

# **TALLAHASSEE PARKS, RECREATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

## **2011 YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL PROGRAM**

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### **NATIONAL YOUTH SPORTS COACHES ASSOCIATION CLINIC**

DATE: Sunday, September 11, 2011, 1:00-4:00 pm

PLACE: COMMUNITY ROOM, 912 MYERS PARK DRIVE  
TALLAHASSEE PARKS, RECREATION & NEIGHBORHOOD AFFAIRS DEPT.

**2011  
YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL PROGRAM  
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## I. PURPOSE OF THE FLAG FOOTBALL PROGRAM

The basic purpose of our Youth Flag Football program is to provide a leisure time activity that has all of the characteristics necessary in helping youngsters to enjoy successful experiences at all levels of ability. The program also strives to increase each player's skill level and enjoyment of the game. We believe that under the proper leadership the program can bring about these objectives. In order for this to become a reality, it is necessary to further develop the objectives below.

Fair play

Learning to get along with others and making friends

Attitudes that are considered good for community living

Good sportsmanship

Fun and enjoyment

Obey and respect the rules and rights of others

Obtain skills necessary for fun and enjoyment

To develop healthy bodies and minds

Belonging - being part of a group

Appreciation of fine play of opponents as well as self

Learning to cooperate - TEAM WORK

Learning to compete - SELF DISCIPLINE

## II. SCOPE OF THE FLAG FOOTBALL PROGRAM

The program will encompass nine (9) areas of participation. The Pee Wee program is designed for players ages 5-7, the Junior program includes players who are 8-10 years old, the Intermediate League is for those who are 11-13 years of age, and the Senior League is for 14-17 years of age. The age of the player as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 is the league age of the player. A player may participate at any park desired.

## III. ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER COACH

The Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department wants to thank you for accepting the responsibility of coaching one of our youth flag football teams. No program can be a success without good leadership.

Please make sure that **all** of your assistant coaches complete the Volunteer Coaches form before providing **any** assistance; return these forms to your Supervisor immediately.

The sport will take many hours and you will serve without pay, but your job is important. You will be building the moral fiber, mental health and physical strength of young players who will be the citizens of tomorrow.

These players are at a most impressionable age and the training you give them, good or bad, will have a lasting effect on their young lives.

For some, playing on your team may be their only contact with organized sports. We know you will want them to remember it as a pleasurable and meaningful experience.

A successful experience for youth of this age in a developmental sports program is to have an opportunity to participate and enjoy (have fun) doing the activity. If each participant perceives the activity in this fashion they will be at the height of their “teachable” moments. This is when they are prepared and interested in learning about the activity and will strive to enhance their abilities and skills.

Please remember, “You can’t make a youngster have fun.” You must use your expertise to provide the atmosphere for enjoyment and the rest will follow.

Without your help, this program would not be possible. On behalf of the athletes, parents, and the Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department, THANKS!!!!

#### IV. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department operates many recreational sports programs for young persons and provides facilities for the operation of many others. The Department recognizes and greatly appreciates the commitment of its volunteer administrators, officials, and coaches involved in those programs. Your time and effort is greatly appreciated by the Department, the league or organization in which you coach, and the parents and participants in these programs.

The Department is committed to creating, through programs, opportunities and experiences that will foster the development of positive moral and ethical standards within the youth of our community, and will promote good sportsmanship among all participants. The achievement of those goals, in large part, depends on the character and conduct of persons involved in those programs as administrators, officials, and coaches.

No person has a “right” to participate as a volunteer in any of the programs. Such participation is controlled initially by the administrators for the particular program; but as a result of its obligation to the welfare of participants, its interest in the continuity and image of all such programs, and its interest in regulation of activities using facilities maintained by the Department. Participation by volunteers is ultimately subject to the oversight and sole discretion of the Department. An inducement to permitting their participation in programs which utilize its facilities, the Department must be assured that such persons are committed to conducting themselves in a manner which will serve as a positive role model for the participants and which will be consistent with the high moral and ethical standards, and with the ideals of good sportsmanship, which the Department seeks to develop through all athletic programs.

In order to assure the Department of his/her continuing commitment to those goals, the undersigned administrator, official, and coach hereby agrees to abide, and be bound, by the

following standards of conduct and further agrees to the authority of the Department to enforce those standards.

1. Abstain from using any tobacco or alcohol products in or around the playing field or the sports complex in which the field is located.
2. Refrain from participating in any game or practice activity when it is apparent that you have consumed alcohol prior to arriving for that activity.
3. Refrain from using abusive or profane language in or around the playing field or the sports complex in which the field is located.
4. Refuse to permit a player to participate in a practice or game when in doubt as to the player's health or physical condition.
5. Abide by a doctor's decision in all matters relating to a player's health and physical ability to participate.
6. Provide equal opportunities for all players regardless of race, color, ethnic background, religion, or age, or otherwise qualified.
7. Refrain from accepting or offering any gift, gratuity, or favor that might influence your judgment, or with the intent of obtaining special privileges, and from exploiting any relationship with a player for your personal gain or other advantage.
8. Strive to promote good mental and physical health in all aspects of participation and refrain from any type of verbal or physical abuse of any players.
9. Constantly display and demand good sportsmanship in practice and in games, including, but not limited to, accepting decisions of game officials in a professional manner; refrain from criticizing opposing coaches, players, and fans; congratulate opposing players and coaches following a game; refrain from teaching unsportsmanlike strategies; and refrain from "running up the score" rather than providing more players with opportunities to participate.
10. Consistently act in a manner which is in keeping with the positive image and high standards of personal conduct which each program should strive to teach and to foster. No volunteer who is accused or convicted of acts involving criminal conduct, moral turpitude, or other conduct that is inconsistent with the overall goals and welfare of the particular program or the Department shall be permitted to participate in such a program in any capacity without the prior written permission of the Department.
11. Conduct yourself in accordance with all rules, regulations, and determinations of the particular league or program in which you are participating.
12. Make any criticism "constructive" in nature and reserve it for private moments.
13. Hold a pre-season parents' meeting, and maintain open communications with parents relating to all aspects of participation, including conduct of both parents and players.
14. Consistently act in the best interests of the players and the particular athletic program in which you are participating so as to provide a positive experience for each player and to promote a positive image of the program.
15. Do not attempt to make a farce of the game by telling or teaching players unsportsmanlike strategies.

16. Always speak to officials in a courteous manner when discussing a rule interpretation.

## **V. ATTENTION: Supervisors, Officials, Coaches and Volunteers**

The Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department has ZERO tolerance for the use or distribution of alcohol and drugs while administering City services.

## **VI. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

We want to emphasize the importance of conducting yourselves properly in dealing with medical emergencies at your facilities. Realizing we are not empowered or trained to "treat" victims, we still have the responsibility to render front line aid and supervise the situation. This may involve discussing the situation with the victim, coach, or parent, or to call in the Ambulance Service. Listed below are some guidelines to follow, which should always be coupled with good common sense.

In the event of an accident or emergency:

1. Try to determine the extent of the injury. If in doubt as to the seriousness of the accident, do not move the patient. Keep him comfortable and reassured and call an ambulance. If the situation calls for it, apply ice or keep the patient warm and comfortable.
2. Front line care of an accident would include use of ice, stoppage of bleeding, restoring breathing, and treatment for shock, heat exhaustion or stroke.
3. Be sure victim is as comfortable as possible. If it's cold, cover them. If it's hot, loosen equipment, etc. USE GOOD COMMON SENSE!
4. Call for additional support. Use other adults to secure necessary materials and never leave the patient alone with other players.
5. If an ambulance is called, be sure you have someone to direct it to the site. Assist paramedics in any way you can.
6. Always prepare an accident report that will be turned in to the supervisor who will then get the information to the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Dept.
7. Be sure you have access to a phone within a short period of time.
8. Submit a follow up report of the injured person. Call to find out the extent of the injury and how he is doing.

Above all, supervisors and coaches are to take charge during these incidents and must coordinate aid rendered.

Please advise all your coaches of the importance of being sure all aspects of an accident are handled properly and expeditiously.

## **Protect Yourself**

### **Heat Stress**

When the body is unable to cool itself by sweating, several heat-induced illnesses such as heat stress or heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke can occur, and can result in death.

### **Factors Leading to Heat Stress**

High temperature and humidity; direct sun or heat; limited air movement; physical exertion; poor physical condition; some medicines; and inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces.

### **Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion**

- Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting.
- Weakness and moist skin.
- Mood changes such as irritability or confusion.
- Upset stomach or vomiting.

### **Symptoms of Heat Stroke**

- Dry, hot skin with no sweating.
- Mental confusion or losing consciousness.
- Seizures or convulsions.

### **Preventing Heat Stress**

- Know signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses; monitor yourself and coworkers.
- Block out direct sun or other heat sources.
- Use cooling fans/air-conditioning; rest regularly.
- Drink lots of water; about 1 cup every 15 minutes.
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals.

### **What to Do for Heat-Related Illness**

- Call 911 (or local emergency number) at once.

#### **While waiting for help to arrive:**

- Move the worker to a cool, shaded area.
- Loosen or remove heavy clothing.
- Provide cool drinking water.
- Fan and mist the person with water.

**Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department**  
**Lightning Safety for All Outdoor Activities**

**Lightning-Safety Policy**

All adults participating in or observing outdoor activities or events are responsible for their own safety and the safety of their children. Adults shall monitor threatening weather conditions at all times.

During supervised activities, before each practice, warm-up time or game, the umpire, home team coach, recreation supervision personnel or other official shall appoint an adult as a designated “weather watcher.” The “weather watcher” will make the call to stop play, remove individuals from the field, and announce a warning to the spectators should weather conditions be determined to be potentially dangerous due to the approach of a lightning storm.

Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds and thunder or lightning. Even storms that are many miles away can pose a lightning danger to your area. This may mean the appropriate decision is to suspend activities even before the first sight of lightning or sound of thunder.

All participants shall have the right to leave an athletic site or recreational activity, without fear of repercussion or penalty, in order to seek a safer structure or location if they feel they are in danger from impending lightning activity. Safety is the number one consideration. The activity can be made up later.

**LIGHTNING SAFETY STRATEGIES**

Lightning safety strategies include avoiding shelter under trees, avoiding open fields and spaces.

Individuals who feel their hair stand on end or skin tingle or hear crackling noises should assume the lightning-safe position (i.e., crouched on the ground, weight on the balls of the feet, feet together, head lowered,

and ears covered). Do not lie flat on the ground.

**SAFE LOCATIONS**

The following areas are not appropriate shelter and should be avoided: Any area of higher elevation; wide-open areas such as sports fields, tall isolated objects such as flag poles, light poles, or trees; metal fences and metal bleachers, unprotected open buildings like dugouts, picnic pavilions, and rain shelters.

The primary choice for a safe structure is any fully enclosed, substantial building. If a substantial building is not available, a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows completely closed is a reasonable alternative. Convertible vehicles and golf carts do not provide a high level of protection and cannot be considered safe from lightning.

A swimming pool can be a dangerous location during thunderstorms. The current can be propagated through plumbing and electric connections via the underwater lights and drains of most swimming pools.

Lightning current can also enter the building, either into the electric wiring inside the building or through underground plumbing pipelines that enter the building. If lightning strikes the building or ground nearby, the current will most likely follow these pathways to the swimmers through the water.

Small structures, such as rain or picnic shelters or athletic storage sheds, are generally not properly protected and should be avoided during thunderstorms as well. These locations may actually increase the risk of lightning strike via a side flash and cause injury to the occupants.

## CRITERIA FOR POSTPONEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

When determining whether or not to suspend play, the designated “weather watcher” should use his/her common sense, good judgment and the “30-30 Rule.” If a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during an activity or contest (regardless of whether or not lightning is seen or thunder heard), postpone or suspend the activity until the hazard has passed for at least 30 minutes.

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### THE 30-30 RULE

#### **Criteria for suspension of activities:**

By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 30 seconds, all individuals should already be inside a safe shelter.

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If activity has been suspended due to lightning, the designated weather watcher should wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder prior to resuming activity. Each time additional lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the minimum 30-minute waiting period should be reset.

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#### **Criteria for resumption of activities:**

Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound (thunder) or observation of lightning before leaving the safe shelter to resume activities.

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The 30-minute rule can also be explained in another way. A typical thunderstorm moves at a rate of approximately 25 miles per hour. Experts believe that 30 minutes allow the thunderstorm to be about 10 to 12 miles from the area, minimizing the probability of a nearby, and therefore dangerous lightning strike.

A clear sky or lack of rainfall are not adequate indicators for resuming play. The minimum 30-minute return-to-play waiting period should not be shortened. Play should not be resumed even after the 30-minute waiting period if any signs of thunderstorm activity remains in the area or

if the weather forecast indicates the threat is not over.

## THE FLASH-TO-BANG METHOD

The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient means for determining the distance to a lightning flash and can also be used to determine when to suspend or postpone activities. The flash-to-bang method is based on the fact that light travels faster than sound, which travels at a speed of approximately 1 mile every 5 seconds.

To use the flash-to-bang method, begin counting on the lightning flash, and stop counting when the associated clap of thunder is heard. When storms have a high flash rate, it is important to correlate a specific flash with the thunder it produced. Divide the time to thunder (in seconds or count one thousand one, one thousand 2, and so on) by 5 to determine the distance, in miles, to the lightning flash. As the flash – to - bang count approaches 30 seconds, all persons should be seeking, or already inside, a safe structure or location. This is the minimal guideline when using the flash-to-bang method to halt activities.

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**A significant principle to remember is, “if you see it (lightning) flee it, if you hear it (thunder), clear it.”**

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**NO LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES CAN GUARANTEE ABSOLUTE SAFETY. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY PERSON TO BE AWARE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO BE SAFE. USE COMMON SENSE AND GOOD JUDGMENT. PLAN AHEAD AND MAKE SAFETY YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.**

## **VII. FLAG FOOTBALL RULES, REGULATIONS AND INFORMATION**

1. **COACHES**- Each team will have two (2) coaches, if possible. All coaches must complete a “blue” background form before performing their role as a coach. Coaches will only be allowed on the field for pee wee games.
2. **ELIGIBLE PLAYERS:**
  - A. **PEE WEE** - This program is for 5, 6, and 7-year-old players.
  - B. **JUNIOR** - This program is for 8, 9, and 10-year-old players. A player who has turned 11 prior to September 1 is not eligible for the program.
  - C. **INTERMEDIATE** - This program is for players 11, 12, and 13-year-old-players. A player who has turned 14 prior to September 1 is not eligible for the program.
  - D. **SENIOR** - This program is for players 14, 15, 16 and 17-year-old-players. A player who has turned 18 prior to September 1 is not eligible for the program.
3. **EQUIPMENT**- Each player shall be furnished with a shirt and a flag football belt. Players must wear shoes at all times. No metal or screw-on cleats allowed. The team shirt must be worn at all times and must be tucked inside the pants. The shirt cannot be altered in any way. The player may not tie knots into the flag belt. If the belt does not fit the player, the supervisor can get another belt for the player. **A player’s shorts may not be the same color as the flags on the flag football belt. Players’ shorts must also not have pockets or belt loops. Any child that has shorts with pockets or belt loops will not allowed to participate.**
4. **COST**- The registration fee for city players will be \$29.50.
5. **INSURANCE**- Recreation accident insurance will be offered for \$10.00 per player. It is a \$100,000 non-deductible policy. Coverage is optional.
6. **LEAGUE**- Each park shall have at least four (4) teams if possible. If not, this would necessitate combining parks and possibly playing at a central location or alternate the parks.
7. **NEWSPAPER**- Information pertaining to games will not appear in the paper.
8. **NUMBER OF PLAYERS PER TEAM** - Each team will have a maximum of sixteen (16) players and two (2) coaches.
9. **PLAYING FIELD**- The field shall measure thirty (30) yards wide by sixty (60) yards long with yardage lines fifteen (15) yards apart. There shall be end lines that shall extend eight (8) yards beyond the goal line. The Senior League will play on a 40x80 yard field at Messer South and/or Tom Brown.
10. **OFFICIALS**- There shall be two officials, if possible. They will be distinguished in dress and shall have a timepiece for keeping the correct playing time. The Park Supervisor and league supervisor shall select them.
11. **PLAYER PARTICIPATION RULE** – Coaches must designate only 7 players for offense each quarter. Those players cannot play defense unless they have been designated to play both ways. If a team has less than 14 players, the coach must designate which players will play both ways per quarter. All players must have an opportunity to play both ways before a player may be used again. All players must play in every game. In order to assure this, the player participation rule will be mandatory. The coach may use his own judgment if a player is late without a good reason or has missed scheduled practices. A coach should check with parents to determine the nature of the missed or late practices. All players should be treated equally, regardless of ability.

12. **PLAYER SUPERVISION** - In order to insure the safety of all players, the Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Dept. is asking each coach to stay with your players after practices and games until all players have been picked up. If the same parents are consistently late, let your supervisor know. The supervisor will talk to the parents about this. If it continues, a player may be dismissed from the league. **Under no circumstances shall a coach leave a player unattended.**
13. **MANDATORY PARENTS MEETING** - All coaches **must** have a preseason meeting with parents to discuss the philosophy of the program, expectations, parental conduct, various rules and regulations, and other necessary team information.
14. **EQUIPMENT APPROVAL** - All uniforms and/or equipment not provided by Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department must be approved by a TPRND park supervisor.
15. **ACCIDENT REPORTS** - Fill out an Accident Report for any injury that you feel will either need or potentially need, medical attention. A copy of the report should be turned into the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department within 24 hours. Use the form provided online at talgov.com or ask your park supervisor.
16. **BALL SIZE** - Pee Wee – Pee Wee size (Voit CF5, Tachikara SF2R)  
Junior - Junior Size (Mikasa F5006, Baden F100, or Voit CF6S)  
Intermediate - Intermediate Size (Mikasa F5007, Baden F200, or Voit CF7S)  
Senior - Full Size (Mikasa F5000, Baden F300, or Voit CF9S)
17. **TEAM PICTURES/TROPHIES** - The Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Dept. cannot endorse or take responsibility for team activities beyond what is established as standard procedures in conducting this activity. Activities such as photography sessions, team pictures, etc. are activities that parents must understand are their personal choice and ultimate responsibility if they opt to participate in them. **Coaches are advised to refrain from actually organizing "outside" activities.** If parents want to undertake these activities it must be understood that mandatory donations for these events from team members is prohibited. All donations are voluntary and cannot affect a participant's rights to any benefits afforded any other player.
18. **CHOICE OF GOALS**- As in regular football, a coin toss will determine whether the team that wins the coin toss receives the ball to begin the game or defer to the second half. Teams will change directions after each half.
19. **DEAD BALL**- An incomplete sideward or backward pass is a dead ball. The same applies to a pass or snap from the center which is fumbled. In both cases, a loss of down is the result. The rule for fumbles applies. The ball is dead where it first hits the player or possession is lost.
20. **FUMBLE**- Fumbles are declared dead the instant the ball hits the ground and goes to the team who fumbles the ball. Fumbles forward - ball is placed where the player fumbled. Fumbled backward - ball is placed where it hits.
21. **DOWNED BALL**- A ball carrier is considered down and the ball dead when an opposing player secures possession of the carrier's flag belt. The defensive player should stand as close to the point of possession of the flag belt as possible. In the event of a flag belt dropping without being pulled by a "tackler", the runner is not down until the defender has touched the ball carrier with one hand anywhere.
22. **EXTRA POINT**- One point will be awarded if attempt is made from the two (2) yard line. Two points will be awarded if the attempt is made from the five (5) yard line. Defense will line up in regards to rule 28 on page 11. If the defensive team intercepts the pass and runs it back, 2 points will be awarded.

23. **SAFETY**- When the defensive player pulls the flag from the belt of the offensive player behind that offensive player's own goal line. Ball is put into play at the kick off mark with the team scoring the points receiving the ball as in regular football. A place kick or punt may be used.
24. **SCORING**-  
 Touchdown - Six (6) points  
 Safety - Two (2) points  
 Extra Point - See rule #22
25. **FIRST DOWNS**- A first down is gained when a team crosses the next closest forward yard line. If a team loses yardage, it must still cross the original yard line established before obtaining a first down. The field will be marked off at fifteen (15) yard intervals. A team will have a series of four (4) consecutive downs in which to advance the ball on or across the next first down line. The senior field will be marked off at 20 yard intervals.
26. **FORMATIONS**- Any of the regular football formations may be used.
27. **LENGTH OF PLAYING TIME**  
 A. The length of a quarter shall be ten (10) minutes. The clock shall not stop except for injury and thirty (30) second time outs. However, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters, the clock shall be stopped in the last two minutes under the following scenarios: when there is a timeout, an injury timeout, incomplete pass, or when the ball carrier (offensive or defensive) is out of bounds.  
 B. One (1) minute between quarters and five (5) minutes between halves.  
 C. Two (2) time outs per half. Each time out shall be a maximum of thirty (30) seconds. Play that has been stopped because of injury does not constitute a time out.  
 D. There will be a twenty-five (25) second maximum in huddle. The huddle starts when the referee marks the ball ready for play. If longer, a delay of game is called.
28. **LINE OF SCRIMMAGE**- A three (3) yard zone will be observed, however, if the line of scrimmage is less than three (3) yards from the defensive players goal or first down line, this rule does not apply and the neutral zone will be goal line or first down line.
29. **NUMBER OF PLAYERS**- Seven (7) players from each team participates at any one time.  
 A. **Offense**- **There is no limit to the number of players that may be on the line of scrimmage. A team may have one to six players on the line. No player on the line of scrimmage may simulate action prior to the snap.**  
 B. **Defense**- **There is no minimum or maximum number of players on the line of scrimmage. However, defensive linemen must be three (3) yards behind the line of scrimmage and cannot rush until the ball has been snapped.**
30. **PASSES**- All players are eligible to receive passes. Any defensive player may intercept a pass. An incomplete forward pass is returned to the line of scrimmage even though it may have been preceded by a successful lateral pass. A forward pass may be thrown from any point behind the line of scrimmage. A player may not pass the ball to himself. On an incomplete lateral pass, the ball is dead at the point it hits the ground. A team may throw as many forward passes as desired, as long as each pass is thrown from behind the line of scrimmage. A pass may not cross the line of scrimmage and be thrown back over the line and thrown forward again. **A completed pass is when a receiver comes down with the ball with at least one foot down in bounds (like college).**
31. **PUNTING**- Fourth down punts must be declared and the defense cannot rush. Quick kicks are illegal and will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. **(PEE WEE League ONLY: Coach may opt to**

place the ball 2 lines from the line of scrimmage or if across midfield on the extra point line instead of punting procedures.)

32. **PUTTING BALL IN PLAY**- The ball is put in play at the kick off line (marked by X) by a place kick. The receiving team will have its linemen at the mid-field line. Neither team may advance until the ball has been kicked. **(PEE WEE League ONLY: Coach may opt to place ball on the 15 yard line instead of standard kick off procedures.)** The ball is dead if it touches the ground after coming in contact with any player of the receiving team advancing the ball. If the ball goes out of bounds on the 1st kick off, a three (3) yard penalty will be assessed. In the event of a kick-off going out of bounds a second time, the receiving team will put the ball in play at the mid-field stripe. NO OPTION.
33. **CENTER** – The center must snap the ball between the legs. **Once the center hikes the ball he/she can't be given the ball back from the quarterback by just touching the quarterback's hand. The quarterback must hand off the ball to his/her side or behind them but not in front him to his center. He/She also may throw to anyone including the center once the center has crossed the scrimmage line.**
34. **SHIRTS TUCKED IN** - All playing shirts must be tucked into the pants. If, in the judgment of the referee, a shirt that is out of the pants prevents a defensive player from pulling the flag belt, the ball carrier is down and a three (3) yard penalty will result.
35. **HAT RULE** - Hats or other head garments may not be worn during play.
36. **SPECTATOR CONTROL** - A team is responsible for its spectators. Officials may penalize a team for the behavior of its spectators.
37. **INADVERTENT WHISTLE** - If the whistle blows inadvertently before the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the down is played over. If beyond the line, the offensive team will have the option of accepting the play at the time of the whistle or replaying the down. If the official judges the ball carrier would have scored if there had been no whistle, a touchdown can be awarded.
38. **17 POINT RULE** - **Applies to the Senior League ONLY** - If a team is ahead by 17 or more points at the 2 minute warning in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the game is over.
39. **SHORTS** – Player's shorts cannot match the color of the flags on the flag belt. **Players can not wear shorts with pockets or belt loops.**

## **IX. PENALTY DEFINITIONS AND ASSESSMENTS**

**LOS = Line of Scrimmage**

**POI = Point of Infraction**

**Previous Spot – spot where ball was last snapped (LOS) or where ball was last kicked off**

**Succeeding Spot – spot where ball is next snapped or kicked off**

The basic spot in a loose ball play is the previous spot. The basic spot on a running play is the end of the run. A loose ball play includes all action from the time of the snap until a legally thrown ball is caught, intercepted, or incomplete. A running play includes 1) any run or scramble BEHIND the LOS in which the ball carrier does not throw a pass or pitch, and 2) BEYOND the LOS, any run and /or any action during any part of a run after a catch of a pass, kick, or punt. On kick-off and punts, any action before the catch is part of a loose ball play.

1. **Illegal Pass** - A forward pass or forward lateral beyond the LOS, or a player passing the ball behind the LOS after the player or ball had previously crossed the LOS. Penalty: 5 yards, loss of down and play continues.

2. **Hurdling** – Jumping and making contact with a defensive player in a set position. It is not hurdling when a ball carrier jumps over a defensive player on the ground (to prevent injury). Penalty: 5 yards, same down, and play continues.
3. **Flag Guarding** – Dropping shoulder toward defender or using arm to prevent defensive player from detaching flag belt. Penalty: 10 yards, same down, and play continues
4. **Spinning** - A ball carrier that rotates his body more than 180 degrees in an attempt to avoid detachment of the flag belt. A ball carrier may spin 180 degrees or less, take at least two running strides (backwards) and continue to spin, providing the second rotation is not more than 180 degrees. Penalty: 10 yards, same down, and play continues.
5. **Charging / Ducking Head into Defender** – A ball carrier must attempt to avoid contact with a defensive player. Deliberately charging of an opponent is a penalty. Penalty: 10 yards, same down, and play continues.
6. **Extending Ball from Body / Diving** – An attempt to gain additional yardage by a player attempting to gain a first down or break the plane of the goal in the vicinity of a defensive player. Penalty: 10 yards, same down, and play continues. A defensive player can dive to pull a flag.
7. **Illegal Screen** – Screening is defined as maintaining a position between the defender and the man with the ball. No moving screens. Screening must be stationary. A “blocker” must set his screen four (4) yards or approximately (2) running strides from a defender. The “blocker” must keep his arms and hands straight down by his sides. No part of the “blocker’s” body, except his feet, shall be in contact with the ground throughout the screen. Sticking a knee, hip, foot, elbow, etc. out and making contact is an illegal block. This would also apply to an illegal pick by an offensive player who is not the primary receiver. Penalty: 10 yards, same down, and play continues.
8. **Illegal Block** – Not only does this apply to the definition of an illegal screen as described above, it would also apply to a stationary block where the “blocker” uses his hands, arms, elbows, hips or movement of any part of the body in making contact with or impeding the progress of a defensive player attempting to “down” the ball carrier or rushing the quarterback. Penalty: 10 yards, same down, and play continues.
9. **Illegal Participation** – This violation can occur when an offensive player steps out of bounds or touches the side line/end line on a pass route, returns to the playing field and touches or catches a thrown ball. Penalty: 10 yards, same down, and play continues.
10. **Offensive Holding** – This violation occurs when a player on offense impedes the progress of a defensive player making a play on the ball carrier, the quarterback or defending a pass. Grabbing the jersey, shorts, or any part of the body, would be construed a “holding” violation. Penalty: 10 yards, same down, and play continues.
11. **Illegal Procedure** – This violation may include an offensive player more than fifteen (15) yards from the ball prior to the snap, excluding the player in motion. A violation occurs when the center does not snap the ball between his legs or when he carries the ball from the line of scrimmage. Another example of illegal procedure occurs when more than one player is in motion. Penalty: 5 yards, same down, and play continues.
12. **Illegal Motion** – This violation occurs when a player in motion moves in direction of his opponent’s goal prior to the snap of the ball. However, the player in motion may move horizontally to the line of scrimmage or in the direction of his own goal before the snap of the ball. Penalty: 5 yards, same down, and play continues.
13. **False Start (offense) / Encroachment (defense)** – This violation occurs when there is any movement by the offense, excluding a player in motion, before the snap of the ball or when a player lines up in the

neutral zone before the ball is snapped. This is a dead ball infraction. Once detected, the official should sound their whistle immediately to kill the play and stop subsequent action that could result in injury. Penalty: 5 yards, same down, dead ball.

- 14. Off Sides** – This violation occurs when a player (offense or defense) lines up with any part of his body extending over the imaginary line of scrimmage or the defensive rush line. This is a live ball infraction with play continuing. The offended team has the option of taking the result of the play or penalty from the previous spot. **NOTE: Do not confuse this infraction with a false start. Do not sound your whistle once the violation occurs.** Remember to exercise preventative officiating in your attempt to have the player(s) back up prior to the snap of the ball. Penalty: 5 yards, same down, and play continues.
- 15. Unsportsmanlike Conduct** - Gross and willful nature or cursing at officials or opponents shall cause that player to be ejected from the game. A coach, who does the same, will result in like penalty. The coach must leave the playing area. Players and coaches who are ejected must leave the field within one (1) minute or the game will be forfeited. **A coach or player who is ejected WILL be suspended for the next game and possibly the remainder of the season; depending on the severity of the offense.** In addition to players and coaches, any fan that threatens physical harm to an official or supervisor will be ejected from the playing area. The game will be forfeited if compliance is not met within one (1) minute. Any player, coach or fan that threatens an official will be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season. Penalty: 15 yards, succeeding spot (if flagrant, automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down also)
- 16. Unnecessary Roughness** – Offensive Penalty: 15 yards, live ball, loss of down. Defensive Penalty: 15 yards from succeeding spot, live ball, automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- 17. Defensive Pass Interference** – Accept the result of the play or the penalty. Penalty: Ball is placed at the spot of interference, 1<sup>st</sup> down. If penalty occurs in the end zone, the ball will be placed on the one (1) yard line, 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- 18. Offensive Pass Interference** – This violation occurs when a player on offense interferes with a defensive player attempting to intercept a pass. Offensive pass interference does not apply on a ball that is overthrown or not catchable. However, such action could result in unnecessary roughness against the offense. Penalty: 15 yards, Previous spot, loss of down. If interference occurs on 4<sup>th</sup> down and penalty is accepted, after measurement, the ball belongs to the defense.
- 19. Spiking the ball:** This violation occurs when a player intentionally spikes the ball after completing a play. Penalty: 15 yards, same down, and play continues. A warning for unsportsmanlike is issued. If this occurs after a touchdown or a two-point conversion, the 15 yards will be accessed on the kickoff.

On behalf of our department we would like to thank you for volunteering your time and effort in coaching in our youth flag football program. We know without you, our program would not be as successful. This page is designed to answer most of your questions and make your experience a rewarding one.

**1. Does the city provide trophies and pictures at the end of the season?**

Unfortunately, the city does not offer trophies or pictures and is not in a position to endorse any company over another. As a coach you are considered a city representative and should not promote or endorse any particular vendor. The selection and purchase of pictures and trophies is up to the individual. Most teams designate a team “mom” or “dad” and they take it upon themselves to find a vendor for trophies and pictures.

**2. This is my first time as any type of coach, what can I do to ensure my team has fun?**

There are several things you can do:

1. Stress from the beginning of the season that “fun” will be included in everything they do.
2. Make the practices fun by teaching the skills as a “game” rather than a drill. For example, if you are teaching them to grab a flag while playing defense. Team them the skill while playing “carwash.” Have a runner run between two lines of players standing behind a row of cones (like a carwash) and the defense has to grab the runner’s flag.
3. Get the other parents involved and have them wear comfortable clothing as they practice so they can burn off some extra calories.

**3. What should my team eat or drink after a game/practice and who gets that?**

The days of providing *Little Debbie*s or cookies with sugar drinks are over! Look to healthy snacks like cut up apples or bananas in a small zip lock bag. Spreading peanut butter on a cracker is another good option. Designate before the games begin a parents snack schedule.

**4. How do I make sure all the kids get equal playing time and do I have to play everyone?**

Our program is set up as a recreational program that teaches the fundamentals while having fun doing it. The rule book is real clear on the playing time, make sure to follow it. We want all the kids to have the opportunity to play the same amount of time and be given the chance to play different positions. A good recommendation for a coach to follow is for them to establish the positions/line-up card before they even get to the field (maybe the night before). Rotate the players each quarter between offense and defense.

**5. What is NYSCA certified and how do I do this?**

Several years we enforced that all head coaches must be NYSCA certified. Our department will pay the initial fee while we strongly encourage the coach to renew on their own expense. We provide NYSCA training in person at the main office to begin the season and it is also offered online. For more information visit [www.nays.org](http://www.nays.org).

## APPENDIX A

### PREVENTING PROBLEMS

**Develop Policies and Procedures:** *Clearly defined organizational policies and procedures help clarify the rights and responsibilities of parents and how they should behave with the confines of the youth sports environment. Without*

boundaries and guidelines for behavior it is difficult to hold individuals accountable for their actions later. Often, parents are out of control because no one has ever told them they are not supposed to be out of control!

**Communication:** Communication is the key to so many things a youth sports administrator is responsible for and dealing with parents is no exception! Policies and procedures will have no effect unless all involved, including the parents, are made aware of them and understand them. This is where communicating with the parents is vital. Parents must be acknowledged for the important role they play. There are several opportunities for the administrator to communicate with parents effectively: Registration, orientation and parent meetings.

**Registration:** Provide parents with important information in the following areas following, or during registration:

- Organizational philosophy and goals
- Season schedule
- Maps to fields or other facilities
- Policies and Procedures Manual
- Safety information about equipment
- Information about areas for parent involvement
- Details about the orientation meeting
- Parents' Code of Ethics
- The coaching approach and philosophy to be employed
- Team goals

**Orientation Meeting:** A parents' orientation meeting is a vital tool in developing a positive youth sports experience for children. Orientation meetings can be held on a league wide basis, on an individual basis with each coach meeting his/her team's parents, or both. The orientation meeting allows parents to raise questions and concerns while coaches and administrators are both present. It also allows the coach to get to know the parents he/she will be dealing with during the season. A healthy two-way communication process should be encouraged and initiated at the orientation meeting. Time should be left at the end of the meeting for questions from parents.

Topics to be discussed at this meeting should include:

- Structure of the league – who should parents contact with concerns or questions.
- Philosophy of the league – equal play, skill development, FUN, etc.
- Program specifics – rules, location, times, etc.
- Season specifics – duration, special events, etc.
- Equipment specifics – what is needed, what is optional, etc.
- Transportation guidelines
- Health & safety guidelines – inclement weather policies, etc.
- How parents can get involved
- The rights & responsibilities of the youth sports parent
- Parent's Code of Ethics

**Get to Know the Parents Informally:** The administrators and coaches of each team should make a point of getting to know the parents of the children. The coach should be aware that all families are different and the motives for children being involved in sports will vary. It may be useful for the coach to have the parents complete a simple questionnaire, asking them specifically what they want their child to get out of the youth sports experience. This questionnaire can be completed at the time of registration and then given to each coach.

By informing each parent know of the organizational philosophy many problems may be prevented in the future. Also, if the parents feel comfortable, it is more likely that youth sports administrators will have an open, constructive relationship with them. Coaches may make the effort to contact each of his/her players' parents on an individual basis or simply spend time talking to each parent at the orientation meeting. What is important is that during and after practices and games the coaches and administrators acknowledge the parents as a valued part of the youth sports experience. If ignored or shown any disrespect, parents feel less secure and are less likely to be supportive.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

#### **Expectations of Spectators**

The Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department has developed the following expectations of spectators at all sporting events:

Cheering in a positive fashion, for both sides, is highly encouraged. Cheer for a good effort as much as good performance. Always behave in a responsible manner and exercise self-discipline. Make only positive comments about children – yours or somebody else’s. Always show respect for all involved in the game including coaches, players, opponents, opposing fans and officials. Ours programs are recreational leagues with fun as the primary emphasis. All coaches and perhaps some of the officials are volunteers and we should all appreciate their efforts and support them, setting a good example for the children.

Any spectator who does not behave appropriately (as described above) will be asked to leave, according to the following steps:

The site supervisor, officials/umpires, Park President or Board Member and/or another Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department staff member, that will be further identified as the site official, will identify violators to the coaches or vice versa.

The site official will confer with both coaches, one of whom will then approach the spectator and give a warning, or ask him/her to leave. If the spectator is not recognized by either coach, the home coach and/or the site official will speak to him/her.

If the decision is made for the spectator to leave, play will not resume until he/she has left the facility. If he/she refuses to leave, his/her team will forfeit and the game will be over.

Please help us foster good sportsmanship and encourage positive experiences for our youth. We thank you in advance for your understanding and support.

## **Ten Commandments of Sports for Parents**

1. Thou shall be sure that your child know that – win or lose, scared or heroic – you love him/her, appreciate his/her efforts, and that you are not disappointed in him/her.
2. Thou shall try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, his/her competitive attitude, his/her sportsmanship--and his/her actual skill level.
3. Thou shall be helpful--but don't coach him/her on the way to the rink, track, court, field or pool--or on the way back home.
4. Thou shall teach your child to enjoy competition for competition's sake, remembering that there are lessons to be learned in winning as well as in losing.
5. Harken `O parents: Try not to relive your athletic life through your child--or try to create an athletic career to replace the one that you never had.
6. Thou shall not compete with the coach--remember, in many cases, the coach becomes a hero to the athletes, a person who can do no wrong.
7. Thou shall not compare the skill, courage or attitudes of your child with that of other members of the squad or team--at least not in his/her hearing.
8. Thou shall get to know the coach so that you can be sure that his\her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to expose your child to him\her.
9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reactions when they bring home tales of woe--or tales of heroics.
10. Thou shall make a point of understanding courage and the fact that it is relative. Some of us climb mountains but fear flight-- some of us will want to fight but turn to jelly if a spider crawls nearby. A child must learn: courage is not absence of fear, but rather doing something in spite of fear.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **SKILLS CARD – FIRST AID - AMERICAN RED CROSS**

#### **A. CHECKING AN ILL OR INJURED PERSON – Conscious Person**

1. **Check** scene, then **Check** person.
2. Obtain consent.

3. **Call 911** for any life threatening conditions.
4. Ask the person
  - a. What is your name?
  - b. What happened?
  - c. Where do you feel pain or discomfort?
  - d. Do you have any allergies?
  - e. Do you have any medical condition?
  - f. Are you taking any medications?
  - g. When did you last eat or drink anything?
5. Check head to toe for
  - a. Bleeding, fluids or wounds.
  - b. Skin color or temperature.
  - c. Medical ID bracelets or necklaces.
  - d. Observable signals of pain.
 

(**TIP:** For infants and children, check from toe to head. Do not separate them from parent or guardian.)
6. Continue to monitor Airway, Breathing and Circulation (**ABC's**).

## **B. SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION (Anaphylaxis)**

### **What to look for:**

- Occurs suddenly after contact with the substance
- Contact area swells and turns red
- Hives, itching or rash
- Weakness, nausea, vomiting or stomach cramps
- Dizziness
- Difficulty breathing, including cough or wheezing

### **What to do – Call 911 (Note: Some agencies might not allow you to take the following steps)**

After determining a person is having a severe allergic reaction, assist with prescribed medication (epinephrine auto-injector). (**TIP:** Use disposable gloves and other personal protective equipment).

- Verify person's name, directions and expiration date.
- Grasp the auto-injector firmly and remove safety cap.
- At a 90-degree angle, inject medication and hold firmly for 10 seconds.
- Continue to monitor ABC's
- Give used auto-injector to EMS personnel.

## **C. ASTHMA ATTACK – Call 911 (Note: Some agencies might not allow you to take the following steps)**

### **What to look for:**

- Coughing or wheezing noises
- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Sweating
- Tightness in the chest
- Unable to talk without stopping for breath
- Feeling of fear or confusion

### **What to do:**

After determining a person is having an asthma attack, assist with prescribed medication (inhaler). (**TIP:** Always obtain consent and wash your hand immediately after giving care.)

1. Verify person's name, directions and expiration date.
2. Shake inhaler and remove cap. (**TIP:** If extension or spacer tube is available, attach and utilize.)
3. Have person breathe out and place lips around mouthpiece.
4. Quickly press down on inhaler canister while person inhales deeply. (NOTE: If possible, have person self-administer the medication.)
5. Have person hold breath for count of 10.
6. Exhale and rinse out mouth with water.
7. Note time administered and monitor **ABC's**.

## **D. SEIZURE**

1. **Check** scene, then **Check** person.

2. Obtain consent.
3. Remove nearby objects.
  - DO NOT hold or restrain person
  - DO NOT place anything between person's teeth or in person's mouth
4. Protect the person's head.
  - Place a thin folded towel or clothing beneath it.
5. Check **ABC's** and **Care** for injuries
6. Place in recovery position.
7. Comfort and reassure the person. (**NOTE: CALL 911** if the person –
  - Does not regain consciousness
  - If pregnant
  - Is a known diabetic
  - Has sustained injury
  - Shows life-threatening conditions
  - Has never had a seizure, seizure last longer than 5 minutes or seizure is repeated.)

## E. POISONING

Breathing difficulty  
 Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea  
 Chest or abdominal pain  
 Sweating  
 Changes in consciousness  
 Seizure  
 Headache or dizziness  
 Irregular pupil size  
 Burning/tearing of the eyes  
 Abnormal skin color  
 Burns around the lips, tongue or on the skin

### What to do:

1. **Check** scene, then **Check** person
2. Obtain consent
3. For life threatening conditions, (e.g., unconscious, not breathing or a change in consciousness) **Call 911**. OR if conscious, Call the National Poison Control Center (PCC) at 800-222-1222 and follow advice given. (**TIP: DO NOT** give anything to eat or drink unless directed by PCC or EMS.)
4. **Care** for conditions found. (**NOTE:** If possible find out
  - What type of poison?
  - How much was taken?
  - When it was taken?
  - How the poison entered the body?

## F. SHOCK

### What to look for:

- Restlessness, irritability or confusion
- Altered level of consciousness
- Pale or ashen, cool, moist skin
- Rapid breathing and pulse
- Excessive thirst
- Nausea or vomiting

### What to do:

1. **Check** scene, then **Check** person
2. Obtain consent
3. **CALL 911**
4. Monitor **ABC's**
5. Control any bleeding
6. Keep person from getting chilled or overheated

7. Elevate legs 8-12 inches if you do not suspect a head, neck or back injury or broken bones in the hips or legs
8. Comfort and reassure the person

## G. SHOCK

1. **Check** scene, then **Check** person.
2. Obtain consent.

### SUDDEN SIGNALS OF STROKE, THINK F.A.S.T.

Face – Weakness on one side of the face

- Ask the person to smile

Arm – Weakness or numbness in one arm

- Ask the person to raise both arms

Speech – Slurred speech or trouble getting the words out

- Ask the person to speak a simple sentence

Time – Note time signals first observed and **CALL 911**

## H. CONTROLLING EXTERNAL BLEEDING (TIP: Use disposable gloves and other personal protective equipment.)

1. **Check** scene, then **Check** person.
2. Obtain consent.
3. Cover wound with a sterile dressing.
4. Apply direct pressure until bleeding stops.
5. Cover dressing with bandage.
6. If bleeding does not stop –
  - Apply additional dressings and bandages.
  - Take steps to minimize shock.
  - **CALL 911** if not already done.

(NOTE: Wash hands with soap and water after giving care.)

## I. BURN CARE (TIP: CALL 911 for serious burns.)

7. **Check** scene, then **Check** person.
8. Obtain consent.
9. Stop the burning.
10. Cool the burn with cold running water until pain is relieved.
11. Cover the burn loosely with a sterile dressing.
12. Care for shock.

(NOTE: Do not break blisters; loosely cover blisters with a sterile dressing.)

## APPENDIX D

### AMERICAN DISABILITY TRAINING (ADA)

#### **Inclusion Programming**

Individuals with disabilities are no different than those without disabilities.

1. Enthusiasm, understanding and knowledge are **key factors** to successful inclusion.
2. Work hard to involve the participant in all aspects of the program.
3. Focus on their **abilities** rather than their **disability**.

4. Create opportunities that promote cooperation between individuals to achieve common goals.
5. **Respect the individual's right to privacy and confidentiality.** Ask permission before sharing information about their disability with others.
6. Recognize the importance of the individual with whom you are working.
  - a. Accept their worth
  - b. Create a supportive atmosphere
  - c. Establish friendship
  - d. Listen with your fullest attention
  - e. Develop self-confidence in the individual
  - f. Verbally compliment the participant for his/her efforts
  - g. Encourage problem-solving
  - h. Demonstrate patience and tolerance
  - i. Bring understanding to every situation
  - j. Ask the participant if they would like assistance and how you can best assist them
7. Be sensitive to the needs and limitations of his/her particular disability, while still capitalizing on his/her abilities.
8. Encourage building bridges with other participants.
9. Encourage involvement. Choose activities which involve the five senses (smell, taste, touch, hearing, vision)

### **Sensitivity Awareness**

Making friends is a crucial and fundamental component of a child's camp experience. Being accepted and feeling part of a group is very important to all individuals and FUN should be the #1 RULE! Children learn essential life skills from each other through communication, and sharing of ideas and feelings. Children without disabilities need to understand that although some of their peers have disabilities, they can develop new friendships while helping them to have fun.

#### **Remove Barriers:**

Fear  
 Ridicule, laughter or staring  
 Being overly sympathetic  
 Lack of knowledge and education  
 Accepting & understanding things that are different

#### **Ways to Remove Barriers:**

Icebreakers  
 Model interaction  
 Small Groups/buddies  
 Modifying activity to fit All Children  
 Teach and educate

Children and adults have preconceived attitudes and stereotypes about people with disabilities. It is the staff that has the opportunity to transpose these ideas and make positive learning experiences for ALL. Through inclusion, we have the opportunity to eliminate barriers and create a more cohesive environment within our community and in recreation.

### **Disability Etiquette**

**Ask Before You Help.** Just because someone has a disability, don't assume he/she needs help. If the setting is accessible, people with disabilities can usually get around fine. Adults with disabilities want to be treated as independent people. Offer assistance only if the person appears to need it. And if he/she does want help, ask how before you act.

**Be Sensitive About Physical Contact.** Some people with disabilities depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them – even if you intention is to assist – could knock them off balance. Avoid patting a person on the head or touching his/her wheelchair, scooter or cane. People with disabilities consider their equipment part of their personal space.

**Think Before You Speak.** Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his companion, aide or sign language interpreter. Making small talk with a person who has a disability is great; just talk to him/her as you would with anyone else. Respect his/her privacy. If you ask about his/her disability, he/she may feel like you are treating him/her as a disability, not as a human being.

**Don't Make Assumptions.** People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do. Don't make decisions for them about participating in any activity. Depending on the situation, it could be a violation of the ADA to exclude people because of a presumption about their limitation.

**Respond Graciously to Requests.** When people who have a disability ask for an accommodation at your business, it is not a complaint. It shows they feel comfortable enough in your establishment to ask for what they need. And if they get a positive response, they will probably come back again and tell their friends about the good service they received.

**Put The Person First.** Say ‘person with a disability’ rather than ‘disabled person’. Say ‘people with disabilities’ rather than ‘the disabled’. Use the person’s name not their type of disability.

**Avoid** outdated terms like ‘handicapped’ or ‘crippled’. Be aware that many people with disabilities dislike jargons terms like ‘physically challenged’ and ‘differently abled’. Say ‘wheelchair user’ rather than ‘confined to a wheelchair’ or ‘wheelchair bound’. The wheelchair is what enables the person to get around and participate in society; it’s liberating, not confining.

With any disability, avoid negative, disempowering words, like ‘victim’ or ‘sufferer’. Say ‘person with AIDS’ instead of ‘AIDS victim’ or ‘person who suffers from AIDS’.

We should focus on the **individual** not the disability. Labels are so powerful, so remember to make their person more important than the disability.

**Be positive.** Words like ‘pitiful’ or ‘hopeless’ convey negative feelings. It is better to say ‘she uses a wheelchair’ instead of ‘she is confined to a wheelchair’. The wheelchair is a means of mobility, to go to work, to travel and to play.

Be **accurate** with terms in which you use. Many terms are negative and degrading. The phrase ‘people with disabilities’ is more appropriate than ‘the disabled’ being that it allows for the emphasis to remain on the individual.

### **History of Attitudes Toward People With Disabilities**

Treatment of people with disabilities throughout history reveals how the attitudes toward people with disabilities have changed throughout the course of time. Hundreds of years ago, people with disabilities were left to die or were actually killed. They were thought to be possessed or as capable of bringing a curse upon those who came in contact with them. Later in history, people with disabilities were used in freak shows or as court jesters for people to laugh at. More recently, people with disabilities were put in institutions of like people. Only recently, society has begun to treat individuals with disabilities as people who contribute to society and who can learn skills and traits.

How can we change the attitudes? Just like adults, children may have questions about disabilities that we find difficult to answer. By allowing a child to experience some of the challenges that a disability may pose, we can help that child better understand the struggles a person with a disability faces daily. We are not focusing on why the developmental disability occurred but in how we can make people’s lives better.