleared with the coach. Carpooling is strongly encouraged.
11. Fees related to competition, meets, and/or tournaments are to be paid by parents.
12. Meals, lodging, and other related expenses. Food is commonly permitted at sporting events. Bagged lunches are encouraged, but policies may vary depending on the event.
13. While our YMCA teams embrace the "Family" approach to helping each other supervise all of the children and competition, each parent is ultimately responsible for their own child(ren). Children should not be left alone or allowed to wander at events unsupervised. In the event that overnight stays are required, a parent should not leave their child alone in a hotel room for any reason.
14. Supply the coach with information on any allergies or special health conditions your child has. Make sure your child brings any necessary medications to practices and games.

#### BE INVOLVED . . . BUT NOT TOO INVOLVED

YMCA Youth Sports needs enthusiastic involvement from parents to be successful. Volunteering your time not only helps the program; it's also an enjoyable way to meet other adults and make new friends. Here are just a few ways to become involved:

- Be a coach or an assistant coach.
- Be an official or umpire.
- Keep time or score.
- Maintain equipment or facilities.
- Coordinate registrations.
- Be an announcer.
- Be a first aid attendant.
- Coordinate refreshments.
- Be a publicity director.
- Become part of a car pool

A healthy involvement will usually be welcomed by both the coach and your son or daughter. However, no coach wants to be—or should be—second-guessed by parents on strategy moves or other coaching decisions. Signs of parents being too closely involved include these:

- You are overly concerned with the outcome of the game.
- You spend a lot of time talking with the coach about the game plan, player skill levels, and the way she or he conducts practices and coaches games.
- Your son or daughter has stopped enjoying the sport or has asked you to stop coming to games or practices.
- You require your son or daughter to take extra practice.

Be involved, show interest, and help the coach where they need help, encourage your child— and enjoy the sport yourself!

#### PARENT'S CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Remain in the spectator area during competitions.
2. Let coaches coach.
3. Keep comments positive to players, parents, officials, and coaches of either team.

4. Come to games sober, and refrain from drinking alcohol at contests.
5. Cheer for your team.
6. Show interest, enthusiasm, and support for your child.
7. Be in control of your emotions.
8. Help when you're asked to by a coach or an official.
9. Thank the coaches, officials, and other volunteers who conducted the event.

## HELPING YOUR CHILD ENJOY SPORTS

You can help your child enjoy sports by doing the following:

1. Developing a winning perspective
2. Building your child's self-esteem
3. Emphasizing fun, skill development, and striving to win
4. Helping your child set performance goals

### **Developing a Winning Perspective**

Every decision parents make in guiding their children should be based first on what's best for the child and second on what may help the child win. Stated another way, this perspective places Athletes First, Winning Second.

We're not saying winning is unimportant. Winning—or striving to win—is essential to enjoyable competition. Pursuing victory and achieving goals are sweet rewards of sport participation. But they can turn sour if, through losing, you or your child lose the proper perspective also. An obsession with winning often produces a fear of failure, resulting in below average performances and upset children.

### **Building Your Child's Self-Esteem**

Building self-esteem in your child is one of your most important parenting duties. It's not easy—and it's made even more difficult in sport by the prevailing attitude of "winning is everything." Athletes who find their self-worth through winning will go through tough times when they lose.

Building self-esteem in your child takes more than encouragement. You need to show your child unconditional approval and love. Don't praise dishonestly; children can see through that. If your child strikes out three times, makes an error, or runs the wrong way in a softball game, don't tell her she played well. Just show the same amount of love and approval for her—not for her performance—that you showed before the game.

### **Emphasizing Fun, Skill Development, and Striving to Win**

The reason you should emphasize fun is quite simple: without it, your child may not want to keep playing. Kids don't have fun when they stand around in practice or sit on the bench during games, when they feel pressure to win and don't improve or learn new skills. Conversely, they do have fun when practices are well organized, they get to play in games, they develop new skills, and the focus is on striving to win.

### **Helping Your Child Set Performance Goals**

Performance goals—which emphasize individual skill improvement—are much better than the outcome goal of winning for two reasons:

1. Performance goals are in the athlete's control.
2. Performance goals help the athlete improve.

Performance goals should be specific, and they should be challenging but not too difficult to achieve. For example, if your child plays soccer, you might help him set the goals of making short, crisp passes; of staying between the ball and the goal on defense; and of giving his best effort throughout the game.

You (and your child's coach) should help your young athlete set such goals. And help your child focus on performance goals before a game; this focus will help sport be an enjoyable learning experience for your son or daughter.

## RELEASE STATEMENT

Realizing that participating in sports is a strenuous activity, we agree, by our signatures, to hold harmless any and all individuals associated with the operation of this YMCA program from any claim for injury or loss which might occur as a result of participation in or traveling to or from any practice or games held in conjunction with this program. We also attest to the health and preparedness of the athlete involved. We also authorize the use of our child's picture in YMCA advertising.

By signing below, I understand that by not displaying the above characteristics, I can be subject to a verbal warning, technical foul against my child's team, ejection from the facility, banishment from the program, or legal action.

**Child's Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_