

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the City of Arlington's "Playing is Winning" Youth Sports Program. The "Playing is Winning" philosophy was introduced several years ago to promote recreational sports in Arlington. Our program goal focuses on the child and their involvement instead of the score.

Through participating in youth sports, your child is winning in social skills, teamwork and physical fitness while having fun. There is a saying, "it takes a village to raise a child." By working together with the volunteer coaches, league administrators and officials, your child will benefit from all aspects of the program and witness first hand what being a role model is all about.

Our program goal is to provide a safe, supportive and encouraging environment for kids to enjoy while playing sports. This handbook will provide information about our program, ways for you to become involved and guides for youth sports development.

Teaching and learning is a lifelong task. Your involvement and encouragement for the team will confirm our "Playing is Winning" philosophy.

Wendy Parker

Wendy Parker
Athletics Director

"You don't stop playing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop playing." *George Bernard Shaw*

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Vision Statement

Arlington is a vibrant city that enjoys a high quality of life through great parks and exceptional recreational opportunities. These services provide a foundation for the physical, social, economic and environmental viability and well-being of the community.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department is to provide quality facilities and services that are responsive to a diverse community and sustained with a focus on partnerships, innovation and environmental leadership.

Athletics Division Vision Statement
Sports Empowerment
Style – Individual expression Play – Participate in fun activities Order – Unite as a team Respect – Honor each other Teach - How to play the game! Succeed – Accomplish team goal

Athletics Division Mission Statement

The mission of the Athletics Division is to foster creative lifestyles through sports development, positive self image and cultural diversity.

Athletics Staff

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The Reality

- 70% of children drop out of organized sports by age 13.**
- 45.3% of young athletes have been called names, yelled at or insulted while participating in sports.
- 17.5% of young athletes say they have been hit, kicked or slapped while participating in sports.
- 21% of young athletes say they were pressured to play with an injury.
- 8.2% of young athletes report that they were pressured to intentionally harm others while playing sports.
- 19,000 members of the National Association of Officials are now offered assault insurance.
- 15% of parents at youth sports events display obnoxious, unruly or unsportsmanlike behavior.***

** The institute for study of Youth Sports of Michigan State University

***National Alliance for Youth Sports

Motivation of Young Athletes*

Why do children want to play organized sports? What are their goals, hopes and aspirations? Each child has his or her own specific answers to these questions. Understanding their reasons for wanting to play sports is a critical first step towards helping children to have the best possible experiences in sports.

Numerous research studies completed in the last 20 years have asked youth sport participants why they decided to participate in organized sports. The top reasons are very consistent. Children expect to have FUN, learn SKILLS, develop FITNESS and participate because they enjoy COMPETITION.

The bottom line is that children want an opportunity to participate in competitive sports, to develop the skills and fitness that will allow them to play effectively and to have fun doing it.

*Dr. Richard Stratton, Health and Physical Education Program,
Virginia Tech

The Key to Keeping Kids in Youth Sports

“What’s the use in trying? No matter what I do it’ll never be enough! My coach is never satisfied. My parents are never satisfied. I can’t compete against other kids who are so much better than I am.”

--9 year old boy who dropped out of organized sports

Research has shown that kids who stay in sports tend to stay in school, get better grades and exhibit better behaviors. It makes sense then, for us to know something about what it takes to motivate kids to keep playing sports once they’ve started.

Don’t expect something from a kid who is not physically or emotionally capable, given their muscle coordination, attention span or level of dedication at a specific age level. The kid then struggles to live up to the expectations of coaches or parents, sees no progress and eventually gives up or quits, feeling like a failure in the eyes of adults.

Help your child to compete against his self, not all the other kids. Start focusing on their personal best!

How to be a Good Sports Parent

Fixing the crisis in kids' sports begins at home. Here are some tips from Sports Done Right to get parents started:

Encourage your child, regardless of his or her degree of success or level of skill.

Ensure a balance in your student athlete's life, encouraging participation in multiple sports and activities while placing academics first.

Emphasize enjoyment, development of skills and team play as the cornerstones of your child's early sports experiences while reserving serious competition for the varsity level.

Leave coaching to the coaches and avoid placing too much pressure on your youngster about playing time and performance.

Be realistic about your child's ability.

Be there when your child looks to the sidelines for a positive role model.

Sportsmanship Checklist for Kids

I abide by the rules of the game.

I try to avoid arguments.

I share in the responsibilities of the team.

I give everyone a chance to play according to the rules.

I always play fair.

I follow the directions of the coach.

I respect the other team's effort.

I offer encouragement to my teammates.

I accept the judgment of the game officials.

I end the game with a positive attitude.

Sportsmanship is the ability to:

- Win without gloating.
- Lose without complaining.
- Treat your opponents and the officials with respect.

Sportsmanship Tips:

- If you make a mistake, don't pout or make excuses. Learn from it and be ready to continue to play.
- If a teammate makes a mistake, encourage, don't criticize.

Checklist For Parents in Youth Sports

1. I maintain a “Fun is No 1” attitude.
2. I treat officials, coaches, my kids, their teammates and their opponents with respect and avoid ridicule or sarcasm.
3. I praise my kids, their teammates and opponents just for participating regardless of their athletic skills.
4. I remember to look for positives with my kids, their teammates and their opponents.
5. I remain calm when my kids or their teammates make a mistake and help them learn from them.
6. I remind my kids and their teammates not to get down on themselves when things don’t go well.
7. I try not to take myself too seriously when it comes to my involvement in youth sports, reminding myself that there is life beyond youth sports.
8. I remind myself and my kids to laugh and keep a sense of humor.
9. I emphasize teamwork in team sports with my kids, teaching them to think “we” instead of me.
10. I teach my kids by giving them a good example of good sportmanship: winning without gloating and losing without complaining.

Developing a Positive Relationship with Youth Sport Officials

Parents and officials never seem to be on the same page. There always seems to be some tension between them. It often seems to parents that the person officiating must be seeing a different game than they are.

**Please remember that
Officials are People too!**

When you hear the typical comments after the game:

“It is the ref’s fault we lost the game. If he hadn’t made that call, we would have won the game”

Remember:

No matter the sport, there will always be older people on the field to see that the game is played fairly and by the rules.

Our officials are trained and have many years of experience.

They must keep in mind the rules, the age level of each team and the concept of a fun positive experience for all players in the game.

Rules of Conduct for all Youth Athletic Programs

I. PROGRAM PURPOSE

- A. The City of Arlington Youth Sports League strives to provide a fun and safe environment where boys and girls, ages 3-12, can learn the fundamentals of sports, sportsmanship and teamwork under the guidance of trained volunteer leaders. The league will emphasize participation (everyone plays), physical fitness, building self-esteem, the opportunity to meet new friends and, above all, fun.
- B. The League recognizes the various developmental stages of boys and girls. Instruction in the teaching of basic skills will be given by volunteers. Height-adjustable goals are used in the basketball program.
- C. The League will expose our youth to healthy competition, teamwork and skill, on their level of physical maturity. Individual success should not be measured by winning or losing.
- D. Youth sports should be a positive learning experience. Too often children are immersed in a highly competitive league before they are prepared to handle it.

- E. We believe for the long-term personal and athletic success of our youth, a progressive system is essential. Our leagues allow boys and girls to play at the level best suited to their physical and emotional maturity.

II. **CLASSIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY**

- A. Leagues will be divided by ages. Consideration will be given to the parent's request for a child to be moved up one division to accommodate playing ability, based on the parent's knowledge of their child's ability.

- B. Participants registered by the deadline will be placed on a team as follows:
 - 1. Players will be assigned to a team. Special requests will be honored as long as they do not jeopardize the competitiveness of the teams.
 - 2. The head coach and one assistant coach may have their own children on their team.
 - 3. When requested, brothers and sisters will be assigned on the same team.
 - 4. Participants registered after the deadline will be assigned to teams on a space available basis.
 - 5. All participants must be registered, in the program in order to play.
 - 6. Participants play at their own risk. The City of Arlington Parks and Recreation Department does not assume

responsibility or liability for accidents and/or injuries which may result from participation in the program. A parent's signature is required on the participant waiver form for a player to be eligible.

III. **THE COACH**

- A. The volunteer coach is the critical link to ensuring the League's success. Coaches will be approved only according to their willingness to adhere to the philosophy and rules of the program. Coaches are strongly encouraged to attend coaches meeting as scheduled.
- B. Coaches should set an example for their players and spectators at all times. They must accept that both correct and incorrect calls are part of the game (especially a youth sports game) and teach players to concentrate on playing the game. They are expected to enforce Youth Bill of Rights (See Article XI).
- C. Coaches are to encourage players to be on time and ready to play for all games and practices.
- D. Coaches and parents should be examples of good sportsmanship to the players.

IV. **PARENTS/ SPECTATORS**

- A. The League encourages the positive support of

parents and spectators at all youth recreation games. Some points to remember:

1. Do not take the outcome of the game too seriously. The focus is **kids first**, winning second.
2. Make positive comments. Criticizing of players, opponents, coaches or officials does not create a positive experience for anyone involved.
This type of behavior will not be tolerated.
3. Accept the official's decisions. The officials strive to contribute positively to our youth Athletic leagues.
4. **Verbal abuse, loud or intimidating behavior is prohibited.** Those displaying this behavior will be asked to leave the facility or playing field, and possibly face suspension.
5. Parents are an integral part of our program and they are asked to actively participate in the following areas.
 - i. Volunteer Coaches must complete the required application and attend the coaches meeting.
 - ii. Depending on which sport your child has chosen; parent will be asked to be a line judge, scorekeeper, time keeper, team organizer, make phone calls and help with the end of season party
 - iii. Completion of informal surveys when applicable.

V. **PRACTICES**

- A. Practices will be held at a location designated by the team coach and parents.
 - 1. Practice time lengths should be based on the appropriate age level, but not to exceed an hour and a half.
 - 2. Practices will take place at a school, park or recreation center.
 - 3. Teams may only meet a maximum of three times a week including games (two practices and one game).

VI. **PARTICIPATION RULES**

- A. It is our goal for all players to play half of each game with competitive basketball being the exception.
- B. Participation goals apply except for disciplinary action and injury.

VII. **EQUIPMENT**

- A. Equipment (when required) will be handed out to the coach at the beginning of the season. Equipment for games will be provided by the Athletics Department.
- B. Shoes: For indoor leagues, players must wear non-marking rubber soled athletic shoes. Proper tread on the shoes ensures traction for the youth while playing.

- C. Team jerseys are provided by the Youth Athletic League and is the required uniform for games.
- D. Under no condition may a player wear any equipment that is a danger to other players (The Athletics Manager will determine if equipment, such as medical casts, etc. is dangerous.)
- E. All jewelry, including earrings, rings, and necklaces must be removed prior to games or practices.

VIII. **FORFEIT**

- A. Failure of a team to appear at a scheduled game with the required number of players will result in a forfeit for that team. A team will be given a five minute grace period. If at the end of the five minutes they still don't have enough players to play, another five minute grace period will be issued and the game will be shortened. Following the second grace period the game will be played within whatever adjustments is possible. (Divide players up from both teams.)
- B. Unsportsmanlike conduct of players, coaches, or spectators may result on a game being stopped. The Athletic Manager will review the situation and take appropriate action.
- C. Playing ineligible players will result in a forfeit.

IX. TEAM ROSTERS

- A. Players are allowed to play on only one team during the season.
- B. The responsibility of moving players from team to team will be at the discretion of the Athletic Sports Manager. Coaches cannot move/trade players unless approved by the Manager.
- C. Should it become necessary to add players to a team, the Athletics Manager will make the addition.
- D. Coaches cannot add players to their rosters without knowledge or permission of the Athletics Manager.

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X. SPORTSMANSHIP

- A. Sportsmanship is a major part of this league. It is expected that coaches will exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. It is the coach's responsibility to see that their players, parents and spectators show proper sportsmanship. **Flagrant fouls or unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.**
- B. Teams will begin each game with a joint huddle that includes both teams. This will give the official time to address any relevant information and lead our league motto: **"Playing is Winning."**

- C. Teams will shake hands with the opponents after every game.

Sportsmanship goals:

1. Accept the official's decisions. Mistakes will be made...stay focused on the game.
2. Keep sideline conduct under control and make positive comments.
3. Cooperate with staff.
4. Avoid flagrant fouls or unsportsmanlike conduct.
5. Respect your opponents.
6. Do not criticize.
7. No trash talking. Players, coaches, and spectators are to refrain from using harsh, derogatory, or abusive remarks. Trash talkers will be warned one time. If other instances occur, the participant, coach or spectator may be ejected from the game.
8. Any player, coach or parent /spectator who is, at the discretion of the Coach or Athletics Manager, deemed out of control will be asked to leave the gym or facility in which the game is being conducted.

XI. **YOUTH BILL OF RIGHTS**

- A. Right to participate in sports.
- B. Right to participate at a level equal with each child's maturity and ability.
- C. Right to have qualified adult leadership.
- D. Right to play as a child not as an adult.

- E. Right to share in the leadership and decision making of their sport participation.
- F. Right to participate in a safe and healthy environment.
- G. Right to proper preparation for participation in sports.
- H. Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success.
- I. Right to be treated with dignity.
- J. Right to have fun in sports.

XII. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Team players, coaches, parents and spectators are subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by the decision of the game officials and rules stated within.

League Snack Special

The concession stand will be open during games held in the facility.



Team Snack Special:

Team drinks: \$5.00 (juice or soda)

Team drinks and snack: \$8.00 (fruit snacks)

This may help in your snack schedule and make it more convenient for parents when it is their turn to bring drinks and/or snacks.



This offer only applies only to City of Arlington teams and is valid only after league games. This includes all team members and coaches listed on the official roster, not parents or siblings.

You're a winner with us! End of Season Celebration!!! Team Party Packages



Celebrate a successful season with one of our fabulous parties at a discounted price!

Party Options

Rock Climbing, Skating or Sports Party

Cost: \$125 per Team. Registered child, parents and immediate siblings are included.

Cake: A personalized cake of your choice is included.

Food: Pizza can be ordered for \$9 per pizza. These must be ordered prior to your party. Drinks are included.

Call to reserve your team's party today!
817-459-6434