

Shooting Stars Basketball 2026

Players Parents Information



First, before I jump into the Shooting Stars information below, let me thank you and your great kids for helping to make this program such a success! Thank you for being part of our team!

Mission

Shooting Stars' mission is to promote inclusion and create enrichment opportunities for individuals with special needs and their families. We strive for our kids to have fun and learn the fundamentals of the game of basketball in a recreational environment.

Your Role as a Parent

We would like, as much as is possible, for you to be able to do something with our program that you rarely get...a choice...you can jump in and coach/help out (don't be shy...no experience required) or sit on the sidelines and watch your child have a great time playing sports! If you choose to watch, this may not happen all of the time and you may have to jump in here and there, but hopefully you get to sit back and enjoy most of the time. Please be respectful at all times to our buddies and coaches **are volunteers** and have made a big commitment to our program and your kids.

Our Program

1. This is our 20th season and we have grown from 8 to 200+ players. It was started by my wife Emmie and I for our son Jacob, who has Autism.
2. We strive to help the players be a part of a team...something they might otherwise never experience.
3. This program is tailored to each child. One size does not fit all. Each age group/team will function differently based on their age and abilities.
4. The season runs 9 weeks (10 with Orientation). This is a big commitment, but it is important. Our kids thrive on familiarity.
5. Our division is not competitive...volunteers will not win a game.
6. There will be a 1:1 buddy/player pairing (for the most part, where we can, depending on the number of buddies). We will see what works, but reserve the right to change anything that is not working.
7. We are open to suggestions.

Volunteers---Their Role and Responsibilities

The main roles of the volunteers is, just like the mission statement, to help the kids have fun and learn the fundamentals of basketball (although this is not a skills camp). They will be acting as buddies and "coaches" for the practice part of our hour and as the opposing team for the second half. Since we all know our kids best, you may be asked to help if we are short of volunteers one week or if your child is having a particularly rough day.

As I may have mentioned, this will not look exactly like a regular basketball game. When the volunteers are the opposing team, their job is still to help. We do this by playing "soft" on defense and offense. We ask the helpers to let the players score, even help them if need be. Our goal will be to have every player from Shooting Stars have at least one basket per game. Another thing, is that if there is a missed shot or errant pass, we ask that the helpers do their best to make sure that their player is safe, as much as possible, and doesn't get hit with the ball.

What we have told the Buddies...

1. Your main job is to engage. Be a cheerleader. Be flexible. Try anything and everything. Be persistent.
2. Follow the lead of the coaches and experienced buddies.
3. Don't be afraid to ask coaches or parents for help and advice. Also, let us know if something is happening that we should know about...communication is key.
4. Help the kids have fun (1st) and learn the game of basketball (2nd).
5. Keep the kids moving up and down the court.
6. We would like to ask that you be very patient and gentle with the special needs kids. The kids will have various levels of skills and abilities. They may act a bit strange or react to things differently than others. It is important that you not "react". Please be patient and know that parents and other volunteers are always there to help. Always be supportive, using positive feedback.
7. You are "buddies" and "coaches" for the 1st half and the "opposing team" for the 2nd half. When you are the opposing team your job is still to help. Buddies will play "soft" on offense and defense. Your #1 job in either role is protect your player from flying basketballs (passes, rebounds, etc...), as much as possible, as some of their reaction times may not be the fastest.

8. We will also ask for your flexibility. Your player may not be there every week or may only last a short while...for a variety of reasons. You may be asked to help out with another player, another team or even be a photographer for a day. Please be open to anything we ask you to do...all jobs are important. Just say Yes!
9. Always focus on your player first.
10. Expectations...please expect the most from your player and push them to do a little bit more every week. Many times they will surprise us (and themselves) with the things they can do.
11. Get to know your player. Find out from them or parents what motivates them or what their interests are.
12. It is OK to "redirect your player" by gently moving them with your hands. If you have questions on this, please ask parents or coaches how to do it.

Practice and Games...and the Rules

1. We teach the kids to dribble, pass and shoot (bounce passes only).
2. We try to teach the basic rules, but most are very lightly enforced.
3. We use trial and error...eventually you or we will find something that works.
4. Each game and division will look different. Some may use subs and have one ball...some may not sub and have multiple balls. Our goal is subs and one ball, but we go with what works.
5. The game may look like chaos at times, but just go with it.

After the Game

Please stay for 15 minutes after the game for wrap up, game balls, snacks, etc... It is very important to the kids.

Schedule, Uniforms and Communication

1. This season we have 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00 and 5:00 groups. Please make sure you know which one you have. All games/practices will be at Corky Smith Gym. We do not have separate practice days. We will have the end of year party/trophies at our last day at the Gym. If you cannot make it to any game, please let me know ASAP (email: coachrick@shootingstarsgroup.org).
2. Flow and time between sessions will be tight. We ask for your help in keeping on schedule.
3. Please be on time and have your child wear their uniform to every event.
4. We will post information to our Facebook page (Shooting Stars Special Needs Group) and website www.shootingstarsgroup.org, but we prefer to send our communications by e-mail, so please check regularly.

"Other Random Points to Cover"

1. ***Before I go further, let me stress that no matter how old your child is, there is absolutely no "drop off and pick up."***
A responsible adult must stay the entire time as each of our kids has their own individual quirks and issues...and parents are best suited to help should they melt down or have a medical issue....or any bathroom needs.
2. It is OK if your kids "act out", act weird, scream, do something unexpected, etc... This is a safe environment and there are parents here going through the same things. We will work through it and be OK. We look for small victories that add up.
3. ***Note: If your child has aggressive behaviors, you will need to step in or bring someone to work with them***
4. Snacks: We will buy snacks for the group each week. If you would like to contribute, we will have a jar at the check in table most weeks and we appreciate the help. *We try to stay away from major food allergies and/or sensitivity, but if your child does have an allergy or sensitivity, it is your responsibility to make sure they do not eat something they shouldn't and/or to bring a snack for them.* Please do not put this responsibility on the buddies/volunteers. You can communicate it to them so they are aware, but we know how fast our kids can be at grabbing something and putting it in their mouth.
5. Everyone is "color coded". (Coaches, Volunteers, Players)
6. We give each player a uniform and t-shirt because some kids don't like the feel of the uniform. Wear the jersey over the t-shirt.
7. It will not always be easy for the players, buddies, coaches (and parents), but seeing the kids (and their buddies) light up with those great big smiles on their faces...there is nothing like it! That is why we have this program!

Thank You Again,

Rick Clark (Coach Rick) - Shooting Stars Program Director

(cell: 760-504-7242)

Shooting Stars 2026 Schedule

8/30 Orientation and uniform pick-up 9/13 Game 1 9/20 Game 2 9/27—Game 3--Picture Day 10/4 Game 4 10/11 Game 5 10/18 Game 6
10/25 Game 7 11/1 Game 8 11/8 Game 9 and End-of-season activities