

# OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

The YMCA of Greater Boston puts child protection front and center in all that we do, from our intensive screening and selection process, with rigorous interviewing questions and reference checking, to vigilant monitoring and supervision, and continuous training on child abuse prevention. We are committed to the safety of all children in our program and facilities.

The YMCA of Greater Boston serves over 40,000 youth ages 0-18 each year. We provide childhood education programs, afterschool programs, camp, sports programming, swim lesson and child watch at many of our branches and sites. Through our quality programming, we create an atmosphere where children can develop, learn and thrive.



# CHILD SAFETY RESOURCES

For more information on Child Abuse Prevention, visit our website:

[www.ymcaboston.org/childsafety](http://www.ymcaboston.org/childsafety)

## TO REPORT ANY SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE, CONTACT:

- Department of Children & Families
- Child-At-Risk Hotline: (800) 792-5200



## TO LEARN MORE ON CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION:

- Stop It Now!  
[www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org)
- Darkness to Light  
[www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org)
- Children's Defense Fund  
[www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)
- Parents Helping Parents  
[www.parentshelpingparents.org](http://www.parentshelpingparents.org)
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children  
[www.missingkids.org](http://www.missingkids.org)



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# COMMITTED TO CHILD SAFETY

## THE Y IS A SAFE PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



**YMCA OF GREATER BOSTON**  
[ymcaboston.org](http://ymcaboston.org)

# CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

## OUR SCREENING

To keep children safe in our programs, we take the following actions:

- Comprehensive application for all prospective employees and volunteers
- Thorough interview process for all applicants
- Internet searches on all candidates
- Intensive reference checking that includes professional and personal references
- Fingerprinting for all employees and volunteers in licensed child care programs
- Criminal background checks (CORI) for all employees and volunteers
- Sex Offender background checks (SORI) for all employees, volunteers, members and guests

## OUR TRAINING

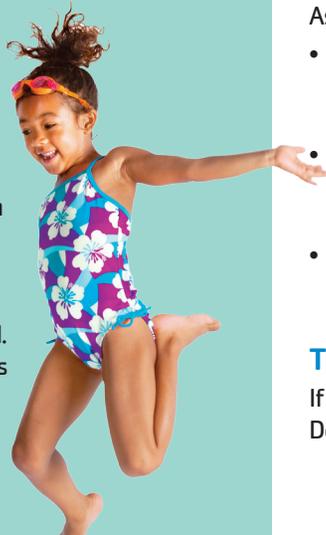
All YMCA of Greater Boston employees complete an extensive series of trainings at hire and annually thereafter on Child Abuse Prevention. Trainings include both in-service and online, and include both prevention and reporting.

## OUR POLICIES

The YMCA of Greater Boston has an extensive Code of Conduct and Child Abuse Protection Policy that all employees and volunteers must read and sign both at time of hire and then annually.

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Suspicion of child abuse can be observed, told or overheard. Massachusetts State law requires professionals whose work brings them in contact with children to notify the Department of Children and Families (DCF) if they suspect that a child is being abused and/or neglected. All YMCA of Greater Boston employees are Mandated Reporters under this law.



# WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT CHILDREN

## TALK WITH YOUR CHILD

Talk with your child about their experience at school, at the Y, and any other places where your child interacts and plays with other youth and adults.

## OBSERVE YOUR CHILD

Watch your child as they participate in activities with other children and adults.

## RECOGNIZE RED FLAGS

Certain behaviors of adults and older children should be seen as a red flag.

- Adults and older children allowing younger children to sit on their lap
- Adults and older children tickling younger children
- Adults and older children who touch children in their bathing suit area
- Adults and older children giving younger children gifts, excessive attention and compliments
- Adults and older children who contact younger children using social media, texting, emailing, etc.
- Adults who are in a one-on-one ratio with a child, when they should be in a group setting
- Adults who neglect or leave children unsupervised

## ENGAGE YOUR CHILD IN CONVERSATION

Ask your child questions such as:

- Has anyone said anything to you that made you feel bad? If they answer yes, 'Can you share with me what they said?'
- Is anyone threatening you or scaring you? If they answer yes, 'What did they say that was so scary?'
- Has anyone asked you to keep a secret? If they answer yes, 'Can you share with me the secret?'

## TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

If something doesn't feel right, ask questions. Don't be afraid to speak up.

# ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can exist in many forms: emotional, physical, sexual and neglect.

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Any chronic and persistent act by an adult that endangers the mental health or emotional development of a child including rejecting, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, constantly criticizing, making mean remarks, insulting, and giving little or no love, guidance or support.

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

An injury or pattern of injuries that happen to a child that is not accidental. These injuries may include beatings, burns, bruises, bites, welts, strangulation, or broken bones.

## SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is the sexual assault or sexual exploitation of children. Sexual abuse may consist of numerous acts over a long period or a single incident. Children can be victimized from infancy through adolescence. Sexual abuse includes rape, incest, sodomy, fondling, exposing oneself, oral corruption, penetration of the genital or anal openings, exposure to sexually graphic materials, as well as forcing children with intimidation, threats, and rewards.

## NEGLECT

Neglect occurs when adults responsible for the well-being of a child fail to provide for or to protect the child. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing, or shelter, failing to keep children clean, lack of supervision, and by withholding medical or other essential care.

## WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

Your child might be displaying warning signs, these can include:

- Abrupt change in behavior: anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal, depression
- Fear of a certain person or place
- Difficulty sleeping
- Change in eating patterns
- Discomfort with physical contact
- Unexplained bruising or other physical markings
- Displays of abuse towards other children