





Training: Working with Minors



Interaxon is committed to promoting the welfare of all who work with our programs, especially children (minors under the age of 18) who live in our community



You have a duty to the children with whom you work,
but also a duty to USC and Interaxon, to prevent any
accusations of abuse or improper behavior



Guidelines

- Never use any form of physical or emotional punishment to discipline children participating in the program
- Never engage in roughhousing or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Do not force children to sit in your lap
- Do not allow any inappropriate touching, including between children
- Be aware of the impact of your words and language on children
- Do not swear, or use or respond to sexual innuendo; never make a sexually suggestive comment – even in fun (not to minors or to colleagues when minors are present)
- Do not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged



Guidelines

-Be aware of situations in which actions can be misconstrued or manipulated by others (for example, being alone with the last child to leave a class or activity); conduct all dealings with children in a public environment as much as possible in order that all behavior can be readily observed

-Do not spend time alone with a child away from others; try to avoid being alone with a child, particularly in a restroom, changing area or shower area (follow the “rule of three” and always make sure there is another person with you.)

-Should you need to be alone with a minor in a changing or shower area, by no means should you ever be unclothed with a minor. Showering or bathing with minors, even when you are not alone with one, is never acceptable.

-Children should use the “buddy system” or otherwise be encouraged to stay together when going to the bathroom, on field trips, or when leaving the classroom or activity area



Guidelines

-Do not give any one child a ride in a car or van unless you have express permission from the parents.

You should not be driving one minor only in your car after any activity.

-Do not appear to favor one child more than another; do not give gifts to any one child in a program; do not take one child on a special outing, do not accept expensive gifts from any child in the program

-Be professional and maintain the highest standards of personal behavior at all times; do not drink alcohol or smoke when working with minors

-Do not tell children “this is just between the two of us” or use similar language that encourages children to keep secrets from their parent/guardians.

Use common sense



How may a child disclose abuse?

“That man has been hurting me”

Might hint that something is wrong: “Coach makes me do weird things”

“I feel uncomfortable around her”

A child’s behavior towards an adult might change i.e. wanting to spend less time with them



If a child discloses abuse to you...

Stay Calm

Ensure that the child is safe and feels safe

Assure the child you are taking what s/he say seriously

Be honest; explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the abuse

Avoid making promises you can't keep

Make a note of what the child has said as soon as possible

Do not ask "leading questions" : Stick to who, what, when, where

Do not investigate on your own



Reporting

ALWAYS REPORT: Interaxon is committed to promoting the welfare of all who work with our programs, especially children (minors under the age of 18) who live in our community. As a volunteer at any of our school sites, should you become aware of any instances of suspected child abuse you must immediately

- Report it to the President of Interaxon, who will guide you through the university's policy, which includes filing a report with both the USC Department of Public Service and the Department of Children and Family Services Child Protection Hotline or the Los Angeles Police Department.



5 Steps

1. Stay Calm
 - a. Voice steady and calm
2. Listen
 - a. Remember and write
3. Comfort
 - a. Don't make them feel guilty
 - b. Hug/pat on the back
4. Don't criticize
 - a. Child may know abuser well
5. Report
 - a. Follow instructions for reporting