



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Putnam County Family YMCA Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Practices for ALL Staff and Volunteers

GENERAL STATEMENT

At the Putnam County Family YMCA, protecting children and the prevention of child abuse is our first priority. The YMCA understands that child abuse and inappropriate contact with children is a pervasive problem throughout the United States that must be managed in a pro-active manner. The safety and protection of the children in our care remain our number one priority. The YMCA's leadership have enacted the following plan to manage and monitor our programs in order to minimize the potential for abuse to occur. Should any allegation arise, the YMCA will pro-actively work with the authorities and all parties involved to respond in a prompt, thorough and empathetic manner.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

The Putnam County Family YMCA maintains a zero tolerance toward child abuse and child endangerment.

STAFF and VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

Background Checks: All staff and volunteers are required to go through background checks prior to any assignments. Staff and volunteers are required to go through new checks in the following cases:

- Returning back to the Y after a 6 month break
- On an annual basis

Code of Conduct: Staff will sign and date the Putnam County Family YMCA Code of Conduct prior to performing any duties.

Electronic Communications: As an organization that holds personal character in the highest regard, the YMCA is obligated to take actions to preserve the core values of the institution. As such, the YMCA may terminate staff or volunteers for inappropriate actions including electronic communication that is contrary to the YMCA's mission and may be detrimental to its community. Staff and volunteers may be held personally liable for any actions and commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, or libelous, whether pertaining to the YMCA, individuals, or any other company.

Child Abuse Prevention Training: All staff and volunteers will complete the introductory child abuse prevention training within the first pay period of employment for staff and prior to volunteer assignments. Failure to comply will result in suspension of duties, which may lead to termination. All staff and volunteers will undergo a review of the training on an annual basis. Upon hire, camp staff will go through training prior to the start of camp or their first day of employment if camp is already in session.

STAFF and VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS (continued)

Violations of Code of Conduct or questionable behavior: Keeping children safe in the YMCA is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers. YMCA staff and/or volunteers are to report to their supervisor any questionable behavior they see or violations of the Code of Conduct. Staff and volunteers are to report any indications of or warning signs concerning abuse involving a child.

Child Supervision: At no time should YMCA staff or volunteers be in a situation where they are alone with a child and cannot be observed by others. The YMCA will make every attempt to design and structure its programs to eliminate the potential for a staff member or volunteer to be in a one-on-one situation. YMCA staff members or volunteers are not to have children enter closets or storage areas to retrieve equipment.

Physical Contact: Appropriate physical contact is important in the emotional development of all children and children at different developmental levels will need differing degrees of physical contact. Therefore, YMCA staff members and/or volunteers should not perform frontal hugs of children – hugs should be from the side. The staff member and/or volunteer should get down to the child's physical level when possible. YMCA staff or volunteers should not touch children in any body location that would be covered by a bathing suit. Staff members or volunteers should not pick-up school-aged children (to reduce potential for both abuse allegations and physical injury) and should not allow children to sit on their laps.

Babysitting and outside contact: YMCA staff or volunteers shall not provide care (babysit) or instruction or develop/maintain relationships with any children or families they meet through YMCA programs. If the staff member or volunteer has a pre-existing relationship with a child coming into a program, this must be disclosed to the Executive Director immediately. YMCA staff or volunteers may not have contact, beyond incidental, with children they meet in YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes but is not limited to:

- Extra practices, coaching, or tutoring
- Transportation in a non-YMCA vehicle
- Private special events such as movies, sporting events, or any other similar excursions
- Visits to any residence

Diapering policy: When diapering a child, staff or volunteers will have another staff/volunteer member in the room and be in a visible area of the room. When assisting a young child with bathroom duties, staff/volunteer members will not close doors to the bathroom or stall so they can be observed.

Supervision standards: All children who are registered into programs will be supervised by YMCA staff/volunteers at all times. This includes bathrooms, locker rooms and changing areas during day camp or after school. At no time should one staff/volunteer member have direct care of a single child. If a staff/volunteer member becomes alone with a child, s/he should promptly move to a location where s/he can be observed by other YMCA staff/volunteer members.

Bathroom/locker room policy: Children who are participating in YMCA programs are not to be sent to bathrooms/locker rooms without a YMCA staff/volunteer member present. The buddy system or three children together are not acceptable practices and are not permitted at the YMCA. For single stall bathrooms, the YMCA staff/volunteer will be positioned outside of the bathroom to make sure no one else enters the restroom. When multiple children are in the bathroom or locker room, YMCA staff/volunteer members will be standing in the doorway and locker room area supervising children. Protocols that address the variety of unusual circumstances possible during outdoor or off-site activities shall be established and made part of that program/activity's operating guidelines.

Child ratio expectations: The YMCA has enacted to meet or exceed all State of Tennessee Child Care ratios. The YMCA has established ratios as minimums, not goals to achieve. Certain programs and activities may require more stringent ratios. Ratios alone do not equate to effective supervision, but if established ratios cannot be maintained the activity will be changed or additional staff/volunteer members added.

Off-site activities: The risks to children change when they are off-site. In order to protect them from predators who may be at field trip locations the following standards will be enacted:

- The ratio of students to staff/volunteers will be strengthened when programs go off-site. The appropriate ratio will be determined based on age of the children and the field trip activity and location.
- Staff/volunteers will check all bathrooms immediately prior to use by the children and will be in the restroom (if not single stall) when being used by a child.
- Children's changing of clothes should take place prior to leaving the YMCA facility and if possible should wait until the group has returned to minimize the use of changing facilities in public locations.
- Picking up of children while on field trips should only be allowed if prearranged and recipient should be required to show proof of ID and sign a receipt for the child.

Member expectations around children: Staff/Volunteers should be aware that members are expected to use appropriate language and act in a positive manner. Members, who talk in a sexual manner, perform sexual gestures, sexual acts, or attempt inappropriate contact with a child will have their membership suspended or terminated depending on the degree of the offense. The police may be contacted, if warranted. No use of cameras or cell phones is allowed by members in the locker room areas.

Parent/child education: Parents and children participating in camp, after school, teen programs, and childcare are to be informed of the policies staff/volunteers have agreed to follow regarding physical contact, gift giving and outside contact.

RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION

Reporting suspicious behavior to a supervisor: All staff/volunteer members have received specific training concerning the requirement to report violations of YMCA policies immediately to their supervisor. If the supervisor does not effectively respond, the staff/volunteer members have been trained to notify the next level supervisor. All YMCA staff/volunteers are expected to observe other staff and/or volunteer members' behaviors, including that of supervisors, and to report any suspicions to an appropriate supervisor.

Mandated reporter: All YMCA staff and volunteer members are mandated reporters with regard to child abuse. Any evidence of potential child abuse or observation of inappropriate contact by a parent, staff or volunteer member or other child will be reported to the State of Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline at 877-237-0004.

Suspension of staff, volunteer or youthful offender: Any YMCA staff or volunteer member who is alleged to have abused a child will be suspended pending further determination by the YMCA. Staff suspension will be with pay. If the allegation is substantiated, the staff or volunteer member will be terminated. If the allegations are against a program participant, s/he will be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation. Depending on the severity of the incident the participant may be terminated from the program.

Incident investigation: The YMCA will perform an investigation following any allegation of child abuse by a staff member, volunteer, participant or member.

Working with the media: The YMCA has a media/communication plan, which is managed through the CEO. All media inquiries should be forwarded to the CEO, who will determine the media statement to be given.

YMCA of the USA: As soon as is practical, or no later than immediately after the initial investigation, the CEO will contact YMCA of USA to apprise them of the situation and next steps in the investigation.

Counseling: The YMCA will engage the consulting services of the Y's Employee Assistance Provider for staff and/or affected children should an event occur.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any time a YMCA staff member or volunteer observes an act of child abuse, he/she is mandated to report such acts to the State of TN at 877-237-0004. If a YMCA staff member or volunteer notices any indicators (as listed in the chart below) or learns of a violation of the YMCA's policies the following procedures must be followed:

Responsibilities of the Staff Member or Volunteer when reporting suspected abuse:

1. Immediately following the observation or accusation, assess the child's current condition and assure safety.
2. Report all information to the supervisor immediately. If the supervisor is not available, contact CEO.
3. The appropriate action will be taken based upon the information disclosed. Should the nature of the disclosure be abuse against a child, staff and/or volunteers are considered mandated reporters in TN and required to report such acts.
4. The staff/volunteer member and a member of management will file a report to the State of Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline at 877-237-0004.
5. The staff and/or volunteer will need to provide a written statement of all facts.
6. Professionalism and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Responsibilities of the Supervisor:

1. The Supervisor should immediately inform the CEO.
2. If the accused is a co-worker or volunteer, immediately inform Human Resources. The Supervisor and CEO with consultation from Human Resources will suspend the accused employee, with pay, immediately. An accused volunteer will also be suspended immediately.
3. The Supervisor will assist in getting all facts appropriately documented for the CEO.
4. Professionalism and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Responsibilities of the Executive Director:

1. The CEO will lead the investigation.
2. The CEO will ensure that all appropriate agencies such as the Police, etc. are notified.
3. The CEO will communicate the situation to the parents or legal guardian of the child(ren) involved.
4. The CEO will collect all written statements from all parties involved by the close of the day the incident was reported.

Media Requests:

All staff and/or volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of information and therefore, should only discuss an incident with the persons involved. Any media inquiries are to be reported to the CEO at the Putnam County Family YMCA at 931-528-1133.

Definition of Child Abuse (The following is the legal definition of Child Abuse.):

Child Abuse is damage to a child for which there is no "reasonable" explanation. Child Abuse includes non-accidental physical injury, neglect, sexual molestation and emotional abuse.

PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

TYPES OF ABUSE	PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS
Physical Abuse	<p>Unexplained Bruises and Welts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anywhere on the body, head or face • on torso, back, buttocks, thighs • in various stages of healing • clustered, forming regular patterns • reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle) • on several different surface areas • regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation <p>Unexplained Burns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks • immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia) • patterned like electric burner, iron, etc. • rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso <p>Unexplained Fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to skull, nose facial structure • in various stages of healing • multiple of spiral fractures <p>Unexplained Lacerations or Abrasions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to mouth, lips, gums and eyes • to external genitalia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wary of adult contacts • Apprehensive when other children cry • Behavioral Extremes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aggressiveness 2. Withdrawal • Frightened of parents • Afraid to go home • Reports injury by parents
Physical Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress, consistent lack of supervision (especially in dangerous activities or for long periods) • Consistent fatigue or listlessness • Unattended physical problems or medical needs • Abandonment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begging, stealing food • Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure) • Constantly falling asleep in class • Alcohol or drug abuse • Delinquency (e.g. thefts) • States there is no caregiver
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in walking or sitting • Torn, stained or bloody underclothing • Pain or itching in genital area • Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas • Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens • Pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwilling to change for gym or participate in PE • Withdrawal, fantasy of infantile behavior • Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge • Poor peer relationships • Delinquent or runaway • Reports sexual assault by caregiver
Emotional Maltreatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.) • Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive, etc.) • Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, speech disorders, inhibition of play) • Psychoneurotic reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior Extremes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compliant, passive 2. Aggressive, demanding • Overly adoptive behavior: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inappropriately adult 2. Inappropriately infant • Developmental lags (physical, mental, emotional) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attempted suicide