



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

April 20, 2023

Dear Families,

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. As part of our commitment to protecting the children in our community, we're participating in the Five Days of Action - a week-long campaign to increase awareness of child sexual abuse and empower and equip us all to prevent it. By taking part in this important campaign and through implementing abuse prevention practices year-round, the West Suburban YMCA is committing to the safety of all children in our community.

The Know. See. Respond. campaign is back this year, tying in three impact areas – preventing child sexual abuse at both summer camp and in youth sports, and internet safety. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, U.S. Center for SafeSport and Praesidium have shared resources to support this campaign.

#### **Know: Summer Camp**

Knowing about child sexual abuse can help adults better understand what to look for and how to prevent it. As parents, caregivers and trusted adults to the young people in our lives, we play an important role in protecting them from abuse. This requires our commitment to continually learn and then ask questions about the safety of our loved ones.

The Y – and other youth serving organizations – implement a series of measures to keep the kids in their care safe. Next time you enroll your loved one in a new program, ask them about their child protection practices. For this summer, you can use the list on our website at [wsymca.org/youth/resource](https://wsymca.org/youth/resource).

#### **See: Youth Sports**

When we SEE boundaries being crossed or suspect a child is being abused, we can and should act quickly. Sports should be safe places for children to grow, both as people and athletes. As a parent, caregiver, coach, or volunteer, it is up to you to make sure any environment in which children in your care interact is free from abuse. Learn more about the signs and how you can help prevent child sexual abuse in youth sports at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/parents/>.

#### **Respond: Internet Safety**

Did you know that you don't need evidence to report abuse—only reasonable suspicion? But even for adults, reporting abuse is hard. We don't want to falsely accuse someone or get someone in trouble. On the other hand, reporting might be the one thing that saves a child – or children – from abuse. It is our responsibility to RESPOND to any and all disclosure, discovery or suspicion of child sexual abuse.

As adults and children alike have turned to digital tools for school, work and socialization, online safety matters now more than ever. Many online dangers put children at risk, such as cyber bullying, online enticement and more. As an adult, keeping an open line of communication with any children in your care who may access online content can be key to helping prevent sexual abuse. Learn the facts, how you can keep kids safe, and how to respond to online victimization at <https://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz>.

**West Suburban YMCA**  
**617-244-6050 | [www.wsymca.org](http://www.wsymca.org)**  
**276 Church Street, Newton, MA 02458 | 135 Wells Avenue, Newton, MA 02459**

At the West Suburban YMCA, steps are taken to ensure a safe environment for every child who enters the building, enrolls in a program, or attends summer camp. These steps include pre-employment screenings that consist of a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check & Sexual Offender Registry Information (SORI) check, and comprehensive reference checks that include standardized questions for assessing risk for abuse. Once an employee is hired, they complete an extensive Child Abuse Prevention Training Program, which is repeated annually, and are mandated to report any suspected abuse. Policies exist to ensure that staff and volunteers are never alone with a child, and all interaction between staff and child must be observable and interruptible.

The West Suburban YMCA and the YMCA Guardians for Child Protection, with support from YMCA of the USA, Darkness to Light, the Redwoods Group Foundation, and Praesidium have made materials available to help adults learn more about preventing child sexual abuse. Please visit our website at [wsyca.org/childcare/child-protection](http://wsyca.org/childcare/child-protection) for more information.

Protecting children from sexual abuse must be the number one goal of every person who cares about the health and well-being of kids. Together, we can stand up to demand that children are protected and encourage adults to make it happen in our community. It takes all of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Fucci". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jack Fucci  
President & CEO