PRATTVILLE YMCA | YOUTH PROTECTION | FAMILY HANDOUT

Growing Good Sports

Be fair. Be kind. Be safe.

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We are talking with children about sportsmanship: treating others with kindness and respect while playing and learning together. These lessons apply everywhere at the Y, including childcare, sports, games, group activities, and the playground.

What we are practicing

Be fair. Take turns, share materials, follow the rules, and be honest. Everyone is learning, and mistakes are part of trying something new.

Be kind. Encourage others, celebrate effort, and help people feel included. Name-calling, threats, teasing that hurts, and encouraging others to leave someone out are not acceptable.

Be safe. Keep bodies and equipment safe. Respect personal space and listen when someone says "stop." Children may decline a hug or high-five and choose a wave instead.

Simple ways to reinforce this at home

Notice the good. Say, "I noticed you waited for your turn," or "That was kind of you to help someone try again."

Practice handling disappointment. Remind children that feeling upset is okay. Practice taking a breath, asking for a break, and getting help instead of hurting someone or damaging things.

Model respect. Use encouraging words about other children, families, staff, coaches, and officials. Show how to win kindly, lose respectfully, and repair a mistake.

Ask your child

"How did you help someone feel included today?"
"What can you do when a game or activity feels frustrating?"
"Which adults could you ask for help if something felt unsafe?"

Help children speak up

Remind your child: "If someone hurts you, scares you, or touches you in a way you don't want, tell a trusted adult. This includes another child or an adult. If the first adult doesn't help, tell another. You are not in trouble for asking for help."

If your child shares a concern, listen calmly, thank them for telling you, and let them know you will help. Please share concerns about bullying, unsafe behavior, or boundaries with your program director or YMCA leadership so they can be addressed.

Together, we can help every child feel safe, respected, and welcome.