

## **Little League International Statement: Children as Managers, Coaches and Umpires**

Some leagues that have requested to use child umpires, managers or coaches, in order to develop them as volunteers, and to augment the volunteer base at the local league.

It has always been the policy of Little League that managers, coaches and umpires should be adults, because it is unwise to put children in charge of other children in a competitive activity such as baseball and softball. The reasons for that policy should be obvious to anyone.

A person designated as a manager, coach or umpire is, in fact, acting as a parent of sorts on a baseball or softball field. In that capacity, the manager, coach or umpire has certain leadership as well as legal responsibilities for the safety and well-being of the children in his/her care.

Placing a child in charge of other children in that capacity, without the benefit of an adult present and in the same capacity, is grossly unfair to the child, and to the children and adults they are supervising. Also, it places the adults – who would allow such a situation to occur – in a potentially dangerous position legally.

With respect to allowing only children to umpire a game, it means they are responsible, by rule, for maintaining the discipline of the adult managers and coaches. Regardless of a league's opinion of its current adult managers and coaches, anyone can see that such a situation also is grossly unfair to the child umpires in such a game.

Little League International has developed new rules allowing child coaches (age 16 or 17 only), provided an adult manager is present at the game or other activity, and provided another adult coach is on the roster.

We also have developed new rules for 2010 that provide for a child umpire (of any age), but only if an adult umpire is present on the field for that game, in the capacity of umpire-in-chief.

These changes in the rules still permit the development of children as volunteers, but require adult support for the obvious reasons noted above.

Also, while the umpire-in-chief is usually the home plate umpire, we are allowing the designated umpire-in-chief to be a base umpire, if the league wishes to do so. That would allow a child to be the plate umpire in a game, provided an adult who is a base umpire is designated as the umpire-in-chief for that game.

These new rules allow children to gain the experience of being a volunteer coach or umpire, while not putting those children or the children in their care, in legal danger.

END