



Continuing the Little League tradition of making it "safer for the kids."

**Be Safe, Not Sorry**

## Check Volunteers' Backgrounds

**This season, use the Little League Child Protection Program**

### Little League Child Protection Program

As your league prepares for a new season, have you done everything you can to give them the safest experience possible? Checking your volunteers' backgrounds is just as important as checking for holes in fences or fields.

Volunteers are the greatest resource Little League has in aiding children's development into leaders of tomorrow. But some potential volunteers may be attracted to Little League to be near children for abusive reasons.

The Little League Child Protection Program emphasizes education/prevention to provide a safer environment for children while in Little League. The entire program can be found in the 1999 Operating Manual, pages 22-26. Leagues will be sent baseball/softball cards for all players of Mark McGwire or Michele Smith with safety tips to help kids protect themselves.

### Defining Child Sex Abuse

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America defines child sexual abuse as "the exploitation of a child by an older child, teen or adult for the personal gratification of the abusive individual." So abusing a child can take many forms, from touching to non-touching offenses.

Leagues must also be aware that *anyone* can be an abuser, and it could happen *anywhere*. By educating parents, volunteers and children, you can help reduce the risk it will happen in your league.

### Education/Prevention of Child Abuse

Educating adults and children is the most important tool to prevent child abuse. Here are some suggestions:

- Meet with volunteers, parents and players regularly to talk about the dangers of child abuse.
- Make Little League's "no tolerance" position clear.
- Use "buddy system" to reduce opportunity for abuse.
- Stress adults' role. Children have an active role in

protecting themselves, but adults are ultimately responsible. (See further General Guidelines in the 1999 Operating Manual.)

### Rooting Out Child Abuse

Another aspect of prevention is a screening process.

Little League suggests a three-step process for selecting caring, competent and safe volunteers.

**Application** — To include residence information, employment history and three personal references from non-relatives.

**Interview** — Make all applicants aware of the policy that no known child-sex offender will be given

access to children in the Little League Program.

**Reference Checks** — Make sure the information given by the applicant is corroborated by references.

### Enforcement/Reporting of Child Abuse

In the unfortunate case that child sexual abuse is suspected and/or reported, you should take specific steps to deal with the situation. (See 1999 Operating Manual.)

### Child Abuse: A Five-Step Review



#### 1. Know what it is, and where to look.

Defining child abuse, and separating the truth from the myths, better enables us all to spot potentially dangerous situations.



#### 2. Educate parents, volunteers and children.

They need to be supplied with the information necessary to protect everyone. Let the children know that it's never their fault.



#### 3. Follow safety procedures.

Employing basic rules, such as the "buddy system," can keep child abuse from happening in the first place.



#### 4. Screen applicants carefully.

An effective three-step plan can keep potential child abusers out of our Little League programs, and keep our kids safe.



#### 5. Don't be afraid to speak out.

Both Little League children and adults need to feel safe to come forward. If an individual honestly feels something is wrong, the laws are in place to protect them.

# Crystal Lake: Making It Safer

Central Region league takes first for second year with attention to details

	Activities	Equipment	Facilities
A Education	Education/Activities	Education/Equipment	Education/Facilities
B Compliance	Compliance/Activities	Compliance/Equipment	Compliance/Facilities
C Reporting	Reporting/Activities	Reporting/Equipment	Reporting/Facilities

## Education/Activities

- Coaches and managers attend mandatory first aid class
- Coaches and managers attend mandatory ACEP class
- Safety Awareness Day with gang awareness, bicycle safety and fire safety
- Umpire training
- Coaches class on hitting, stretching, training techniques

## Education/Equipment

- Volunteers trained using a grader
- Players trained with face shields, batter's vests and safety bases
- Umpires trained to watch for proper equipment being used
- Volunteers trained to properly use maintenance equipment

## Education/Facilities

- Concession stand workers trained in proper food handling and preparation
- Fields checked before season and prioritize needs

## Compliance/Activities

- Make certain safety plan is being followed
- Safety discussion part of board and general meetings
- Give copies of rule changes to each manager

## Compliance/Equipment

- Cups mandatory for all players
- All equipment is checked, repaired or replaced before season starts

- Safety baseballs used for Rookie League
- Umpire checks to be sure equipment is used properly in games

## Compliance/Facilities

- Completed facility survey
- Field clean-up days before season started
- Everyday field maintenance
- Fencing repaired
- Caution tape erected along field #5 to keep cars out
- New fencing replaced 30-year-old fence
- New scoreboards installed
- Concession stand updated; meets Health Department regulations

## Reporting/Activities

- All injuries reported on injury/incident form within 48 hours
- Safety Committee reviews all safety suggestions turned in

## **Crystal Lake Makes Its Players Central to Safety**

In looking over their Central Region winning safety plan in 1997, Safety Officer Marc Platt said, "We concluded that our children were not active enough in our program and therefore were not receiving the benefits of safety awareness." They implemented "Attaboy" recognition cards, a safety poster and safety slogan contest, a safety suggestion box and a team safety officer program.

The "Attaboy" program uses donated certificates from a local restaurant as incentives. When a player is seen doing a safe act, the player can turn in the "Attaboy" certificate to the concession stand for a certificate for a free pizza.

*'With the information in the ASAP Newsletter and the encouragement of the Crystal Lake Park District, we made it mandatory for board members, managers and coaches to fill out a criminal history background check. We had no resistance at all from the members of the league.'*

*— Marc Platt, safety officer*

## Reporting/Equipment

- Notify equipment manager of all faulty or needed equipment
- Umpires report any unsafe equipment being used
- Safety Committee randomly checks for improper use of equipment

## Reporting/Facilities

- Implement long range plan

## **Long Range Plans:**

### Activities

- Train all board members, managers and coaches in CPR
- Upgrade safety program annually
- Budget additional money for safety incentives

### Equipment

- Update with safer equipment
- Rotate in new players equipment for older equipment as needed
- Purchase new riding lawnmower

### Facilities

- Install ventilation system in concession stand
- Install running water in restrooms
- Replace fencing on field #4
- Install lights on fields #1 and #2
- Purchase lightning detector

# Little League Volunteer Application

(Use any paper to complete if additional space is required)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Special professional training, skills, hobbies \_\_\_\_\_

Community Affiliations (Clubs, Service Organizations, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Volunteer Experience Year \_\_\_\_\_

(Including Baseball/Softball Experience) Year \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have children in the program?  Yes  No If Yes, at what level? \_\_\_\_\_

Special Certification: i.e. CPR, Medical, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a valid Driver's License?  Yes  No

Accident or Traffic Violations?  Yes  No If yes explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of any crime(s)?  Yes  No If yes, describe each in full: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been refused participation in any other youth programs?  Yes  No If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

In which of the following would you like to participate? (Check one or more.)

- League Official       Coach       Umpire       Field Maintenance  
 Manager       Scorekeeper       Concession Stand       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for the Little League organization to conduct a background check on me which may include a review of criminal and child abuse records maintained by governmental agencies. I understand that if appointed, my position is conditional upon the league receiving no inappropriate information on my background. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability the local Little League, Little League Baseball, Incorporated, the officers, employees and volunteers thereof, or any other person or organization that may provide such information. I also understand that regardless of previous appointments I may not be appointed to a volunteer position. If appointed I understand that, prior to the expiration of my term, I am subject to suspension by the President and removal by the Board of Directors.

Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Please Print)

**NOTE:** The local Little League and Little League Baseball, Incorporated will not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sex or sexual orientation, or disability.

# Warn youngsters of trunk danger

## Car trunks deadly place for playful kids

Young children don't know how dangerous a trunk can be on a hot day, but you can help parents protect their youngsters by teaching them a simple lesson: don't get inside a car's trunk. Ever.

The deaths of 11 children who got locked in car trunks last summer renewed calls for car manufacturers to install escape latches inside trunks. But future legislation won't protect children from being trapped in older cars' trunks. Warnings may.

Safety advocates call it the '90s version of reducing the dangers from abandoned refrigerators.

Janette Fennell has lobbied Congress and automakers Ford, GM and Chrysler for two years about the dangers of being trapped in a car trunk.

All 11 children were six years old or younger, and the children gained access to the trunks by using the parents' keys, pressing the trunk release from inside the car, or from finding the trunk left open.

The accidents occurred all across the country, from West Valley City, Utah; to Gallup, N.M.; to Greensboro, Pa. Temperatures inside the trunks could have reached 140 degrees.

"This is to child safety what abandoned refrigera-

tors once were," West Valley City Police Lt. Charles Illsley says. "But there are a whole lot more car trunks out there than old refrigerators."

Fennell, of San Francisco, became involved in the issue after a carjacker forced her and her husband, Greig, into the trunk of their car after robbing them at gunpoint in 1996. They escaped after they found the cable that led to the trunk lock.

They hope that recent legislation requiring the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to study the benefits of requiring trunk releases could help save lives of curious children or crime victims.

Fennell's group, Trunk Releases Urgently Needed Coalition, has counted 645 cases of crime victims and children being locked in trunks since the early 1980s. There are no official statistics on how many children have been injured or killed in car trunks.

A few carmakers already install trunk release devices.

"Young children love small, confined spaces and they love to play hide and seek," Fennell says.

"Parents should teach their children about this danger. They should always lock the car, and never leave the keys where kids can get them."

# Have volunteers fill out application

Checking the backgrounds on league volunteers is a good way to help ensure you have the best possible candidates helping guide your youngsters. The Little League Volunteer Application on Page 3 is suggested for all volunteers in the front cover story.

Have all potential volunteers fill out the application, which clearly asks for information about prior criminal convictions. The form also points out that all positions are conditional based on the information received back from a background check which may be made.

Different regulations are enforced for accessing backgrounds across the country, but most allow qualified youth activities sponsors to check on potential volunteers for prior child violence or sexual offenses.

In Virginia, the State Police recently opened a web site with the names, photos and addresses of violent sex offenders who have completed their sentences and are living in the state. The public may now view the records, although the information has been available to

schools, day care providers and youth groups like Little League since the registry was set up in 1994.

In California, qualified people may request the information from the sheriff's department, who will perform a search of the state's children's offender registry for each of the names provided.

In some states, a small fee may be required for processing the information, but most have a method for tracking those who have committed crimes against children, especially for organizations serving youth.

In Des Moines, Iowa, the NBC affiliate runs photos and addresses of convicted sex offenders to notify the public when released felons move into a community.

The push for community notification began nationwide following the abduction, rape and murder of a seven-year-old New Jersey girl, for whom the "Megan's Law" is named. She lived unknowingly on the same block as a twice-convicted child molester who eventually killed her.



## Question/Answer

# 'What ages can teens start helping league?'



*"Are children 14-16 year olds, allowed as 'helpers' of coaches? Are 17-18 year olds allowed as umpires? (The local varsity baseball team members want to umpire.)"*

**Natalie Powell, safety officer  
Middleburg, NY, Little League**



According to Dan Kirby, risk management director with Little League, there's no such thing as a "coach's helper." You are either a coach who has been appointed by the league president, or not. Little League recommends all coaches be adults. It is never a good idea to put legal minors in charge of other minors and adults as umpires. And once a game begins, the umpire is in charge of the game, and responsible for all rules enforcement. If you need to have a minor as an umpire, it's always recommended that an adult umpire be the crew chief, responsible for calling games and interacting with adult coaches. A minor could be influenced by an adult coach on decisions regarding calling games for weather or darkness, when in the heat of the contest, safety concerns could be jeopardized. "This is why it is imperative that an adult's judgement is in charge of the game at all times," explained Kirby.



*"I am trying to put together a small first aid kit, one that would have most everything needed for a first aid emergency at a Little League game. Do you have any suggestions of where I can pick up something made just for sports first aid? I have found that having the bulky Rubbermaid® bins that I inherited as first aid kits are more a detriment than a help. And, if I can make it small and easy to carry, they are more likely to get it to the field! I found too many of them leaving it at the league office last year. You can't get too angry with volunteers! You have to talk them into it!"*

**Kelly Neibert, safety officer  
Lacamas Little League, Camas, Wash.**



A Little League licensee, Fyrst USA, has a small, team-sized first aid kit available for about \$25, which contains the necessities for game situations. If you're looking to put together your own kit, you still may want to contact them for a couple kits to use as examples for what you need in yours. The ASAP News has published several recommendations on what a full kit should contain (Dec., 1997), so check your back issues for that, too. Here's the address:

Fyrst USA  
Contact: Gary Marshall  
3954 Montefrio Court  
San Diego, Calif. 92130  
619-259-1380

## Submit safety plans in time for April 15 deadline

This season, remember to send in your league's safety plan. An operating safety plan will help you reduce injuries to your players, and it will also return 20 percent of the league's player accident insurance premium in the form of a credit, if you carry Little League/CNA Insurance.

Qualified safety plans must be postmarked by **April 15, 1999** to Little League Headquarters.

Where are the requirements?

- In the **1999 Safety Officer Manual** on CD; leagues should have received it in the mail;
- Or check Little League's web site on the Internet at [www.littleleague.org/manuals/asap](http://www.littleleague.org/manuals/asap) for all the forms, manual pages and requirements, and you can send us an e-mail, too.

If you didn't get your CD, call ASAP's hotline at **800-811-7443** or e-mail [asap@musco.com](mailto:asap@musco.com).

Give us your name, your league's name and a mailing address where you would like the 1999 Safety Officer Manual CD to be sent.



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*"We recently got our local hospital to donate two first aid kits and they've agreed to restock all supplies for them as long as we have them. We also recently installed safety railing around our bleachers and we've grounded all our metal bleachers with grounding rods and straps. In addition, we're currently in the process of putting the safety plastic railing caps on the top of our fences in the outfield."*

**Brian Roerick, safety officer**  
Township Little League, Palmerton, Pa.

*"To promote safety in our league, we sent out fliers to all 1600 kids in our league to join our Safety Club. The kids turn in safety posters and safety ideas, with a winner each month. We didn't judge so much on the safety idea, but on the way the kids made their poster. We had a pancake breakfast to kick-off our opening day which we hadn't done for a long time and I had a safety booth to promote the safety awareness program. It was a big hit."*

**Robin Stearns, safety officer**  
North Issaquah LL, Issaquah, Wash.

(Way to go Brian and Robin; these are great ideas! Thanks for calling. — Ed.)

**These safety officers received ASAP caps for calling in their safety ideas. What is your league doing to become safer for the kids? Call the ASAP Hotline, or e-mail them to [asap@musco.com](mailto:asap@musco.com)!**

**ASAP HOTLINE**  
24 HOUR TOLL-FREE  
**800-811-7443**

### ASAP News

ASAP News is a service of  
Little League Baseball®, Inc.  
facilitated and published by  
Musco Lighting, Inc.  
P.O. Box 808  
Oskaloosa, Iowa 52577

© January, 1999, Little League  
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