

# 2023 Challenger Buddy Training

Online training to prep for meeting  
prior Sunday, April 16 training session.





Thank you for volunteering  
to be a baseball buddy!

# Training Agenda

- What is the Mason Challenger League
- Expectations for Buddies
- Disabilities & Inclusion
- Your athlete is unique
- Scenarios you may encounter
- Information about the season





# Mason Challenger League & Buddy Program

# Challenger League

- Challenger Baseball is adaptive baseball program specifically designed to empower children, youth, and adults living with physical and/or cognitive disabilities.
- Introduction to Challenger  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3WbIFACPao>







## Buddy Expectations...

Your role is an **IMPORTANT** one!

- Be **DEPENDABLE**
- Be **RELATIONSHIP FOCUSED**
- Be **ENERGETIC**
- Be **NURTURING**
- **HAVE FUN!**

# 7 Ways to Be a Great Buddy

1. Be open-minded and flexible
2. Use your athlete's name
3. Involve your athlete's family
4. Get to know your athlete
5. Always communicate face-to-face
6. Foster independence
7. Be your athlete's biggest fan



# Opportunities for Service Hours and Leadership

- **Service hours**

- Please see a Challenger Board Member to have your service hour form signed after the game
- We give **1.5-2** hours for each game you participate in as long as you sign in each time.
  - ***Please make sure you check yourself in on the Check-in Sheet in your team's dugout***

- **High School Baseball Buddy Coordinator**

- Help run the Challenger Buddy group during the season
- Responsible for promoting the buddy program prior to the season starting
- During the season, send reminders to buddies of upcoming games, let them know of game changes/cancellations, ensure everyone has signed in, and that all teams are covered







# Disability & Inclusion Defined



## **What is a Disability?**

It is a difference in someone's physical or intellectual abilities affecting how someone functions in life. It may affect a person's ability to speak, focus, do everyday tasks, play a sport, or more.

# What is Inclusion?


- Inclusion happens when everyone has access to and feels accepted, valued, and like they belong in a space.





# Working With Your Athlete

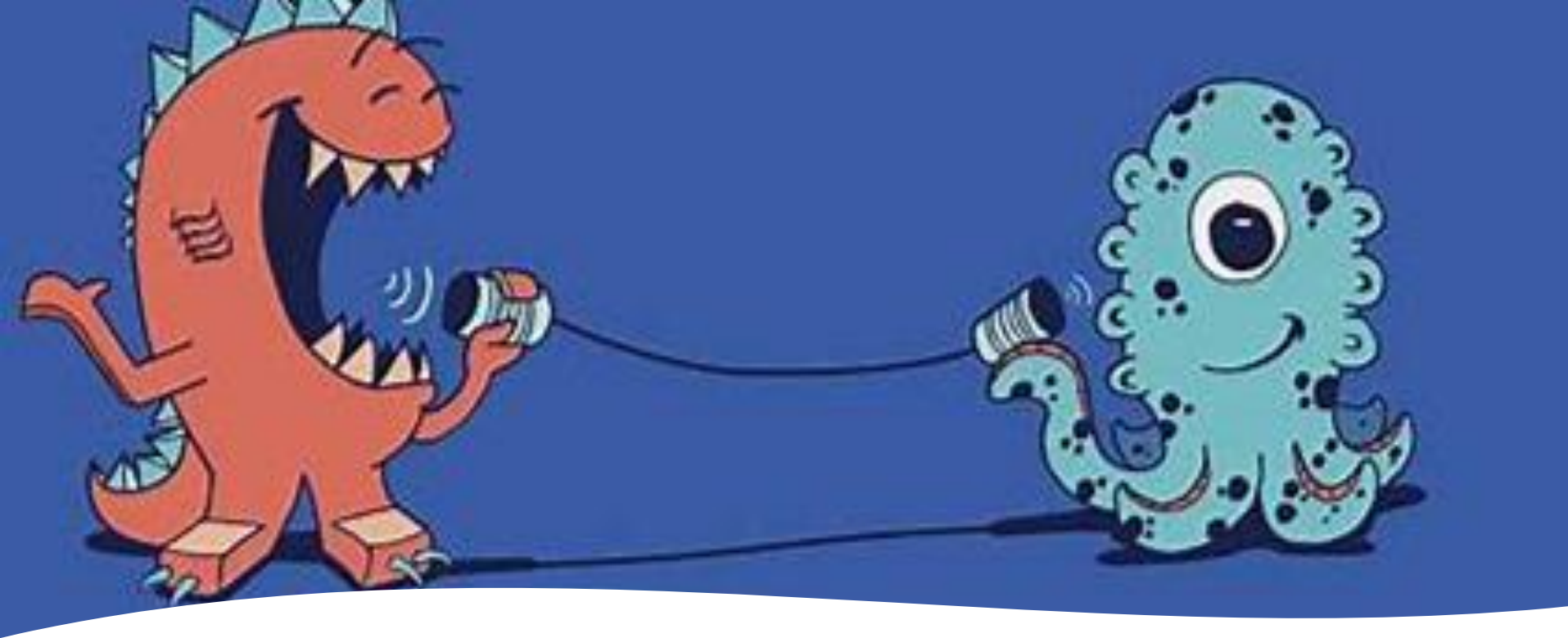




# How to Build a Relationship with Your Athlete

- Be yourself
- Be a friend
- Ask about their interests
- Check with their parents if there is anything you need to know





## Verbal and Non-Verbal Cues While Speaking with Your Athlete

- Make sure you are at eye level with your athlete.
- Don't take it personally if your athlete doesn't look at you when you speak to them. They may still be listening.
- Offer choices to create opportunities for the athlete to communicate with words or by pointing.
  - Example: While pointing, "Do you want...X? Or Y?"
  - Make it fun, i.e. have them tap your left hand for YES and your right hand for NO.


# Communication

- If your athlete uses a communication device, ask their parents for tips on how to use it
- It's ok if your athlete doesn't respond. Just keep to talking to them and encouraging to play.
- If your athlete doesn't respond to the directions you are giving them
  - Try to show or tell them in a different way.
  - Break down the steps as you are doing them, i.e. "First, we're going to get your helmet." Athlete gets their helmet. "Now, let's get your bat." Athlete gets their bat.
- Ask a parent, coach or Challenger Board Member for suggestions on how to communicate.





## Communication Continued

- Don't use too many complex words.
    - Use common terms like “awesome” or “sweet”
    - Find other ways to let them know they can do it and they are doing a great job!
  - When greeting your athlete, make sure they are looking at you to help them pay attention.
  - If your athlete uses sign language, ask their parents for a few helpful signs for the game.
- 



# Participation

- My athlete does not want to wear baseball glove or helmet.
  - All athletes must wear their helmet to bat. Coaches will help if needed.
  - If they don't want to wear their glove – it's ok. Find ways to encourage them to try.
- My athlete doesn't want to participate in the activity, lacks attention, or is distracted.
  - Encourage participation
  - Give praise and support
  - Ask the coach for some direction
  - Keep the emphasis on fun
  - Bring a ball onto the field and toss it to them



# Player Meltdown

- If your athlete is upset
  - Ask parents what works well to calm their child down
  - Stay calm yourself if your athlete does have a challenging moment
  - Don't force them to do anything they do not want to do without a clear plan from the parent
  - Listen to their wants and needs and make it clear you understand
  - Ask the coach for help






# High Fives, Fist Bumps, and Hugs

- Encouragement and praise is good
- Every athlete is unique
  - Some like to high five or fist bump
  - Some do not like to be touched – so give them a thumbs up!
  - Unsure? Ask the parent what your athlete prefers.



## High Fives, Fist Bumps, and Hugs

- What if my athlete shows affection I am uncomfortable with or is being too physical towards me?
    - Tell the player nicely, but sternly, “No thank you. Please stop.”
    - Immediately tell a coach or a Challenger Board Member so we can involve their parent. We will find a solution to set proper boundaries together, including finding a new buddy for them if needed.
- 



# Mobility Devices



- If your athlete uses a device for mobility
  - Gait trainer and walkers
    - Stay close behind them to assist if they lose their balance
  - Wheelchair
    - Make sure they are safely strapped in while you are pushing it so they do not fall out of the chair

# Injuries

- Bring the athlete to the coach immediately or ask the coach to come to you
- Tell the coach what happen
- You may be asked to find their parent as well







Click below to  
learn more  
baseball specific  
ways to help  
your athlete.

Buddy Game Play  
Guidelines

How To Be A Great  
Buddy





# Next Steps & Game Days



# What to Expect Next


- You should have received an **email** with your team assignment and schedule, as well as game day communication options
- **Reminders and Updates**
  - Via Remind
    - Please download the Remind app if you do not have it to become a part of the Buddy group.
      - If you have the app, add existing class **@masonchall**
      - If you don't have the Remind app text **@masonchall** to **81010**
      - Go to [www.remind.com/join/masonchall](http://www.remind.com/join/masonchall)
  - Via Email
    - Please check your email as well. More detailed information will be sent this way if needed.

# Game Days

- **Sign-In Clipboards**

- You will find these in your team's dugout
- ***Make sure to check yourself in***
  - This is how we account for service hours
- Look for your player assignment or check with the coach

- **How to Find Out About Rainouts**

- Rainout phone number: 513-588-0177
  - Social media – FB, IG, and Twitter
  - MYO website: [www.masonyouth.org](http://www.masonyouth.org)
  - Remind/email will be sent
- 
- Four teal-colored dashes of varying lengths and orientations are arranged in a curved pattern in the bottom right corner of the slide.



# Who to Contact

## **HS Student Baseball Buddy Coordinator**

Sarah Lupinetti

Text or call: 513-432-3061

[sarahlupinetti2@gmail.com](mailto:sarahlupinetti2@gmail.com)

## **Challenger Buddy Coordinator**

Lisa: [challengerbuddy@masonryouth.org](mailto:challengerbuddy@masonryouth.org)