

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

At the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis, our top priority is to provide a safe and enriching experience for all children. To help ensure that all children are able to succeed in a safe and nurturing environment, we implement, and ask every parent/guardian and child in our programs to follow, our YMCA Behavior Management Plan.

Our program's philosophy is based on respect for the child's self-esteem, setting reasonable limits, and creating an environment that encourages self-discipline, problem solving, and conflict resolution. We see the opportunity to teach values of getting along with others, solving problems in a positive way and learning self-control as the key to a successful program. Our staff and volunteers are dedicated to working together with the children and parents/guardians to resolve any concerns that may arise.

Guidance and discipline are positive and appropriate to the situation and to the child's developmental level. No child will be humiliated, shamed, frightened, or subjected to verbal abuse. When children are at the YMCA, they have the resource of our staff and volunteers to help them solve conflicts. We ask that you encourage your child to go to staff when conflict arises. In case of physical aggression, staff may restrain children for the safety of those involved but no form of physical punishment is ever used. Staff may consult with the parents/guardians about problems that are occurring in the program and encourage the parents/guardians to discuss any problems they are having at home. It is very important for us to work together for the benefit of the children.

YMCA Program Expectations

- Speak for yourself
- Listen to others
- Use put-ups; not put-downs
- Care for others, the property, and yourself
- Be honest
- Show respect for all
- Be responsible for yourself
- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you

Behavior Management Strategies

- Setting an appropriate environment for programming.
- Having a well-planned program.
- Respecting all children
- Establishing clear rules
- Consistency in enforcement of rules
- Using positive language to explain desired behavior
- Speaking calmly
- Giving clear choices
- Redirecting behavior by giving choices.
- Encouraging group consensus on problem solving.
- Discussing problems to discover causes, and guiding the group of children towards resolution.
- Assigning special tasks and responsibilities that will help to build their self-esteem (for example, special helpers, clean up supervisor, demonstrator).
- Reflecting children's successes and accomplishments.

- Discipline or threat of discipline will not be associated with food, rest or toilet training.
- The use of physical punishment is never permitted.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

When a conflict arises concerning the rights of other people and/or property, our goal is to work with each participant individually to solve the problem through effective communication and logical consequences. Other behavior management techniques, which include redirecting behavior, removal from a particular activity, and parent consultation, will be used in situations where conflicts continue.

If you find that you do not agree with our discipline policy, please share your feelings and beliefs with us. We will attempt to work out our differences; however, if you find yourself uncomfortable with our methods and we haven't been able to work out a compromise you may need to consider other arrangements for your child.

The YMCA Youth Sports Program follows our Youth Development Guidelines and categorizes misbehavior into two general types.

Level 1: Behavior is minor but disruptive and inappropriate. This includes, but is not limited to: profanity, uncooperative behavior, not following staff directions, or being untruthful.

Children who engage in such behavior will be guided by our behavior management plan. Ongoing disruptive behavior will result in written documentation and logical consequences. Escalating behavior may result in a meeting with the Program Director. Parents may be contacted to discuss behavior or special circumstances.

Level 2: Behavior includes, but is not limited to damage or theft of property, assault, verbal abuse, possessing weapons, threat of violence and/or repeated level 1 behaviors.

Such behavior will be documented, dealt with immediately, and may result in lost playing time or dismissal from the program. No refunds will be issued.

Threats of Violence: All threats of violence towards another child(ren) or staff and/or the threat of bringing a weapon to the program will be taken very seriously and will result in immediate suspension. Decisions regarding a child's ability to return to our program after a threat will be made on case by case basis with input from parents, staff, and school personnel (if applicable).

Property and Equipment Damage: Parents may be held financially responsible for intentional damage to equipment and facilities caused by their child.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROCESS

When disruptive behavior is demonstrated by a child in our programs, the YMCA staff will take the following steps. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the YMCA reserves the right to utilize these interventions in any order:

- Staff will redirect the child and discuss appropriate behavior.
- Child will be encouraged to take "personal time" to regain composure and/or discuss other choices for behavior.

- If repeated reminders are needed, a behavior report will be written by the volunteer coach or staff member. A copy will be shared with parents in a timely manner.
- If a child receives three written behavior reports in any program period the child will be suspended at the end of the day and a parent conference is required before the child may return to the program. The parent is responsible for calling the YMCA to schedule a conference.
- If a child returns to the program and receives a fourth written behavior report, YMCA staff will notify the parent. If necessary, the parent will be asked to pick up the child immediately. After this report, the child will be dismissed from the program. In most instances, the child is eligible to return in another program.
- Depending on the severity of the behavior, suspension from the program may be effective immediately without following the above steps. YMCA Staff will notify the parent.

ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Y requires adults of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with the Y values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility, following their program's code of conduct. The Y goal is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the staff, but the responsibility of each and every adult who enters the program. Adults are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Adults who violate the code of conduct may be asked not to return to the program. Participants can be removed for the program based on inappropriate behavior of parent or guardian.

Swearing/cursing: No adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language in a YMCA program, whether in the presence of children or not. This includes phone conversations and email exchanges with staff. Such language is considered offensive and will not be tolerated.

Threats: Threats of any kind towards staff, children or other adults will not be tolerated.

Confrontational Interactions: While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the staff or the parents the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

Addressing Program Participants: Adults are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. No adult may physically or verbally punish another adult's child. If an adult should witness another adult's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the adult to direct their concern to the staff. Parents are not permitted to spank or slap their own children while at program site.

Confidentiality: It is inappropriate for one adult to seek out another adult to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the staff's attention. The staff will address the issue with the other adult. Although you may be curious about the outcome of such a discussion, staff and volunteers are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Violations of Safety Policy: Adults are required to follow all safety policies at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the children and staff.

BULLYING

The primary goal of all Youth Development programs is to foster achievement, relationships and belonging. Children will sometimes display behavior inconsistent with our four core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility and make another child feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. We realize that these behaviors can range from inadvertent rudeness to bullying. Our staff members work to address each of these behaviors as they occur and with consequences logical to the behavior. We take bullying very seriously at the Y and our staff are trained in how to identify and correct bullying behavior. If your child expresses concern about being bullied, please inform our staff right away so that it can be addressed and corrected. Below is some information from a licensed therapist on childhood behaviors ranging from rude, to mean to bullying.

RUDE VS. MEAN VS. BULLYING

Rude = inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else.

From kids, rudeness might look more like burping in someone's face, jumping ahead in line, bragging about achieving the highest grade or even throwing a crushed up pile of leaves in someone's face. On their own, any of these behaviors could appear as elements of bullying, but when looked at in context, incidents of rudeness are usually spontaneous, unplanned inconsideration, based on thoughtlessness, poor manners or narcissism, but not meant to actually hurt someone.

Mean = purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once (or maybe twice).

The main distinction between "rude" and "mean" behavior has to do with intention; while rudeness is often unintentional, mean behavior very much aims to hurt or depreciate someone. Kids are mean to each other when they criticize clothing, appearance, intelligence, coolness or just about anything else they can find to denigrate. Meanness also sounds like words spoken in anger — impulsive cruelty that is often regretted in short order. Very often, mean behavior in kids is motivated by angry feelings and/or the misguided goal of propping themselves up in comparison to the person they are putting down. Commonly, meanness in kids sounds an awful lot like:

- "Are you seriously wearing that sweater again? Didn't you just wear it, like, last week? Get a life."
- "You are so fat/ugly/stupid."

Bullying = intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power.

Experts agree that bullying entails three key elements: an intent to harm, a power imbalance, and repeated acts or threats of aggressive behavior. Kids who bully say or do something intentionally hurtful to others, and they keep doing it, with no sense of regret or remorse — even when targets of bullying show or express their hurt or tell the aggressors to stop. Bullying may be physical, verbal, relational, or carried out via technology:

Physical aggression was once the gold standard of bullying— the "sticks and stones" that made adults in charge stand up and take notice. This kind of bullying includes hitting, punching, kicking, spitting, tripping, hair pulling, slamming a child into a locker and a range of other behaviors that involve physical aggression.

Verbal aggression is what our parents used to advise us to “just ignore.” We now know that despite the old adage, words and threats can, indeed, hurt and can even cause profound, lasting harm.

Relational aggression is a form of bullying in which kids use their friendship—or the threat of taking their friendship away—to hurt someone. Social exclusion, shunning, hazing, and rumor spreading are all forms of this pervasive type of bullying that can be especially beguiling and crushing to kids.

Cyberbullying is a specific form of bullying that involves technology. According to Hinduja and Patchin of the Cyberbullying Research Center, it is the “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.” The likelihood of repeated harm is especially high with cyberbullying because electronic messages can be accessed by multiple parties, resulting in repeated exposure and repeated harm.