

COMMITMENT TO YOUTH AND CHILD SAFETY

The West Suburban YMCA serves over 12,500 individuals, with more than 30% under the age of 18. Programs for children include child care, camps, creative arts, sports, fitness and swimming.

We are proud and respectful of the trust parents place in our YMCA. A safe environment for children combined with quality programming is an important part of our focus on youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

Our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility are part of everything we do. We place great value on providing the most child-safe environment possible and creating an atmosphere where children grow and thrive.

CHILD SAFE RESOURCES

For reporting suspected child abuse or neglect in Massachusetts, call the **Department of Children and Family Services' 24-hour DCF Child Protection Hotline** at 1-(800)-792-5200 or local DCF office. Find a directory of the DCF Area Offices at www.mass.gov/dcf.

OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

PARENTAL STRESSLINE

A 24-hour hotline for support & guidance in Massachusetts. 1-800-632-8188

CHILDHELP'S NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

1-800-4-A Child (1-800-422-4453)

NEW HOPE

A 24-hour domestic violence and sexual assault hotline. 1-800-323-4673

MIDDLESEX CHILDREN'S

ADVOCACY CENTER 781-987-8400

WEST SUBURBAN YMCA

276 Church Street
Newton, MA 02458
617-244-6050

wsymca.org



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION & SAFETY



WEST SUBURBAN YMCA
Newton, MA

CREATING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

We take the following steps to keep children in our programs safe:

- » Detailed employment application forms.
- » Comprehensive reference checks that include standardized questions that assess risk for abuse.
- » Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check & Sexual Offender Registry Information (SORI) check.
- » Statement of compliance with the West Suburban YMCA Code of Conduct and Abuse Prevention Policies.
- » All staff complete an extensive Child Abuse Prevention Training Program annually.
- » Supervisors complete additional training to further promote a child safe environment.
- » Staff and volunteers are mandated to report any suspected child abuse.
- » Staff are prohibited from working 1-on-1 with or contacting youth outside of the Y (including babysitting & social networking).
- » Policies exist to ensure staff & volunteers are not alone with a child. All interaction between a staff and child must be observable and interruptible.

Employees who are trained in abuse prevention are more likely to understand their role as protector, to recognize the signs that abuse is occurring, and to report suspicious or inappropriate behaviors. Trained staff members are also less likely to place themselves in situations where they could be falsely accused.

INFORMATION ABOUT ABUSE

We want all children to be safe. Unfortunately child abuse does exist, taking on many forms.

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

Physical: Causing injuries to a child on purpose, such as bruises, burns, scars, broken bones, etc.

Sexual: 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, supervision, etc.



WARNING SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE:

- » Unkempt or malnourished appearance
- » Unexplained bruises, welts, or burns
- » Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns
- » Abrupt changes in behavior, anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, or withdrawal
- » Sexually transmitted diseases and infections
- » Discomfort with physical contact
- » Fear of a certain person or place
- » Fearfulness or depression
- » Abuse of other children

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT ABUSE?

- » TALK regularly 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.
- » Learn to recognize and WATCH for warning signs of abuse.
- » LISTEN & WATCH for signs of your child receiving special attention that other children or teens are not receiving.
- » Periodically ASK your child these questions:
 - Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
 - Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
 - Has anyone said anything to make you feel bad?
 - Is anyone touching you in a way you do not like?
- » EDUCATE your child about self-protection, including information about strangers and good and bad touches.
- » LEARN to control the stress level of yourself and family members.
- » COMMUNICATE with your child and really listen to their concerns.
- » RECOGNIZE the fact that most abuse happens by people that children know and trust.
- » BECOME AWARE of your community resources.
- » KNOW where your children are and who their friends are.
- » TEACH your children it's not okay to keep secrets from you; that they can always tell you the truth.