

CREATING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The Rye YMCA is a family oriented community service organization which welcomes all people and promotes positive values through program that build spirit, mind, and body.

Parents place their trust in the YMCA to help their children thrive through various youth programming and activities. Our core values of 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.



OUR STAFF

The Rye YMCA has more than 250 staff members and many volunteers working with youth in the various programs we offer.

OUR SCREENING

To keep children in our programs safe we take the following steps in our intensive screening of employees and volunteers:

- Detailed application forms
- Comprehensive interview process
- Reference Checks
- Criminal background checks

OUR TRAINING

Employees complete an extensive child abuse prevention training program prior to their first shift at the Y. This includes three hours of training specifically around child abuse. Supervisors complete additional training to further promote a child safe environment. Staff are then presented with additional child abuse prevention training during their first 30 days of employment in our New Staff Orientation. All staff members are mandated to report any suspected child abuse.

OUR POLICIES

Policies exist to ensure staff and volunteers are not alone with a child. Staff is prohibited from working one on one with youth outside of the YMCA, (i.e. babysitting or tutoring).

Child abusers can be parents, caretakers, friends, neighbors, or anyone who comes in contact with your child- even other youth. It takes everyone's help to stop the cycle of abuse.



INFORMATION ABOUT ABUSE

The Y wants all children to be safe. Unfortunately, child abuse does exist, taking many forms.

Emotional Abuse: Threatening a child or using words that can hurt a child's feelings and self-esteem; withholding love and support from a child.

Physical Abuse: Causing injuries to a child on purpose, such as bruises, burns, scares, or broken bones.

Sexual Abuse: Having sexual contact in any form with a child, including exposing, fondling, intercourse, pornography, or internet solicitation.

Neglect: Not providing children with enough food, clothing, shelter, medical care, hygiene, or supervision.

Warning Signs of Abuse: Unexplained bruising or other physical markings, disturbed sleeping or eating patterns, abrupt changes in behavior- anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal, depression, fear of certain person or place, discomfort with physical contact, a child who abuses other children.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR SAFETY

Talk to your child about his or her experiences in programs, schools, sports, and 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.

Listen and watch for signs of your child receiving special attention that other or teens are not receiving, including favors, treats, gifts, rides, increasing affection or time alone, particularly outside the activities of school, childcare, or other activities.

Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if anything happens to him or her.

Read our staff Code of Conduct. The code is posted at www.ryeymca.org , About us/Contact Us.

IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE...

- 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 child.
- Talk to a YMCA Director for assistance.
- Call Child Protective Services or the police to report any abuse.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Westchester County Child Protective Services, To report child abuse:

Weekdays 9am-4pm (914)995-6054, Weekends/Holidays 4pm-9am (914) 995-2099

NY Sex Offender Information: <http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/nsor/>

NY Department of Justice: <http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us>

Rye YMCA: www.ryeymca.org

If you have any question or concerns regarding a YMCA staff person or program, contact Eileen Barber, Rye YMCA Chief Operating Officer at (914) 967-6363 ext. 100

TIPS FOR PARENTS

These suggested guidelines are based on materials from Praesidium, a company that advises us on how to keep children safe. This information is designed to help you talk to your child in situations where there is a possibility that he or she might reveal information about inappropriate touching. It may be difficult to do but it's important to try to stay calm when you speak with your child. Your demeanor will communicate more than your words. Children can be traumatized by emotional, angry or accusatory reactions.

Things to consider before talking with your child about sensitive subjects:

- Timing and atmosphere are very important. Choose a calm, unhurried, private time to talk with your child.
- Before entering into this type of conversation, be sure you're ready. Be calm, emotionally controlled and confident. You want to communicate to your child that you are open to discussing this topic and that you can handle whatever comes up.
- If this is difficult for you to talk about, practice first with a friend, your spouse or in a mirror.
- Use simple, conversational language, gauged to your child's level of understanding.
- Don't make the talk scary or gloomy. Sexuality and self-protection are issues to discuss with children on a regular basis. Conversations such as this should be a positive learning experience for children so that they feel comfortable talking about their bodies. This also increases the chances that your child will seek your advice in the future. Remember, "If you can't talk about it, you can't protect it."

- If your child shares difficult information, **STAY CALM!** Do not say, "Why didn't you tell me?" Do let the child continue to talk. Say that you are proud that he or she found a way to get help. If you are at all agitated, it may be best to wait until you have a chance to contact a local resource provided to you by the child care center to continue the discussion. Tell your child, "I'm really proud that you've shared this with me, and I think we should continue this discussion when we can get some extra help from a counselor who has helped other children with these things. How does that sound?"



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?

Educate your children from an early

Molesters count on young children not knowing the names of their body parts, rules about their bodies, the meaning of sexual abuse, or what to do if someone abuses them. They search for teens they can manipulate or control or who may be lonely, isolated, or different. Talk to your youth and teens about boundaries and what inappropriate behavior is.

THE Y IS COMMITTED TO KEEPING OUR ENVIRONMENT SAFE SO ALL YOUTH CAN ENJOY OUR PROGRAMS IN A FUN, SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL!