



Our commitment – a child safe environment

Our organization is committed to keeping children safe in our community. This means educating ourselves and our community about child abuse and how we can work together to prevent it. Please read this document, ask us questions, and learn more about what you can do to protect children from abuse.

Information about Child Abuse

Child abusers can be parents, caretakers, friends, neighbors, or anyone who comes in contact with your child, even other youth. It takes everyone's help to stop the cycle of abuse. Below are the 4 types of child abuse that are recognized by most states:

- **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, or broken bones.
- **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, or supervision.

Child abuse can happen between an adult to a child, or from one child to another (peer to peer abuse).

Child Safe Policy

OUR STAFF

Ocean Community YMCA has more than 300 staff members and volunteers working with youth in the many programs we offer.

OUR SCREENING

To keep children in our programs safe we take the following steps in our intensive screening of employees and volunteers:

- Detailed application forms
- Comprehensive interview process
- Reference checks

- Criminal background record checks and fingerprinting
- Internet searches

OUR TRAINING

Employees complete an extensive child abuse prevention training program. Supervisors and managers complete additional training to further promote a child safe environment. All staff members are mandated to report any suspected child abuse.

OUR POLICIES

Staff is prohibited from working one on one with youth, they cannot contact youth outside of our Y, and we have many other rules our staff must follow. Policies exist to ensure staff and volunteers are not alone with a child and are treating a child correctly. If you observe a member of our staff violating any policies please alert us.

Working together for safety

Whether your child is attending one of our programs, or any youth program, we suggest having open and honest discussions with your child on a routine basis about his or her experiences.

Talk to your child about this or her experiences in our programs, school, sports, and other activities.

Drop in your child's programs.

Trust your instincts. Don't wait to tell a supervisor if something seems "strange." Speak up.

Watch for warning signs of abuse:

- Unexplained bruising or other physical markings
- Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns
- Abrupt changes in behavior-anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal, depression.
- Fear of certain person or place.
- Discomfort with physical contact.

Listen and watch for signs of your child receiving special attention that other children or teens are not receiving, including favors, treats, gifts, rides, increasing affection or time alone, particularly outside the activities of school, child care, or other activities.

Every once in a while, ask your child these questions:

- Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
- Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
- Has anyone said anything to you that made you feel bad?

- Is anyone touching you in a way that you don't like or you are not sure about?

Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if anything happens to him or her.

If you suspect abuse...

- Report this to the local Child Protective Services (in RI it's Department of Children, Youth, and Family DCYF) or local law enforcement.
- If you think your child has been physically injured, seek medical attention.

If you have questions or concerns regarding a member of our staff, please contact us immediately.

If you are not comfortable sharing this information directly with us, please make a report to one of the resources below.

National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453

DCYF (RI): 1-800-742-4453

CPS (CT): 1-800-842-2288

**Ocean Community YMCA: Vice President of Operations, John Reilly, 401-340-1011 OR
President/CEO, Maureen Fitzgerald, 401-340-1011**