

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CODE OF ETHICS POLICY**  
**Code of Ethics for Persons Working with Children and Youth in UUA Sponsored Programs**  
**The Role of Adult Leaders**

Adults working with children and youth in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one which may carry with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as youth advisor, chaperone, child care worker, teacher, minister, registrant at a youth-adult conference or in any other role, the adult has a special opportunity to interact with our young people in ways which are affirming and inspiring to the young people and to the adult. Adults can be mentors to, role models for, and trusted friends of children and youth. They can be teachers, counselors and ministers. To help our children grow up to be caring and responsible adults can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult and a lifetime benefit to the young person.

While it is important that adults be capable of maintaining meaningful friendships with the young people they work with, adults must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom in using their influence with the children and youth and refrain from using young people to fulfill their own needs. Young people are in a vulnerable position when dealing with adults and may find it difficult to speak out about the inappropriate behavior of adults.

Adult leaders need to possess a special dedication to working with our young people in ways which affirm the UUA Principles. Good communication skills, self awareness and understanding of others, sensitivity, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and a positive attitude are all important attributes. Additionally, in recruiting adult leaders we should also seek persons who 1) have a social network outside of their religious education responsibility in which to meet their own needs for friendship, affirmation and self-esteem, and 2) are willing and able to seek assistance from colleagues and religious professionals when they become aware of a situation requiring expert help or intervention.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire church or conference community, not just those in leadership positions, to create and maintain a climate which supports the growth and welfare of children and youth.

**CODE OF ETHICS**

*With the aforementioned in mind, the following statement is submitted as a  
“Code of Ethics” for adults working with children and youth:*

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering the spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurture, care, and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential of their relationship is to be realized.

There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that children, youth, and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care; therefore, leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with children or youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

Leaders shall be informed of the Code of Ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In case of violation of the code, appropriate action will be taken.

New Hampshire Practice 2 N.H.P. Criminal Practice and Procedure 736

**632-A:10 Prohibition from Child Care Service of Persons Convicted of Certain Offenses.**

I. A person is guilty of a class A felony, if, having been convicted in this or any other jurisdiction of any felonious offence involving child pornography, or of a felonious physical assault on a minor, or of any sexual assault, he knowingly undertakes employment or volunteer service involving the care, instruction or guidance of minor children, including, but not limited to , service as a teacher, a coach, or worker of any type in child athletics, a day care worker, a boy or girl scout master or leader or worker, a summer camp counselor or worker of any type, a guidance counselor, or a school administrator of any type.

II. A person guilty of a class B felony if, having been convicted in this or any other jurisdiction of any of the offenses specified in paragraph I of this section, he knowingly fails to provide information of such conviction when applying or volunteering for service or employment of any type involving the care, instruction, or guidance of minor children, including, but not limited to, the types of services set forth in paragraph I.

III. A person is guilty of a class B felony if, having been convicted in this or any other jurisdiction of any of the offenses specified in paragraph I of this section, he knowingly fails to provide information of such conviction when making application for initial teaching certification in this state.