

Guidelines for Working with Minors

To foster and maintain an atmosphere of trust and safety when engaging with minors, the following guidelines have been established. These guidelines are intended to provide information about employees' conduct when working or engaging with minors. The Institute expects all employees and volunteers to maintain high standards of professional and moral behavior.

- Treat all minors with respect.
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents and visitors.
- Respect cultural differences.
- Take responsibility for ensuring you are accountable and do not place yourself in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made.
- Be aware of situations in which actions can be misconstrued or manipulated by others (for example, being alone with the last child to leave the room); conduct all dealings with children in a public environment as much as possible, such that all behavior can be readily observed.
- Do not spend time alone with a child away from others; avoid being alone with a child, particularly in an enclosed space such as a restroom (follow the “rule of three” and always make sure there is another person with you).
- Inform Children to use the “buddy system” or otherwise encourage to stay together during their visit and when going to a restroom.
- Touching should be age appropriate and in context to the situation. There should be no physical contact when alone with a minor.

Examples of appropriate physical contact are:

High-fives, hand slapping and fist bumps

Handshakes

Pats on the shoulder or upper back

Holding hands while walking with small children

Touch should be appropriate, public and non-sexual

Verbal praise is always appropriate!

Type of physical contact to be avoided includes but is not limited to:

Inappropriate or lengthy embraces

Tickling, horseplay, wrestling or roughhousing

Piggyback rides

Holding minors on the lap

Any form of unwanted affection

Remarks that refer to physique or body development are also inappropriate.

If you, as a University employee, suspect that a child known to you in your professional capacity is either abused or neglected, you must report this to the **Department of Child and Family Services** (DCFS) by calling 1-800-25ABUSE. You must also call your campus police and let them know a report has been made to DCFS.