

YOUTH CHALLENGE

PARENT HANDBOOK

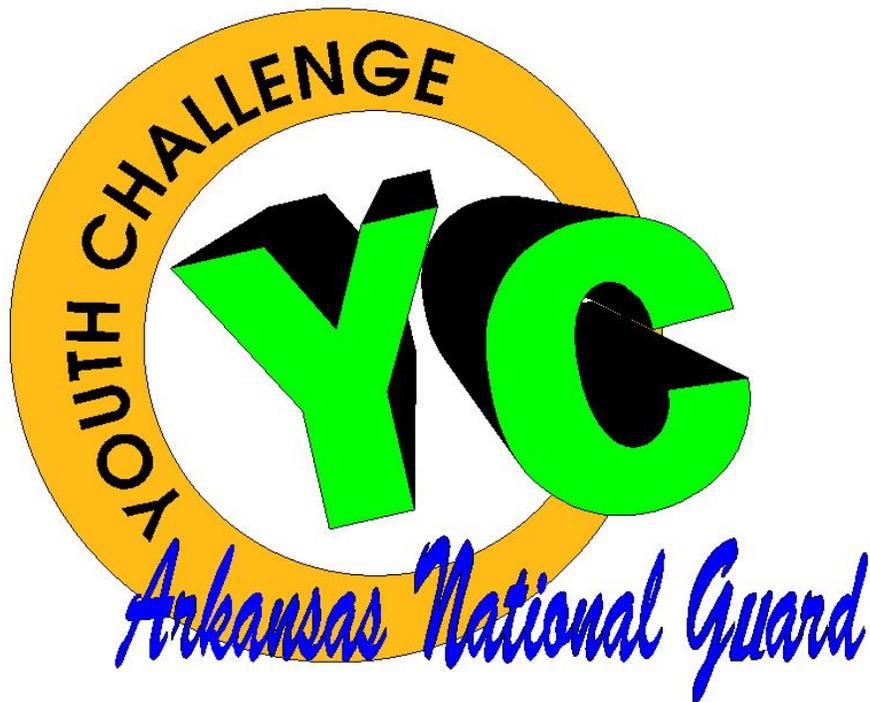
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Parent Resource Information

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. This resource sheet is intended to assist you in preparing for the next few weeks. Historically, the first few weeks of 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. Please read the following tips that may help you support your candidate through the next few weeks:

1. **PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A PHONE CALL!** The candidates will not receive their first phone call until after the Acclimation Phase, (two weeks of being 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. 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, wash the car, cut the grass, make my bed, study, make good grades, stay home, do what I’m told to do, etc.)
- c) Fuss, Cuss, Rant and Rave (anger phase)
- d) Threaten (I’ll run away, go to jail, kill myself, my heart (or some other vital organ) is going to fail, the cadre are after me, there are candidates/cadets that are going to beat me up or kill me, etc.).

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

Many common “reasons” your cadets may give you for wanting to leave the program are as follows:

- a) I just want to go home.
- b) I just came here for my GED.
- c) I can’t sleep (I haven’t been able to sleep since I’ve been here).
- d) I have to go home and help my mother, brother, sister, etc.
- e) I have some things to finish at home.
- f) I am sick and nobody’s doing anything (can’t see nurse).
- g) I don’t like being here with all these people.
- h) I will get my GED somewhere else (Adult Ed.).
- i) I don’t like the food; it’s making me sick.
- j) I have to get up too early.
- k) I didn’t come here for all of this PT and marching.
- l) I came here to go to school, not all this physical stuff.
- m) I miss my family, friends, dog etc.
- n) I don’t like people telling me what to do.
- o) I am under too much stress here.
- p) I just can’t make it.
- q) It is a good program, just not for me.
- r) They are picking on me (nobody’s doing anything).
- s) Everybody in here was sent by the courts (probation).

- t) They are stealing my stuff (nobody's doing anything).
- u) I have chest pains, asthma, headaches, bad back etc.
- v) They don't smoke cigarettes here.
- w) These people are hollering and disrespecting me.
- x) This place is like a boot camp.
- y) This place is for kids who don't know how to act.
- z) I'm not going to the military, so I don't need military training.
- aa) I'm tired of being punished for other people's mistakes.
- bb) It's just too hard; I'm not ready; I'll come next class.
- cc) I can't handle this; I keep getting in trouble.
- dd) I can't do anything right.
- ee) I can't learn the cadet code and creed.
- ff) I can't learn this marching.
- gg) I keep messing up. They keep blaming me.
- hh) I want to quit before I get kicked out.
- ii) You told me to try it and see if I like it.
- jj) They have gangs in here.
- kk) My girlfriend is pregnant.
- ll) I might have an STD and need to get tested.

What your child will say and promises he/she will make when you talk to them on the phone:

- a) You ask why he/she wants to leave and his/her response is, "I will tell you when you get here."
- b) You just don't understand.
- c) I will go back to high school.
- d) I will stay at home.
- e) I would rather be in jail than here.
- f) I'll do anything you tell me to do if you come get me.
- g) I will follow all of your rules.
- h) If I stay X number of days, will you come get me?

What will happen if you refuse?-----Threats

- a) More begging, pleading, crying, screaming, and cursing.
 - b) I'll walk away from this place (run away).
 - c) I'll make them kick me out.
 - d) You can come get me from jail.
 - e) I'll do something to get arrested.
 - f) I won't do anything they tell me to do.
 - g) I will bust somebody's head.
 - h) I will never speak to you again.
 - i) I hate you.
 - j) You are not my mother, father etc.
 - k) Cadre don't like me, they are out to get me.
 - l) Cadets are after me (will beat me up).
 - m) I will kill myself or somebody else.
 - n) You will never see me when I get out.
 - o)
2. **Remain calm in your conversations.** It is very easy to get caught up in an argument with your teen.
3. **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.

4. ***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.).
5. ***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.
6. ***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.

FINANCIAL GUIDANCE

Parents are **NOT** required to pay tuition. Parents will be responsible for making sure cadets have personal items needed during their stay at YCP and **parents are responsible for the cost of prescription medication or medical care** needed beyond what is provided by our medical staff.

Parents/guardians may be held responsible for damages caused by a cadet in the program.

MEDICAL CARE

A full-time nurse is on site during the regular duty times to treat minor illnesses and injuries. In addition, a nurse is on call should a serious medical problem require additional attention after normal duty hours. 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. Generally, HMO's will cooperate when informed of the residential nature of the Youth Challenge Program.

- **The cadet's parents must schedule all non-emergency medical or dental appointments during the time frame before the cadet enrolls, when the cadet is on pass or after the program is complete.**
- **Parents/Guardians: 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 and ask to speak to the nurse. They have a procedure to go through in order to see the nurse and should report any problems to our staff. Sometimes they will tell you on a phone call or in a letter. Although they might tell you that we know, often times we do not. 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 director.
- **No passes will be issued for non-emergency appointments not properly coordinated.**

The parents or guardians must provide all prescription medicines that they want administered to the students while enrolled in YCP. Cadets must turn in all prescription and over-the-counter medications to 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 nurse 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:

- Families should schedule all vacations and non-emergency appointments either before In-Processing or after graduation. **Cadets will NOT be allowed to participate in family vacations during the 22 Week Residential Phase of the program**

ACADEMICS AND CURRICULUM:

There are 8 core components of the Arkansas Youth Challenge Program:

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

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 Acton 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.

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 grow with the skills and knowledge obtained while living at Camp Robinson.

The Post-Residential staff will assist your child 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 at all 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

Requirements of Cadets and Parent/Guardians:

- 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.

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. D-squad cadets do not eat in the chow hall. They will eat a sack lunch outside the dining facility. 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 make arrangements for someone on the sign out list to pick them up as soon as possible. If your son or daughter has a probation officer or FINS officer, we will contact them prior to calling you to come get them.

Visitation and Leave Policies

General visitation is not allowed, due to the Current situation with COVID-19.

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

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Hours of Operation

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

Telephone Numbers

TOLL FREE

1-800-814-8453

Main Office

501-212-5302

Operations

501-212-5308

24/7 Cell Phone

501-352-6318

FAX

501-212-5339

CAMP ROBINSON PUBLIC SAFETY (Open 24/7)

501-212-5280

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMATION

In case of emergency you may call 501-212-5565 or 501-212-5308 during between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Between the hours of 3:30 p.m. - 7:00 a.m. and weekends call 501-352-6318.

Student incoming mail should be addressed as follows:

Cadet John/Jane Doe
ARNG YCP
Camp Joseph T Robinson
Building 16414, Box 41
North Little Rock AR 72199-9600

(NOTE: Do not mail money or any type of food products)

It is important for you as parent/guardian to keep Youth Challenge informed of any changes in insurance, contact phone numbers, etc. You can fax updates to 501-212-5339.

Important Dates:

- **Monday August 31, 2020 – Acclimation Graduation**
Candidates promote to cadets and will make a phone call home sometime after graduation through Sunday. There is no visitation during this time.
- **September 18, 2020 – Family Day**, one family member per cadet to visit NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE PERMITTED. Must have COVID -19 Test 72 hours prior to Family day. Social Distancing will be enforced
- **November 6, 2020 – Open House Will be Virtual, more information to follow.**

You must have proper ID, vehicle registration and proof of insurance for your vehicle before you receive a pass to enter Camp Robinson.

- **Class 55 Graduation:**
 - **When: Monday, December 21, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**
 - **Youth Challenge Campus – Virtual Graduation**

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.

Street

City State ZIP

New Address:

Last Name First Name Mr./Mrs.

Street

City State ZIP

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 Intake Drop Off, Dismissal or Graduation Pick up.