

## **Healthy and Professional Boundaries When Working with Youth**

PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES REFER TO THE AREA AROUND A PERSON (PERSONAL SPACE) WHICH IS GENERALLY 2.5-3 FEET.

*Below are Teaching Family Home's guidelines to appropriate boundaries you will follow when working with the youth:*

### Acceptable Physical Contact

1. High Fives
  - a. Hand to Hand contact
2. Elbow bumps
  - a. Elbow to Elbow contact
3. Side hugs
  - a. No more than 2 seconds
4. Fist bumps
  - a. Fist to Fist contact
5. Pushing a youth on the swings.
  - a. Staff Hand to Youth upper back or shoulder contact
6. Barriers between staff and youth such as pillows or other objects should be used at all time.
7. Linking arms to skip around
8. A game such as 'Patty Cake" would be acceptable as the contact is similar to a high five. Thumb war however would not be acceptable as this would be considered "Hand Holding"
9. Handle with Care physical Management technique.
10. Helping a youth dress in a jacket, shoes, snow pants if the youth is incapable to perform.
11. Topographical applications of medical creams, lotions, etc. (Other Staff should be monitoring this). Please wear gloves.
12. Helping a youth brush their hair.
  - a. This will be under specific/special events and must be in camera view at all instances and monitored by another staff.
13. Helping a youth apply make-up
  - a. If a youth would like assistance with make-up, first model the application to your own face. This does not need to include actual make-up but just the movements of how you would apply something to your own face. You can also use unused blush brushes, eyeshadow brushes, or anything that would work for modeling the behavior.
14. Any games that require minimal and appropriate physical contact: Tag, dodgeball, soccer, basketball, etc.

## Non-acceptable Physical Contact

1. Laying with a youth on the couch, bed, floor, ground, etc. If a staff and youth are laying on the floor or ground for example, they must be at least 2.5-3 feet between them.
2. Cuddling
3. A staff or youth laying their head on any contact point of another's body
4. Hand holding
5. Massaging
6. Applying lotion or other similar items.
7. Assisting a youth to dry off if wet
8. Running fingers through their hair
9. Touching feet together (bare or with socks on).
10. Tickling
11. Applying make-up to a youth.
12. Horse Play
13. Tackle Football; touch football or Combat basketball, Any sport that includes physical contact sport.

## Non-acceptable Body Gesture Communication

1. Eye winks
2. Role playing that involves violence or sexual performance.
3. Use of hand gestures, signals or signs.

## Acceptable Body Gesture Communication

1. Thumbs-up
2. Silly, Goofy faces
3. Hand waving

## Non-acceptable Vocal Communication

1. The use of belittling wording. So instead of "Let's use your brain," say, "Let's try and remember," for example.
2. Use of Profane Language
3. Use of vocal communication at inappropriate high levels (Yelling), or sexual tone.
4. Conversation that involves discussing the physical attractiveness of the individual
5. Giving youth nicknames, i.e., dipstick, skidmark, etc.
6. Use of sarcasm.
7. No use of whispering to a specific youth.
8. Staff should refrain from sharing personal information with another staff member while they are on their shift.
9. Staff should refrain from sharing personal information while around youth. This includes being within earshot of a youth.

## Acceptable Vocal Communication

1. Saying hi to a youth and asking how they are doing.
2. Asking a youth how their day went.
3. When a youth wakes up in the morning, asking if they slept okay.
4. Describing the clothing of a youth. For example: "I like the flowers on your shirt!" or that looks like a warm enough jacket to play outside!" Would deem appropriate.
5. Teaching a youth how to appropriately accept a compliment.

## Unacceptable-(Grooming)-No 1-on-1 with the youth.

1. Sharing personal information with youth.
2. Allowing a youth to watch video's on personal cell phone.
3. Showing family pictures on personal cell phone.
4. Allowing youth to listen to music on personal cell phone.
5. Writing secret notes back and forth with youth.
6. Giving personal phone number or email to youth.
7. Spending extra time with a youth, ignoring others.
  - a. A youth will not be transported off campus by a staff member of opposite gender For example: If a female youth needs to be transported off campus, a female staff will provide the transport. If two staff are available to provide the transport, two staff MUST provide the transport.
8. Coming back to work after shift is over to spend time with a youth.
9. Interfering with another DCW's teaching interaction to protect a youth.
10. Making secret or special deals with a youth to garner good behavior-All staff need to be implementing the same motivator for the target skill being practiced. Talk to social service worker about motivators for approval.
11. Giving youth money or special gifts.
  - a. Gifts should be donated to Teaching Family Homes as an agency, not to youth individually. Clothes should be donated to the clothes closet at site, electronics should be donated to the whole house, not to an individual youth
12. Sharing of electronic devices.
13. Sharing of clothing items and jewelry.
14. Independently accepting gifts from youth, or youth's family members.
  - a. Gifts should be donated to Teaching Family Homes as an agency, not to staff individually.

**Effective May 7<sup>th</sup> 2020**

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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