



# LITTLE LEAGUE® CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

## OVERVIEW

The safety and well-being of all participants in the Little League® program is paramount. Little League promotes a player-centric program where young people grow up happy, healthy, and, above all, safe. Little League does not tolerate any type of abuse against a minor, including, but not limited to, sexual, physical, mental, and emotional (as well as any type of bullying, hazing, or harassment). The severity of these types of incidents is life-altering for the child and all who are involved.

The goal of the Little League Child Protection Program is to prevent child abuse from occurring through an application screening process for all required volunteers and/or hired workers, ongoing training for its staff and volunteers, increased awareness, and mandatory reporting of any abuse. Little League is committed to enforcing its Child Protection Program, as highlighted below under “Enforcement.”

Local Little League programs should establish a zero-tolerance culture that does not allow any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of misconduct or abuse (mental, physical, emotional, or sexual) between players, coaches, parents/guardians/caretakers, spectators, volunteers, and/or any other individual. League officials must remove any individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and report the individual to the authorities immediately.

Little League continues to keep up-to-date with all of its safety policies and procedures within the [Child Protection Program](#), including adherence to the youth protection standards of [SafeSport](#) and USA Baseball's [Pure Baseball program](#). The Child Protection Program provides the resources necessary for a local league Board of Directors to successfully fulfill its requirements.

## FEDERAL LAW PROTECTING YOUTH INVOLVED IN OUR PROGRAMS

In 2018, the “Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017,” also known as the [SafeSport Act](#), became Federal Law. This national law increases the standard of care and makes it a crime for an individual involved in a national governing body sports organization, including Little League, to ignore, or not report to law enforcement, any reasonable suspicion of an act of child abuse, including sexual abuse, **within 24 hours**. The law applies to all employees, volunteers, or hired workers of Little League and makes all indicated Little League individuals’ mandatory reporters in the eyes of the law.

All chartered Little League programs must adhere to the following requirements:

- Conduct annual background checks on volunteers and hired workers. Prohibit anyone with any offenses that would disqualify them as a participant in any Little League activity.
- Report Child Abuse, including sexual abuse involving a minor, to the proper authorities within 24 hours.
- Adopt a policy that prohibits retaliation against “good faith” reports of child abuse.
- Adopt a policy that limits one-on-one contact with minors without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult.
- Volunteers and/or hired workers who have contact with minors are strongly encouraged to complete the [Abuse Awareness Program](#) training, provided by USA Baseball, or comparable training.

## CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

Defining child abuse is the first step in battling it. Child abuse can take several different forms, and it is important to understand what is considered child abuse and other terms that are mentioned throughout the Child Protection Program.

**Abuse or Neglect:** The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C.A §5106g), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum, “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation;” or “an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”

Different types of Child Abuse or Neglect

- **Neglect** is the negligent failure of a minor’s caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision which threatens harm to a minor’s health, safety, or welfare.
- **Physical Abuse** is any non-accidental, intentional, deliberate act that results in physical injury.
- **Emotional and Psychological Abuse** is any act that diminishes the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth by humiliation, intimidation, verbal assault, and emotional deprivation.
- **Sexual Abuse** is any type of maltreatment, violation, or exploitation that refers to the involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial benefit to the perpetrator.
- **Bullying** is the intentional, repetitive harmful act, words, and behavior that makes the victim feel hurt, scared, and/or ashamed. Bullying can also be an imbalance of real or perceived power between the bully and the victim. Different types of bullying include, but are not limited to, physical bullying, verbal bullying, emotional bullying, harassment, and hazing.
- **Grooming** is the process where an individual creates a relationship with a minor or the minor's family to gain trust so he or she can take advantage of a minor for a sexual purpose.

**Child/Minor:** Any individual who is younger than age 18 or who is not an emancipated minor.

**Little League Programs and Activities:** Any games, practices, tournaments, approved activities, and approved special games are considered Little League programs and activities.

**Little League Volunteer or Hired Worker:** Refers to any person in the organization who provides regular service to the league and has contact with minors: coaches, managers, the Board of Directors, program workers, coaches, bus and carpool drivers, maintenance workers, or anyone that has repetitive access to or contact with players or teams.

## VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PROCESS

With the above definitions, we have a better understanding of child abuse, which will prevent potential child abusers from entering the ranks of Little League. Another aspect of prevention is screening all applicants who wish to be a manager, coach, member of the Board of Directors, and any other person, volunteer, and/or hired worker who provides regular services to the league and/or have repetitive access to or contact with players or teams.

Little League requires a five-step process for selecting individuals to fill any of the above positions:

1. **Application** — All local leagues are required to use the [Little League Official Volunteer Application](#) for all managers, coaches, members on the Board of Directors, and any other person, volunteer, and/or hired worker who provides regular service to the league and/or has access to minors. The Little League Official Volunteer Application is available through the [JDP Quick App, for leagues that utilize Sports Connects](#) or online at [LittleLeague.org/BackgroundChecks](#). The applicant must also submit a government-issued photo identification card (e.g. driver's license) for the league to verify that the information on his/her volunteer application is correct (e.g. spelling of the name, address, date of birth, etc.). The completed volunteer application enables the local Little League program to run and review a background check.
2. **Background Check** — An annual background check, in compliance with Little League Regulation I(c) 8 and 9, is required to be conducted on every individual before the applicant assumes *any* of his/her duties for the current season. The background check must, at a minimum, meet the standard of a nationwide criminal search, a national sex offender registry search and a review of the [U.S. Center for SafeSport's Centralized Disciplinary Database](#) and the Little League International Ineligible list. The criteria for exclusion are detailed below. Information regarding free background check services is available at [LittleLeague.org/BackgroundChecks](#).
3. **Interview** — The applicant must be interviewed by an approved board member, and if selected to participate, should be educated on the position regarding Little League's Child Protection Program and their role in the protection of minors in the program. They should also be aware that as a volunteer, they are a mandatory reporter per the [SafeSport](#) Law.
4. **Reference Checks** — A minimum of three reference checks must be completed by an approved board member before a new volunteer is allowed participation in a Little League program. All information from reference checks should be documented, dated, and signed by the leader conducting the reference check. Reviewing the reference check is important to determine if any information from the reference differs from what is represented on the volunteer application and/or during the review. It is not required to conduct reference checks on returning volunteers and/or hired workers.
5. **Exclusion of Certain Individuals** — No local league shall permit any person to participate in any manner whose background check reveals a conviction for, guilty plea, no contest plea, or admission to any crime involving or against a minor. An individual is also prohibited from participating as a volunteer or hired worker if they appear on the [U.S. Center for SafeSport's Centralized Disciplinary Database](#) and/or Little League International Ineligible List. A local league may prohibit any individual from participating as a

volunteer or hired worker if the league deems the individual unfit or inappropriate to work or volunteer. If a potential volunteer appears on the National Sex Offender Registry, the league must [contact the Security Manager at Little League International](#) (570-326-1921) before appointing the volunteer to participate in any capacity in the league. The Security Manager will advise of the next steps and provide assistance to the decision-maker in the process.

## BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS

Per Little League Regulation 1(c) 8 & 9, every individual is required to complete a volunteer application **every year** before the applicant assumes *any* of his/her duties for the current season. The individual is required to consent to a background check during the volunteer application process. The local league Board of Directors must conduct, review, and verify that the background check process is completed.

Little League provides every league up to 125 free background checks through our preferred background check provider, [JD Palatine \(JDP\)](#). JDP offers a quick and easy option for potential volunteers to complete their volunteer application and a background check in the same process - the [JDP QuickApp](#). In order to use this tool, the League Official only needs the potential volunteer's full name and email address. The League Official then inputs the potential participant's information into the JDP platform, which automatically sends an email to the potential participant with a secure link to the Little League Official Volunteer Application in order for them to submit their own information for a background check.

For leagues that utilize [Sports Connect](#), there is an additional opportunity for potential volunteers to conduct the Official Little League Volunteer Application and background check in one platform. Sports Connect and JDP are integrated together to provide a process for the league officer to review and approve a potential volunteer directly in the Sports Connect platform. For more information on how a league can utilize the Sports Connect/JDP Integration, visit [LittleLeague.org/JDPSC](#).

Local Little League programs should conduct a background check which is concurrent with the Little League International fiscal year, October 1 to September 30. The background check must, at a minimum, meet the standard of a nationwide criminal search, a national sex offender registry search and a review of the [U.S. Center for SafeSport's Centralized Disciplinary Database](#) and the Little League International Ineligible List. Background checks conducted by JDP for local little leagues include all of the required database searches. Local leagues may utilize other background check providers but will need to confirm the provider's ability to satisfy all of the above requirements for a complete search, which may require contacting the Little League International's Security Manager to gain access to the Little League International Ineligible list.

**NOTE:** Some states have enacted laws that require additional background check requirements that are different from or supplement those mandated by Little League. For additional information on state requirements, visit [LittleLeague.org/StateLaws](#). Local leagues are required to satisfy both the state-specific requirements and the Little League requirements.

The league's Board of Directors must review the results of the background check with the Little League Official Volunteer Application and a government-issued photo identification card to verify that the information provided on both is identical (full name, DOB, and address). The league should confirm that the full **legal** name is correct (for example, John J Smith JR. not Johnny Smith). Some states and local counties only provide full legal name and DOB as identifiers for the National Criminal Database.

### **Offenses that Prohibit Participation**

Ensuring the safety of players is the most important job of a Little League volunteer. Unfortunately, the reality is that there are individuals in this world who intentionally cause harm to minors. Prohibiting those individuals from participating is every Little League participant's responsibility. The following offenses prohibit an individual from participating:

- Any charge, conviction, no contest plea or guilty plea, or admission to any crime involving or against a minor.
- An individual is listed on either of the [U.S. Center for SafeSport's Centralized Disciplinary Database](#) and/or Little League International Ineligible List.
- If an individual has any charge, conviction, no contest plea or guilty plea, or admission to any crimes that are considered sexual in nature or listed on the National Sex Offender Registry, they must [contact the Security Manager at Little League International](#) (570-326-1921) before appointing the individual as a volunteer to participate in any capacity in the league.
- **NOTE:** If an individual involved with a league, or any activity of the Little League program, is under investigation for any type of child abuse, or has a pending charge against, or involving, a minor, they must be suspended until the outcome of the investigation or pending charges are complete and the allegations are resolved.

*If a local league becomes aware of information, by any means whatsoever, that an individual, including, but not limited to, volunteers, players, and hired workers, has been convicted of, pled guilty, pled no contest, or admitted to any crime involving or against a minor, the local league must **immediately** contact the applicable governmental agency to confirm the accuracy of the information before allowing the volunteer to participate in their position or per their Little League Constitution suspend the volunteer until the information is received and reviewed.*

### **PROPERLY HANDLING SENSITIVE DOCUMENTS**

It is necessary to require the volunteers and/or hired workers to complete a volunteer application and consent to a background check, but the local Little League program also has due diligence to protect the information that is provided. To protect the privacy of volunteers and others, the following best practices have been established:

- The local League President shall only share, on a need-to-know basis, any personal, non-public record or information contained in the volunteer application or attached documents, with other League Officers to make personnel decisions.
- If a league is utilizing the JDP QuickApp, the records of a volunteer will remain on the JDP Portal as long as the local league is an active user with JDP. If a league is still utilizing paper Volunteer Applications, the league must adhere to the following protocol:

- The local League President must maintain the record of a volunteer in a locked, secured location for at least two (2) years after the volunteer is no longer in the league. When it comes time to dispose of these records, they must be **shredded or confidentially destroyed**, as they contain sensitive personal information. All actions concerning these records must comply with any applicable laws.
- If a local Little League Board of Directors has records utilized for reviewing a potential volunteer's background check, they must maintain these records the same length of time that the league maintains the volunteer's application. The records must be maintained in a locked and secured area, such as the League President's home, and not in a clubhouse or similar public facility. The record must also be properly shredded or confidentially destroyed when it is time to dispose of the records.

## MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

When an allegation of abuse is made against a Little League volunteer, the organization must protect the child from any further potential abuse by keeping the alleged abuser away from all children in the program until after the incident is reported to one or more of the below outlets **and** completely investigated.

### Investigating Suspected Abuse

Once a report of abuse has been made, the league should promptly notify the alleged abuser that they are temporarily suspended until the investigation is completed. Little League urges local leagues to work with a lawyer who can advise them about the rights of an alleged abuser. If the investigation substantiates the allegations, the local league must assure that the individual will not have any further contact with the children in the local league.

All information and statements received from the parties involved with the incident (suspect, victim, witness, etc.) must be passed onto the proper authorities as explained below. **Local Little League officials should not attempt to investigate suspected abuse. Let law enforcement and child services professionals conduct the investigation.**

### Reporting

[Child abuse laws vary from state to state](#), but federal law establishes a nationwide standard of duty to report suspected child abuse. Any individual who participates in the league must report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within **24 hours** to the proper authorities. If a case of abuse is suspected within a league, it must be reported to the appropriate child services organizations and/or local law enforcement, as well as their League President and District Administrator. **REMEMBER: If you or someone else is in immediate and serious danger, you should call 911.**

After making a report to law enforcement, individuals may also consider contacting one of the following organizations for additional support:

- [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#)
- [The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's](#)
- [The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline](#)

- *Please note that these organizations are not affiliated with Little League International and the information shared has been approved by these organizations.*

After reporting to the correct enforcement agencies, the local Board of Directors should also contact [Little League International's Security Manager](#) at 570-326-1921.

### **Suspending/Terminating**

If there are any allegations against an individual in the league, the local league must take the next step and assure that the individual will not have any further contact with the children in the local league. Little League urges local leagues to work with an attorney who can advise them about the rights of an accused abuser.

#### *Suspending*

- If there are any type of allegations against an individual, the league must promptly notify the alleged abuser that they are suspended until the end of an external investigation.

#### *Terminating*

- If the allegations are substantiated, the local league must notify the alleged abuser that they are terminated from their position. The league's Board of Directors should then communicate with the members of their local league about the termination. (see below)

**IMPORTANT: If an individual is suspended, this information is not necessary to report to the Little League Security Manager, but assistance, in terms of best practices, is available. If a league has banned, or will ban, an individual from their league, they must report this to [Little League International Security Manager](#).**

### **Communication from the League**

The local league's Board of Directors must be prepared to contact parents if a substantiated abuse allegation is made against a volunteer or participant within their league. The league must remember that both parties (suspect and victim) have privacy rights. The league must only provide a public record, without any commentary, about an arrest that involves claims of child abuse. Do not violate the privacy rights of individuals in your state, however, Little League parents do have a right to public records. Public records are documents received from a governmental body/agency that are available to the general public (i.e. police or sheriffs records, court records, a statement from the arresting police department). If a league is contacted by the media, assistance is available by contacting the [Little League International Security Manager](#) or the [Little League International Communications department](#). Additional tips on how to handle crisis communications can also be found on [Little League University](#).



## NON-RETALIATION FOR REPORTING

Concern has been expressed over the potential for criminal or civil liability if a report of abuse is subsequently found to be unsubstantiated. However, potential reporters should not be afraid to come forward in cases where they either have firsthand knowledge of or a good faith belief that abuse has occurred, even if there is a possibility that the report is wrong. Many states provide immunity to those who report suspected child abuse in “good faith.” Little League policy prohibits retaliation, of any kind, when a good faith report of child abuse is made.

## APPROPRIATE ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION GUIDELINES

An adult participant should not allow themselves to be alone with a minor (who is not their child) and should always position themselves in an area where they can be observed by others. Minors must always be supervised by appointed volunteers and/or hired workers who have completed the mandated background check. If an adult participant finds himself or herself alone with a child, he or she should remedy the situation by removing themselves to an area within an observable and/or interruptible distance of another adult over the age of 18.

### *Practices or games*

- **Encourage the Buddy System:** There is safety in numbers. Encourage players to move about in groups of two or more children of similar age, whether an approved adult is present or not. This includes travel, leaving the field, or using the restroom areas. It’s far more difficult to victimize a child if they’re not alone. If an approved adult must accompany a minor to another location, a minor of the same age or another approved adult should accompany them. All interactions between minors and adults should be observable and within an interruptible distance of another adult.
- **Shower and Toilet Facilities:** Most Little Leaguers® can use toilet facilities on their own, so there should be no need for an adult to accompany a child into restroom areas. However, there can sometimes be special circumstances under which a child requires assistance to use the toilet facilities. For example, within the Tee Ball and Challenger divisions, there may be a need for adult assistance, but there should still be adequate privacy for that child and there must be another approved adult who is within an observable and/or interruptible distance from you and the child you are assisting. Again, the “buddy system” should be utilized in instances like this.
- **Access to Certain Facilities:** Little League volunteers and/or hired workers must not allow any minors to enter an unsecured area without reviewing the area first. Controlling access to areas where children are present, such as the dugout or locker rooms, protects them from potential abuse and/or harm by outsiders. It’s not easy to control the access of large outdoor facilities, but visitors could be directed to a central point within the facility. Individuals should not be allowed to wander through the area without the knowledge of the Little League approved individuals.
- **Proper Supervision:** Minors must always be within the visual contact of an approved volunteer and/or hired workers when outside to verify that they are not approached by a stranger or an individual who is not permitted near the minors. Also, this helps to verify that the minors are participating in safe activities. If you cannot see a player, then they are not being properly supervised. Adults should still respect the minor’s privacy in shower and toilet facilities as outlined above.



### *Transportation*

- **Rooming:** Players must room with players of the same age and gender when traveling overnight for Little League-approved tournaments. Girls' rooms should not be adjacent to boys' rooms, and rooms should not have adjoining access, either between children or children and adults.
- **Car Safety:** When traveling in a vehicle with minors, adults must have at least two minors in the vehicle at all times.
- **Rides:** Children dropped off too early or picked up late are potential targets. Little League parents and volunteers should be encouraged to pick up and drop off on time. Little League encourages talking to the youth participating in our program about safety issues. Children should be warned about the risk of strangers and how to avoid accepting rides from anyone that was not pre-arranged by their parent/legal guardian. Children should also be told to always tell someone if they're approached by a stranger for any reason, even if it seems innocent, like to help the stranger find a pet. If a player is left unattended after a practice/game by their parent or guardian, the coach or manager must ask another approved adult to stay behind to wait for the parent/guardian.

### *Physical Contact*

- Physical contact between volunteers and/or hired workers with minors should be very limited. Some examples of appropriate physical touch should be limited to high fives or administering appropriate first aid.

## **PROHIBITED ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION GUIDELINES**

To minimize the chance of an individual's opportunity to groom a minor, the following practices relating to one-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an approved adult volunteer or hired worker should be followed:

- A minor athlete will not be left unattended or unsupervised at any time. The minor athlete should always be within the sight of an approved adult volunteer.
- Volunteers or hired workers are prohibited from being alone with minor athletes unless:
  - There is an emergency.
  - There is written permission from the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian.
  - The volunteer or hired worker is the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian, sibling, or personal care assistant.
- Volunteers or hired workers should not interact one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in settings outside the regular scope of the official Little League program (e.g. the volunteer's home, a restaurant, a vehicle, personal communication including electronic communication).
- Minor athletes may not reside with unrelated volunteers or hired workers for the purpose of participation qualification.

**NOTE:** If a volunteer is in a position where he/she is left alone with a player, they should not leave the child so long as the volunteer has exhausted all of the options above to comply with the guidelines of the policy. Likewise,

if a child is injured and must be transported to a hospital, urgent care, or treatment center, the volunteer should not leave the child alone if all options have been exhausted to comply with the policy in an emergency where medical treatment is necessary.

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

Education is an important tool for both Little League children and volunteers. It empowers them to recognize potentially compromising situations, and it places a barrier between abusers and their victims. Here are a few education tools and prevention suggestions for our Little League volunteers, hired workers, and children.

- **Training:** Training is strongly encouraged for all Little League participants, including players. Little League has Abuse Awareness training videos available to all Little League individuals through USA Baseball's Pure Baseball initiative and the SafeSport Organization. The free Abuse Awareness for Adults courses provides resources to create a positive and safe environment for all athletes, coaches, parents, legal guardians, umpires, and spectators by understanding how to recognize misconduct and abuse of all types. Topics covered include how to identify and report incidents and what abuse awareness policies should be in place. The free Abuse Awareness for Minors course provides resources to identify what abuse is and what to do if someone is being abused.
  - [Pure Baseball Abuse Awareness Training](#) (for both adults and players)
  - [SafeSport Reporting Training](#)
  - *Please note that these organizations are not affiliated with Little League International and the information shared has been approved by these organizations.*
- **Meet with Volunteers:** Since Little League is a volunteer-led program, our membership changes from year to year. It is important to hold regular meetings in which both volunteers and parents can talk about child abuse and ask questions. The Child Protection Program and Policy should be reviewed with participants annually. Since Little League could not exist without the time and effort from volunteers and parents, it is important to communicate directly with the volunteers. For that reason, the Little League Child Protection Program should be freely copied and distributed to all adults in the local league.
- **Make Our Position Clear:** Little League has a clearly defined policy for dealing with child abuse. Make adults and minors aware that Little League will not tolerate child abuse in any form. Suspected abuse must be reported and retaliation for good faith reporting is prohibited.
- **Stress the Role of Adults:** Minors should be encouraged to take an active role in protecting themselves, but the responsibility for ensuring their safety ultimately rests with the adults. We can identify potentially uncomfortable situations, for ourselves, as well as for children. The welfare of our Little Leaguers is the highest priority in any situation.
- **Participate in ASAP:** More than 90% of leagues in the United States participate in the [A Safety Awareness Program \(ASAP\)](#). Basic safety procedures can help in the identification and prevention of child abuse. Leagues can also include their own additional best practice to prevent child abuse in their league's ASAP program. One of the requirements for the ASAP program is to properly distribute the plan, which should incorporate the Little League Child Protection Program as well.
- **Provide Additional Resources:** Many organizations will gladly assist our efforts to protect our young people, several of which are listed below. Feel free to provide the name of the below organizations and the websites to parents, volunteers hired workers, umpires, as well as minors.

[SafeSport](#)  
[USA Baseball- Pure Baseball](#)  
[National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#)  
[American SPCC](#)

- *Please note that these organizations are not affiliated with Little League International and the information shared has been approved by these organizations.*

## BULLYING AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Little League is focused on the total well-being of our players. Any type of bullying can have serious effects on players. Anyone who engages in harassment, in any form (verbal, physical, cyber, etc.), or commits violence or acts of intimidation shall be prohibited from participating in Little League. This applies to player-to-player, adult-to-player, player-to-adult, and adult-to-adult interactions. We strive to have a safe and encouraging environment at all Little League functions.

The following types of behavior will not be accepted in the Little League culture:

- **Physical Bullying:** Hitting, pushing, shoving, punching, strangling, hair-pulling, stealing, excessive tickling, or any other deliberate and inappropriate touching.
- **Verbal Bullying:** Hurtful, deliberate name-calling, banter, taunting, intimidating, threatening, gossiping, and teasing.
- **Emotional Bullying:** Rejection, terrorizing, extorting, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics, such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation, manipulating friendships, isolating, and peer pressure.
- **Social/Cyber Bullying:** Deliberately excluding, alienating, ignoring, spreading rumors, impersonation, inappropriate photographs, video shaming, and hacking social media accounts.
- **Harassment:** Harassment includes bullying and all of the actions listed above, as well as subjecting someone to unwanted sexual advances, involving physical contact or explicit written or verbal language.
- **Hazing:** An initiation, ritual process involving different types of harassments that intentionally humiliates the individual or a group.

### Creating a Player-Centric Environment

Both children and adults may experience frustration at times. It is important to recognize when a person needs to take a break from activities to calm down. Adult volunteers and hired workers should never escalate a situation when someone is upset. Instead, they should attempt to de-escalate any stressful situation.

Little League recommends that local leagues create and issue a “Code of Conduct” that is upheld by players, managers, coaches, board members, umpires, other volunteers, and parents. This should be reviewed each season to establish a safe environment for everyone involved with the local Little League season.

If an individual (player, volunteer, or parent) feels they are stressed out and cannot handle the situation, they should remove themselves from the area until the issue is de-escalated. These situations might include:

- A coach screaming at an umpire - the game should be paused until the coach and umpire can remove themselves until the issue is de-escalated.
- A player getting emotional about a bad play and starts to break down on his teammates - The coach should remove the player from the dugout until he can resolve the issue.
- A parent in the crowd that does not agree with the placement of their child in the lineup/field - A volunteer should remind the parent about respecting the game and ask them to step away or to respect the coach's decision.

Create a positive area for players to enjoy the game by implementing a "Cheer Only Zone" at the field to remove the negativity for players. Leagues can utilize training tools for their board members on how to implement a positive coaching experience through:

- [Positive Coaching Alliance \("PCA"\)](#)
  - PCA offers resources for coaches, parents, athletes, and leaders to make better athletes and better people. As young people return to playing sports after going through the trauma of being away from school, friends, and sports due to the coronavirus, we need to make sure our coaches are equipped with the skills to deal with their social and emotional needs.
- [Live Like Sam](#)
  - Live Like Sam supports youth from diverse backgrounds to develop a healthy sense of self-identity, character, purpose, and connection to the community by fostering positive well-being through educational programming and mental fitness initiatives. Live Like Sam aims to help individuals and their families thrive by empowering and championing youth development. We believe that social and emotional conditioning gives young adults the tools to positively impact their lives, the lives of others, and to succeed in life.

*Please note that these organizations are not affiliated with Little League International and the information shared has been approved by these organizations.*

## **APPLICABILITY**

The Child Protection Policy and the elements of the broader program apply to anyone who has *any* involvement in a local Little League program, as well as anyone who participates in Little League-approved programs and activities, including, but not limited to, Boards of Directors, volunteers, managers, coaches, umpires, spectators, players, and hired workers who provide regular services to the league and/or have repetitive access to or contact with players or teams. Anyone with questions on who the Child Protection Policy applies to should contact the [Security Manager at Little League International](#).

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Local leagues should establish a culture that does not allow any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct behavior between players, coaches, parents, volunteers, hired workers, and any other individual. League officials must remove any individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and report the individual to the authorities immediately.

Any violations of the policies set forth herein may result in the suspension or revocation of the local league's tournament privileges and/or charter by action of the Charter or Tournament Committees in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.