

**St. Mary's County
Recreation and Parks**



**Community Standards in
Youth Sports
Guidelines**

Revised September 2008

Community Standards in Youth Sports Manual

Table of Contents

Process and Disqualifiers	3
League Responsibilities.....	7
Background Check Guidelines and Procedures.....	8
Disqualifying Offense Appeal Process.....	9
Positive Youth Sports Pledge.....	10
Crisis Intervention Plan.....	11
Coaches Clinic Guidelines and Procedures	12
Coaches Clinic Information Handout	13
Background Consent Form Deadline(s)	14-15
SSCI Background Check Consent Form	16
SSCI Fax Transmittal Form	17
List of Coaches Form	18

Community Standards in Youth Sports Process and Disqualifiers

Purpose

Recreation and Parks (R&P) recognizes that youth sports are an integral part of the lives of many of the county's families where a safe, fun and enriching experience is the primary goal. To insure a high standard for child safety and positive youth development within youth sports leagues that participate in county parks and facilities the Board of County Commissioners approved the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports initiative on March 7, 2006.

Standards

- Two youth sports league administrators in each league must be certified in the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) Administrator Program.
- The head coach and at least one assistant coach, if more than one coach is assigned to a team, must have a background check completed and also participate in a coaches training program. Background check disqualifiers can be found on the back of Southeastern Security Consultants Inc. (SSCI) consent form.
- All parents must sign a Parents Code of Ethics statement prior to their child participating.
- Smoking is limited to beyond 150 feet of the playing field.

COACHES BACKGROUND CHECK

1. The R&P Sports Coordinator, or his/her designee, will meet with all league representatives prior to the spring, fall, and winter sports seasons. Background check information and other required forms will be distributed. The leagues will provide all the appropriate information needed to administer a background check to the Sports Coordinator.
2. All consent and release forms are sent to Southeastern Security Consultants, Inc., to conduct the background reports. Name based criminal background checks and sex offender searches will be conducted and profiles will be returned within 2-5 business days. The screening will include social security verification, address trace, a statewide criminal record check, a nationwide (47 states) criminal record check through the National Background Directory, and sex offender registry record check.
3. It is the policy of R&P to respect the privacy of volunteer coaches. Information received during the screening process will be confidential, and not disclosed to anyone other than the designated league representative.
4. If a background report is returned to R&P with a criminal conviction that would disqualify an individual from becoming a youth sports volunteer, a R&P staff member will contact and inform the applicant and the appropriate league representative. All reports are valid for one year. All volunteer information and report status will be recorded in the background check program database. Background check results must be reviewed by R&P before volunteers are permitted to have contact with children.
5. Individuals disqualified from being a youth sports volunteer based on the findings of their background check may direct their appeal to Southeastern Security Consultants, Inc. SSCI will notify R&P of any requested appeals.
6. It is the responsibility of each organization that utilizes county fields or facilities to fully comply with the background check program. Failure to comply could result in revocation of field use permits.

Disqualifying Offenses:

A person will be disqualified and prohibited from serving as a volunteer if he or she has been found guilty or has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere (no contest), regardless of the adjudication for any of the disqualifying offenses. A review process of the disqualifiers will be conducted on an as needed basis and will be reviewed by the R&P Board.

1. **All Sex Offenses** – Regardless of the amount of time since offense.
Examples:
Child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sodomy, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure, etc.
2. **All Felony Violence** – Regardless of the amount of time since offense.
Examples:
Murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated burglary, etc.
3. **All crimes against children** – Regardless of the amount of time since offense.
Examples:
Child abuse, child neglect, etc.
4. **All Felony Offenses other than violence or sex** – within the past 10 years from time of arrest.
Examples:
Drug related, theft, fraud, etc.
5. **All Misdemeanor Violence** – within the past 7 years from time of arrest.
Examples:
Simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit and run, etc.
6. **All Misdemeanor drug and alcohol offenses** – within the past 5 years or multiple offenses in the past 10 years from time of arrest.
Examples:
Driving under the influence, simple drug possession, drunk and disorderly, public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia, etc.
7. **Any other misdemeanor** within the past 5 years from time of arrest that would be considered a potential danger to children or is directly related to the functions of that volunteer.
Examples:
Contributing to the delinquency of a minor, providing alcohol to a minor, theft – if a person is handling monies, etc.
8. **Open Charges** – Persons with any open charges for disqualifying offenses shall be restricted from volunteering until the active case is brought to resolution or the charges are dropped.

ADMINISTRATOR AND COACHES TRAINING

1. Each league must annually certify two youth sports league administrators through the NAYS program.
2. The Sports Coordinator will schedule administrator training dates each sports season.
3. Teams in each league must have the head coach and one assistant coach, if more than one coach is assigned to a team; participate in a positive youth sports development training program. The NAYS training program is preferred but leagues may conduct a comparable training program which must be approved by the Sports Coordinator at least two months prior to the league's practice season.
4. The league must complete the Training Documentation form (TR 06) each year confirming the leagues participation in a positive youth development coaches training program.
5. All fees related to administrator and coaches training are paid for by the individual leagues.
6. Failure to comply with participation in the training program could result in revocation of field use permits to leagues.

PARENTS AND SPECTATORS

1. It is expected that all parents and spectators demonstrate positive behavior during all youth sporting events.
2. If negative and inappropriate behavior occurs it is recommended that those involved are asked to leave the spectator area immediately by league representatives.
3. A Crisis Intervention Plan (CI 06) has been developed to assist league administrators in dealing with unruly parents and/or spectators.
4. Parents must sign a Parents Code of Ethics prior to their child participating and a copy should be kept on file with the league for the entire season. This process should be documented on the training document (TR 06).
5. Smoking is limited to beyond 150 feet of the playing and practice areas.

ANNUAL APPLICATION AND REPORTING

1. Each league must complete an Annual Application (AA 06) and submit it to the Sports Coordinator prior to the beginning of each season.
2. The Sports Coordinator will forward a copy of the field request portion of the application to the Parks Coordinator for approval.
3. Each league administrator should meet with both R&P Coordinators each year to review updated park and field use guidelines and any other information that is related

to fulfilling the requirements of the Community Standards initiative. This would also be a time for R&P staff and league administrator's to review the league's accomplishments and challenges.

4. The Sports Coordinator will prepare a report following each sports season that will be reviewed by the R&P Advisory Board to highlight the compliance of each league and to also indicate the areas that need to be improved regarding the standards within the initiative.

LEAGUE RESPONSIBILITIES

Leagues Shall

1. Comply with all aspects of the Community Standards Guidelines.
2. Purchase general liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and name the St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks Department, the St. Mary's County Board of County Commissioners, and the St. Mary's County Board of Ed as additional insured. The county's liability insurance would become secondary and would be considered an addition to and not in lieu of the leagues primary coverage. All league advertisement should include whether or not medical insurance is provided by the league.
3. Establish and implement a fee reduction or fee waiver policy within the framework of its financial resources and commitments.
4. Accept any eligible participant, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, or physical capability.
5. Establish and implement league rules that require each youth to be placed on a team, and to play in each game for a reasonable length of time. This length of time will be specified for a given sport or activity by the organization.
6. Submit league rules and program policies and procedures to Recreation and Parks Staff for review.
7. Ensure that member teams use proper, safe playing equipment.
8. Ensure that coaches, league administrators and officials refrain from using alcohol and drugs (including tobacco) on or near the playing fields, benches, dugouts, etc. and abide by the smoking laws while on public school property.
9. Encourage all spectators and parents to abide by the park policy of No Smoking within 50 yards (150') of a game or practice area.
10. Advertise that fund raising efforts are solely for league operations.
11. Submit field use requests each season in writing and abide by the rules, regulations and policies that pertain to the use of the parks, recreation facilities or school grounds as determined by the Recreation and Parks Board and School Board.
12. The Recreation and Parks Board may terminate the status of the league's use for failure to comply with the terms of this agreement. Should that occur, a priority usage of public fields and facilities would become secondary to other requests. Further, in extreme cases of disregard for the terms of the agreement, the Board may determine that field use permit shall not be issued to a league until appropriate actions are taken by the league to remedy the situation.

*Leagues are not eligible to use Recreation and Parks tax-exempt status or federal identification number.

BACKGROUND CHECK GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Southeastern Security Consultants Inc. (SSCI)

According to St. Mary's County's Community Standards in Youth Sports Initiative, all youth sports leagues must submit appropriate information of the head coach and an assistant coach to be used for a comprehensive background check (League Responsibilities). The league must also abide by the disqualifiers approved by the Recreation & Parks Citizen Advisory Board.

- SSCI
 - Contact – Chris Goodman
 - Phone – 866-996-7412
 - Fax – 866-996-1292
 - All forms can be found at www.ssci2000.com
 - Background Consent/Release form
 - Fax Transmittal form
- St. Mary's County funds the cost (\$13.50 per background check) for two (2) coaches per team.
- All consent forms should be collected prior to start of league's season. (SSCI Background Consent/Release Form)
- A cleared background check is acceptable for one calendar year. The volunteer is cleared to coach on all county fields and facilities during that calendar year.

Procedure

- Volunteer leagues must have Background Consent Forms turned in to the Community Standards Coordinator by designated date. (Background Consent Form Deadlines, Pg. 14-15)
- The Community Standards Coordinator may be available to address volunteer coaches at various league meetings. Background Check Consent Forms and List of Coaches Forms should be distributed and completed during these meetings.
- Background Check Consent Forms are completed and all pertinent information is faxed to SSCI via the Fax Transmittal Form.
- SSCI has agreed to email completed background check information back to the Community Standards Coordinator in 2-5 business days.
- Consent forms are filed alphabetically in binders and locked in a secure cabinet according to league, season and year.
- An excel spreadsheet is formulated according to all volunteer coaches that have submitted background check consent forms and completed coaches' certification.
- If a completed background check reveals a disqualifying offense, as listed in the disqualifying offenses section of the Community Standards, the league President/Representative will be notified by the Community Standards Coordinator by phone and a letter will be sent to the disqualified volunteer. A copy of the letter will be forwarded to the appropriate league representatives and the Community Standards file. Volunteer may appeal his/her disqualification. (Disqualifying Offense(s) Appeal Process, Pg. 9)



DISQUALIFYING OFFENSE(S) APPEAL PROCESS

- If a completed background check reveals a disqualifying offense, according to the County's standards, the league President/Representative will be notified by the Community Standards Coordinator as soon as possible.
- A letter will be sent to both the League and disqualified volunteer.
- It is the League President/Representative's responsibility to inform the volunteer of his/her disqualification. If the volunteer wishes to appeal the disqualification he/she can do so by:
 1. Making an appointment to meet with the Community Standards Coordinator and the Recreation Division Manager to discuss disqualification(s).
 - Volunteer will be notified of decision within 2 business days of appointment.
 2. If volunteer wants to appeal this decision, they can do so *in writing* to the Director of Recreation and Parks.

The Director will give a final decision, in writing, within 5 business days of receiving the correspondence.

POSITIVE YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE

Parents and Spectators Please:

- Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports events.
- Place the emotional and physical well being of your child ahead of any personal desire to win.
- Support coaches and officials working with your child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- Remember that the game is for the youth-not the adults.
- Do your very best to make youth sports fun for your child.
- Have your child treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.

Signature _____ Date _____

Season _____ Sport _____

CRISIS INTERVENTION PLAN

During a sports season league administrators may have to deal with unruly parents and spectators. Listed below are guidelines for effectively managing a potential crisis during a sports practice or game. Included in the guidelines are the steps to take if the league believes it is necessary to have someone removed from the playing area or the park.

1. Address parents and spectators in a manner that is respectful and non-threatening.
2. When league representatives speak to parents or spectators, refer them to the Positive Youth Sports Pledge posted in the park or placed in the facility.
3. If the unruly behavior persists, inform them that you may call the Sheriff's Department and request that they be removed from the site.
4. Once a police officer arrives, all action taken regarding the potential arrest of the individual is the decision of the police officer.
5. If the league desires that charges be filed against the offender and the officer does not believe justification exists, the league has the option of filing charges with the District Court Commissioner.
6. If any negative behavior warrants a parent or spectator being asked to leave the playing area, league representatives have the authority to inform that individual(s) they may not come within 100 yards of the playing area during league play or practice. This may include time when their child is participating. If they do not do so, this may be just cause for a No Trespass Notice being served on the individual for future games and/or practices.
7. If the league requests the Department of Recreation and Parks to serve a No Trespass Notice on an individual their request must be in writing to the Youth Sports Administrator and include the following:
 - Name of offender
 - Date, time and location of incident
 - Description of incident
 - Witnesses
 - Requested length of No Trespass period
 - Signature of league administrator
8. The Youth Sports Administrator/Sports Coordinator will initiate a review of the request with the offender, witnesses, and league administrator. A decision whether or not to serve a notice will be made within five working days of receipt of the request. The notice must be authorized by the Recreation Manager or Department Director. A copy will be given to the league, a copy will be sent via certified mail to the offender, and a copy will be on file in the Recreation and Parks office. The league should have a copy available if in the event a police officer is called to the park to address the offender.

COACHES CERTIFICATION CLINIC GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA)

According to St. Mary's County's Community Standards in Youth Sports Initiative, all youth sports leagues must have the head coach and an assistant coach of each youth sports team participate in the NYSCA training program, or provide an educational training program for coaches and parents which is equivalent (as determined by Recreation and Parks staff) to the NYSCA Certification program; if not participating in the NYSCA program, the volunteer league must provide to the Department an established "Coaches Code of Ethics" that is comparable to NYSCA and require coaches to sign and live up to that pledge (League Responsibilities).

- National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS)
 - Sports Coordinators have access to all forms and member list which can be found at www.nays.org under NYSCA.
 - Coaches' initial member roster
 - Coaches' additional member roster
 - Coaches' continuing member roster
 - Roster balance sheet
 - Materials order form
 - Coaches Clinics
 - Offered prior to each youth sports season (Spring/Summer, Fall, Winter)
 - Make-up clinics are scheduled only when necessary.
 - Conducted by certified NAYS clinician.
 - Leagues will work with Sports Coordinator to produce an appropriate date and time for Coaches Clinic.
 - All NYSCA level members are able to attend clinic.
 - Initial member (must attend clinic, online clinic is **not** an option)
 - Continuing member (can renew membership at clinic, online or via mail)
 - Additional member (can add a sport membership at clinic)
 - Volunteer coaches must sign in on specified member roster and receive an information handout and NYSCA Youth Sports Journal
 - Two (2) videos are shown
 - Introduction to Youth Sports
 - Sport specific coaching video (soccer, football, etc.)
 - Payment
 - Payment is received from the league after clinic has been completed and coaches have been tallied.
 - \$20.00 per initial member and continuing member (payable to NAYS)
 - \$3.00 per volunteer coach trained (payable to R&P)

All rosters are completed and mailed to NAYS along with roster balance sheet and payments.

COACHES CLINIC INFORMATION HANDOUT

Purpose

Recreation and Parks recognizes that youth sports is an integral part of the lives of many of the county's families where a safe, fun and enriching experience is the primary goal. To insure a high standard for child safety and positive youth development within youth sports leagues that participate in county parks and facilities the Board of County Commissioners approved the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports initiative on March 7, 2006.

Standards

- Two youth sports league administrators in each league must be certified in the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) Administrator Program.
- The head coach and at least one assistant coach, if more than one coach is assigned to a team, must have a background check completed and also participate in a coaches training program.
- All parents must sign a Parents Code of Ethics statement prior to their child participating.
- Smoking is limited to beyond 150 feet of the playing field.

General Information

- The county funds the cost for up to two (2) volunteer background checks per team. Each background check is \$13.50. The league is responsible for any payment exceeding the limit.
- A background check is good for one calendar year and covers any volunteer that coaches multiple sports within that year.
- The fee for all initial and continuing level National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) certification is \$20 per coach. Each league has the option to cover this fee for their volunteers.
- R&P does not recognize initial level certification done online. All initial level coaches must attend a supervised clinic.
- Once a coach has completed the NYSCA initial level certification, he or she can easily renew their certification online on a yearly basis.
- Each league has the option to conduct their own comparable coaching clinic. This clinic must be approved by the Recreation and Parks Department. A R&P sports coordinator will attend a portion of the clinic.

* For more information regarding coaching certification please refer to your
NYSCA Youth Sports Journal.

BACKGROUND CONSENT FORM DEADLINE(S)

Youth Sports Leagues should submit the Background Consent Forms as well as the List of Coaches form to the Community Standards Coordinator no later than the dates indicated in the chart below. Please note that there are separate dates for Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches.

Spring

League	League will be notified	Head Coaches	Asst. Coaches	Complete List of Coaches
American Little League	By: 1 st week of Jan.	Due By: 1 st week of March	Due By: 3 rd week of March	Due By: 3 rd week of March
Babe Ruth	By: 1 st week of Jan.	Due By: 2 nd week of March	Due By: End of March	Due By: End of March
Boys Lacrosse	By: 1 st week of Dec.	Due By: 2 nd week of Feb.	Due By: End of Feb.	Due By: End of Feb.
Girls Lacrosse	By: 1 st week of Dec.	Due By: 1 st week of Feb.	Due By: 3 rd week of Feb.	Due By: 3 rd week of Feb.
Mechanicsville Lacrosse	By: End of Dec.	Due By: End of Feb.	Due By: 2 nd week of March	Due By: 2 nd week of March
National Little League	By: 3 rd week of Jan.	Due By: 3 rd week of March	Due By: End of March	Due By: End of March
Northern Soccer	By: 2 nd week of Jan.	Due By: 2 nd week of March	Due By: End of March	Due By: End of March
Slow Pitch Softball	By: 2 nd week of Jan.	Due By: 2 nd week of March	Due By: End of March	Due By: End of March
South County Flag Football	By: End of Jan.	Due By: End of March	Due By: 2 nd week of April	Due By: 2 nd week of April
St. Mary's Youth Soccer	By: End of Jan.	Due By: End of March	Due By: 2 nd week of April	Due By: 2 nd week of April
T-Ball	By: 2 nd week of Jan.	Due By: 2 nd week of March	Due By: End of March	Due By: End of March

Summer

League	League will be notified	Head Coaches	Asst. Coaches	Complete List of Coaches
Summer Basketball	By: 2 nd week of April	Due By: 2 nd week of June	Due By: End of June	Due By: End of June
Swimming (Tritons)	By: 1 st week of April	Due By: 1 st week of June	Due By: 3 rd week of June	Due By: 3 rd week of June
Tennis	By: 1 st week of April	Due By: 1 st week of June	Due By: 3 rd week of June	Due By: 3 rd week of June

Fall

League	League will be notified	Head Coaches	Asst. Coaches	Complete List of Coaches
American Little League	By: 1 st week of July	Due By: 1 st week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.
Indoor Roller Hockey	By: 2 nd week of July	Due By: 2 nd week of Sept.	Due By: End of Sept.	Due By: End of Sept.
National Little League	By: 1 st week of July	Due By: 1 st week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.
Northern Soccer	By: 1 st week of July	Due By: 1 st week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.
Pigskin Football	By: 1 st week of July	Due By: 1 st week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.
South County Football	By: 1 st week of July	Due By: 1 st week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.
St. Mary's Youth Soccer	By: 1 st week of July	Due By: 1 st week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.

Winter

League	League will be notified	Head Coaches	Asst. Coaches	Complete List of Coaches
Indoor Field Hockey	By: 1 st week of Oct.	Due By: 1 st week of Dec.	Due By: 3 rd week of Dec.	Due By: 3 rd week of Dec.
Indoor Lacrosse	By: 1 st week of Oct.	Due By: 1 st week of Dec.	Due By: 3 rd week of Dec.	Due By: 3 rd week of Dec.
Indoor Soccer	By: 1 st week of Oct.	Due By: 1 st week of Dec.	Due By: 3 rd week of Dec.	Due By: 3 rd week of Dec.
Swimming (GMAC)	By: 1 st week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Sept.	Due By: 1 st week of Nov.	Due By: 1 st week of Nov.
Wrestling	By: 3 rd week of Sept.	Due By: 3 rd week of Nov.	Due By: End of Nov.	Due By: End of Nov.
Youth Basketball	By: 1 st week of Oct.	Due By: 1 st week of Dec.	Due By: 3 rd week of Dec.	Due By: 3 rd week of Dec.

League: _____ Team: _____ Division: _____

Southeastern Security Consultants, Inc.



BACKGROUND CONSENT/RELEASE FORM

Organization Name: St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks

Applicant's Name (printed): _____

Social Security Number: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Applicant's Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

I, _____, authorize and give consent for the above named organization to obtain information regarding myself. This includes the following:

- Criminal background records/information
- Sex Offender Registry Checks
- Addresses

I, the undersigned, authorize this information to be obtained either in writing or via telephone in connection with my volunteer application. Any person, firm or organization providing information or records in accordance with this authorization is released from any and all claims of liability for compliance. Such information will be held in confidence in accordance with the organization's guidelines.

Print Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

******* Disqualifiers are listed on back*******

Southeastern Security Consultants Inc.
FAX TRANSMITTAL

To: SSCI

Client Name: St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks

Fax: 866-996-1292

Pages (cover plus consent forms): _____

Telephone: 866-996-7412

Date of Transmission: _____

Re: Request for Background Checks

Note: Simply fill in the required information below and fax, along with consent forms, to SSCI at the number listed above. This information will assist SSCI in completing the background check process and will limit the amount of requests for information coming back to you due to missing or illegible information. This form may also be used as a tool to assist you in reconciling your invoices. **Please use one Fax Transmittal sheet per 15 Consent Forms.**

	Name	SS#	DOB
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____	_____



LIST OF COACHES

League: _____
League Representative: _____
Phone Number: _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____

Team Name _____

Head Coach 1 _____

Assistant 2 _____

Assistant 3 _____