

YMCA of El Paso

Youth Sports

Parent's Guidelines and Handbook

YMCA Sports Program Pledge

Win or lose, I pledge before God to do my best, to be a team player, to respect my teammates, opponents and officials, and to improve myself in Spirit, Mind, and Body.

YMCA Youth Sports Prayer

Dear God,

We thank you for this time together.

As parents, we thank you for children who can run and play and laugh, help them to learn and use their talents to the fullest and remain injury-free.

As kids, we thank you for parents who care about us, and who love us for who we are, not for how we perform.

Grant each team the grace to play their best,
To exercise good sportsmanship and fair play,
and to realize that win, lose, or tie we are all children of the same God.

- Amen

Welcome to YMCA Youth Sports

Your son or daughter is entering the most unique—and the *best*—sports program offered in America. In fact, we've named the program YMCA Youth Sports because we're confident it's the best designed sports program for young people ages 3 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**.

YMCA Youth Sports is currently designed for many sports—baseball and softball, basketball, indoor and outdoor soccer, flag football, and volleyball—and consists of two major divisions:

Y-Winners and YMCA Competitive

YMCA Y-Winners is a non-competitive, skill development program for children ages 3 to 10 years old. Players learn the basics of the game in a precompetitive environment where they can focus on learning the sport, not performing to win. Coaches are encouraged to teach the fundamentals of the game. Every child is a winner for the reason that all children are guaranteed to play half of each game and no team standings are kept.

Y-Winners are broken into four different age groups:

YMCA – 3 and 4 year olds

YMCA – 5 and 6 year olds

YMCA – 7 and 8 year olds

YMCA – 9 and 10 year olds

YMCA Youth Competitive Sports is a progressive sports program that combines the traditional philosophy of YMCA youth sports programs with new concepts and values. The objectives of YMCA Winners are the same as those for Y-Winners: learning the tactics and skills of the game, the rules and traditions of the sport, important fitness concepts, and character development. However, in YMCA Winners they are achieved along with competition with other players and teams. It's for young people ages 11 to 15, with the competition grouped in these age ranges:

YMCA - 11 and 12 year olds

YMCA - 13 to 15 year olds

What Makes YMCA Youth Sports So Special?

YMCA Youth Sports goes beyond teaching tactics and skills by weaving in simple but important fitness and character development concepts in every practice and game. YMCA Youth Sports focuses not only on skill development, but on the overall development of the youngster in areas that are important not just for the season but for a lifetime.

The YMCA Philosophy of Youth Sports

YMCA Youth Sports is not just another sports program. We have a mission, and that mission is stated in our Seven Pillars of YMCA Youth Sports.

Pillar One—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.

Pillar Two—Safety First. Although kids 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. Coaches make sure the equipment and facilities are safe, and they teach the sport so that the skills taught are appropriate for athletes' developmental levels. And coaches constantly supervise their players and stop any unsafe activities.

Pillar Three—Fair Play. Fair play is about playing by the rules—and more. It's about coaches and players showing respect for all involved in YMCA Youth Super Sports. It's about coaches being role models of good sporting behavior and guiding their players to do the same.

Pillar Four—Positive Competition. We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. The right perspective is when adults make decisions that put the best interests of the players before winning the contest. Learning to compete is important for youngsters, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. Through YMCA Youth Sports we want to help kids learn these lessons.

Pillar Five—Family Involvement. YMCA Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately in their child's participation in our sports programs. In addition to parents being helpful as volunteer coaches, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation. To help parents get involved appropriately, YMCA Youth Sports offers parent orientation.

Pillar Six—Sport for All. YMCA Youth Sports is an "inclusive" sports program. We offer programs to all youngsters regardless of their race, gender, religious creed, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the kids and their parents to do the same.

Pillar Seven—Sport for Fun. Sports are naturally fun for most kids. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sporting activities they over organize and dominate the activities to the point that it destroys kids' enjoyment of them. If we take the fun out of sports for young athletes, we are in danger of the young athletes taking themselves out of sports.

Tips for Becoming a Good Youth Sports Parent

- * Always treat others (coaches, parents, officials and players) the same way you would want your child to be treated. Set the example by showing respect, dignity, and sportsmanship at all times. Make only positive, encouraging comments.
- * Be responsible; Get your kids to practices and games on time. Make sure they have their uniform and sneakers and that they have had something to eat and drink. Let the coach know if your child will be missing a game or practice.
- * Focus on fun and participation rather than winning and losing.
- * Motivate through confidence by trying to identify a positive from every game and practice. Making mistakes is part of the learning process so don't criticize and try to avoid too much postgame analysis.
- * Act your age; youth sports are for kids. If you find yourself becoming too emotionally involved, take a step back and relax. Remember that your childhood is over. Give the young players a chance to enjoy theirs.
- * Be seen, not heard; nothing is better for a young player than having parents watch them play. However, nothing is worse for a player than to have a parent boo, taunt, or scream at officials, players or coaches.
- * Respect the officials. Even if you don't agree with a call, accept it and move on. It's not your job to officiate the game.
- * If you must talk to the coach, do it in private after the game or practice. Better yet, wait until the next day when the heat of the moment has passed. Never create a scene in front of the team.
- * Get interested in your child's sport and learn the rules.
- * Refrain from tobacco or alcohol use at all youth sports events.
- * Participate in team activities and volunteer to help.

YMCA PARENT'S CODE OF CONDUCT

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will support the implementation of the YMCA's character development values: caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all YMCA youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth – not for adults.
- I will do the very best to make the youth sports experience fun for my child.
- I will help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan or assisting with coaching.
- I will teach my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
- I will remember all coaches are volunteers, dedicating many hours to help children. I will treat them with respect. If I have suggestions or wish to discuss my child's progress with them, I will do so before or after practice or a game.
- I will try to have my child on time to practices and games.

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parents' Code of Conduct.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Tips for Becoming a Good Youth Sports Player

- Believe in yourself and your abilities. Learn from your mistakes.
- Practice the fundamentals and work hard on areas that need improvement.
- Listen to your coach.
- Be patient with your teammates and remember that everyone has strengths and weaknesses. In team sports, success only comes when the entire team plays well together.
- Give 100% in games and practices. It doesn't take special talent to hustle, but it could make all the difference in the game.
- Never question an official. They do not care who wins or loses and want nothing more than to have a game that is fair and safe. Make it easier by not talking back to them.
- Be a good sport and play fair. Put winning and losing in perspective. Remember the Golden Rule "Treat others as you would want to be treated"
- Include your parents in your sports world.
- Have fun and enjoy every moment playing.

Players' Code of Ethics

- I hereby pledge to be positive about my youth sports experience and accept responsibility for my participation by following the Players' Code of Ethics Pledge.
- I will treat each athlete, opposing coach, official, parent, and administrator with dignity, based on the YMCA Character Development values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
- I will uphold the authority of officials who are assigned to the contests in which I am participating, and I will assist them in every way to conduct fair and impartial competitive contests.
- I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials and parents at every game and practice by demonstrating good sportsmanship.
- I will attend every practice and game that I can, and will notify my coach if I cannot.
- I will expect to receive a fair and equal amount of playing time.
- I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
- I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert parents or coaches if it stops being fun!
- I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it's important to me.
- I will do my very best in school.
- I will remember that sports are an opportunity to learn and have fun.

Failure to adhere to the above stated code of ethics could result in suspension.

Player's Signature

Date

POLICIES

Refund policy for Youth Sports Programs:

Letters of credit/refunds for the youth sports program must be requested no later than the refund deadline, and a \$5.00 processing fee is deducted from your amount paid.

Team Assignments

Individual players will be placed on teams in such a manner as to keep the numbers of players on each team as even as possible.

Practice and Game Information

Teams will have the opportunity to practice once per week at the YMCA or a YMCA secured gymnasium. Practices will be no more than 60 minutes in length. The day of the week and time is at the coach's discretion. Games will be played on Saturdays at the YMCA or a YMCA secured gymnasium with the possibility of some Sunday or Weekday games.

Team Jerseys and Equipment:

Participants will receive a team shirt. These shirts must be worn for all games. The YMCA will provide game balls, however if your child wishes to bring their own ball, please make sure your child's name is on their ball with a permanent marker.

Coaches:

Please keep in mind that all coaches are YMCA volunteers. They are individuals who take their personal time to instruct and coach your child. Without their efforts, this program would not be possible. YMCA sports coaches are held to a higher standard. Coaches, assistant coaches and other volunteers are thoroughly screened (YMCA Volunteer Application & Local Background Check) by the YMCA. Your child will not be allowed to have any contact or physical interaction with their coach until all paperwork and background check is complete.

Officials:

Coaches and parents may NOT verbally abuse the officials. This will not be tolerated. Please respect their calls. Remember your child sees your attitude when you act negatively towards the official. The YMCA staff will gladly accept any suggestions (done in the proper manner). Remember that nobody is perfect, and officials are going to miss calls. Please notify the YMCA Program Director if you have any problems with an official.

Player Registration:

The YMCA registers players on a first come, first serve basis. If there are openings on a team you want to move to, we will make every effort to honor your request within the guidelines previously discussed. **THIS IS NOT GUARANTEED. No roster changes are made once practices begin.**

Playing Up or Down a Division:

If there are special circumstances, a player may move up one division if they are within a year of the minimum age of that division. Parents must clear this with the YMCA before your child will be moved up. **Players may not play down a division for any reason.**