



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

ABUSE PREVENTION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Parents place their trust in the Y to help their children thrive. Our core values—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility—are part of everything we do. Because of this, we place great value on creating the most child-safe environment possible. We believe when parents are well informed about safety protocols, it greatly assists our constant vigilance of all who have potential access to children. On the back side of this flyer, you will find established zero-tolerance YMCA policies that are regularly communicated with parents. Parents should be regularly encouraged to report any deviation from these policies immediately.

STAFF

The Y of Delaware has more than 4,000 staff members and volunteers working with youth in the many programs we offer. To keep children in our programs safe, we intensively screen potential employees and volunteers by using a detailed application form, comprehensive interview process, reference checks and criminal background checks.

TRAINING

Our employees complete an extensive child abuse prevention training program. Supervisors and managers complete additional training to further promote a child-safe environment. All staff members are mandated to report any suspected child abuse.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or concerns regarding a YMCA staff person or program, please inform the program director, associate executive director or executive director at your location. You can make a confidential report to Ethics Point on our website.



YMCA CHILD SAFETY PROCEDURES

- A child should never be alone with a staff member (but may be separate, if in full view of others).
- Children should not be contacted by YMCA staff except for issues relating directly to currently active YMCA activities (i.e., no letters, email, telephone calls, texts, Facebook, visits, non-YMCA excursions, etc.).
- Children should never receive gifts of any kind from individual Y staff members.
- Children should always be transported in YMCA-identified vehicles (or appropriately identified vendor-operated vehicles), never in a staff member's personal vehicle, and never alone.
- Y staff members should not babysit Y members or program participants. If the babysitting relationship pre-existed the Y relationship, the President of the YMCA of Delaware could make an exception, but a specific acknowledgement should be signed by the parents and the babysitting staff member and retained by the Y.
- Children in child care must sign in and out of programs each day and will only be released to preauthorized individuals.
- Parents who become aware of hazing, bullying, or similar behavior should report the incident to the Y. Such behavior is often the precursor of peer-to-peer abuse and must be addressed.
- Parents should be provided with the names of at least two separate Y individuals whom they may contact if they believe there is an issue of any kind that needs to be addressed.
- Children should be encouraged to discuss their experiences with their parents and identify any behavior or activity that made them uncomfortable. Parents need to be aware that programs like gymnastics and aquatics require some physical contact between adult and child to provide the necessary instruction, coaching, and spotting. A single touch in a normally inappropriate place may not be an inappropriate touch if it occurred while trying to prevent an injury, etc.
- Delaware law requires ALL ADULTS to report cases of suspected abuse to the authorities.

HOW CAN YOU HELP PREVENT CHILD ABUSE?

- Talk to your child about his or her experiences in Y programs, school, sports, and other activities.
- Drop in on your child's programs.
- Trust your instincts. Don't wait to tell us if something seems "strange." Speak up!
- Every once in a while, ask your child these questions:
 - Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
 - Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
 - Has anyone said anything to you that made you feel bad?
 - Is anyone touching you in a way that you don't like?
- Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if anything happens to him or her.
- Watch for warning signs of abuse:
 - Unexplainable bruising or other physical markings
 - Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns
 - Abrupt changes in behavior—anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal, depression
 - Fear of a certain person or place
 - Discomfort with physical contact
 - A child who abuses other children
 - Listen and watch for signs of your child receiving special attention that other children or teens are not receiving, including favors, treats, gifts, rides, increasing affection or time alone, particularly outside the activities of school, child care, or other activities.