



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CHILD SAFETY AT THE YMCA

Abuse Prevention at the YMCA:

- Every employee at the Missoula YMCA is interviewed, reference checked, and must pass a background check before working here. All YMCA staff members are required to complete training about preventing child sexual abuse, and every YMCA staff member is a mandatory reporter of suspected child abuse.
- All Y staff who work with children sign a code of conduct and are taught very specific rules about bathrooms, locker rooms, appropriate touch, relationships with children outside the Y, and electronic communication.
- Y staff members are never permitted to be alone with a single child.
- Y programs set ratios for number of employees/volunteers to youth to ensure safety.
- If staff observes a rule violation by another staff member, we ask them to report it immediately so that staff member may be retrained, and supervisors can intervene before abuse occurs. Rule breaking can be the first step toward abuse, and requiring strict adherence to rules prevents child sexual abuse from occurring.
- To prevent peer-to-peer abuse, we do not allow alone time between campers or inappropriate touch such as tickling or lap sitting. Our staff is trained to be aware of blind spots, such as bus seats, tube slides, play structures, bathrooms or locker rooms. We teach staff to know their kiddos and to be aware of changes in dynamics or behaviors between children.

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- To prevent adult to child abuse, again, we have zero tolerance of inappropriate touching. The Y permits side hugs, pats on the shoulder or back, high fives or knuckle touches and handshakes. Young children are allowed to hold hands when being escorted from one place to another. Staff and children must always stay within a line of sight of other staff and campers. There should be no favoritism, excessive flattery or gift giving. We do not permit outside contact between staff and youth such as babysitting, social media connections, emails or texts without a parent or guardian in the conversation.

Did You Know...?

- Most abusers are known to the children they abuse. Abuse can be peer-to-peer, or adult to child.
- Peer-to-peer abuse often happens when there is a power imbalance between children, such as age, strength or popularity. It might be an extension of bullying, and can start as aggressive or unwanted contact. It happens most during unstructured time, and in plain sight during bus transport, under water, under a shared blanket or towel or in locker rooms or bathrooms.
- One in four girls and one in six boys will experience some type of sexual abuse before they turn 18—that's 10% of school children in our country.

Visit preventabuse.com for more abuse prevention resources.