

LCA Cheer Peer Contract

LCA Cheer Peers are role models whose behavior serves as a positive example for special needs athletes. They must strive to provide the fairest and most positive competitive experience to every athlete on our teams. They must exhibit, above all, respect for the athletes, coaches, volunteers, families and event staff. The cheer peers must have positive interpersonal relationships; uphold the highest of moral values; and be honest, trustworthy and courteous to all persons at all levels of our organization. Their verbal and physical behavior is expected to reflect a positive and constructive attitude toward cheer competition and toward those volunteers, coaches, officials and event coordinators whose time and efforts provide that opportunity. A good cheer peer realizes that this experience is not limited to competitions and practices. Athletes will benefit in every facet of their lives. They become more productive at home, in school and in society as a whole. The most successful attitude is one that focuses on the lifelong benefits the athlete receives, not just on competition.

Requirements

- Must be at least 13 years of age with parent signature if under 18 years of age.
- Must be a mature, reliable individual who is capable of supervising his or her athletes under the direction of the coaches.
- Must uphold the idea that competing and winning are secondary to experiencing and participating.
- Must be a role model exhibiting positive interpersonal relationships, moral values, respect, honesty, trust, fairness and courtesy toward the athletes, coaching staff, volunteers, families and event staff.
- Must answer directly to the LCA coaches.

Responsibilities

- To assist the coaches with training the athletes.
- To arrive on time and prepared for all practices and competitions. You must notify a coach ahead of time if you will be absent.
- To participate with athletes during the entire practice.

Guidelines

As a cheer peer, your attitude toward sports and competition will directly affect your athletes. LCA believes that the athletic experience and the camaraderie shared by teammates is what benefits an athlete the most. Cheer Peers should be aware of how they influence their athletes, and should follow these guidelines in all aspects of their interactions with athletes.

- Successful cheer peers help athletes master new skills, enjoy competition with others and feel good about themselves.
- Successful cheer peers are not only well-versed in techniques and skills, they know how to teach these skills to people.
- Successful cheer peers not only teach athletes the skills of cheerleading, they also teach and model the skills needed for successful living in society.
- Successful cheer peers are those who can learn new skills, who are flexible enough to change old ways when change is needed, who can accept constructive criticism and who are able to critically evaluate themselves.

Objectives

- To help athletes develop physically by learning skills and rules, improving physical conditioning, developing good health habits and avoiding injuries.
- To help athletes develop psychologically by learning how to control their emotions and develop feelings of self-worth.
- To help athletes develop socially by learning how to cooperate in a competitive context and by

- learning appropriate standards of behavior, including sportsmanship.
- To cooperate and exercise sound judgment in every decision that affects athletes, coaching staff, family members, volunteers and event staff.
- To be a positive role model exhibiting good interpersonal relations, moral values, respect, honesty, trust, fairness and courtesy towards the athletes, coaches, volunteers, family members and event staff.
- To have fun – the coaches, the cheer peers and the athletes.

With proper leadership, sports programs produce athletes who accept responsibilities, who accept others and, most of all, who accept themselves.

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Working with People with Intellectual Disabilities

As an LCA Cheer Peer, you will be looked up to and held in esteem by the athletes with special needs. They will look to you for friendship as well as for coaching guidance. These basic guidelines for working with the athletes may help you in establishing discipline, coaching routines and interpersonal relationships. The method and manner by which you conduct yourself will, in large part, determine your success as a cheer peer. While coaching, approach your athletes enthusiastically. Assist with the day's lesson in an enjoyable manner. Remember, the athletes will return the excitement and enthusiasm transmitted to them by you. There are a variety of things you can do as a cheer peer to create a positive, acceptable human environment to support learning in a group.

Goals

It is very important that we have certain goals for the athletes on a daily and weekly basis. On a daily basis, physical conditioning should be stressed at each practice. On a seasonal basis, preparation for competition events will be in order. All short-range goals should lead up to the sound development of each athlete. The long-range goal is the enhancement of each athlete's self-image, physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

Discipline

In general, a "firm, but fair" approach is best; the athlete should realize that you are there to pass on information as well as to offer guidance. You, therefore, should remain flexible and open-minded in your expectations and demands. This "open-ended" approach helps create a cooperative spirit and a greater desire to perform. Above all, consistency in your expectations for discipline is a key to success.

Physical Conditioning

It is important that you become familiar with the physical abilities of each participant, specifically to those you may be paired with. The goal is to help each athlete achieve maximum physical potential. The best way to encourage your athletes to perform is through your demonstration and participation in the activities.

Competition

LCA athletes with special needs should be encouraged to compete, above all, with themselves. The key lies in the motivation; therefore, it is up to you to encourage interest by not making wait times too long, and by varying your approaches to the skills you are coaching. It is important for you to help coaches and your athletes keep and review records of athletes' progress. As the athletes gain more and more control over their bodies, records will help them achieve awareness of their progress, which in turn

stimulates further interest in competing against themselves.

Reinforcement

Rewards are a good motivation for achievement. Some athletes may respond best to verbal praise and encouragement; others may require more tangible rewards such as stars, ribbons, patches, certificates or medals. The most important tool you can have is knowledge of each athlete's needs. The spirit of achievement is a good incentive for continued improvement. Acknowledgment of the efforts of your athletes in the form of rewards or reinforcements helps to bolster their self-image.

Before the Practice

- Always understand the lesson thoroughly.
- Minimal time should be spent standing or waiting around. Maximize participation of all athletes.
- Always allow for warm-up.

During the Practice

- Closely analyze the athlete's attempts and always provide feedback.
- RELAX! Attempt to learn the rhythm and style of your team the first day.
- Be flexible. Adapt instruction to meet the needs of a particular athlete or group.
- Use confidence builders and motivation. Always attempt to prevent an athlete from encountering repeated failures.
- Stand and face athletes during instruction (mirroring reverse instruction of left and right).
- Provide brief and clear instructions.

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- Teach by modeling as well as direction. Athletes are great imitators; be a good model.
- Allow the athlete plenty of time to become familiar with one skill before teaching another skill.
- Always point out the positive before correcting, "Bill, you did well with that jump, but if you . . ."
- Remove distractions as much as possible or as necessary.
- Be firm.
- Be consistent.
- Be quick to praise. Praise in public; discipline in private.
- Follow through with any warnings you may give.
- Devote a part of each training period to vigorous activity.
- Participate in the activity with the athletes. Stay active.
- Individualize your instruction.
- Repetition and practice is the key to success. Overlearn.
- Passive manipulation. Physical assistance is often needed to ensure proper learning.
- Don't expect immediate results as far as skill learning – practice patience, patience and more patience.

What Makes a Successful Coach?

- Knowledge of the sport – The more knowledge you have of the basic skills of a sport, and the more you know about teaching these basics in the proper sequence, the more fun you and your athletes will have.
- Motivation to be a good coach – You can have all the skills and knowledge in the world, but without motivation you will not be a successful coach.
- Empathy – The ability to readily understand the thoughts, feelings and emotions of your athletes and convey this to them. Successful cheer peers possess empathy. They are able to understand athletes' emotions of joy, frustration, anger and anxiety.
- Communication – The cheer peer must be able to communicate with athletes and coaches.

Everyone works together better when goals and objectives are clear.

Practice Tips

- Keep the athletes active.
- Keep verbal communication brief.
- Praise the athlete; be specific about what skills you are praising.
- New skills should be taught at the beginning of the lesson. Do not over-coach; teach just one thing at a time.
- Be patient. Respect and accept the athlete as an individual.
- Review for reinforcement.
- Know your athlete – his or her abilities, interests and goals.
- Keep all practices fun.
- Be firm, understanding, organized and imaginative.
- Set up special awards, such as hardest worker, most improved, etc.
- Set realistic goals that are meaningful, challenging and attainable.
- Set a goal at the beginning of each lesson or practice and then evaluate at the end of the orientation as to whether it was achieved. Be positive; there is no room for negative expectations.
- Plan a fitness program.
- Be flexible. Have the courage to change methods to better the program.
- Give the athlete confidence. Use your voice and face to express yourself.
- Focus on ability, not disability. Emphasize potential, not deficiency. Encourage, don't discourage.
- Before you act, remember that you are a focal point on and off the field of play and that your actions, attitudes and words could have a profound influence on the lives of your athletes and other individuals around you.
- You set an example. Be a positive role model by exhibiting positive interpersonal relations, high moral values, respect, honesty, trust, fairness and courtesy toward others.

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Sample Training Plan

Session 1

Orientation (10 minutes)
Warm Up Development (20 minutes)
Skill Assessment (15 minutes)
Conditioning (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 3

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (25 minutes)
Trial (10 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)

Session 2

Welcome/Warm-Up (15 minutes)
New Skills: Jumps (15 minutes)
Skill Development (10 minutes)
Trial (5 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 4

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Trial (15 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)

Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 5

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
New Skills: Cheer (15 minutes)
Skill Development (15 minutes)
Trial (5 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 7

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Trial (15 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 9

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
New Skills: Dance (15 minutes)
Skill Development (15 minutes)
Trial (5 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 11

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Trial (15 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 13

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
New Skills: Stunts (15 minutes)
Skill Development (15 minutes)
Trial (5 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 15

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Trial (15 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

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Session 17

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Routine (45 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 6

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (25 minutes)
Trial (10 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 8

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Trial (15 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 10

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (25 minutes)
Trial (10 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 12

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Trial (15 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 14

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (25 minutes)
Trial (10 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 16

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Trial (15 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 18

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Routine (10 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 19

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Routine (15 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Session 20

Welcome/Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Skill Development (20 minutes)
Routine (15 minutes)
Conditioning/Tumbling (10 minutes)
Closing/Cool Down (5 minutes)

Please answer the following questions in your own words, sign the Code of Conduct, and return to LCA.

- 1: What do you expect to personally gain from your experience as an LCA cheer peer?
- 2: What do you expect to personally contribute to this team of athletes with special needs?
- 3: Please tell us how your personal experiences (cheerleading, coaching, working with people with special needs, etc.) will benefit the team and other cheer peers.
- 4: Please share with us your opinions and beliefs about people with special needs.
- 5: What do you think the significance might be for an athlete with special needs to participate on this team?

Code of Conduct Agreement

1. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being at LCA and events.
 - Within the context of the activity, treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
2. Ensure the athlete's time spent with LCA is a positive experience.
3. Treat each athlete as an individual.
 - Respect the skills, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
 - Ensure all athletes are provided appropriate training opportunities.
 - Be fair, considerate and honest with athletes.
 - Instruct all athletes to perform to the best of their ability at all competitions.
4. Be professional in and accept responsibility for your actions.
 - Language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation should display high standards.
 - Display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in the sport (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators, media, volunteers, etc.).
 - Encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
 - Respect the time of LCA, it's athletes and coaches by not bringing with you to practice cell phones, iPods, and other electronics that are distracting to you or the athletes. Save social conversation for outside of practice times.
 - No consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is permitted while representing LCA at training, competition or while supervising athletes.
5. Operate within the rules and spirit of Liberty Cheer Allstars.
6. Refrain from any form of abuse toward athletes and others.
 - This includes verbal, physical and emotional abuse.
 - Be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes while in your care.
7. Be a positive role model for athletes and cheerleading.

I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____