

Guidelines for Those Working With or Around Children

The following guidelines are intended to provide information about your conduct in order to prevent abuse or unfounded allegations of abuse. You have a duty to the children with whom you work, but also a duty to the University and yourself to prevent any accusations of abuse or improper behavior.

- Never engage in any aggressive horseplay or sexually provocative games with children, even as a joke.
- Do not ask kids to sit in your lap.
- Do not engage in any physical activity if the child has asked you to stop.
- Allow children to express affection on their own terms; do not request a hug or kiss from a child.
- Never use any form of physical or emotional punishment to discipline a child or to tease a child.
- Respect the child's need for privacy, especially in restrooms or changing rooms.
- Don't swear around children or make sexually suggestive comments, even in fun.
- Don't ask children, particularly teens or preteens, about their sexuality.
- Do not appear to favor one child over the others in your care.
- Don't give special gifts or trinkets to just one child.
- Do not offer to take the child home or on any special outings.
- Never tell a child to keep any type of secret from their parents.
- Don't say things like "This is just between us..."
- Avoid being alone with one child away from the others, particularly in a restroom, shower, or changing area.
- Follow the rule of 3: It is preferable to take another person with you if you must accompany a child to the restroom.
- Should you ever 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, is never acceptable or allowed.
- Activities with children should be conducted in as public an environment as possible in order that all behavior can be readily observed.
- Keep classroom doors open and windows should remain uncovered by drapes or shades.
- Be aware of situations which could be misinterpreted, including being alone with the last child to leave an activity.
- Don't tease children or use guilt tactics if they are setting their own personal or physical boundary with you.
- Do not give any child a ride in a car or van unless you have express permission from the parents.
- Children should always use the "buddy system" or otherwise be encouraged to stay together when going to the bathroom, on field trips, or when leaving a classroom or activity area.
- Be professional and maintain the highest standard of personal behavior at all times; do not smoke or drink alcohol when working with minors.
- Remain alert to any inappropriate actions of others.
- Trust your instincts.
- Report any suspicions or criminal action as required by the law and by USD policy.