



CHILDREN, YOUTH & TEEN PROGRAMS TOUCH POLICY

This policy is applicable to all persons who work with Children, Youth & Teen Programs. This touch policy is based on the premise that positive physical contact with children is absolutely necessary for their guidance; whereas “no touch” under any circumstances creates a stark and unacceptable atmosphere for children. Based on this premise, individuals involved in direct care will provide positive physical contact (appropriate touch) and refrain from inappropriate touch. Children will always have the option to refuse touch except in the case of danger to other children or the child him/herself.

To clarify, appropriate touch involves: recognition of the importance of physical contact to child nurturance and guidance, a adult respect for personal privacy and personal space for children, having the permission of the other for touch, response effecting the safety and well-being of the child, and role-modeling of appropriate touch by direct care staff.

Examples of appropriate touch include:

- Hugs and holding hands are expressions of affection to build self-esteem or when the child needs to be comforted
- Reassuring touch on the shoulder to show approval or provide support
- Backrubs to relax a tense child
- Assistance in toileting for children when needed

Examples of inappropriate touch include:

- Coercion (physical, emotion or other forms of exploitation of a child’s lack of knowledge)
- Disregard for the safety and the well-being of the child
- Failure to respect the child’s right to personal privacy and space or to refuse touch from an adult
- Violate cultural taboo against sexual contact between adults and children
- Satisfaction of adult needs at the expense of the child
- Attempts to change child behavior with physical force
- Forced goodbye kisses
- Corporal punishment
- Sexual exploitation
- Prolonged tickling

It is the responsibility of all Children, Youth & Teen Programs staff to:

- Monitor CYTP activities for compliance with the Touch Policy
- Ensure that the CYTP Touch Policy is discussed during the orientation phase for all new staff members/registered volunteers and those new staff members/volunteers sign a statement of understanding
- Take immediate disciplinary action for infractions of the Touch Policy
- Ensure parents are aware of the policy and have signed the statement of understanding indicating that they have read and understand the CYTP Touch Policy and the consequences of failure to comply
- Report to the supervisor any instances of inappropriate touch of which they are aware

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the Children, Youth & Teen Programs Touch Policy in its entirety.

Sponsor’s/Parent’s Signature: _____

Date _____