



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

April 1, 2024

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. The campaign takes place April 15-19. 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, and [Childhelp](#), [Common Sense Media](#) and [Committee for Children](#) have shared resources to support this campaign.

Know

Knowing the facts 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. Learn more about the different types of abuse, the signs and how you can help at childhelpline.org.

See

Media and technology are at the center of children's lives every day. With more of life happening online, what catches their attention isn't always what's best for them. As a parent or caregiver, you may SEE a child interacting with media daily, and you can be equipped with the tools and resources to make sure any environment (including online) is free from any abuse. Learn more at commonsensemedia.org/articles/online-safety.

Respond

How can you respond to the call to help prevent child sexual abuse? As a parent or caregiver, you may know it's important to talk about it, but you may not know what or when to say it. Committee for Children has created the Hot Chocolate Talk campaign, packing decades of research into easy-to-use guides to help you begin these crucial conversations – at any age, from toddler to teen. Visit cfchildren.org/resources/child-abuse-prevention/ to learn more and empower your child to report and refuse 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>.

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.

We take our commitment to child protection seriously and we ask that you do, as well. Check out our protection policy here [wsymca.org/safekids](https://www.wsymca.org/safekids) to learn more about how we keep kids safe at the West Suburban YMCA. Protecting children from sexual abuse must be the top priority 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 stylized with a large, looped "J" and "F".

Jack Fucci
President & CEO
West Suburban YMCA