

**FROM: "MAINTAINING AN ENVELOP OF SAFETY:  
GUIDELINES FOR CHILD/YOUTH/COUNSELOR CONTACT"**

Excerpted from video entitled "Maintaining An Envelope of Safety  
by Bob Ditter

**GOLDEN RULE! WHATEVER IS DONE WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH IS DONE IN BROAD  
DAYLIGHT WITH COMPANY!**

**GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN**

**They can become impulsive and overstimulated**

**They look up to you—your actions have a real impact upon them**

**They can be made to feel unsafe if they become overstimulated. They can become overstimulated when they:**

- Feel scared or frightened
- Become too curious, especially about the private romantic lives of counselors
- Get too excited

**Loss of self control (Not feeling Safe) is one of the things children fear most. Some things that cause children to feel out of control:**

- Tickling
- Wrestling
- Scary stories
- Details of counselors private romantic lives

**Some other things to keep in mind about children:**

- They do better with rewards and success than failure and punishment
- They become tired and hungry more quickly than adults
- They "fall apart" when tired and cranky
- They have different energy levels than adults
- Don't always know what's in their best interest,
- Argue with you for the very things that might harm them
- Become impulsive and restless when idle
- Assume adults can guess what is bothering them

**Guidelines for discipline**

- Under no circumstances hit a child
- Do not use abusive or derogatory language
- Ask for help from other counselors
- Seek assistance.

**Things that support the need for discipline:**

- Get to know children and youth
- Use activities to channel energy
- Make a child/youth a special helper
- Use pets/small animals
- "Time Outs"
- Get help when needed

## **SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR CHILD/YOUTH/COUNSELOR CONTACT**

- Three safe places to touch a child: hand, shoulder and upper back
- Never touch a child against their will. (Unless in a clear present danger of the child)
- Never against a child's verbal or non-verbal expressed comfort
- Always in the company of adult.
- Never as to overstimulate them.
- Never touch a child on a place normally covered by a bathing suit. And then, only for a medical emergency and in the company of another adult.

### **Other things to Maintain an Emotionally Safe Environment**

- Never embarrass a child about his/her body.
- Do not draw attention to a child/youth while they are changing or showering
- Refrain from sitting upon a child/youth's lap—no matter how big the child/youth might be.

### **Other Important Practices That Help Maintain Safety**

- No hazing of children and youth by counselor or other children and youth
- "initiation rites" shall not be abusing in any form.
- Encourage children and youth to change their own clothes
- At least two adults present during showers and changes of clothing, etc.
- When transporting children and youth try to have an adult monitor on board
- Pillow fights and wrestling need to be well supervised.
- Tickling or teasing a child/youth can make a child/youth feel out of control—reducing trust and sense of safety.
- Back rubs with another adult present and with clothes on.
- Limit "clingers"
- Children and youth should not be alone with counselor in the "counselor's" quarters.
- Counselors shall not share a bed or sleeping bag with a child/youth—not in any circumstances.
- All overnights shall have at least one adult of same gender of children and youth.
- Counselors sleeping together on overnights is grounds for dismissal
- Romantic lives of counselors shall not be shared with children and youth.
- Counselors shall stay out sleeping quarters after "lights out" unless on specific Church business and in the presence of another adult.
- Teen children and youth have a tendency to develop "crushes" with the counselors that work with them.

## **GOLDEN RULE**

**WHATEVER IS DONE WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH IS DONE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT WITH COMPANY!**