



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

## **Interviewing Kids: Recommended Rules of the Road**

When you need to get story materials (quote, photo, video, etc.) from a child participating in a Y program, being prepared will help put you and the child at ease – and will help get you the best responses possible. Follow these simple reminders and share them with your Y colleagues.

### **Use the Photo/Video Release Form:**

Requirement: Any time you will be focusing on a particular child, you must use the National Y Photo and Video Release Form, located in the Brand Resource Center on SharePoint. (General Y parental permissions acquired upon registration only apply to group shots.)

Suggestion: When feasible, staff can ask parents at sign-in to indicate if they DO NOT want their child photographed/interviewed. That way, the child can wear a bracelet or some other kind of identifier so that you'll know not to select him/her.

### **~ Top 10 Tips ~**

1. **Talk to the child one-on-one:** Try not to do the interview with the child surrounded by a group of kids – it changes the dynamic of the conversation. Do it one-on-one but still in accordance with the Y's child protection policy (i.e., within view of other staff).
2. **Set it up ahead of time:** When possible, ask program staff to help you identify a child or children who would be the best for your photo, video or story goals. Impromptu is fine, but prep time lets you get the permission out of the way and removes the element of surprise for the child.
3. **Get at their level:** Adults can look like intimidating giants to kids! Crouch down, sit in a small chair or sit on the floor to be able to look them in the eye.
4. **Don't get right to it:** Kids need small talk to warm up – especially because they may think they're in trouble if a stranger asks to talk to them specifically. Get to know them and put them at ease by asking about their favorite activities, movies, hobbies, etc.
5. **Simple and direct questions:** Open-ended questions don't work well with kids. Give them specific questions. For example, instead of, "Tell me about your counselor," try "What do you like best about your counselor?" or "How does he/she make you laugh?"
6. **Be happy and engaging:** Kids will often mirror personality and body language. If you want smiles and energy, demonstrate it! Tap into your inner kid and don't be all business.
7. **Aim for quality:** Don't let the "good enough" quote or photo keep you from getting a great one. You wouldn't use a weak quote for an adult, so be prepared with a variety of questions to increase the odds that they'll say something priceless!
8. **Share what you're shooting:** Kids are naturally curious. By letting them see a few images or some footage of themselves as you go along, you'll provoke more interest, enthusiasm and willingness to participate.
9. **Coach kids on posing:** Don't forget to tell kids where to look, whether you are shooting video or stills. If you want to add some zip to a photo, tell them to raise their arms in the air, or make a funny face. Smiling shots are great, but add some variety.
10. **Keep it short:** Can you say, "notoriously short attention spans?" On average with most kids, you've got 3-5 minutes of quality time before they're on to other things. Always prepare if you can, before the clock starts ticking!