



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

ITTY BITTY SPORTS PARENT AND COACHES HANDBOOK

Wenatchee Valley YMCA



Dear Parents and Coaches,

The Wenatchee Valley YMCA welcomes you to Itty Bitty Sports! A goal of the Y is for all youth sports participants, both parents and children, to have an enjoyable sporting experience. Skill development is the main component of all YMCA Youth Sports. Non-competitive games are a part of every season and each child will play an equal amount of time in every game (or close as possible based on roster of team). Of course, a fun and friendly environment is characteristic of all YMCA programs.

This Parent and Coaches Handbook describes the Y's Itty Bitty Sports Program. Please take a few minutes and read the information. This material may answer some of your questions as well as give you the YMCA Youth Sports Philosophy.

Youth Sports programs are possible by the dedication of volunteer workers. Many volunteers put in several hours of work to make the Y programs a success. Thank you to all of the Y volunteers who invest time and energy into the lives of young people today. If you are interested in future volunteer opportunities, please contact us.

Families are very important to the Wenatchee Valley YMCA. Please show interest in your child by participating with him/her when asked by a coach during the practices and games. Also, time spent with your child at home in sports skills development builds confidence and parent-child relationships.

Thank you for allowing your children to participate in Itty Bitty Sports. We look forward to serving you and your child in our Youth Sports program. If you have any comments or questions, please contact me.

Community Support Campaign

To ensure that no one is denied a chance to participate because of inability to pay, the YMCA Community Support Campaign raises money to provide scholarships for swim lessons, day camp, family/senior memberships, youth sports, childcare and community outreach programs. GIVE, JOIN, or VOLUNTEER in our Community Support Campaign. Please speak to your branch director for more details.

Sincerely,

Thalia Lepley

Director of Youth Programs

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PARENTS

CODE OF CONDUCT

Each person in the program has a role and works toward the goal of developing youth. Please commit to the following in your role.

As a parent/guardian I will...

1. Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for players, coaches and officials at every game and practice.
2. Support coaches and officials in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
3. Make sure that my child and I treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
4. Refrain from the use of tobacco or other smoking related products, alcohol and drugs at all youth sports activities.
5. I will ensure safety by remaining present at all games and practices and monitoring the actions of siblings by making sure they also act respectfully.
6. Place the emotional and physical wellbeing of the players ahead of your personal desire to win.
7. Ask your child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect.
8. Promise to help your child enjoy the youth sports experience by fostering good sportsmanship, assisting in coaching, being a respectful fan and modeling that behavior for your child.
9. Have your child participate in as many practices and games as possible while providing proper supervision for all of the children brought to practices and games.
10. Attend practices and games to support your child's participation.
11. Be a positive role model for your child and the other players on his/her team.
12. Not use profanity or vulgar speech while observing your child's activities.
13. Keep off of the playing field at all times, unless specifically told otherwise by an official or coach.
14. Resolve conflicts without regressing to hostility or violence.
15. Not encourage any behavior that could be dangerous to your child or the other children.
16. Not taunt, heckle, argue with, any coach, official, or opposing player during the course of your child's games/practices.

Failure to comply with this code of conduct may result in your losing privilege of attending YMCA Youth Sports events.

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PHILOSOPHY

1. **Everyone plays.** We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from YMCA Youth Sports. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays at least half of every game.
2. **Safety first.** Although some children may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play.
3. **Fair play.** Fair play is about more than playing by the rules. It's about parents and participants showing respect for all who are involved in YMCA Youth Super Sports. It's about being role model of good sportsmanship and guiding players to do the same. Remember, we're more interested in developing children's character through sport than in developing a few highly skilled players.
4. **Positive competition.** We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. Learning to compete is important for children, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. The "right perspective" means adults make decisions that put the best interests of the children above winning the contest. These are the lessons we want to teach through YMCA Itty Bitty Sports.

5. **Family involvement.** YMCA Itty Bitty Sports encourages parents to be appropriately involved with their child participating in our sport programs. In addition, to parents being helpful as volunteers, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation.
6. **Sport for all.** YMCA Itty Bitty Sports is an inclusive sport program. That means that children who differ in various characteristics are to be included rather than excluded from participation. We offer sport programs for children who differ in physical abilities by matching them with children of similar abilities and modifying their sport. We offer programs to all children regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. We ask our adult leaders to support and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the children and their parents to do the same.
7. **Sport for fun.** Sport is naturally fun for most children. They love the challenge of mastering the skills of the game, playing with their friends, and competing with their peers. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sport, they over-organize and dominate the activity to the point of spoiling children's enjoyment of the sport. If we take the fun out of sport, we are in danger of our children taking themselves out of sport. Remember, that these sports are for the kids; make sure the kids are having fun.

RISKS AND GUIDELINES

Inclement Weather Procedure

If games are cancelled for weather, the YMCA branch Program Director will contact parents and coaches by email and posting to Facebook, and a message will be relayed to the Front Desk of your Y branch.

Smoke: An Air Quality index of 101+ will cancel outdoor practices. These decisions will be made at least two hours in advance in order for a timely notification for parents. Please note that this is a challenging decision because the air quality conditions could change by the time of the event. We will decide to cancel using the best information that we have at that time. Airnow.gov is used to monitor for non-wildfire smoke pollution and Washington Smoke Blog will be used to monitor for wildfire related smoke and pollution.

Rain/ Thunder / Lightning: Practices will be canceled for excessive rain, thunder, or lightning. If it begins to rain, thunder or lightning during practice, it is the responsibility of the YMCA staff person on site to determine if play should be stopped or resume.

Heat Index: A heat index above 90 degrees will require modified practices and additional water breaks. Heat index of 100 will result in stopping of games and practices.

Heat Related Injuries: Know the signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Make sure athletes are in appropriate clothing and receiving fluids & rest periods during high heat conditions

Unattended Children

Never leave children unattended. Parents are required to remain on location with their children. If a parent leaves a child inform them and YMCA administration of the issue. The coach has authority to stay until the parents return and to inform them of the rule. Always attempt to call the parents and emergency contact person if a child has been left alone. Don't transport the child home or put a child in your vehicle without another adult present. It is your responsibility to notify authorities if a child's parents cannot be located.

Missing Children

If you notice a child in your care is missing:

1. Determine through a quick search that they are really missing (never leave other children unattended).

2. Arrange for other adults to continue searching while you call the YMCA to notify the staff in charge. The YMCA will send help and call the parents.

3. Activate the 911 system.

Clothing

Players are required to have appropriate clothing for the sport in which they will be participating. Players will not be permitted to wear, watches, jewelry, shoes with metal spikes. Appropriate rubber cleated shoes and shin guards are permitted for soccer.

FACILITY USE GUIDELINES

Without the assistance and cooperation of city and school, gyms and fields our YMCA sports programs would not be possible. Each facility needs to be treated with the utmost respect.

1. Teams are only allowed in the gym or on the field during their scheduled practice time
2. Parents are required to stay for practice and encouraged to get involved.
3. If a player's siblings are present during practice or games they must be supervised by a parent.
4. No one is allowed outside the gym except to use the restrooms or to exit the building.
5. No food or drink is allowed in the gyms. Water in non-breakable containers is acceptable.
6. Please help keep our facility clean by using trash receptacles that are provided.

LOST & FOUND

The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

COACHES

COACHES

All coaches at the YMCA participate on a volunteer basis. They must complete volunteer training and are subject to a criminal background check. We do not take your children's safety lightly and take steps to ensure that our youth sports programs provide a safe environment. (If you are interested in learning more about becoming a coach for the YMCA, please let your YMCA youth sports director know! Coaches attend a pre-season coach's meeting where they receive information they need.) Coaches and volunteers can go to <http://training.ymca.net> for valuable tools and other free coaching resources. Courses include YMCA Youth Sports Programs, Coaching YMCA Youth Sports, Safety and Emergency Action and other sport specific coaching guides with more to come! Each sport specific coaches training includes how to teach basic skills, practice plans, drills, and more. The YMCA highly recommends these trainings for coaches new to the YMCA or any coach wanting to refine their skills or looking for new ideas

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a coach I will...

1. Treat and uphold the authority of players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, and appreciate them as an integral part of the game.
2. Not transport children other than my own to or from practices or games.
3. Refrain from the use of tobacco or other smoking related products, alcohol and drugs at all youth sports activities.
4. Emphasize fundamentals and good sportsmanship
5. Attend YMCA coaches training
6. I will strive to achieve the objectives of the YMCA youth sports program and communicate them to my players and their parents.
7. Learn the strengths and weaknesses of my players and conduct my practices and games so that all players have an opportunity to participate equally and improve their skill level through active participation.
8. Protect the health and safety of my players by ensuring that all of the activities under my control are conducted age appropriate and develop their psychological and physiological welfare.
9. Provide positive feedback during practices & games
10. Always be positive and genuine in your comments.
11. Try to state a compliment followed by a correction and then another compliment
12. Speak clearly, in an appropriate tone and volume
13. Watch your athletes for signs of confusion or frustration
14. Use terms and language your athletes can understand
15. Make sure to spread your attention around to all your athletes

HOW TO RUN A YMCA YOUTH SPORT PRACTICE SESSION

The key to a good practice is organization. Each Practice should consist of four components: Warm Up, Skills Drills, Scrimmage, Team Huddle.

Warm Up (5 to 10 minutes)

- Players will be excited at the beginning of the practice, but also a little nervous. Start warming up and do some light running and stretching.
- Let a different player lead the warmup each practice to teach leadership skills.

Skill Drills (15-20 minutes)

Be organized. Have your practice drills planned out in detail. Go over the practice drill with players, demonstrating the drill. Drills should cover the basic skills of the game. Use a variety of drills that work on the same skill to mix things up.

Allow 5 to 10 minutes for each drill

Scrimmage (15-20 minutes)

This is the opportunity to teach basic plays, rules and the importance of fair play.

Team Huddle (5 to 10 minutes)

This is a time to focus on the objective of increase the self-esteem of the athletes and develop character in youth. Take a few minutes to discuss the topics associated developing these traits. Topics may include: fair play, sportsmanship, honesty, responsibility, importance of education and family.

TEACHING VALUES TO PLAYERS

It is everyone's responsibility to teach values to youth athletes. Each team may have a "Values Coach" who provides the leadership for Team Huddles. The Values Coach can be the person who is constantly on the lookout for players demonstrating positive values and recognize them for doing so. There are a few important things to remember when teaching values to children:

1. Ask open ended questions rather than giving the answers.
2. BE YOURSELF. Children respect an adult who listens and speaks honestly.

INJURY

The first defense to injury is prevention:

- Know the risk factors of the sport specific and make sure that the player has the appropriate protective equipment to prevent injury.
- Inspect the area for hazards and remove them.

Required Information for All Game and Practice Sites

- Working phone, land line or cell
- The exact address of the activity site
- The exact entry location (which door) for emergency personnel is

What to do When a Child Gets Hurt

Acknowledge what happened and provide basic first aid (band-aids, ice packs, ice cubes, etc...), notify parents to seek medical attention etc.

If the parent is not present, notify them immediately, even if the injury is minor. If someone other than the parent transports the child, tell them and then call the parents to follow up.

If the injury is serious make every attempt to notify the parents or emergency contact and let them make the judgement for treatment. If they are unavailable or the injury demands immediate attention, you make the determination to contact 911.

Notify your YMCA site supervisor or program director of the injury. If the injury occurs during a game, please make sure the YMCA staff person present is aware of the situation. If a serious injury occurs at your practice please notify the YMCA so that they can follow up with the family involved.

Dehydration Prevention

Make sure your athlete has the proper amount of liquids and is staying properly hydrated. Fluid should be caffeine free. Athletes should have water breaks every 10-20 minutes and more often when exercising in extreme heat.

Concussions

Athletes need to be in proper protective gear for their sport. In the event of a head injury athletes need to be cleared by a medical professional before returning to play.

COACHES TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

Discipline Make a few rules and make sure all the players on the team understand not only the rule, but why it is important and the consequences for breaking it. Discipline should be positive and not degrading. Never use exercise as discipline.

The Ball Hog If you sense this happening, have a chat with the player. Compliment their skills and encourage them to include all the players on the team. Give them a challenge like having everyone on the team touch the ball before a shot is taken. This approach recognizes the player's talent but it also suggests the fact that the team should come first.

Running Up the Score At some point your team may have a game where it is clear that your team is going to win big. Avoid running up the score by; calling a time out and challenge your team to do so many passes before a shot is taken, or focus on other skills. You still want them to work hard but redirect them to focus more on their skills and less on scoring.

Pre-Game Jitters Young players can become nervous and anxious before a big game. Be careful to not become the source of the pre-game anxiety. Before the game, wear a smile and look relaxed, and bring the team together and have a quick meeting to remind them to have fun, relax and concentrate on what they have learned at practice.

Pushy Parents What do you do when you have a parent who always wants to give you a piece of his or her mind? Give them 10 uninterrupted minutes to speak. Then look them in the eye, thank them for their feedback and respond to their suggestions and comments. Notify your YMCA staff if you need help with an aggressive parent.

Player Problems If you are having any type of problems with a player, it is your job to communicate the problem to the parent(s) immediately. Most of your problems are solved just by making the parents aware. Adopt a philosophy of stopping small problems before they become large problems.

Thank you for choosing YMCA Youth Sports!

If you have questions, please contact the Director of Youth Programs at thalia@wenymca.org

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Visit us at www.wenymca.org