

The YMCA of Greater Seattle commitment to abuse prevention

We want all children and teens to be safe. Unfortunately, child abuse does exist, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.

FACT: Most abuse happens by people that youth know and trust. Abusers can be caretakers, friends, neighbors, activity leaders, parents, relatives and even other youth.

FACT: While rare, every major youth-serving organization in the country has had incidents or allegations of abuse by a staff member, volunteer or program participant.

We take these steps to keep your child safe:

- ✓ We thoroughly screen staff and volunteers, including completing criminal background checks.
- ✓ We train our staff in abuse prevention.
- ✓ We carefully supervise and monitor our programs.
- ✓ We ensure that staff understand their responsibility to report abuse.
- ✓ We teach children about appropriate and inappropriate touching through our personal safety talks.
- ✓ We have policies to limit circumstances in which staff and volunteers are alone with a child or teen where others cannot observe them.
- ✓ We have policies that limit staff contact with children and teens outside of YMCA programs.

We believe that quality programs for youth require open, ongoing communication between families and staff.

It takes everyone's help to stop abuse.

If you have questions or concerns about preventing abuse, contact the YMCA of Greater Seattle risk management director or human resources department, or your branch program director or branch executive.

YMCA of Greater Seattle Risk Management	206-382-5085
Human Resources	206-382-5035
Auburn Valley YMCA	253-833-2770
Bellevue Family YMCA	425-746-9900
Camping Services	206-382-5009
Downtown YMCA	206-382-5000
Downtown Bellevue YMCA	425-637-8375
Fauntleroy YMCA	206-937-1000
Federal Way Norman Center YMCA	253-838-4708
Highline YMCA	206-244-5880
Lake Heights Family YMCA	425-644-8417
Meredith Mathews East Madison YMCA	206-322-6969
Metrocenter YMCA	206-382-5013
Northshore YMCA	425-485-9797
Sammamish YMCA	425-391-4840
Redmond Ridge YMCA	425-746-9900
Shoreline/South County YMCA	206-364-1700
University Family YMCA	206-524-1400
Vashon YMCA	206-463-0550
West Seattle Family YMCA	206-935-6000

YMCA of Greater Seattle
909 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104
206-382-5003 Fax 206-382-7283
www.seattleyymca.org

YMCA Values:
**Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Caring,
Faith and Fun...Everyday!**

*Special thanks and credit to Praesidium, Inc.
a nationally recognized abuse prevention
consulting company.*

Creating a Child Safe Environment

An abuse prevention guide for families



We build strong kids,
strong families,
strong communities.

*Building a community where all people,
especially the young, are encouraged
to develop their fullest potential in
spirit, mind and body.*

Here's how we can work together to keep your child safe

Talk to your child about his or her experiences in YMCA 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!

Watch for warning signs of abuse:

- Unexplainable bruising or other physical markings
- Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns
- Abrupt changes in behavior – anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness or 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 and other activities.

Every once in a while, ask your child or teen 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.

Read our staff Statement for Prevention of

Abuse. If it's not posted at your YMCA, ask to see it. If someone breaks it, let us know immediately.

We encourage youth to tell and get help

Staff have occasional discussions with children and teens about appropriate touching and personal-space limits. These personal safety talks are incorporated into our programs so that youth will learn skills that may help them avoid a potentially abusive situation. We encourage children to tell an adult if someone is bothering them or touching them in a way they don't like. The main message is about respect, one of the YMCA's core values. Children and teens are taught to respect themselves and give respect to others.

The YMCA of Greater Seattle Personal Safety Message

My body belongs to me.

If someone makes me feel uncomfortable, scared or hurt, or touches my private areas, I will yell "STOP" and

GO TELL an adult who listens.

I have a right to be safe.

I deserve respect.

A copy of a sample discussion format is available at your YMCA. If you have any questions or would like to see the discussion materials, please feel free to contact your YMCA program director or the YMCA of Greater Seattle risk management director at 206-382-5085.

Responding to a child or teen who discloses abuse to you

Your child or teen may share a past or current situation of abuse with you. Here is a good way to respond.

Stay calm. Avoid overreacting or expressing shock or outrage.

Listen. Allow him or her to talk freely. Be sensitive to vague disclosures.

Be supportive. Let your child know you believe him or her. Tell your child he or she was right to tell you. Express your love in words and gestures.

Assure your child the abuse was not his or her fault. Avoid questions that could make your child feel responsible, such as "Why didn't you tell me before?"

Reassure your child that you will do everything you can to keep him or her safe.

Steps to take

- ✓ If you think your child is physically injured, seek out appropriate medical attention.
- ✓ If you see signs of distress, withdrawal or acting out, consider counseling for your child.
- ✓ Talk to your YMCA Program Director for assistance.
- ✓ Call Child Protective Services (CPS) or the police to report any abuse.

Local CPS office numbers are:

1-866-END-HARM

Or

1-866-363-4276