

Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate “In-service” Lesson Plan

1. Introduction

A. Introductions

B. Class overview

- This session is a 20 minute “in-service.”
- Prior to each season the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate will meet with the Regional Coach Administrator, Regional Referee Administrator, Coaches, and Referees. The purpose of this meeting is to review child and volunteer protection issues, supervision responsibilities, and any other matters as necessary.
- It’s important for all coaches and referees to attend the entire session.
- There will be time for questions and answers.

2. Body

A. Why AYSO Regions need a Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA)

- We need a qualified individual to oversee the Safe Haven Program.
- AYSO children and volunteers deserve a safe, fair, and fun environment.
- We must ensure volunteers are trained and certified before working with players.
- CVPA acts as the liaison to the NSTC regarding sensitive child and volunteer protection issues.
- Abusive behavior continues to occur in youth sports, including in AYSO.

B. Understand the touching guidelines

Some forms of touching are acceptable as long as they are respectful and appropriate:

- Touching should be in response to the need of the child, not the need of the adult.
- Touching should be with the child’s permission.
- Resistance to touching must be respected.
- Touching should never include the breast, buttocks, or groin.
- Touching should be done in the open, not in private.
- Touching should have a brief, limited duration.
- Touching is age and developmentally dependent; what’s appropriate changes over time.

C. Reporting child abuse

- There is an agency in every state that is mandated by federal law to receive and to investigate reports of suspected child abuse and neglect.
- Each state has designated different people as mandated reporters. **[CVPA: please have your state’s specific information available. If you do not know who is a mandated reporter in your state, please go to http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/ to find your state’s reporting law.]**
- Remember, reporting is a means of getting help for a child or a family.
- You do not have to prove that child abuse occurred; that’s up to the investigator to determine.

D. To Report Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

- You should notify the mandated agency in the state where the child lives. **[CVPA: please have this information available; you don’t have to share it with everyone at the in-service, but let them know that you do have the information if someone needs it]**

- Should you encounter difficulty finding the agency in your community, call your local police department and they will help guide you in the right direction.
- E. All reporters are provided immunity from civil or criminal liability as a result of making a required or authorized report of known or suspected child abuse.
- Any person who makes a report of child abuse known to be false or with reckless disregard of the truth is liable for any damages caused.
- F. The following information is required when making a telephone report of suspected child abuse to the child protection agency:
- Name of the child
 - Present location of the child
 - Nature and extent of the injury
 - Any other information, including that which led you to suspect child abuse.
 - Within 36 hours of making the telephone report, “mandated” reporters must also file a written report to the child protective agency.
- G. Volunteer Application Forms
- Any person volunteering in AYSO must complete and sign an AYSO volunteer application form each year either online or by using the hard copy form.
 - The application form includes a Criminal Background Check Release; criminal background checks will be performed, with priority given to coaches and referees, followed by team parents and other volunteers.
 - In order to maintain the integrity of the Safe Haven program, as well as for very important insurance concerns, it is imperative that only volunteers who have been approved be assigned to positions.
- H. Be aware of the risk assessment tool (review grid)
- This matrix includes situations common to many regions. Items listed in each row provide examples of the range of risk. When a region has several items checked in the “higher” column, the opportunity for abuse will be greater.
 - This is where the region is going to want to focus their attentions on designing risk management strategies to reduce the risk exposure for their region.
- I. Enforce Region’s Supervision Ratio:
- The region shall maintain the adult to child supervision ratio of 1:8 or less;
 - That is one adult for every eight or fewer children and two adults (one of whom may be the coach and one of whom should be of the same gender as the group) present at all times. The second adult does not have to be a coach or assistant coach; it can be any adult over the age of 18.
 - For the protection of both the children and the volunteer, no volunteer should permit himself or herself to be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during AYSO-sponsored activities.
 - No AYSO volunteer should drive any children, other than his or her own, to or from AYSO activities.
 - Once the head coach has assumed charge of the children on his or her team, he or she remains responsible until a duly designated adult has taken charge of each child after practice or a game or the child leaves the immediate vicinity of the practice or game as prearranged by the parent to walk home or to a friend’s or relative’s house. No child shall be left unsupervised after a game or practice. Parents who are unreasonably late or consistently tardy should be reported to the child protection advocate for action. Each coach may establish a standing policy of where children may be picked up by late parents.