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# Community Foundation

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of St. Clair County

## **GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH**

### **GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS**

Community Foundation of St. Clair County (CFSCC) is committed to creating a safe environment for our youth (under 18), employees and volunteers so that youth can grow, learn and have fun while participating in CFSCC related activities. CFSCC has heightened expectations for adults who interact with, supervise or monitor youth and youth activities. The purpose of these guidelines is to:

1. provide guidance on various issues where adults should follow best practices,
2. identify permissible and strictly prohibited behaviors,
3. offer insight to create a safe environment for both adults and youth,
4. raise awareness of the warning signs of abuse and how to manage risk, and
5. provide instruction for reporting suspected issues or incidents of concern

Staff and volunteers working on behalf of CFSCC at any event, program, meeting or activity where youth are present and/or involved, are expected to have read, understand, agree and abide by these guidelines and other CFSCC or individual organization policies, procedures and training. In addition to these guidelines, adults are expected to allow processing of criminal background checks and driving record checks, execute all necessary waivers and releases and engage in training sessions as may be required.

### **IDENTIFYING RISK LEVELS WHEN INTERACTING WITH YOUTH**

CFSCC understands that each organization and the adults and youth who participate in organization activities may have different circumstances for how often, why and in what way adults and youth interact. Many youth rely on adults to function as parental figures, while other youth have a very stable and supportive home life. CFSCC does not wish to discourage meaningful, existing mentor relationships with youth. Therefore, the following assessment of risk factors is meant only to highlight potential risk levels.

Lower risk:

- Activities held at CFSCC offices during regular business hours
- Activities held in facilities with public access
- Parents actively involved
- Two or more adults supervising
- No changing of clothing
- Adult has no physical contact with youth

Medium risk:

- Activities held in private homes
- Some or little parental involvement
- One adult supervising youth
- Periodic interaction for short periods of time between adult and specific youth
- Changing of clothing/showering (such as for sport activities)

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- Adult and youth engaged in activities involving some physical contact

## Higher risk:

- Activities held in isolated settings
- No parental involvement
- Activities with one adult and one youth
- Interaction between adult and youth spanning a long period of time
- Changing of clothing, bathing, toileting or overnight stays
- Adult has close physical contact with youth

## BEST PRACTICES:

These are general best practices. For specific behaviors that are prohibited and/or discouraged, see the chart below.

- Follow appropriate guidelines around physical contact
- Avoid being alone with youth where you cannot be observed by staff or other adults
- Use the Rule of 3: 1 adult / two children, two adults / one child
- Avoid driving youth alone or any time outside of program activities
- Understand and respect boundaries regarding physical touch or sharing personal information
- Establish clear boundaries with youth
- In sensitive situations and in cases of injury, involve another staff member, adult, or parent
- Use appropriate displays of encouragement, i.e. positive / uplifting words, side hugs, high five, fist bumps
- Provide clear communication about the program at all times
- Communicate the codes of conduct/rules/behavior to youth and parents at the onset of each program or event
- Share with parents how and what you are doing with youth and keep parents involved in an ongoing relationship
- Transparency is key; avoid interactions that are not part of a program activity, a parent is not aware of or has declined to give consent
- Do not discipline minors by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care
- If a disciplinary discussion becomes necessary, have the discussion discreetly in the presence of other group members; avoid any type of disciplinary measure while alone with the youth
- Separate your private life from your work or volunteer activities
- Do not engage in Internet social networking with youth for *personal* reasons or through personal profiles; networking through approved program sites/profiles may be used when the contact is related to programming
- Do not share intimate or overly personal information; do not swear or tell off-color jokes
- Do not discuss the youth's intimate or personal information
- Treat all youth equitably, i.e. fairly and consistently; avoid showing favoritism
- Understand that CFSCC and individual organizations are monitoring interactions at all times; adults should encourage other adults and youth to comply with the guidelines
- Act as a mentor on program, academic or enrichment related topics but avoid personal topics or offering advice on personal or sensitive topics in the youth's life

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## ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS: PROHIBITED VS. DISCOURAGED

The following chart lists behaviors and actions that are strictly prohibited and those that are discouraged. **The lists are illustrative and not all-inclusive; other behaviors may be identified.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Prohibited</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">These actions and behaviors are prohibited by any adult toward any CFSCC youth.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Discouraged</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Adults working with CFSCC youth are discouraged from these behaviors and actions.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sexually abusive acts of any kind, including penetration, touching or non-contact such as exposure or nudity. This includes implicit or explicit sexual acts, regardless of age and regardless of whether the youth understands the nature of the activity</li> <li>2. Sexual exploitation (e.g. trafficking, encouraging sexual behavior in youth, sharing or taking nude pictures)</li> <li>3. Using any recording device in showers, bathrooms, locker rooms and other areas where there is an expectation of privacy</li> <li>4. Physical interaction involving intimate touching (e.g. caressing, sitting on lap, patting on bottom, kissing or affectionate gestures)</li> <li>5. Physically abusive acts, punishment, discipline (e.g. use of physical force, striking, squeezing, whether used for behavior management or not)</li> <li>6. Discrimination of any kind based traits protected under state and federal laws (e.g. race, gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, national origin, etc.)</li> <li>7. Verbal abuse (e.g. yelling in aggressive or threatening manner; belittling, including making fun of the youth’s family, national origin, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation; threatening bodily harm to the individual or individual’s family/friends)</li> <li>8. Being under the influence of, using in the presence of, selling or providing alcohol or illegal drugs to youth; selling or providing over-the-counter drugs to youth, except with documented parental or physician authorization</li> <li>9. Bullying, taunting; intimidation of physical force</li> <li>10. Using inappropriate consequences for behavior (e.g. closing minor in closet, cabinet; restraining minor inappropriately such as tying their hands with string, taping their mouth)</li> <li>11. Bringing or having in your possession or in your vehicle any weapon while engaged in CFSCC activities or while transporting a youth</li> <li>12. Neglect – failure to provide for basic needs of minors (e.g. failing to provide appropriate medical care, access to restrooms, or access to food/water)</li> <li>13. Inappropriate off-hours contact and/or contact without consent of parent (e.g. weekend trips, dating, fraternizing, social networking or texting)</li> <li>14. Telling or asking a minor not to tell an adult or parent of words or actions of staff or volunteers</li> <li>15. Instructing employee in mandatory reporting situation not to make a report</li> <li>16. Violation of any laws intended to protect the health, safety or security of minors</li> <li>17. Failure to fully cooperate with an investigation by CFSCC, individual organizations, law enforcement agencies or other authorized outside agencies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Touching any parts of the body without consent.</li> <li>2. Frontal hugs and bear hugs</li> <li>3. Physical interaction involving potential for inappropriate touching or other risk of injury (e.g. tickling, wrestling, swinging minors by ankles or wrists, massages)</li> <li>4. Holding hands - intent is to eliminate special, singular relationships (ok for groups, games and with young children who need assistance)</li> <li>5. Restraint of youth (unless youth is an immediate danger to self or others; to avoid harm to a youth, physically redirecting youth to safety).</li> <li>6. Being rough with youth for behavior management (eg. yanking arm, grabbing shoulder, pushing youth into position)</li> <li>7. Roughhousing (aggressive physical contact, often for fun, youth not in control of body).</li> <li>8. Lifting, carrying, piggy-back or arm-chair rides (exceptions could be for challenge course activities, group games, moving an injured youth).</li> <li>9. Emotional abuse (e.g., sarcasm, harsh or abusive words; rejecting or stating you do not like the youth).</li> <li>10. Neglect – denying snack or other comfort as a behavior consequence.</li> <li>11. Disciplining youth outside the presence of other adults or in a setting that cannot be observed by others</li> <li>12. Personal gifts to minors or their parents without knowledge or consent of parent</li> <li>13. Non-program related communications with youth via any type of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat), internet, email, text, cell phone calls</li> <li>14. Crossing boundaries of appropriate and inappropriate interaction with youth (including telling stories of personal sexual relationships, illegal activity, siding with minors as opposed to supporting staff with rules)</li> <li>15. Driving alone with youth for any CFSCC activities; driving youth during off-site or off-hours activities</li> <li>16. Off-hours contact and/or contact without consent of parent (e.g. babysitting, movies, sports)</li> <li>17. Singling a minor out for favored attention or giving the appearance of grooming</li> <li>18. Leaving youth under age 16 unsupervised</li> <li>19. Failing to report suspicion of abuse or neglect</li> </ol>

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>18. Failure to adhere to instructions related to youth food allergies or medical / health issues</li><li>19. Illegal activity during volunteer time</li><li>20. Failure to accurately disclose information related to criminal background or driving record checks; failure to disclose the type of criminal or other unlawful activity information that was requested at initial or other criminal background or driving record checks</li><li>21. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect of a minor.</li></ol> |  |
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## REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF A MINOR

If you know, suspect or receive information indicating that a child has been abused or neglected or you have other concerns about the safety or well-being of a child, you **MUST** inform your immediate supervisor or the vice president or president of CFSCC. Failure to do so is a violation of these guidelines and may result in your removal from all program activities and/or participation in CFSCC events. Even if you are not sure whether something constitutes abuse, you are not to conduct any investigation or make inquiries but instead are required to report it to your immediate supervisor or the vice president or president of CFSCC. We expect that you will share in the responsibility of protecting the youth involved in any of our programs.

## TRAINING

At least once every two years CFSCC will organize a professional training session for staff and volunteers whose work involves dealing with youth under 18. This training will be mandatory and records of attendance will be kept by CFSCC.

## CRIMINAL BACKGROUND AND DRIVING RECORD CHECKS

All adults who participate in any CFSCC youth program must provide complete and accurate information relative to criminal background (include sex offender registry) and driving record checks. CFSCC will conduct these background and record checks once an adult first becomes an employee or volunteer for CFSCC, at any time that CFSCC has reason to believe that there is behavior that violates its screening protocols and every two years after the initial screening.

Absent extenuating circumstances or as otherwise required by law, the following types of infractions will render an individual disqualified from employment or a volunteer position:

- Sexual offenses
- Crimes of violence involving physical injury to another
- Child abuse, molestation or other crimes involving child endangerment
- Murder
- Kidnapping
- Drug distribution or felony drug possession
- Any other felony or conviction of crime involving moral turpitude

Generally, any adult who works with youth may not be listed on any sex offender registry. CFSCC will comply with all state and federal laws related to criminal history in determining employment or volunteer status.

You must notify your immediate supervisor and/or the vice president or president of CFSCC if there is a change to your personal circumstances that might result in a negative indicator on a criminal background check or driving record check.

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## CONFIRMATION OF UNDERSTANDING

I have received a copy of the Guidelines for Working with Youth, and I understand my responsibilities. I understand a violation of these Guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal (for employees) and removal of volunteer position or involvement in any CFSCC programs (for volunteers).

I have read the Guidelines for Working with Youth, and I agree to abide by the guidelines, rules and boundaries for working with youth.

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_