

10 Tips for Working with Youth

When working with youth, it is important to consider their safety and needs. We would like to offer these tips and resources so you can ensure that all youth you encounter have the best experience possible.



1. Consider taking Youth Protection training. Many organizations working with youth provide and require training. One of the most comprehensive is by the Boy Scouts. You do not need to be a member or even involved with the program in order to take their free online training. Find it here: <http://www.scouting.org/Training/youthprotection.aspx>
2. Always respect the time commitments of youth. They are very busy. Be clear about when an event or project starts and when it ends. Parents also very much appreciate it when their child is finished at the stated time.
3. Parents should always be welcome to stay and take part in the activity.
4. No matter the project or event, make sure that proper safety measures are taken for everyone involved. Also, be sure that activities or projects are age appropriate.
5. Be extremely conscious of the location where you bring or meet the youths.
6. Do not smoke, drink or use drugs around them.
7. If you are taking youth somewhere other than the Post home or a school, consider asking parents to sign a permission slip and make sure parents understand that the children may be riding in personal vehicles.
8. Receive training from your local Child Abuse Prevention Council or Child Protective Center on the Mandated Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Laws in your state for those working with children.
9. Find out if you need to have individuals working with youth/children fingerprinted before events. There may be laws in your state that require background checks.
10. Maintain and model healthy boundaries with children - be a role model. Remember it is never appropriate to display acts of violence or abuse around or towards children.

Remember that it only takes a minute to make a difference in the life of a child. There are many small, positive things we can all do to help protect and nurture our children that only take a minute. A few words of praise and encouragement to a child, listening carefully to what a child has to say, showing a child you care, are all simple actions that have been shown to have a profound impact on a child's life. In these very real ways, we can all support children and strengthen families.