



## **Fort Worth Youth Athletic Quality Standards 2018**

### *The Fort Worth Youth Athletic Quality Standards Are:*

- A set of expectations for youth athletics which many organizations have agreed upon
- A commitment by the entire community to give children and youth access to a wide range of enriching athletic programs
- A guide to help youth athletic programs develop a continuous improvement mindset
- A way for parents and young people to know what to expect from a youth athletic program
- A set of guidelines that, when adopted, can act as an assurance to funders and sponsors that the youth athletic programs they support will deliver high-quality services
- A way to educate the community as a whole about what high-quality youth athletic programming looks like, can be achieved and sustained

Standards alone can begin the transition to quality youth athletic programs and skills of program staff and volunteers. Even for youth athletic programs that have adopted the standards, this process and practice takes time and will happen in stages. Youth athletic programs have the capacity and resources to tackle a few standards at once. The idea is to set realistic and achievable goals so that over time, programs can meet all youth athletic standards in all areas, but in the short term, these are clear objectives to work toward as an adult team, leading our most precious resource, our Fort Worth youth.

### *The following are suggestions on implementation of the Athletic Quality Standards in youth athletic programs:*

- Examine the strengths of your program and identify areas for improvement
- Plan and develop strategies to adopt the Standards within a reasonable time period
- Discuss with your board, staff, and volunteers how they can contribute to help your program achieve the Standards

### *The following are suggestions on how Children, Youth and Families may utilize the Athletic Quality Standards when selecting and participating in athletic programs:*

- Use the guide as a “checklist” of items to observe, when visiting a program
- If a program has adopted these Standards, feel assured that the program is continuously working to provide high quality OST opportunities and hold programs accountable

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## **RELATIONSHIPS**

Relationships are the “*glue*” of a youth athletic program. Youth feel engaged and excited about a program and activities, when staff and volunteers work together to foster strong, respectful relationships at every level – among staff, youth, families and the community.

- Through active engagement, staff creates a supportive, caring environment
- The program provides positive peer interaction among diverse participants
- The program fosters involvement to support program’s goals
- The program establishes strong community partnerships to achieve program goals and to leverage resources
- Participants engage in service learning projects and activities to foster community involvement
- Staff models cooperation, conflict resolution and positive relationships with one another

## **POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

When surveyed, children and youth nationwide indicate that their number one criterion when selecting a youth athletic program is that it is FUN! Beyond being fun, youth athletic programs can contribute to positive learning and personal growth. Ongoing involvement in a youth athletic program is connected to the quality and variety of activities offered. Quality programming engages youth and attracts parents to the program.

- The program provides a well-rounded variety of activities and opportunities that support the physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth and development of all participants
- Participants are provided with a variety of developmentally appropriate engagement techniques to promote learning objectives
- The program may provide academic assistance, where feasible.
- The program should always recognize academic achievement when possible.

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## **ENVIRONMENT**

The youth athletic program environment is how a program looks and feels: the physical space, safety/security, the atmosphere conveyed, and aspects of health and nutrition. The positive and welcoming environment helps an adult and child “shopper” develop a first impression of the program. This will influence a participant/parent joining the program and becoming invested.

- The indoor/outdoor program spaces meet: physical, social, emotional and cognitive needs of all
- The program provides a safe and healthy environment for participants and program staff
- The program provides a fun, supportive atmosphere where participants and staff are emotionally safe and are building respect for the diversity of people and cultures
- The policies of the program encourage positive behaviors and utilize restorative discipline when possible
- The program has comprehensive documentation of programming and all participants
- The program is aware of, records, and informs staff of all special needs of participants
- The program provides participant supervision at all times
- The program follows a schedule that is known, flexible, and meets the needs of all participants
- Meals and snacks provided will be healthy and nutritious. Water will be available at all times
- All laws, program policies and safety rules are followed when transportation is provided

## **MANAGEMENT**

As in any profession, youth athletic program staff and volunteers require ongoing resources, support and training to provide high-quality programming. This ensures meaningful impact on each participant can occur. Methods of recruiting, hiring, training, and technical assistance are important to consider. Staff who are involved in delivering high-quality youth athletic programming tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and stay at them longer; professional development can therefore make a program more consistent and sustainable. There must be appropriate organizational supports in place to run smoothly and effectively and serve youth in the best way possible.

- The program/organization has a mission statement that fosters understanding of established youth athletic program quality standards
- The organization has an effective structure that supports leadership, quality and sustainability
- The program incorporates strong business and financial practices supporting goals and objectives
- The program plan includes standards, measurable indicators, program assessments and use of data supporting a continuous improvement model.
- The program has formal policies, procedures and processes for hiring, training, managing and retaining staff and volunteers
- All staff are provided with orientation, professional development and performance reviews
- The organization provides a strong infrastructure and positive work environment for employees





