

COMMUNITY PARTNER GUIDE

Combat Sambo as a Community Tool: A Guide for Schools, Youth Organizations, and Community Partners

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is written for schools, youth-serving nonprofits, community organizations, juvenile justice programs, child welfare agencies, and law enforcement agencies that work with young people and are looking for structured, evidence-informed physical activity programming to complement their existing services.

It explains what Combat Sambo is, what CS Combat Sambo League's programs look like in practice, what safety and youth protection standards are in place, and how a partnership with CSL — or an independent implementation of CSL's model — might serve the young people your organization works with.

You do not need to know anything about martial arts to find this guide useful.

PART 1: WHAT IS COMBAT SAMBO — AND WHY DOES IT MATTER FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING?

A Brief Introduction

Combat Sambo is a martial art that combines grappling (throws, takedowns, ground technique) with striking. It is governed internationally by the International Sambo Federation (FIAS), which has received recognition from the International Olympic Committee.

For community programming purposes, what matters most about Combat Sambo is not its competitive form — it's its training methodology. A Combat Sambo training session is:

Highly structured. Every session follows the same format, with clear expectations and consistent adult supervision.

Progressive. Participants advance through defined levels based on demonstrated competency, giving them a visible, achievable pathway of growth.

Partner-based. The discipline requires working cooperatively with a partner — developing communication, physical awareness, and mutual respect.

Physically demanding but accessible. The conditioning benefits are real and significant, but the entry barrier is low — no prior experience or fitness level is required.

Discipline-building by design. The qualities that Combat Sambo training develops — focus, consistency, the ability to stay calm under physical pressure, respect for a partner — are the same qualities that support positive outcomes in school, work, and community life.

Why Martial Arts for At-Risk Youth?

Structured martial arts training has been studied as an intervention for at-risk youth populations across several decades. The consistent findings are that well-structured programs — ones with clear rules, consistent adult mentorship, progressive skill development, and a non-punitive approach to mistakes — are associated with improved self-regulation, reduced aggression, improved school attendance, and stronger relationships with prosocial adults.

The key word is "well-structured." Not all martial arts programs produce these outcomes. Programs that emphasize aggression, winning at all costs, or physical dominance can produce the opposite effect. The structure of the program — and the quality and training of its instructors — matters as much as the discipline itself.

CSL's programs are designed around the elements that research associates with positive youth outcomes: clear structure, consistent adult mentorship, progressive skill development, a cooperative rather than competitive emphasis in training, and explicit attention to the social and emotional dimensions of participation.

PART 2: CSL'S PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Youth Combat Sambo Program (CSL-YCP-001)

CSL's standard Youth Combat Sambo Program serves participants ages 5 to 17 across three divisions:

Little Warriors (approximately ages 5–7): Foundations — safe movement, listening skills, falling safely, partner awareness. No technical mastery required. The goal is a positive, structured experience.

Junior Sambo (approximately ages 7–12): Real Combat Sambo technique begins — throws, takedowns, basic ground positions. Four certification levels with specific advancement criteria.

Youth Sambo (approximately ages 12–17): Advanced technique — combination throws, complex ground sequences, competition preparation for athletes who want it. Four certification levels.

All youth training and competition at CSL is grappling only — no striking. This is consistent with Florida law and with CSL's own standards for youth participants.

At-Risk Youth Pilot Program (CSL-AYP-001)

CSL has developed a specialized pilot program for young people who face circumstances that put them at elevated risk — including foster care placement, juvenile justice involvement, school disengagement, family instability, economic hardship, or exposure to community violence.

This program is built on the same curriculum as the standard Youth Combat Sambo Program, adapted with additional protocols and instructor preparation for this population. Key differences from standard youth programming:

Trauma-informed approach. Instructors assigned to this program receive specific training in recognizing and responding appropriately to trauma-related behavior — including understanding that what looks like defiance, disengagement, or aggression may be a trauma response, not a character problem.

Consent-centered physical contact. Physical contact is introduced gradually and with explicit verbal consent. Participants are never forced to engage at a level beyond their comfort. Instructors are trained to read and respond to signs of distress.

Enhanced youth protection standards. Level 2 background screening, SafeSport certification, mandatory reporter training, and the Two-Adult Rule are requirements — not suggestions — for all instructors in this program.

Confidentiality by default. The default for all at-risk youth participants is confidentiality — no photography, no public identification — unless affirmatively cleared for each individual.

Structured referral and intake. Participants are referred through partner organizations. CSL works with referring partners to complete a brief intake process, understand each participant's situation, and adapt the program environment as needed.

Phased programming. The program operates in three phases: Welcome and Stabilization (building trust and routine), Engagement and Development (real Combat Sambo training), and Integration and Leadership (advanced skills and peer mentoring opportunities).

Law Enforcement Partnership Program (CSL-LEP-001)

CSL has developed a pilot program introducing Combat Sambo methodology to law enforcement personnel. This program is designed for departments and agencies interested in offering their officers exposure to a structured combat system with deep roots in military and law enforcement application.

PART 3: SAFETY AND YOUTH PROTECTION STANDARDS

This section describes CSL's concrete youth protection commitments. We encourage community partners to ask about these standards — and to ask any youth-serving organization for the same information before referring young people to their programs.

Background Screening

Every CSL instructor who works with minor participants completes Level 2 background screening — the fingerprint-based standard used in Florida schools and licensed childcare facilities — before any contact with youth participants. This requirement applies without exception and is renewed on the schedule required by Florida law.

SafeSport Certification

Every CSL instructor completes SafeSport training, focused on recognizing and responding to abuse, misconduct, and grooming behaviors in youth sports settings. For instructors assigned to the At-Risk Youth Pilot Program, SafeSport certification is required before beginning work with participants.

Two-Adult Rule

No CSL instructor is ever alone with a minor participant. At every session, at every location, at least two qualified adults are present. If two adults cannot be present, the session does not happen.

Mandatory Reporting

Every CSL staff member is a mandatory reporter under Florida law (Florida Statute §39.201). If any CSL instructor has reason to believe that a minor participant is being abused or neglected, they are required by law to report it to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF Hotline: 1-800-962-2873).

Written Standards

All of the above is documented in CSL's written program standards — the Standards & Safety Manual (CSL-SSM-001) and the Instructor Standards Manual (CSL-ISM-001) — which apply at every CSL location independently of any individual being in the room on a given day.

PART 4: HOW A PARTNERSHIP WORKS

What We're Looking For in a Community Partner

CSL is looking for community partners who:

Work directly with youth populations who would benefit from structured physical activity programming

Can identify and refer appropriate participants through a defined intake process

Are willing to maintain communication with CSL about participant wellbeing and progress

Understand and support the confidentiality requirements that apply to at-risk youth participants

What We Offer Partners

A structured, documented program with defined curriculum, certification levels, and session format

Instructors who have completed Level 2 background screening, SafeSport certification, and trauma-informed practice orientation

Clear youth protection standards that meet or exceed Florida law requirements

Confidential handling of participant information

Regular communication about participant attendance, progress, and any concerns

Flexibility to adapt program delivery to the partner organization's context and schedule

What We Ask of Partners

A defined referral and intake process for participant identification

Communication about participants' relevant history and needs within applicable confidentiality constraints

A designated point of contact for ongoing communication

Willingness to participate in periodic check-ins about program effectiveness

Support for program participation — helping participants get to sessions, reinforcing participation in your own interactions with youth

Getting Started

The first step is a conversation. Contact CSL at ak.legacy.np@gmail.com or 904 776 3353 to discuss whether a partnership makes sense for your organization and the young people you serve. There is no obligation in having that conversation.

If a partnership is a good fit, we'll document it in a simple memorandum of understanding that clarifies expectations on both sides before participants are referred.

PART 5: IMPLEMENTING THIS MODEL INDEPENDENTLY

Some organizations may want to implement a structured martial arts program using CSL's framework without a formal CSL affiliation.

This guide, and CSL's publicly available educational content at combatsamboleague.com, provides a starting framework for doing that. The structural principles described here — consistent session format, defined advancement criteria, written youth protection policies, Two-Adult Rule, background screening, mandatory reporting — are not proprietary. They are broadly applicable best practices that any youth-serving martial arts program should implement.

If your organization wants to implement a more complete version of the CSL model — including the full curriculum library, certification system, instructor training standards, and competition framework — CS Combat Sambo League™ offers partnership and licensing arrangements. Contact us to discuss.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Do participants need any prior experience or fitness level?

No. CSL programs are designed to teach absolute fundamentals from day one. The only requirement is willingness to try.

Q: Is this safe for children who have experienced trauma?

With the right instructor training and program adaptations — which CSL's At-Risk Youth Pilot Program includes — yes. The key is that instructors understand trauma-informed practice, physical contact is introduced gradually and with consent, and the program environment is predictable and consistent.

Q: What does a session actually look like?

Every session follows the same arc: warm-up and falling practice, a technical skills block where the instructor demonstrates and participants drill, supervised partner practice, and a closing circle where every participant receives individual acknowledgment. Sessions are typically 60–90 minutes.

Q: Is there any cost to participants?

For community partner referrals — particularly at-risk youth — CSL's goal is to remove cost as a barrier to participation. Contact us to discuss arrangements for your specific partner context.

Q: What happens if a participant discloses abuse or shows signs of distress?

CSL instructors are mandatory reporters under Florida law and are trained to respond appropriately to disclosures and signs of distress. We will notify the referring partner organization within applicable confidentiality constraints and follow mandatory reporting obligations.

Q: Can we visit a session before referring participants?

Yes. We encourage it. Contact us to arrange a visit.

ABOUT CS COMBAT SAMBO LEAGUE™

CS Combat Sambo League™ is operated by AK Legacy INC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Jacksonville, Florida. We are the first structured Combat Sambo sanctioning and training organization in the United States.

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