



Arkansas National Guard
Youth Challenge Program
Building 16414
Camp J. T. Robinson
North Little Rock, AR 72199

Welcome to Youth Challenge

You should be so proud! Your son or daughter has chosen voluntarily to attend the Arkansas National Guard Youth Challenge Program and to challenge themselves to make positive changes and life choices that will affect their future. Historically, the first few weeks at Youth Challenge are very challenging for teens. Transitioning into a quasi-military environment is a difficult and stressful adjustment. Many teens will experience frustration, stress, anger, withdrawal, fear, anxiety, homesickness, etc. These emotions may cause many to want to quit or give up easily. They will look to you as parents to “rescue” them from these uncomfortable feelings and emotions. This handbook is intended to assist you in preparing for the next 22 weeks of your son or daughter’s journey to success!

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Our normal hours of operation for the Youth Challenge Program are 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday. When a cycle is in progress, our phones are manned 24 hours for emergency purposes only after normal business hours.

PLEASE DO NOT CALL AFTER 3:30 PM EXCEPT FOR EMERGENCIES

Staff members can be reached at the telephone numbers listed below for your questions

Admissions	1-800-814-8453	For questions concerning the program
	or	
	501-212-5565	
Headquarters Fax Number	501-212-5339	To send address changes, forms, or information
Academics Department	501-212-5330	For questions concerning grades, academics
Medical Department	501-212-5306	For medical/medication questions
Operations Department	501-212-5308	For cadet progress questions
Post Residential Department	501-212-5309	For career planning and placement

FOR AFTER HOURS EMERGENCIES CALL

Operations Department Mobile Phone	501-352-6318
Camp Robinson Public Safety Department	501-212-5280

The First Weeks

THIS IS NOT A “TRY IT OUT AND SEE IF YOU LIKE IT” PROGRAM. FOR A WHILE, THEY WILL NOT LIKE IT!

This is a quasi-military behavior modification program. During the Acclimation Phase of the Program, our students will be challenged to follow strict guidelines and told (not asked) how to do EVERYTHING. They are expected to work as a team with each other in their barracks and they will receive praise and/or discipline for their actions accordingly. Guidance provided is stern and training is rigorous. Compliance with our rules and guidelines is strictly enforced. Students will learn principles that will help them become more respectful and have greater self-discipline. After Acclimation, it gets easier. The more they get engaged with program activities, the more they get accustomed to their new lifestyle while with us. We make no guarantee for their change in behavior. Cadets will get the maximum benefit of this program according to their cooperation and willingness to apply the training given.

Staff members are trained to provide guidance and support to deal with situational issues that impact the cadet’s performance while in the program. Cadets may request to see staff members as needed and if the time does not interfere with their daily academic or required daily schedule. Some group sessions are held in the barracks to address group interaction. Life skills instruction is taught to all cadets in a classroom setting to target key behavioral issues.

The candidates will not receive their first phone call until after the Acclimation Phase, (the first two weeks at Youth Challenge); HOWEVER, if a candidate continually displays behavioral problems, or wants to quit or give up, a phone call will eventually be given to a candidate to call home. This may happen at any time during the Acclimation Phase.

Almost every cadet gets homesick. When they do, they may come to our office and become emotional. This can range from just concerned, to crying, or even being irate. This most often happens within the first two to three weeks of being in the program. Expect it! Most youth have not been away from home for this length of time. They may come up with every excuse why they need to return home. A staff member may call you with your candidate on the phone with the candidate’s request to go home. **WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO STAY!** Quickly, let the candidate know your decision is for them to complete the program. This should not be a long conversation.

You know your son or daughter the best. Take some time to think about how he/she may act/talk during this phone call. It is important that you prepare yourself with some responses to your child. The following can assist you:

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A PHONE CALL! This phone call will be on a **speaker phone**. The way you respond to this phone call is **vital**. **There are generally 4 Phases of Withdrawing (Quitting):**

- a) Begging: please, PLEASE, come get me.
- b) Negotiating: I'll go back to school, work, do what I'm told to do, I'll listen to you, etc.)
- c) Anger: Fuss/Cuss/Rant and Rave
- d) Threatening: I'll run away, go to jail, kill myself, the cadre are after me, there are candidates/cadets that are going to beat me up or kill me, etc.).

Remain calm in your conversations. It is very easy to get caught up in an argument with your teen.

Listen and be understanding. It will be hard for you to identify with the stress and challenges they are encountering but show an interest and understanding with what they are experiencing.

Be Supportive. Encourage them to succeed! Remind them about their future and urge them to think about what is required to have a successful future (High School Education, Physical Fitness, Military, College, Employment, etc.).

Know that change will not happen overnight. Be patient with your son or daughter. Remind yourself that **change is a process**. If your child gives up and comes home, chances are high that things will remain exactly the same or even worse than before he or she left. **Stay strong** and do what is best for your child.

Be firm, confident, don't give in! Remember that they are probably going to be begging you to come get them! Be firm with them about the decision they made to come to Youth Challenge. Allowing them to give up just reinforces that it's ok to quit other things in their life [jobs, school, relationships, marriages, etc.] Many times, your ability to remain firm is all it takes for your son or daughter to accept that they need to stay in the program to reap lifelong benefits.

You may hear the following excuses:

What they will say

I just can't do this
This is just not for me
I'm not going to make it here
There are too many people in one place
I can't shower in front of people
I can't do the exercises
I hate the food
I'm not learning anything
Cadre and staff are mean
Cadre yell at us
All this military stuff won't help me
When one person does something wrong, we all get punished for it.
Some of these kids are mean

What they really mean

They don't want to try
I'd rather be doing only what I want
This is a big challenge
We are living in barracks like soldiers do
There are up to 4 cadets in partitioned showers
I'd rather play video games on the sofa
We get 3 meals a day and a snack before bed
I don't want to learn anything they are teaching
Staff are firm and consistent
Yes, cadre really will yell sometimes as needed
I don't want discipline or work as a team
Through acclimation.... One for all, all for one...
I don't like that concept.
This is a behavior modification program.....
That's why they are here.

The students agreed and each guardian has made a voluntary decision for the youth to be enrolled. The reasons they enrolled in Youth Challenge are the same they need to complete the entire Program. We advise that you DO NOT make deals for them to participate or stay in the program. Our staff are trained to address their behavior and help them to

manage their emotions. The first few weeks will be the toughest and stressful times for all of us, the students, the staff, the parents/guardians, and families/friends. Encourage one another and build each other up! Success is ahead!

MAIL

Cadets can never get too much mail! The cadets heavily rely on receiving mail. It keeps them motivated and encourages them to continue in the program. Cadets do not need stamps, envelopes, or paper. We supply needed materials. They can write as often as they would like to. When they write to you, write them back. Those that do not receive letters might feel abandoned. Family and friends should write the cadet EVERY WEEK if possible.

You should always put your address on the envelope. Put the cadet’s full first and last on the envelope. NO NICKNAMES Cadets open incoming letters and packages in front of staff. Please do not send money, food or inappropriate material to our cadets. We caution you, do not forward mail from your child to another cadet at Youth Challenge. This is considered fraternization and it will not be tolerated. We will not receive letters from nor send letters to any detention or correctional facility (penitentiary/jail). Any mail from a detention or correctional facility will be returned to the sender unopened.

Please address you letters and packages according to the example.

Your Name 123 Main Street Anywhere, USA 77777	ARNG YC Cadet Last Name, First Name BLDG. 16414 CAMP J.T. ROBINSON North Little Rock, AR 72199
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CADET RULES

While your son or daughter is in our program they will be held to a strict disciplinary standard. Our methods of handling discipline are very different from a traditional school.

Our program abides by a Hands-Off Leadership Policy. Our staff members do not use corporal punishment; however, your son or daughter may do physical tasks known as CAPE (Corrective Action through Physical Exercise) for their offenses. Following the rules is paramount. Cadets that do not follow the rules will not be allowed the privileges of those that make the right choices. This may seem extreme but remember that your son or daughter needed additional discipline or different discipline and that is why they are here. Our guidance is to use a tough love, caring, and disciplined approach in dealing with cadets. Our goal is to help them succeed and to achieve their future goals by instilling in them a sense of self-worth and accomplishment. You can help in this process by providing guidance and encouragement beginning today. We will work with you to assure that you begin this process by writing two encouraging letters to your son or daughter that will be distributed to them over the next couple of weeks. Since phone calls and emails are not allowed, you need to write to your cadet. Cadets that do not receive mail from their family have a tendency to act out. Write to them often and you will begin to see changes as they progress through the program.

DISMISSALS

No matter how hard we try to help the cadets in our program, some will not succeed. If we get to the point that we need to dismiss your cadet, we will call you to come and get them. **You must bring a change of clothing for your son/daughter to wear home.** You must plan for someone on the sign out list to pick them up as soon as possible. We will notify the high school and if applicable, the probation officer or FINS officer.

FINANCIAL GUIDANCE

Participation in the Youth is tuition and fees free! Parents are responsible for **the cost of prescription medication or medical expenses** needed beyond what is provided by our medical staff and some personal items required to bring/wear for In-Processing Day.

Parents/guardians may be held responsible for damages caused by a cadet in the program, i.e. damage or defacing Youth Challenge property or clothing, broken windows, damage vehicles and etc.

MEDICAL CARE

A full-time nurse is on site during the regular duty times to treat minor illnesses and injuries. Should a serious medical problem require additional attention after normal duty hours, the medical staff will be contacted. Serious emergencies are referred to a local hospital, usually St. Vincent's (Sherwood location) or Children's Hospital.

While treatment provided by our program medical staff is at no cost to you, YCP **will not** pay for other health care services to include charges for doctor, dental care, hospital visits, clinical testing, or medications. **Parents or guardians are responsible for co-payment costs or expenses not covered by their health insurance.** If your health insurance policy requires you to claim a Primary Care Physician (PCP) you must notify your PCP and ask for a referral to a doctor in the North Little Rock area for the duration of the program.

All non-emergency medical or dental appointments should be scheduled before In-Processing Day or after the Program is complete.

Do not schedule routine medical appointments for cadets while at YCP unless asked to do so by our nurse. If your cadet tells you of a medical issue, please call the nurse. Sometimes they will tell you on a phone call or in a letter. Although they might tell you that we know, often we do not. Cadets have a procedure to see the nurse and should report any problems to our staff. Make sure to get the name of the staff member you speak with or the staff member they claim that they informed of the problem. Any complaints of staff failing to address an issue should be made to the Program Director.

The parents or guardians must provide all prescription medications. This will be collected by the program nurse or designated staff member during the in-processing procedures. No medication, vitamins, or herbal supplements will be allowed without a prescription or written order from a physician. Only the medical staff or a trained staff member is allowed to dispense medication to cadets. If a prescription is ordered as the result of treatment while at YCP, our nurse will have it filled, using the cadet's medical insurance. If there is a co-pay involved then you will be required to coordinate the payment in advance.

Parents must provide immunization records for their cadets. These forms must be submitted **prior** to in-processing.

DRUG TESTING

Youth Challenge is a drug-free program, and all cadets will be drug tested. Cadets who test positive for drugs will be dismissed from the program.

FAMILY VACATIONS, HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS (PROMS, ETC.), and NON-EMERGENCY APPOINTMENTS

Due to the COVID-19 our Campus is closed. No visitor and all passes and outside trips are not approved until further notice.

ACADEMICS AND CURRICULUM

Cadet progress is measured throughout the program. A record of accomplishments under each of the eight core components is entered into a data management system. Graduation from the program is determined by the satisfactory completion of all eight core components.

The academic classroom is self-contained with approximately 20-30 cadets to each instructor. Cadets will be in class for approximately 5.5 hours a day working towards improvement of their grade level, as well as on various life skills, including career exploration and goal planning as part of the Post Residential Action Plan. Regular school report cards will not be used to reflect academic progress; however, progress assessments will be maintained on each cadet and reports issued to cadets at the end of each promotional period. **GED completion is not a requirement of graduation, nor is there any guarantee that your child will receive his/her GED while at Youth Challenge.** Academic improvement is measured by the Test of Adult Basic Education or TABE test and is a graduation requirement.

Cadets will be evaluated in a wide range of academic areas in order to assess their needs and develop an educational plan that will provide them the skills required to make academic growth. We use the TABE test to identify a cadet's grade level. From this information we make an individualized lesson plan based on his or her weaknesses.

Official GED tests will be given near the end of the program. Only students with official GED results available at graduation will compete for academic scholarships.

There are 8 core components of the Youth Challenge Program

- Academic Excellence
- Physical Fitness
- Health & Hygiene
- Life Coping Skills
- Job Skills
- Responsible Citizenship
- Leadership/Followership
- Service to the Community

POST-RESIDENTIAL

We often refer to the Youth Challenge Program as a 17-month program. That is because it consists of a five-month residential phase and a 12-month post-residential phase. The post-residential phase allows us to continue to assist your cadet as they continue to succeed with the skills and knowledge obtained while living at Camp Robinson.

The Post-Residential staff will assist our cadet as he/she develops a Post Residential Action Plan (PRAP) that they will be expected to follow upon graduation. The PRAP will include educational plans and career goals. Cadets will be given a

series of vocational interest surveys and standardized tests while enrolled in YCP to include the military ASVAB. There is no military requirement associated with this test.

The most important part of the post-residential phase is accomplished by establishing a mentor for your cadet. Mentoring is a one-to-one relationship over a prolonged period of time between a youth and an adult who provides consistent support, guidance, and concrete help as the young person goes through a difficult or challenging situation in life. The goal of mentoring is to help youth gain the skills and confidence to be responsible for their own futures including, and with increasing emphasis on, academic and occupational skills.

One of the requirements of attending the Youth Challenge Program is to have a mentor. We need your help to accomplish this. Every cadet **MUST** have a matched Mentor prior to the end of week 13. This is the latest date that matching mentors is possible. Mentors need to be identified and matched prior to the end of week 13 if possible.

In addition to maintaining the mentoring program, the Post-Residential staff will provide information, advice, and assistance to the cadets once they graduate from YCP. Please feel free to call the Post-Residential staff with any questions regarding post-residential assistance or mentoring.

Guidelines for Parents Regarding Mentors

- A mentor application should be completed and returned to the Post Residential Office (PRO) prior to the starting date of the class.
- If a mentor does not meet eligibility requirements or resigns, a new mentor must be found immediately.
- Mentors must receive training and establish contact with the PRO.
- Parents and mentors are required to assist cadets with completion of their Post Residential Action Plan. They must discuss the goals and sign off on the plan prior to the cadet's graduation.
- If there is something about the relationship that concerns you, contact the PRO Supervisor immediately. Try to let the mentor know his/her efforts are appreciated.
- Remember that the mentor is volunteering his/her time to help your cadet.
- Get to know the mentor and make sure you are comfortable with the relationship.

We hope these guidelines will help you support your teen's mentoring relationship. Your role in the development of this relationship is very important. The cadets and mentors will experience training about what to expect from the relationship, the responsibilities each of them have to the relationship, and the development of this unique relationship. Parents should call the Post Residential Office (501-212-5326) if they have questions about the mentoring process.

Visitation and Leave Policies

Visitation is not allowed, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic safety protocols. You will be notified if this changes and scheduled visitation days are allowed again.

The staff worked diligently to provide educational and recreational activities which offer the best opportunities for our cadets. The schedule is filled with those activities and learning experiences. We will exercise caution and use safety protocols to limit exposure to the coronavirus and other cold/flu viruses while attending events and participating in activities. We will post pictures/short videos of these events on our website and other social media platforms to share with you. The following is a schedule of a regular day at Youth Challenge. Pictures/videos of a typical day will be posted also. Make sure to visit our platforms! The staff is dedicated to achieve our mission by intervening in and reclaiming the lives of our students, producing program graduates with the values, life skills, education and self-discipline necessary to succeed as productive citizens. We can do this, especially with your support!

Schedule for a Regular Youth ChalleNGe Day

0530 – 0545 Wake up / Roll Call / PT
0545 – 0630 PT
0630 – 0730 Morning Meal / Morning Meds
0630 – 0715 Morning meal
0730 – 0815 Showers / Barracks Maintenance / Prep for Class
0815 – 0830 Formation
0830 – 1230 Academic Classes (beginning Week 3)
1230 – 1400 Noon meal / Noon Meds / Prep for Class
1400 – 1450 Academic Classes
1450 – 1530 Supply Requests / Sick Call / Prep for PT
1530 – 1600 PT
1600 – 1745 Showers / Letter Writing / Study Hall
1745 – 1800 Evening Formation / Colors / Retreat
1800 – 1845 Evening meal / Evening Meds
1845 – 1930 Personal Time / Housekeeping / Mail Call / Study Hall
1930 – 2000 Quiet time
2000 Lights Out

***SATURDAYS:**

WHEN APPLICABLE, CADETS PARTICIPATE IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

****CHAPEL SERVICE**

Wednesday 0830

Change of Address Request Form

Cadet's Name: _____

Please notify us immediately with address or phone changes. Only the parent or legal guardian may request a change. This change will affect all mail from YCP to the parent or legal guardian. This form should be mailed to Youth Challenge Administration Building.

Address on file:

Last Name	First Name	Mr./Mrs.
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Street

City	State	ZIP
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New Address:

Last Name	First Name	Mr./Mrs.
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Street

City	State	ZIP
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New phone # () _____ Type: _____

Printed name of person making request: _____

Relationship to cadet: _____

Signature: _____

Office Use Only

Approved: _____ Date _____

Entered: _____ Date _____

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Parent Handbook

I _____, parent/guardian of _____,

do hereby acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the parent handbook for the Arkansas National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program. I understand that I should refer to this handbook if I have questions and use it as a resource. I agree to notify the program in writing of any address or phone number changes for me and for any persons listed as emergency contacts or those listed on my son/daughter's sign out list.

Signature

Date

Driver's License Information for 1 Person for purposes of In-Processing Drop Off, Dismissal or Graduation

DL# _____

DOB _____

EXP _____

Issuing State _____