***Child Pick Up Authorization***

If you’re running a kids program within your gym, it’s important to consider what happens to your students once their class has ended. A lot of parents don’t mind dropping their kids off at your box, leaving to run a few errands, and returning afterwards to pick them up. What do you do, though, when another relative or known family friend arrives to take them home?

According to Parents.com, “Based on the identity of the perpetrator, there are three distinct types of kidnapping: kidnapping by a relative of the victim or "family kidnapping" (49 percent), kidnapping by an acquaintance of the victim or "acquaintance kidnapping" (27 percent), and kidnapping by a stranger to the victim or "stranger kidnapping" (24 percent).” This shows that children are more likely to be abducted by someone they know rather than a complete stranger. With kids easily willing to leave with a family member or family friend, what steps can we take to avoid them leaving with an unauthorized individual?

**Keep Child Pick Up Authorization Forms on File**

This form should be filled out the first time a child attends your class. We’ve attached an example for your use. The Child Pick Up Authorization Form specifically states who is allowed to pick the child up and take them home on behalf of the parent. With this information on file, if another individual shows up who the child might know but isn’t on the list, a phone call to their parent must be done before the child can released. Encourage parents to notify you ahead of time if someone new is planning to pick up their children to avoid any confusion.

**Don’t Allow Kids to Be Picked up in the Parking Lot**

Make it known that you will not release children into the parking lot to be picked up outside after class. Parents, or authorized individuals must come inside before children will be released. This allows you to ensure that the individual picking them up is indeed allowed to do so. But it also helps protect children from coming across any unforeseen dangers while waiting outside or walking through a parking lot alone.

Overall, you are legally responsible for the safety of every child in your program. This includes ensuring that they leave safely. As a general rule, you should only release children to legal parents/ guardians, any person whom the parent or legal guardian has previously authorized and/or the police or child welfare workers who provide legal authorization. If a parent does not have custodial rights to a child at, make sure that the parent who does have custody provides you with the proper legal documents. If you do not have copies of the documents, you cannot deny a biological parent their child.