

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURES and POLICIES

A foundational commitment of the Y is to provide a healthy atmosphere for the growth and development of children. Thus, child abuse in any form is a primary concern to the Y. Child abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of a child resulting in injury or harm.

- Any staff or volunteer who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child participating in one of our programs has been abused or neglected, or having reason to suspect that a child has been threatened with injury and that abuse will occur, must report to the proper authorities.
- Volunteers are trained to recognize, prevent, and report child abuse.
- Under no circumstances should a staff/volunteer member interrogate the child or cause them to feel responsible for the abuse/neglect. The staff/volunteer person's responsibility is to report and cooperate with the agency's investigation.
- Confidentiality is of utmost importance.
- Parents/guardians or children involved in the case should not be contacted by a YMCA staff/volunteer person.

Oklahoma Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-522-3511

In order to avoid allegations regarding child abuse, the following policies must be adhered to:

- Staff/ Volunteers will not use verbal or emotional abuse when disciplining.
- Staff/ Volunteers will not discipline by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care such as food or shelter.
- Staff/ Volunteers should at no time be alone with a single child unobserved by other Staff/ Volunteers.
- Staff/ Volunteers to child contact should be on the hand, shoulder, or upper back. Staff and volunteers will respect children's rights not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable and will understand that touch should be done only in view of others.
- Staff/ Volunteers shall be alert to the physical and emotional state of children each time they report for a program.
- Staff/ Volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection toward others in the presence of children, parents, and staff.
- Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life in the presence of children and/or parents is prohibited.
- Contact should never be against a child's will (unless in the case of clear and present danger of the child).
- Contact should never be against a child's discomfort, whether expressed verbally or non-verbally.
- Contact should never be used when it would have the effect of over-stimulating the child.
- Contact should never take place in a place on a child's body that is normally covered by a bathing suit, unless for a clear medical necessity, and then only with supervision from another adult.

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs • Pats on the shoulder or back • Handshakes • High-fives and hand slapping • Verbal praise • Pats on the head when culturally appropriate • Touching hands, shoulders, and arms • Arms around shoulders • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Showing affection in isolated area • Lap sitting • Wrestling • Piggyback rides • Tickling • Allowing a youth to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg • Any type of massage given by or to a youth • Any form of affection that is unwanted • Compliments relating to physique or body development • Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas
<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youth in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers • Secrets • Cursing • Off-color or sexual jokes • Shaming or Belittling • Derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth • Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family