



AMERICAN YOUTH CHEER 2026 AGE WAIVER GUIDELINES



American Youth Cheer (AYC) encourages all regions and conferences to entertain the age waiver process. Age waivers are to be used with the goal to allow all children to participate in the association to which they belong/live without the inconvenience of needing to join “a different” association to participate.

Age waiver requests will need additional proof that a division of cheer is not possible for the participant to join in an association but an attempt is made to provide a team for which they can cheer (i.e. rosters).

The Age Waiver Request form must be signed and approved by the Conference Cheer and Dance Director and then forwarded to the Region Cheer and Dance Director for approval. If approved by both parties, the request will then be submitted to the AYC National Cheer Commissioner for final approval prior to the participant’s placement on a team and prior to the participant beginning practice. Not having the proper waiver could result in the director denying the waiver.

Age waivers are primarily used to waive “up” a participant in a division, not waive “down” in a division, as per our current AYC National Rulebook. In regards to waiving down, special circumstances will be entertained which will need to be explained along with accompanying paperwork to see how teams were formed in order to approve requests.

WAIVE DOWN

Example A: **Division 12**

- (3) 9 year old athletes
- (11) 10 year old athletes
- (5) 11 year old athletes
- (4) 12 year old athletes
- (1) 13 year old athlete

This association does not have any additional 13 year old or older athletes. This association can request the 13 year old to be waived “down” to Division 12 rather than having this child participate in another association or not participate at all.

WAIVE UP

Example B: **Division 12**

- (2) 8 year old athletes
- (1) 9 year old athlete
- (0) 10 year old athletes
- (4) 11 year old athletes
- (7) 12 year old athletes

This association only offers a Division 12 team because of the number of athletes and coaching staff. This association can entertain age waivers for the 8 year old athletes to compete “up”.