



Arkansas National Guard Youth Challenge Program
Building 16414
Camp J. T. Robinson
North Little Rock AR 72199-9600



Parent Handbook



ARKANSAS NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH CHALLENGE PROGRAM

Camp Joseph T. Robinson
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72199-9600
(501) 435-2465 / 800-814-8453



Greetings!

It gives me tremendous joy to welcome you to the Arkansas National Guard Youth Challenge Program. Our mission is to intervene in and reclaim the lives of our Cadets, producing program graduates with the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed. Your Child has chosen to “push the reset button” and move towards being a productive and successful individual. We are grateful for the chance to contribute to changing the future of your children.

At Arkansas Youth Challenge, we understand that regular encouragement, structure, and direction have helped young people overcome obstacles in life. I've noticed that once a young person recognizes their worth and gains confidence they generally lean towards achievement. We will do our best to assist your youth in successfully completing the program. I remind you that this may not be an easy task. There will be “challenges” that the youth must get through. They may have never experienced this type of environment and will want to give up. I ask that you allow the program to take its full course. Join our staff in encouraging and cheering the youth to finish strong!

As the Director, I always look forward to seeing the faces and joy of family and loved ones that believed in their youth, and believed in the power of positive influences that Arkansas National Guard Youth Challenge Program brings to the youth in the State of Arkansas!

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norvell Thomas".

Norvell Thomas
Director
ARNG Youth Challenge Program

Acclimation Phase

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 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!

The First Weeks

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

This is a quasi-military behavior modification program. During the Acclimation Phase of the Program, our Cadets 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 a little 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. We provide the structure and training for change to occur. 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 at some point throughout the residential phase. 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 as to why they need to return home. A staff member may call you with your candidate on the phone with a 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, excessive crying
- 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 son/daughter.

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, 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.

The cadets 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 reasons 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!

The following page lists examples of what your cadet might say during their phone call. Keep this sheet handy during the Acclimation phase in case you get a call from one of the Staff members.

You may hear the following excuses:

WHAT THEY WILL SAY:	WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN:
I just can't do this	They don't want to try
This is just not for me	I'd rather be doing what I want
I'm not going to make it here	This is a big challenge
There are too many people in one place	We are living in barracks
I can't shower in front of people	They are in partitioned showers
I can't do the exercises	I'd rather play video games on the sofa
I hate the food	We get 3 meals a day and a snack
I'm not learning anything	I don't want to learn anything
Cadre and staff are mean	Staff are firm and consistent
Cadre yell at us	Yes, cadre really will yell as needed
All this military stuff won't help me	I don't want discipline or work as a team
When one person does something wrong, we all get punished for it.	Through acclimation.... One for all, all for one.....I don't like that concept
Some of these kids are mean	This is a behavior modification program..... That's why they are here

What your child will say when they get on the phone:

1. I will tell you when you get here.
2. You just don't understand.
3. I will go back to school (I promise).
4. I promise to stay at home.
5. I would rather be in jail than here.
6. I'll do anything if you come and get me (I promise).
7. I will follow all of your rules (I promise)
8. Please, PLEASE, come and get me.
9. Promises, begging, pleading, crying, and screaming.
10. If I stay X number of days, will you come and get me?
11. I will promise to get a job, wash car, cut grass, study, make all A's, stay home, and keep curfew.

The threats that may be issued when you refuse:

1. I'll walk away from this place (run away).
2. I'll make them kick me out.
3. I'll do something to get arrested and you can come get me from jail.
4. I won't do anything they tell me to do.
5. I will bust somebody's head.
6. I will never speak to you again and you will never see me when I get out.
7. I hate you.
8. Cadre don't like me; they are out to get me.
9. Cadets are after me (will beat me up).
10. I will kill myself or somebody else.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Our normal hours of operation 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
Administration	501-435-2465	To send address changes, forms, or information
Academics Department	501-435-2436	For questions concerning grades, academics
Medical Department	501-435-2419	For medical/medication questions
Operations Department	501-435-2408	For cadet progress questions
FOR AFTER HOURS EMERGENCIES CALL		
Operations Department Mobile Phone		501-352-6318
Camp Robinson Public Safety Department		501-212-5282

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. Since phone calls and emails are not allowed, you need to write to your cadet as often as possible. 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 to 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/FINS officer.

MAIL

Cadets can never get too much mail! The cadets heavily rely on 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 like to. When they write to you, write them back. Those that do not receive letters might feel abandoned. Family/friends should write 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 will not receive 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

CADET LAST NAME, FIRST NAME
ARNG YOUTH CHALLENGE PROGRAM
CAMP J.T. ROBINSON, BLDG. 16414
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR 72199-9600

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.

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.**

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.

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.

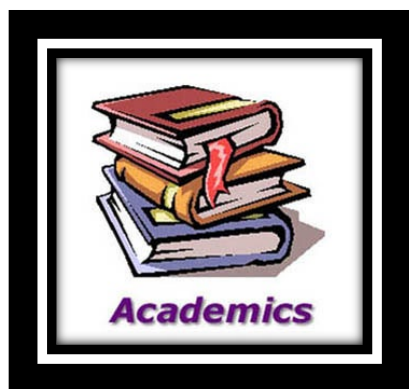
DRUG TESTING

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 Class Graduation. Cadets will NOT be allowed to participate in family vacations or high school events during the 22 Week Residential Phase of the program. The medical staff will coordinate all non-emergency appointments with you.

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. A state licensed teacher provides GED based instruction in four content areas: Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. 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 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 academic needs. 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 for cadets that qualify.

Cadets will be enrolled into Graduate Arkansas as a means of providing cadets the opportunity to earn additional credits towards their high school diploma.

Cadets who complete the program receive academic credits that can be applied toward high school graduation. These credits will be entered through Graduate Arkansas in accordance with the ADE Commissioners Memo (Conditions may apply for non-Arkansas residents)

Academic improvement plans are developed for any cadet that is falling below a "C" average in any one of the four content areas.

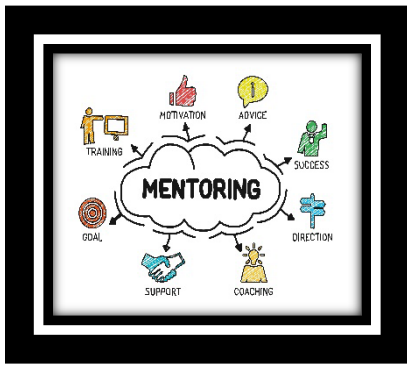
The 8 core components of the Youth Challenge Program:

- 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. The Staff will also 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 assistance or mentoring



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 trained and matched Mentor prior to the end of week 13.

Guidelines for Parents Regarding Mentors

- A mentor application should be completed and returned to the admissions office 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.
- 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 has to the relationship, and the development of this unique relationship. Parents should call the Mentor Coordinator (501-435-2410) if they have questions about the mentoring process.

VISITATION AND LEAVE POLICIES



*General visitation is not allowed. An on-campus Family Day and off-campus weekend passes will be scheduled, and families notified well in advance.

*Mentor Days are provided for the purpose of training and visitation between the mentors and cadets only. They need time to develop and grow without distractions that others can bring.

*Parents/Guardians will be contacted by staff before Family Day and the weekend passes to make arrangements.

- Cadets may not leave campus with anyone except parents or who is on the approved check out list.
- Parents/Guardians will be asked to show ID when picking up cadets.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for picking up their cadet at the appropriate time. Parents should make sure that the cadet is on time for the return to YCP.
- It is the cadet's responsibility to return from pass on time. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The following is a schedule of a regular day at Youth Challenge. Pictures/ videos of a typical day will be posted on social media. Each class will have its own private page on Facebook that you will need to join. The link to private page will be emailed to the parents/guardians. Please take a minute to connect to our general sites @ArkansasYCP on Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | YouTube.

OUR SCHEDULE!



Time	Activity (Monday-Friday)
0530-0630	Wake up Roll Call Physical Training
0630-0730	Morning Meal Medical Call
0730-0815	Showers Barracks Maintenance
0815-0830	Morning Formation
0830-1220	Academic Classes
1220-1400	Noon Meal Medical Call
1400-1550	Academic Classes
1600-1745	Physical Training Showers Study Hall
1745-1800	Evening Formation Colors Retreat
1800-1845	Evening Meal Evening Medical Call
1945-1930	Personal Time Housekeeping Mail
1930-2000	Quiet Time
2000-0530	Lights Out
Weekends	Details Service to Community Activities

