SEE HOW THEY
RUN

Anybody's Guide To Organizing
A Successful Children's Running Event

See How They Run!

Anybody's guide to organizing a successful children's running event.

Kids will never forget the excitement of crossing the finish line. And parents and friends will never forget the smile on their child's face. It's a memorable achievement for both you and every participant. And it will soon become your reward for organizing a kid's run.

This guide is inspired by decades of organizing children's running events. Beginning in 1985 with the first Junior Bloomsday® run—which drew over 3,000 five-to-twelve year olds—and growing into America's Kids Run and now America's Armed Forces Kids Run (staged on over 170 U.S. military bases worldwide.) We've organized over 1200 children's running events on four continents and over one million smiling finishers.

And we continue to do it—every year.

If you need more information, please contact us at **www.americaskidsrun.org.**

It's about making a difference in the lives of kids. **Now it's your turn!**

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KIDS IN TRAINING
TEACHING THE BASICS

Get kids ready for the big day with the proper training program. Here's a quick guide that will help every kid cross the finish line and keep them running for years to come.

The First Step- Shoes.

Make sure kids have proper running shoes. Hard soles can damage developing feet. So look for cushioning in the heel and forefoot. Make sure their shoes are tied before the race. Loose shoes while running can cause injury. So before training and prior to your event, have volunteers do a quick lace check. Any loosely tied shoes should be secured.

Training = Stretching + Walking + Jogging + Running
It's a simple equation. And it works. Teach kids the simple basics.

Stretching will help you become flexible and keep you relaxed during your run. You should always stretch before walking, jogging or running to prevent strains and injuries.

Walking starts your body in motion. Walking for a few minutes warms the muscles to make jogging and running easier.

Jogging is what kids will do the most. A well-trained child should be able to jog one or two miles prior to your event.

Running---it's what you do after you've warmed up. So always stretch first and walk or jog before running.

Stretching.

You should always stretch before walking, jogging or running to prevent strains and

injuries. Plus stretching makes running easier by signaling to muscles that they are about to be used. Stretch with gentle, easy movements to increase flexibility.

The key to stretching is breathing. So don't hold your breath. It is important to breathe slowly and rhythmically while counting the seconds for each stretch. Breathe deeply from the bottom of your tummy—in through your nose and out through the mouth.

Easy Stretch

The easy stretch is extending any limb—arms or legs—for 10-30 seconds. Stretch only

until you feel your body pull slightly. And don't bounce. Try a simple wall stretch with both hands on the flat surface with one or both legs extended.

Developmental Stretch

Stretch until more tension is felt. And hold for 10-30 seconds.

Walking.

Walking starts the body in motion. Walking for a few minutes warms the muscles to make jogging and running easier. Walking builds leg muscles and prepares the heart for longer periods of exercise. Seasoned runners walk five minutes each day before jogging or running.

Jogging.

Jogging is running at a slower pace—fast enough to get a workout, yet slow enough to maintain a conversation with your training pals.

Proper form makes jogging easier. Your wrists should swing slightly upward across the body from your hip. Elbows should bend naturally. Jog with your head and chest forward while you slightly lean into the run. And keep your hands loose—not in a tight fist.

Running.

Just like a car, the body can't go from 0-to-60 without warming up. Jogging warms up the body so it can slowly gain speed; running is like cruising down the highway.

There are two forms of running—striding and sprinting. Striding is running at less than full speed, but faster than jogging. And sprinting is running at top speed. Sprint only after you've stretched and warmed up for several minutes.

Training Properly

Start slowly. Walk or jog for several minutes before running or sprinting. Save speedwork for the end of training. Once kids have trained for a week or two, extend the length of each run. And after they have built up to a mile or two, begin to integrate striding or sprinting for 30 seconds-to-one-minute intervals.

Always be sure to cool down and jog for a while after running. And make sure kids take deep breaths---in through the mouth and out through the nose---during their cool down period.

TRAINING CHECKLIST

If you follow these tips, every kid should have a fun and easy run. But remember a few basic training rules:

Each child should train a minimum of two weeks prior to your running event. This means training two-to-three days per week for 20 minutes each.

- ☐ **Always stretch before and after training.**

     Emphasize good running form. Keep hands loose. Let the arms swing freely. Run upright. Run softly. And avoid slapping feet on the ground.

- ☐ **Be careful of traffic.** Instruct children to be street smart by using proper road crossings, and running on sidewalks or grassy areas instead of on roads. Make sure they yield to traffic and say thank you or give a friendly nod to drivers that wait for them as they cross busy streets.

- ☐ **Drink water before, after and during the run**—especially in warm weather. And drink three full glasses of water daily.

- ☐ **Most importantly, have fun!**

2

GET STARTED

YOUR GOALS & "THE TEAM"

So you want to plan a running event for Kids? Grab a pen, set aside some time and then ask yourself, why? Or better yet, how? And then get ready. Because from start to the finish, this book is all you need to get your event off and running.

Your Goals: Set your objectives.

It's simple. Ask yourself this: Why do you want to do this? To help kids get fit? To bring your community together? To prepare young people for healthy adult lives? Whatever it may be, you'll need to set some goals. So write your goals down, share them with your team of volunteers and get ready-you're about to plan a race.

Put Your Goals On Paper

What do you want to accomplish with your kids run?

How many participants?

What are your target age groups?

Will this be an annual event?

Do you want to make it free, a profit event, or break even?

How much outside involvement will you need from parents, sponsors, volunteers and the media?

The Team: Volunteers and Race Directors.

You can't do this alone. From first aid to registration, you'll need a team of volunteers and a few race directors to make sure things run smoothly.

Volunteers

You'll need at least 12 volunteers for every participant. And since everyone likes to help kids, volunteers can be easy to find. Parents of potential participants, senior citizens, college and high school cross-country teams as well as hospital employees who understand the importance of keeping kids fit are just few examples of who may help you get your event up and running. You may also consider contacting your local youth after-school youth organization and schools for volunteer help.

Organize a volunteer meeting a one or two weeks before the run. And if you have a large group of volunteers, break into task groups according to responsibility. But make sure you have a meeting venue. Try your local public utility's auditorium or meeting room, church basement, Grange Hall or elementary school, college or university classroom or auditorium.

Directors

Just like a soccer team needs a coach, every group of volunteers needs some direction. You'll need trusted leaders for each of the following:

☐ **Registration-** From recording of entries to handing out race numbers.

☐ **Course Set-up and Tear Down-** Includes marking the running distance, setting up barricades, chalk running paths, snowfencing and signs for participants.

☐ **Communications-** From cell phones to radios to mobile devices, even cameras!

☐ **Staging-** Herding the kids to the starting line.

☐ **Finish Line-** Making sure the participants are efficiently escorted through the finish line to awards, aid and refreshments.

☐ **Awards-** T-shirts and awards.

☐ **First Aid-** Emergency response and managing medical volunteers.

☐ **Lost and Found-** And not just for lost kids, but lost parents too.

☐ **Promotions and Sponsors—** You've gotta get the word out. From businesses to organizations, they can support your event with donations, supplies or services.

Plan a director's meeting 4-6 months before the actual event. Make sure you are organized and armed with an agenda that includes details about your event and your objectives. Be prepared for tough questions.

VOLUNTEER MEETING AGENDA

I. Welcome: General Session
        A. Overview Goals
        B. Preview Event
        C. Thank everyone

II. Breakout Sessions (20 minutes)
        • Check-in
        • Course Set-up/Tear-down
        • Communications
        • Staging
        • Finish Line
        • First-Aid
        • Lost and Found

III. Regroup for final overview
        Thank You.
        Let's have a great kids Run!

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REGISTRATION

THE FORMS & THE "ALPHA" LIST

From entry forms and race numbers to t-shirts and awards, it's time for a little paperwork.

Registration: The run begins.

The Entry Form might be the only way parents and kids learn about your event, so it has to have it all-event information.

If you are doing "paper" entries, your form must have a perforated or tear-off mail-in form and the Parental Consent and Release form. The top of the form lists event information for the participants while the bottom is the tear-away entry form. It should fit on one side of a page, but if you need more space, make sure the mail-in form can be detached without losing any important information.

If you are setting up online registration, be sure to include a check box to validate Parental Consent with a phone number and/or email address of parent for validation.

The Entry Form— What to Include

Name of event
Distance
Date
Time
Place
Directions

Premiums (if any awards are given)
Refreshments

Course information
First Aid information

Entry fee (if charging a fee)
Registration deadline (if required)
Date/Time of registration and number pick-up
Disclaimer: "Do not send cash. Checks and money order only"
For online: credit card or charge information

Youth Participant information (name, address, phone, age, date of birth)
Signature of entrant and parent to certify accuracy of personal information (print name and sign). If online- check box to verify accuracy and acceptance of disclaimer and participant information

Participation by walkers
Wheelchairs and physically challenged athletes
Risk factors
Other conditions or limitations

Event mailing address
Event information phone number

Sponsors (if applicable)

ENTRY FORM

NAME OF EVENT
Date of event - Location -Starting time(s)
Distances- Age of eligible participants

**Participant Check-in
Run Number and pick-up**

Date(s) _____
Place _____
Time(s) _____

Registration Fee
Do not send Cash. Check or Money Order only _____

On-Time Registration Deadline _____

Late Registration Fee _____

Select a T-Shirt size

☐ YOUTH SM 6-8   ☐ ADULT SM
☐ YOUTH MED 10-12   ☐ ADULT MED
☐ YOUTH LRG 14-16   ☐ ADULT LRG
                     ☐ ADULT XL

Last Name

First Name

Initial

School Name

Birthday **Month** **Day** **Year**

Address

City

State

Address (if needed)

Zipcode

Telephone

Email

If your child needs special attention, Please read: If your child is hearing, sight, speech, vision impaired or has a medical hindrance that may cause them to become disoriented, please check this box. Upon registration, you will be issued a wristband for your child to wear during their run. This will immediately notify **(Event Name)** officials of the child's needs. Thank you for your cooperation.

Wheelchair entrant check here ☐

WAIVER
Please Read

PARENTS! Please read before signing as legal representative of your child as a participant in: I know that running a race is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter and run unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by the decision of a race official relative to my ability to safely complete the run. I assume all risks associated with running in **(Event Name)** including, but not limited to, falls, contact with other participants, the effects of weather, including high heat and/or humidity, traffic and the conditions of the course, all such risks being known and appreciated by me. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts and in consideration of your accepting my entry, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release **(Event Name)** officials, organizers, the **(Your City)** and **(County)**, and all volunteers associated with **(Event Name)**, sponsors, their representatives,event organizers, participation in this event. I grant permission to all of the forgoing to use any photographs, motion pictures, to any other record of this event for any legitimate purpose.

_____   _____
Signature   **Date**

REQUIRED FOR ENTRY

_____   _____
Parent Signature   **Date**

Return this form by mail to:
Event Name
Address
City, State, Zipcode,/Postal Code

The Release: Parental Consent Form.

In case a child does not correctly fill in the required information or is injured during the event, the release form is your legal protection. So you must have a guardian's signature or online acknowledgment* for each child. And you should obtain secured liability insurance as well as consult a legal professional before printing and distributing the entry and consent forms.

Use this as a guide in writing your release form in 6-10 point type.

*Recommended: Have a form for parent to sign upon check-in/pick up of runner number, t-shirt or other at event.

RELEASE FORM

PARENTS! Please read before signing as legal representative of your child as a participant in **(Event Name)**– **(Event Date)**

I know that running a race is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter and run unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by the decision of a race official relative to my ability to safely complete the run. I assume all risks associated with running in **(Event Name)** including, but not limited to, falls, contact with other participants, the effects of weather, including high heat and/or humidity, traffic and the conditions of the course, all such risks being known and appreciated by me. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts and in consideration of your accepting my entry, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release **(Event Name)** officials, organizers, the **(Your City)** and **(County)**, and all volunteers associated with **(Event Name)**, sponsors, their representatives,event organizers, participation in this event. I grant permission to all of the forgoing to use any photographs, motion pictures, to any other record of this event for any legitimate purpose.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

REQUIRED FOR ENTRY
_____   _____
Parent Signature   Date

The Alphabet List: Creating the master list.

Everyone and Everything Accounted For:

How many kids are coming?
How many t-shirts do you need?
It's time to get down to business.

If your event has over 100 participants, then you'll need a laptop or computer, someone who knows how to use one and a database spreadsheet program that can handle of lot of information-like Microsoft Excel®.

Then you'll need a location where your volunteer can open the mailed entries or download online entries, compile a list and properly secure the funds (if you charge an entry fee.) And just in case someone wants to take off with your entry receipts, you'll need to establish a system of checks and balances.

Now you can get to work-capturing the name, address, telephone number, t-shirt size and age of each entrant. Race directors call this list, the Alpha List, and it's the foundation for managing your event.

From this master list you can order the proper number of awards and sizes of t-shirts. And in case your race has multiple starting times, you'll have the total number of boys and girls and age distribution.

And it's vital on race day to have a master Alpha List at a central location. This is an important security measure. Just in case a child or parent gets lost, you'll have the ability to contact them for a speedy reunion.

But don't throw your Alpha list away when the race is done. You've now got a list that can help you plan future races and save you money. Especially if you want to make this an annual event, you can now forecast the percentage of each size of t-shirts you might need. You'll be able to place an order with confidence and the vendors are sure to give you a good deal if you place your order far enough in advance.

4

THE COURSE

CREATE YOUR COURSE & THE LOGISTICS

Plan your route. Because, it should be fun—of course!

The Course: Plan your route.

How far should kids run?

One distance for all: 1 mile or 2.62 mini-marathon
Vary distances by age: 4-7 year olds, 1 mile maximum
9-14 year-olds, 2-4 miles maximum

What kind of course?

Loop, out and back or point-to-point?

Where should it be?

Public or private property?

* Map out the course with parents in mind. They find it much easier to send and retrieve their kids at the same point. Plus, it's much easier to start and end at the same point.

The Length: Make it doable for young folks.

Don't plan a marathon. Let's face it. If your race distance is too long, then you'll have fewer entries. But if you choose a distance that challenges every skill level, regardless of age, then you're off to a good start.

Try a maximum distance of two miles for kids 10 and under. Even then you'll find that after just a mile, kids will be looking for the finish line. So if you decide on one distance for all ages, then it's best to keep it at one mile. A half a mile is a fitting challenge for any 4-to-6 year-old. And they'll usually juggle their time between running, walking and cavorting with their friends.

The Type: Make it a loop, an out-and-back course or a beeline to the finish.

The Loop

The loop is the most common type of course. And kids love it. Because their journey starts and finishes at the some point, they're never bored looking at the same scenery. Wind them through a wooded park, a stadium or use a combination of both that keeps them running until the end.

The Out-and-back

The out-and-back course gives kids something to look forward to-a halfway point. The turnaround point serves as its own reward-physically and emotionally. And because the course distance is shorter, it allows you to have a greater degree of control over the participants.

The Point-to-point

The point-to-point course presents the biggest challenge for you-not your participants. Why? Because kids leave their personal items at the start, and you'll have the fun task of shuttling the finishers to and from the start and finish line to reunite them with their belongings.

The Location: Public vs. Private.

From a park to a stadium or sports complex, the site should be a contained area with lots of parking and vehicle access. And every kid, parent, spectator and emergency response technician must be able to get in out and as easily as possible.

Public

From town and city parks to recreation departments, public property is the best place to host any party or event. Some require a deposit for shelter facilities, restrooms and waste disposal. But despite the cost, it's still an ideal venue. So make sure you reserve your spot as early as possible. Be sure to check with Local Authorities of Municipal Offices if a Permit is required along with notification for Traffic Control by Law Enforcement.

Kids can run over streets, byways, avenues and crossroads as well, but only as a last resort. Ultimately, kids will fall. And asphalt hurts. Most cities will not completely close public streets to traffic, so you might be putting your participants in harm's way. Only use public streets if your local law enforcement and volunteers can help keep the course safe and under control.

Private

A local play area, polo field or open area that is owned by a friendly and willing landowner can be an even better location for your event. But don't forget, with private property, you have a personal and legal obligation to cleanup, repair and restore the area the same way you found it.

Using private property can be a legal liability. Unlike public property where local contracts govern any assumption of risk, private property does not. So before your event, make sure that the property owner has adequate liability insurance that will cover any problem as a result of your children's run. And as organizers, you have the responsibility to insure the event. The Road Runners Club of America offers affordable policies specifically for running events.

The Logistics: Permits, Insurance, and other things you need to know.

Permits.

Some call them parade permits, event licenses or use permits, but whatever you call them, there is no way around them. If any portion of your event is held on public or city property, you are going to need a permit. From total use of a park or public street to law enforcement assistance and legal waiver of liability, permits give you permission to use public land.

Contact your local city hall or law enforcement office at least four to six months before the event. If you're organized with a detailed map of your running course and parking needs, your permit request will go smoothly.

And make several copies of your permit. The Race Director should have one at all times in the days before your event. Keep the original permit in a safe place just in case someone wants to see it.

Insurance.

And we're not talking about health insurance. Even if you have the best first aid staff available, you must have event insurance. You can obtain an event policy through a local insurance company or contact Road Runners Club of America.

Course Containment: Getting things under control.

Most parents worry their children might wander off or get lost, especially during an event. To help quell their anxiety, set up a contained course so it's only accessible to participants and authorized event organizers. It's well worth the extra effort.

Use barricades, snowfencing, traffic cones, and tape for setting up boundaries around your course. You can rent supplies from your local barricade company or you can borrow from your local municipal services department and park authority at little or no cost.

Traffic barricades should be placed every 20-30 feet, and traffic cones every ten feet. Unless there is a curve in your course, place the cones every three to four feet. And try stringing plastic barricade tape between the barricades for extra security.

Parent Access: For kid's only.

Some parents will want to be with their children every step of the way. But don't let them. If you want a running event for parents and children, then plan accordingly. Otherwise, give kids their space. They love to meet new friends. And those that are shy will be encouraged to run with their buddies. In the end, they will feel a greater sense of achievement if they can finish the race by themselves.

The largest youth run to date, the former, annual Junior Bloomsday®/America's Kids Run, only allowed participants and volunteers on the course. With a properly contained and clearly marked course and well-trained volunteers, every child will finish the run and properly be reunited with their parents. You can do with proper organization, volunteers and a bit of control for "hover-parents."

A Few Reasons to Keep Parents Off the Course

Get out of the way: Parents get in the way of their own children's progress as well as others, especially if they want to run fast-really fast.

Double the fun: If one child wants their parents on the course, then they all do.

Soon you'll have twice the race.

Can't find the finish line: Big people make it hard to see what's next, right?

Is that your mom? Everyone can look like a parent. Access can lead to abduction.

Ouch: If a child gets stepped on, you may have a lawsuit.

Call the doctor: They might have been in shape once, but they can't keep up anymore.

5

THE FINANCES

THE BUDGET, THE MONEY, ACCOLADES & HOT OFF THE PRESS

Will you need security, emergency response or porta-potties?
From postage to first aid, you've got to plan your budget.

How big? The more you have, the more budget to plan.

You don't want your crowd getting out of control. So if you have over 500 participants, enlist the services of a local law enforcement or government crowd management service. And if your event is on public property, some cities, by law, require security and crowd control services. Some will even provide it at a nominal fee or at no cost to you.

If you have a large number of participants or your race is in a remote area, have an on-call or on-premise ambulance. And remember, when kids gotta go, they gotta go. So if you don't have the proper restroom facilities, you can rent porta-potties by the unit.

The Money Source: Entry fees, sponsorships & contributions.

Unless you've just won the lottery, you will need to find ways to finance your event. Through entry fees, sponsorships and contributions you may receive all the money you need to fund your race.

Entry fees provide a solid cash flow and are based on a calculated breakdown of expenses and projected entry numbers.

Entry Fee Example

Projected Budget= $1,800
200 entries anticipated
Entry fee = $1,800/200 = $9

Sponsors

Most major road races would not be around today if sponsorships were not available. Sponsors will finance your run in return for promoting their products with your event. And everybody wins. You get the financial backing you need and the sponsors get to reach their audience of kids and parents.

Take a look at your audience. Kids are more responsive to beverage, sporting goods, and youth entertainment companies. And parents are more receptive to healthcare organizations, financial services, and natural child product manufacturers.

Tiered Sponsorship.

If you are in a large city or anticipate over 500 participants, try a multi-level sponsorship.

A major sponsor pays a substantially higher amount and, in return, receives far more acknowledgment in benefits. They could provide the sole logo on the t-shirt or have their name attached to your event.

Participating sponsors pay a smaller fee or provide in-kind services in exchange for sponsorship. Obviously with less recognition than the major sponsorship, these sponsors are publicly acknowledged for their support. For example, a local barricade company might forego their rental expense in lieu of a bit of the spotlight.

And then there are cash contributions. Yes, altruism does exist. And many people are willing to donate money simply because they want to help keep kids fit. Most arrive unsolicited, but you can also appeal to the public by asking for donations to help pay the entry fees of those less fortunate.

How To Get a Sponsor

Determine your audience size: Project how many parents and children will attend your event.

Establish the amount of money: Will you need $100, $1,000 or $10,000 or more?

Develop a sponsor package: Professionally prepare a presentation to potential sponsors. That means no typos and misspelled words. Make sure to provide projected numbers of entries and spectators, possible signage, logo and t-shirt design opportunities as well as additional ways they could market their products or services- from selling product to hand-out coupons and sample products.

Name your price: Once you have the package prepared, put a price tag on it. Once it's in writing, all you have to do is ask. Good luck.

A GUIDE TO PLAN YOUR EXPENDITURES

Variable expense items: Dependent on the amount of entries $ _____

T-Shirts $ _____

Water Aid $ _____
    Drinking Cups $ _____
    Containers $ _____
    Plastic Gloves $ _____
    Garbage Bags $ _____

*Online registration (if applicable and using an outside vendor) $ _____

    $ _____

Fixed Expense Items: Independent of the amount of entries

    $ _____

Licenses/Permits

Rentals $ _____
    Barricades $ _____
    Start/Finish Line Equipment $ _____
    Security/Crowd Management $ _____

Insurance $ _____

Administration $ _____
    Postage $ _____
    Paper $ _____
    Copies $ _____
    Printing and Entry Forms $ _____
    Paid Support Personnel $ _____

Extra Items $ _____
    First Aid Items $ _____
    Emergency Response* $ _____
    Porta-Potties* $ _____
    Volunteer Acknowledgment* $ _____

TOTAL BUDGET $ _____

*optional

Accolades: For kids, it's more than just a t-shirt.

T-shirts not only give kids something to wear that makes them feel proud, but they also help promote your event. Usually given as an award, t-shirts can easily be funded with entry fees. You can even create your own custom design.

Follow the six steps outlined below to create a cool t-shirt that every kid will want to wear.

Step 1— Create your design

Unless you're a graphic designer, you're going to need to find one. Some silkscreen printers have in-house artists that will provide their expertise in exchange for a printing order.

But keep it simple. Print on white or light colored shirts to avoid having to reprint lighter shades. And try to stick with two color graphics. The more colors you have, the more expensive it will become. Make sure the design includes the name of your running event, the year and a cool graphic that kids will like. Avoid cluttering the design with sponsor logos. Most will respect your decision.

Step 2— Make film positives of your design or give a design file to silkscreen printer

What's that? Well, differing from traditional web or offset printing, t-shirts are silkscreen printed, which involves making a screen for each color. The screen captures ink that is spread over the t-shirt by a large device. In order to make screens of your design for printing, the solid colors need to be captured as a positive print on clear film, called a film positive.

Most silkscreen garment printers are now equipped to make screens from a digital design file. If your design is intricate, make sure your graphic artist 1) converts any fonts to "outlines", 2) runs a "trap" on your design or 3) "packages" all design items in a folder with original file, font(s) and any vector graphics. Trapping prevents colors from bleeding when they overlap. So if you have a wide red border running over a blue graphic, trapping makes sure when the red and blue inks are printed together, they don't produce a dirty purple tone.

Step 3— Select a silkscreen printer.

Silkscreen printers are everywhere. And the best way to find one is to first look at samples of their work. Check out the quality by rubbing your hands across the design to see if the ink sticks. Are they are printed well? Next, show them your design. Pick the color and quality of shirt you want and get a price quote for the number of participants you expect. And make sure you understand all of the charges and get them in writing.

Step 4— Determine your order quantity and sizing

Most running events have entry deadlines 7-14 days prior to the event. This is so they can estimate not only the number of t-shirts they will need, but the distribution of sizes as well. So make sure you place your t-shirt order once you have collected and counted all the entries. If you are accepting late registration, budget an additional 6-10% for shirt orders.

Step 5— Set up a reorder

If you have a large event, discuss the potential for a last minute order with your silkscreen printer. Normally this printing can be accomplished 2-3 days prior to your event. But make sure you set a price and a final drop date on one more round of t-shirts.

Step 6— Decide to give your t-shirts before or after the run.

They're not just t-shirts, they are awards. Although many adult running events give t-shirts after the race, they can also be given before the event. And for kids who like to wear their shirts during the event, this can be added publicity for you and your sponsors.

Most silkscreen printing bids include

Shirt cost
Printing cost per shirt
Set-up charges for screen(s)
Local sales tax if applicable.

Example Budget

100% Cotton
Two-Color Print
Qty: 240 (20 Dozen)

$3.20 per shirt x 240 _____ = **$768.00**
$.79 per shirt silkscreen printing x 240 _____ = **$189.60**
Screen charges, 2 colors x $19 per screen _____ = **$38.00**
Total before local sales tax _____ = **$995.60**

Hot Off The Press: Get the word out.

If you want people to come, then you have to get the word out. Promote your event with signs, advertising, entry forms and publicity.

Signs are easy and inexpensive. And all you need is paper. You just have to hang them in the right place-schools, stores, youth and health clubs, gyms and sponsor locations. But make sure to get the word out weeks before your registration deadline-and not the day before the run.

Entry Forms. It's simple. Put them everywhere. Post them online too!

Advertising. From newspapers, television and radio to buses, billboards, websites, Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs and newsletters, any medium can help. Although it might seem a luxury you can't afford, there are many roads to free advertising.

Sponsors can promote your event within their advertisements. Or your local television and radio station can produce a public service announcement. Just contact the Community Affairs Director at the station to find out if they are willing to help you. It doesn't hurt to ask, right?

Publicity. Instead of going door-to-door, send a press release announcing your event to your local newspaper, radio and television station. Some may throw it aside and others might do a follow-up story. Also, send the Community Affairs Director a notice detailing your event and request to be published on their community calendar.

Most print and broadcast media (radio/TV) websites now have community calendars that allow you to input event information in a "pre-posting" page. It will then be reviewed for accuracy and ultimately posted if deemed appropriate.

Use the web! There are many event posting sites like Active.com, local city event websites and community blogs where posting is free.

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:

Your Name _____

Daytime Phone _____

Home Phone _____

Email _____

(Your Name) TO HOST LOCAL CHILDREN'S RUNNING EVENT

(Your Name) is staging a running event just for youth on **(Date)** at the **(Location)**

The **(Event Name)** run will be open to children of all ages **(Age)** through **(Age)**. Entry fee is **(Amount)**.

All those interested in participating may pick up entry forms at **(Location)** or register online at **(Web URL)** On time registration must be postmarked no later than **(Date)**. Entries postmarked after the deadline must pay a late registration fee of **(Amount)**.

Volunteers are needed. If you are interested in helping with the organization, staging, or on the day of the run please contact: **(Name and Contact Info)**.

The **(Event Name)** is sponsored by **(Sponsor[s] Name)**.

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6
RACE DAY

COMMUNICATIONS. SET THE STAGE.
THE KIDS ARRIVE & ON YOUR MARKS, GET SET, GO.

Race Day Communication: Everything loud and clear.

Whether you're using mobile phones, smartphones or two-way radios, every area on the course-from the starting line to lost and found-must be able to communicate with each other.

The Race Director should be the main point of contact. And if communication devices are limited, then First Aid should have the first line to the Race Director in case of an emergency. If you have over 500 participants, then crowd management personnel should have an additional line of communication (Use a backup mobile device where the number is known to all.) And the larger your event, the more communication becomes essential.

Who Needs a Mobile Communication?

Race Director
First Aid
Lost & Found
Starting Line

Larger events should also include:

Course Area
Crowd Management
Staging Area

Most people now have mobile devices or smartphones. But a great additional source is your local CB radio club. They know the in's and out's of radio communication with a solid understanding of emergency response.

Also, your local military service or reserve organizations are trained and equipped with two-way communication. They know how to manage a crowd. Plus, kids love a man or woman in uniform. So just ask for the Public Affairs Officer when you call your local Marines, Air Force, Army, Navy and Coast Guard office.

Set The Stage: Get ready for the big day.

From water and first aid to the start and finish line, make sure everything is ready before the gun goes off.

The Starting Line.

It's going to be hard to start your event if the kids can't find the starting line. Whether it's a banner, tape, signs or a human chain of volunteers, make sure you have a clearly marked starting line. A start and finish line banner bearing the names of your sponsors could even add a little more value to your event.

Perfect Timing.

In our experience with Junior Bloomsday®/America's Kids Run, and over a hundred fifty annual America's Armed Forces Kids Runs, perfect timing is no timing. Running should be fun for all kids. And if you remove timing, you also remove the element of competition. Some children will always run faster than others. And if the run becomes a race, those kids that run at an average or slower pace may get discouraged.

Every child should be a winner.

But if you do decide to time your event, keep it simple. Provide a clock. And if you want, time the first dozen finishers. Timing equipment can be borrowed or rented from any local running club and usually consists of a large digital monitor. If you want to provide individual times, you'll also need a Chronomix- a timing device that records the time of each finisher as they cross the line or use timing chips which are now becoming common for many events.

And one last thing-mount your digital timing monitor where your finishers can see it, but won't run into it.

Ready. Set. Group One-Go!

For every kid, the start is as exhilarating as the finish. But not if they get run over by a bigger kid before they've even crossed the start line-a problem that could happen if your participants vary widely in age. So how you begin your event-all at once or in waves-deserves consideration.

Of course, you can start everyone at once. But if you have more than 100 participants, try starting them in waves. Volunteers can separate the kids into groups of 30-40. And use starting tape or rope as a divide to ensure each group starts on time. Then start, one group at a time and at least two to three minutes apart.

But if your event has over several hundred or thousand participants, start by age. Simply separate the kids by age in the staging area and start each age group 15 minutes to 1/2 hour apart. And if you have a large age group, then break them into smaller waves.

The Finish.

Usually when kids cross the finish line-they stop. But that's not exactly what you want them to do. Whether they're tired or ready for another mile, they must move through the finish line as quickly and efficiently as possible. And you could even make it fun.

The Chutes.

Every run needs a well-designed chute system to direct kids through the finish area. All you'll need are metal standards or stanchions placed 10' to 15' apart, and rope, tape or flagging to string between them. The most common system uses a 12" x 12" steel base plate, an 8" riser, a 40" PVC pipe to fit over the riser and a clip to use at the top of the pipe so you can attach a flag. But you can design a chute system out of anything from truck axles and traffic delineators to snowfencing, barricade webbing and scaffolding. And if you are planning an annual event, consider purchasing a lightweight chute system.

Setting Up Your Single Chute System

If you have less than 200 participants, then a single chute system is all you'll need. The funnel-shaped area-commonly known as the deceleration area-should start 30 feet before the finish line to let the kids know they need to start slowing down. The chute should be about 20 feet wide at the finish line and narrow to about 3 feet at the start of the finisher's chutes until it ends 20-30 feet past the finish line-for a total length of 50-to-80 feet. So it should be just wide enough so kids aren't running into each other, but narrow enough so they can't pass each other either. And flagging is a good way to keep kids moving as well.

As for volunteers, they'll be handing out water, instructions and cheers in their own workers' chute-also known as a "moat"-that runs alongside the finisher's chute. This way, they'll be out of the finisher's way so the foot traffic can move smoothly.

If you have more than 200 participants, you can add more chutes. Additional chutes will increase your finish line capacity by 30%. So try one chute for each gender. This could also help parents locate their loves ones as well.
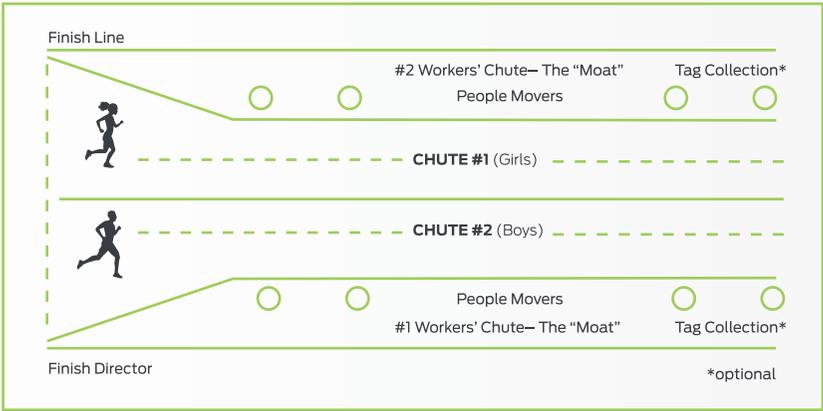
Once kids have passed through the finish line chute, you can direct them to get their t-shirts or be reunited with their parents.

First Aid.

Whether it's a child or a parent, someone will always need medical attention during the run. So you'll need supplies and a group of special volunteers who can give the best medical attention as quickly as possible.

Off-duty nurses, aids or physicians are the best first aid volunteers. But whomever you enlist, they should be well-trained in first aid, sports medicine or have other medical training. From HIV to hepatitis, they must also understand the risk and transmission of blood-borne pathogens and use plastic gloves when treating open wounds.

With large events, there should be at least two first aid volunteers and an appointed director that can cover procedures, expectations and answer questions for other first aid volunteers.

First Aid Supplies

Plastic/Latex gloves
Bandages
Compression bandages
Solar blanket
Water
Sanitary wipes
Gauze
Tape
Antibiotic medicine
Ice

You must always have access to emergency response crews. You can have a local emergency response unit on-call or have an ambulance on-site for the duration of the event. And everyone should be able to find the first aid area. So announce its location and use identifiable signs.

Thinking It Through.

Water Aid

Everyone needs H2O. So plan to have at least one water station on the course or at the finish line-or both.

Each water station should have:*

Water Source: Bottled water and/or electrolytes may be donated by major sports beverage companies or grocers.

Clean Plastic Barrels or large thermos jugs: Line barrels with plastic liner bags to haul and store water and keep them covered if they aren't being used.

Paper Cups Only: If plastic cups are tossed on the ground, kids may slip and fall.

Plastic Pitchers: To transfer water from the barrels to the cups.

Latex or Plastic Gloves: For the volunteers to use when handling water.

Long Garden Hose: It's optional. Just in case you run out of water.

*Everything should be sanitized

Your goal is to make it as easy as possible for kids to grab cups of water. So set up your water station to the right of the runners. And if you are providing electrolytes and water, use signs to indicate what the kids are grabbing, and that the drink "contains sugar" for those diabetics. Volunteers should hold the rim of the cup between the thumb and forefinger or in the in the palm of their hand, so kids can easily take one for drinking.

Plan on providing two cups of water per runner at each water station. Also make sure a water source is close by. Kids will take more than you think.

Lost and Found.

From kids and parents to coats and backpacks, people and things get lost. And especially at a children's running event, kids will wander off and parents will become worried. The goal is to reunite loved ones as quickly and painlessly as possible.

Guide to a Happy Reunion

Have a visible presence. Make sure the lost and found area is loud and clear for both kids and parents to see. And if you're hosting a large event, especially in a stadium, use the public address system to announce lost and found as often as possible.

Announce the location on the entry form and before the run. Let parents know they can reunite with their children immediately after they finish. And if their child is lost, they can find them in a designated area.

Find the right volunteers. Lost and found requires patience and compassion, especially when you're a lost child waiting for your parents. Find volunteers who can make it fun.

Be positive. Kids just want to know that it's going to be okay. Try to entertain them until mom and dad show up. And mom and dad will be so happy with your good work that it could help spread the word for next year's race.

They're Here: Check-in, Race Numbers and Late Registration.

It's the big day. And time for kids to get checked-in, receive their race numbers and listen to those last-minute instructions before the gun goes off.

Check-In: The "day of" or the morning before

You've got to have a formal check-in period. Why? For three reasons:

1. So kids can get their race numbers or participant t-shirts.

2. Parents and kids can understand everything they need to know about the run.

3. And legally, there aren't any unregistered kids running your race.

For an event with less than 200 participants, schedule at least five volunteers to start checking kids in 60 - 90 minutes before the gun goes off. With an early check-in, you not only have time to process the entries, but parents are forced to be on time.

But if your event has more than 200 people, schedule check-in for the day before the race. Commonly used for adult running events, pre-event check-in is held at convenient location. And keep in mind working parents when you schedule the check-in. Try mid-afternoon to early evening hours for at least three-to-five hours.

Check-in: What you'll need.

From tables, pens and rulers to the Alpha List and volunteers, there are a few things you're going to need.

The most important thing you'll need is the list-the Alpha list. With several copies in hand, this master list should have each participant's name, address, age and emergency contact name and number.

At Check-in

Divide the list alphabetically. For race-day check-in, allow one volunteer per every 50-100 entries. But for check-in the day before, volunteers can handle larger lists. And if your event has over 500 participants, try dividing the list by gender as well.

Make Signs. Make sure the parents and kids know where to go. Make signs for each table according to the section of the alphabet each volunteer is handling.

Each volunteer gets a table, a list, a good pen and a ruler. As kids check-in, volunteers use the ruler to find their name and a pen to check them off the list. Then they're off to the races.

Race Numbers. Although they aren't required, race numbers can help you control your event. But most importantly, they make kids feel cool-like a part of something big.

It's easy. If a child has a number, they have a parental release form on file. So anyone running the race without a number could be a legal liability. And for kids, race numbers not only identify if they are registered, but they become a keepsake and reminder that they accomplished something great.

Race numbers can be easy to find. Available in stock or custom printed, the number should be printed on waterproof paper stock or Tyvek with the space to print emergency contact information. And if you aren't timing your event, numbers don't need to be sequential. You can simply use one number for each age group. But make sure they are hole-punched so that safety pins can easily attach to each child's t-shirt. Give each child their number and four safety pins during check-in, and make sure they complete the emergency contact
information.

Try searching for the key words **'RACE NUMBERS'** on an internet search engine to find a number distributor near you.

What to Do: Instructions and reminders.

Even though you provided all the information on the entry form, once is never enough. People will always need to know where to go and what to do. So whether it's a bullhorn or a public address system, you'll need to constantly deliver pre-race instructions to the kids and parents.

For race day check-in, make sure you have signs with all the information the parents will need. And for check-in held before race day, give each child a sheet with all the instructions along with their number.

What they'll need to know

Starting time.
What time to arrive before the gun goes off.
Where to find water and first aid.
What to wear, rain or shine.
And anything from sponsor and volunteer recognition to cheers of encouragement.

Check-In: An easy location.

You don't want kids crowding your start line as they wait in line to get their number. So make sure your check-in is far enough away from the start line to avoid congestion, but close enough so the kids and parents don't have to search to find it.

For check-in held before race day, find a central location. Many schools or after school youth organization will allow you to use their lobby or gymnasium. And your sponsor might provide an even better location.

Make sure you have enough parking. Most parents with pre-school age children need easy access, so make things as effortless as possible.

Late Registration.

With every event, there will always be a few that join the party late. So for those who wish to register after the deadline, make sure there is a special area with trained volunteers.

And to discourage latecomers, the fee is usually two to two-and-a-half times more than the normal entry fee. So for an entry fee of $7, the late entry fee would be $15. And where does this extra money go? Well just in case you have to special order t-shirts and mail them to participants after the race. And your volunteers should let parents and kids know that they may have to wait until after the race to get their t-shirt.

Trouble Desk.

No matter how much you prepare, it's possible that someone who registered will not be on your Alpha List. Whether it's because of an unpaid fee, unsigned waiver, bounced check or incomplete entry form, you might find yourself facing an angry parent.

Be proactive. Diffuse any possible conflict. Organize a trouble desk armed with a few amiable volunteers and a master Alpha List. And prepare them for any type of greeting, confrontation or request. If you are unable to locate their entry, at a minimum, be sure to have entrant and parent sign a waiver before permitting entry.

On Your Marks, Get Set, Go!

It's almost time to start the race. But before you herd them to the starting line, make sure the kids know how to stretch and warm-up.

Warm-up.

It's not just adults that need to warm-up. Stretching is great for kids too and allows them to push harder. So have a volunteer lead the kids through a series of stretches in a designated warm-up area or post signs with a few suggested stretches:

A few stretches

Hold the following for at least 30 seconds, and don't bounce!

Wall stretch.

Standing stretch. Grab the foot behind the back and pull it toward the glutes to stretch the quadriceps.

Toe touches. Bend at the waist and touch the ground to stretch the back of the legs.

Staging: On your marks.

A common term among race organizers, staging is the final movement and call of the participants to the starting area.

It sounds easy, but leading a bunch of kids safely to the starting line is quite the task. Kids are anxious, ready to run and will probably be jumping up and down. And the last thing they have is patience. So you have to have a firm stance with the parents if you're going to get the run off to a good start.

First, you'll need to create a starting line. By using snowfencing, barricades, traffic cones or barrier tape, make sure to create a barrier between the spectators and participants. Volunteers can also be placed at strategic points to make sure only participants are allowed in the starting area.

Then create a chute with rope, barrier tape, or volunteers that will lead only registered participants to the starting area-keeping spectators and parents out of the way. Simply design the chute like a funnel so it narrows toward the starting line, forcing a single file line. And post volunteers along the way to make sure kids keep moving.

If your event is large or is held at a stadium, create a moving chute. Unless you've got a great set of lungs, use the public address to announce the staging of each area. You can move your staging chute from one section of the stands or entrants, to the next.

Congratulations!

You've done it. You've gathered your volunteers, ordered your t-shirts, and organized your first official kids run. And whether you have ten participants or ten thousand, you'll not only help kids succeed, but help keep them fit. And what could be better than that? Doing it all again next year.

Director's Pre-Race Checklist

- ☐ Race Date/Time
- ☐ Course Established
- ☐ Course Approved by Authorities
- ☐ Volunteer Oganization & Meeting
- ☐ Insurance/Permits
- ☐ Ambulance Service
- ☐ Entry Form Preparation
- ☐ Entry Form Printing
- ☐ Publicity/Advertising
- ☐ Entry Form Printing
- ☐ Publicity/Advertising
- ☐ Race Numbers/Supplies
- ☐ T-Shirts (for participants)
- ☐ T-Shirts (for volunteers- optional)
- ☐ Police Involvement (optional)

Organizing Checklist

- ☐ Volunteer Liaison
- ☐ Publicity
- ☐ Entry Form Development
- ☐ Entry Form Distribution
- ☐ Entry Processing/Data Entry
- ☐ Race Number Preparation
- ☐ Registration/Check-in-Area
- ☐ Race Day Check-in
- ☐ (barriers/flagging, etc.)
- ☐ Crowd Control
- ☐ Course Signage
- ☐ Water Aid
- ☐ Medical Aid
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Equipment Transportation
- ☐ Start/Finish Line & Operation
- ☐ Porta-potties
- ☐ T-Shirt Distribution
- ☐ Tear-down/Clean-up
- ☐ Refreshments (optional)
- ☐ Entertainment (optional)

Stretching Guide:

Always stretch before walking, jogging or running to prevent strains and injuries.

Remember to breathe.

Hold the following for at least 30 seconds, and don't bounce!

☐ **Isolated muscle**

TOE TOUCHES
HAMSTRINGS

LEGS STRAIGHT

STANDING STRETCH
QUADRICEPS

LEG(S) STRAIGHT

WALL STRETCH
CALVES

Start by standing upright with your fee together. Take a deep breath and release as you slowly bend over the knees- hands extended reaching for your toes. You should feel tension on the backsides of you legs. Increase tension by driving your palms toward the ground.

Start by standing upright. Bend one leg at the knee with the heel the toward the sky. Grab the bend leg with your hand on the same side and pull upward. Balancing can be tricky- try placing your opposite arm on the shoulder of your running buddy, extend your free arm outward, or keep your eyes fixed at a spot on the ground. Hold for 30 seconds and switch legs.

Start by standing upright with your fee together. Lean toward the wall with on foot forward. With you fingertips, or palms pressed against the wall, drive your back heel toward the ground. Keep your back straight. Hold for 30 seconds and switch legs.