



2022 YMCA Day Camp PARENT HANDBOOK



YMCA Mission: To put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Everyone is welcome.

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MISSION

The Y mission is to put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Everyone is welcome.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

No one does camp like the Y! Offered at locations all around the Houston area, our camps place special emphasis on youth choice, achievement and a sense of belonging. We are confident that we have the right camp for your child. Y Summer Camp provides youth ages 5-15 (specific ages vary by location) with supervised activities designed to teach core values, conflict resolution and leadership skills. Campers have fun while making new friends, building self-confidence, appreciating teamwork and growing in self-reliance. The campers are placed into their respective age groups and taken through activities that are geared for their developmental level. Throughout the greater Houston area the YMCA has three types of day camps available.

- **Discovery Camp**- Discovery camps are for those who are seeking passions through small groups in the safe environment of your local YMCA center. Campers will discover unexpected fun.
- **Wonder Camp**- Wonder camps bring summer camp to the next level, offering uniquely scheduled themed weeks involving both indoor and outdoor exploratory activities.
- **Adventure Camp**- Adventure camps allow an opportunity to leave ordinary at the door through an on-site quest for exploration and personal growth. Regionally located, these camps offer a wide-array of predominantly outdoor activities.
- **Explore Camps**- Explore camps approaches opportunities to work with families in the communities we serve with holistic and collaborative intention are offered within various communities across the Greater Houston Region. Activities include: STEM Activities, Sports & Outdoor Games, Nature Exploration and Water Safety Training.
- **Academic Academy**- Academic Academy is designed to support students to achieve their full academic potential. Young people ages 5-11 are engaged in reading and mathematics with support from academic instructors each morning and have the opportunity to select enrichment programs every afternoon that provide hands-on activities. Activities includes: Literacy, Math, Mindfulness, Enrichment Clubs, Water Safety and Field Trips.

Even the rain will not stop the fun at Y Summer Camp. Our staff members are prepared for rainy days with many backup plan options including songs, skits, games and additional activities.

Our caring and competent staff offer positive reinforcement, safe surroundings, Christian values (caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith), fun and laughter, which in turn help bring these characteristics out in our campers. Our staff are trained on the Y KIDS first culture!

HOURS, DAYS AND MONTHS OF OPERATION

Y Summer Camp is offered during the day, Monday through Friday, from the end of the school year in May/June to the beginning of the new school year in August. Hours vary from camp to camp, but typical

hours are 6:30 or 7 am to 6 or 6:30 pm.

Y STAFF TRAINING AND RATIOS

The Y believes that staff training is essential to providing quality programs. All of our staff are required to attend 40 hours of training before working at camp. Their training hours are spent on CPR, first aid, character development, age-appropriate activities, bullying prevention, child abuse awareness and a variety of other topics to ensure your children have a safe and fun experience at camp.

All potential employees are required to pass a drug test, criminal background screening and FBI background check which includes fingerprinting at our child care licensed camps. Y staff members are not permitted to have outside contact with children enrolled in our camp program. Please do not ask staff to babysit, drop off or pick up your child.

ACTIVITIES OFFERED

The campers are placed into their respective age groups and taken through activities that are geared for their development level. At certain points during the day, campers are brought together for House activities, songs and/or special events.

A typical camp day includes:

- Arrival
- Opening Ceremonies or group activity
- Morning rotations of camp activities
- Lunch
- Literacy
- Afternoon rotations of camp activities
- Closing activity
- Departure

OUTSIDE PLAY

Outdoor play will be in staggered shifts. If multiple groups are outside at the same time, they should have a minimum of six feet of open space between outdoor play areas or visit these areas in shifts so that they are not congregating. Afterwards hand washing will be done immediately after outdoor play time. Usage of play structures and jungle gyms are prohibited during outdoor play.

Camp rotations include opportunities for campers to learn, play and explore. Our focus on academic achievement consists of a fun and educational blend of literacy activities such as Camp Readers and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) activities to help campers learn to love nature and the way things work. Of course camp would not be complete without a healthy living emphasis in traditional camp activities of group games and sports, archery, hiking, and arts and crafts.

Water breaks and hand washing are provided during rotations and group transitions between rotations.

As part of a national effort to help combat childhood obesity, the YMCA of Greater Houston will limit the use of television, movies, digital devices and computers to no more than one hour per day and for educational purposes only.

Many children throughout our community lack access to the educational opportunities they need to succeed. Summer is a particularly critical time because children can lose two or more months of academic skills when not engaged in structured learning over their summer break. This phenomenon, known as summer learning loss, is most acute among high-needs students in under-resourced communities. The YMCA is helping to prevent this summer slide by providing enriching summer programs that build skills in math, science and literacy in fun and interactive ways.

Daily camper needs:

- Healthy snacks/lunch
- Labeled Water bottle (must have)
- Face mask (optional)
- Towel
- Spray sunscreen (staff do not directly apply to campers)
- Comfortable play clothes
- Bug spray (staff do not directly apply to campers)
- Cap/visor
- Closed-toe/closed-heel athletic shoes
- Good attitude

Campers do not need:

- Cell phone
- Makeup
- Electronic device
- iPods, iPads, tablets or Mp3 players
- Toys/stuffed animals
- Money
- Weapons
- Trading cards
- Jewelry

All necessary personal items that come to camp should be clearly labeled with the camper's name. Items that are lost will be placed in a lost-and-found area. Due to our limited storage space, if items are not claimed by the end of the camp session, they will be donated to local charities. Please remember we are not responsible for lost, misplaced or stolen items.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Throughout the summer, Camps will plan different events to add something special to your camper's experience. Special activities may include programs, treasure hunts, talent shows, speakers and virtual field trips. These will take place during the regular camp day and give your camper the total experience of Summer Camp.

Our Adventure Camps are going through a revolution to become a destination experience for campers around the city. To develop this experience we are focusing our efforts on enhancing the on-site program for the campers. This will mean there are no field trips at Outdoor Adventure Camp.

Additional waivers may be required to participate in certain activities.

Bussing

Any youth who rides transportation shall adhere to the mask wearing policy of the transportation and filed trip vendor.

Youth are required to adhere to the following safety protocols:

- Observe all usual program safety and field trip rules.
- Comply with seating assignments made by the driver and / or YMCA staff member.
- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, arms and personal belongings out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus.
- Be seated while the bus is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts when riding a bus that is equipped with seatbelts.
- Wait for the driver's and / or YMCA staff members signal upon leaving the bus and before crossing in front of the bus.
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the bus. Misconduct will be addressed in accordance with the Discipline and Guidance Procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook; the privilege to ride in a district vehicle, including a school bus, may be suspended or revoked.

CAMPER BELONGING

Campers should be dressed for active indoor and outdoor play. All campers must wear athletic shoes (no open-toed or open-heeled shoes), pants/shorts and a shirt. All clothing must be appropriate for camp activities. A change of clothes is recommended. Parents will supply their camper with insect repellent and/or sunscreen if necessary. YMCA staff will not purchase, provide or apply insect repellent and sunscreen on campers. Items brought to the program by your camper must be labeled and we expect campers to be responsible for their personal belongings. Please leave toys, money, video games and players, iPods or devices and cell phones at home. The Y cannot credit or compensate for lost, damaged or stolen items.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Nutrition and healthy eating is an important part of a successful Day Camp Program. Some centers will require campers to bring all of their own meals, snacks and water. We ask that campers not bring fried foods and foods high in sugar and saturated fats, such as chips, cookies, gummies, fried chicken nuggets, etc. In addition, we request that no outside food be brought into camp from local restaurants. We are unable to provide accommodation for meals that require refrigeration or heating/cooking.

All meals provided by the Y comply with USDA program guidelines. Weekly food menus are posted on parent boards or at the parent table to review. Check with your local camp regarding meals and snacks.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

All enrollment is completed electronically at ymcahouston.org/camps. Registration fees must be paid at the time of enrollment. Please allow time to complete your registration in one sitting as it will time out after 30 minutes.

The following items are needed to enroll:

- Name, address, and phone number
- Your child's shot record
- Your child's school ID or lunch ID
- Emergency contact information included address for someone other than yourself (not parent or guardian)
- Contact information for others authorized to pick up including Driver's License or government issued ID
- Payment information
- Registration fee
- Insurance information
- Doctor and Hospital information

If special accommodations are needed, a meeting must be conducted prior to the camper attending the program. Please contact the Program Director to set up a meeting with you and your camper.

BILLING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

To avoid late fees, sessions must be paid in FULL by the Wednesday prior to the start of each session. No refunds or credits will be issued to anyone withdrawing once the session has started.

To ensure a spot for your child, you must schedule your weekly payments for auto-draft.

Cancellations/program withdrawals

Cancellations must be made in writing and dropped off in person five days prior to the first day of that session. (A minimum of one week in advance). Registration fees are non-refundable. In the event of program cancellations due to inclement weather or facility issues that prohibit children from attending school, the YMCA recognizes three days of care as a full week of service. Based on this balance billing, accounts will be credited for a maximum of 3 days in any full week of cancellation.

Late Pick-up

Please call the camp site lead if an unexpected emergency will cause you to be late picking up your child. There is a \$1 a minute charge for campers not pick up by the program's closing time. In the event that camper has not been picked up within one hour of the stated closing time, Y staff members will call Children's Protective Services. In the event that a child is repeatedly left pas the closing hour, the Y reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment in the program.

Receipt Request

When making payments, you are able to print a copy of receipt through your online account. Please retain all receipts and canceled checks for your records. The Y Tax ID number is 74-1109737.

ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE AND RELEASE PROCEDURES

Parents/guardians must sign their camper in and out each day. Your camper will only be released to the persons listed on the emergency or authorized pick-up section of the enrollment form. This person will be requested to show proper identification (Driver's License or government issued photo ID). Please bring your ID to the camp site. Only those designated on our enrollment form will be allowed to modify your information. All changes must be made with the program director in writing.

If you indicate on your child's enrollment form that he/she may be released to a sibling under the age of 18, the sibling must be listed as an authorized person to pick up your child on the child's enrollment form.

If a parent/guardian is not allowed to pick up a child, the YMCA must have a copy of the court order signed by a judge. Without this documentation, we are obligated to release a child to either parent/guardian, if both are listed on the enrollment paperwork. The Y will only follow what the court order states. In the unfortunate event of a difficult/dangerous custody situation where a court order is in place, please contact the Senior Program Director to set up guidelines regarding the release of your child. You must have a copy of any court documents regarding the restriction of release of children in our care. Parents are responsible for resolving any issues that may arise from their child's participation in our programs. The YMCA will not get involved in disputes between parents.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE PROCEDURES

Self-management skills and positive social interactions among campers and adults are encouraged and maximize everyone's enjoyment of camp. Programs use positive guidance methods including reminders, distraction, logical consequences and redirection.

Self-management skills are taught according to the following guidelines:

- Consistent rules are clearly stated. Campers are expected to work and play within known limits.
- Behavior expected of campers is age-appropriate and according to development level.
- An atmosphere of trust is established in order for campers to know that they will not be hurt nor allowed to hurt others.
- Staff members strive to help campers become acquainted with themselves and their feelings. This will help them learn to cope with their feelings and control them responsibly.

Camper safety is the most important concern of the program; therefore, campers whose behavior is dangerous or repeatedly disruptive must be immediately picked up from the program by someone designated through the departure and release procedures. Repeatedly disruptive or dangerous behavior will be discussed with the camper's parent and may result in suspension or termination from the program.

CONDUCT POLICIES

As in any activity, inappropriate behavior of a few campers can have a dramatic impact on the experience of the entire group. Therefore, the following conduct policies apply directly to each individual camper and will be used in determining the camper's eligibility to continue as a participant in the camp program. Please make certain that both you and your child are completely familiar with these conduct policies.

A camper may be suspended or released from camp, without refund, for the following behavior while participating in the program or while being transported:

- Leaving the YMCA camp location without permission or going into unauthorized areas
- Using foul language, fighting, being rude or discourteous to staff and other campers
- Verbal or written threats to staff or other campers
- Defacing Y or school property or field facilities or any property visited such as church, park or special event location
- Engaging in fighting, intentionally injuring another camper or bullying
- Bringing or using any illegal substances and/or weapons

- Public displays of affection
- Stealing or defacing another camper's property
- Refusing to remain with the group while at camp and during outings, such as running away from group or designated areas
- Refusing to follow check-in and -out procedures or refusing to follow basic rules of safety
- Refusing to participate in daily camp activities
- Not remaining seated at all times while being transported
- Not keeping seat belt fastened while being transported on a bus with seat belts. Having any body part out of the window, defacing the vehicle and/or being rude and discourteous to the driver or to other drivers on the road while being transported.

Disciplinary procedure- the severity of the incident may result in immediate suspension or removal from the program

First Incident- Parent is notified by the Director and the child is redirected

Second Incident- Camper will receive a written warning that may lead to a suspension

Third Incident/Gross violation- The action taken is at the discretion of the Senior Program Director and Executive Director of Summer Programs, after appropriate consultation with the parent. This may result in suspension or termination of care. The YMCA considers behaviors such as hitting staff or other campers, damaging Y property or supplies and running away from the program to be gross violation.

HEALTH/SAFETY GUIDELINES, ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION

The YMCA of Greater Houston does not require child care staff to receive any additional immunizations in order to work with children. In order to ensure the health and safety of all, employees who work directly with children will follow required procedures to prevent the spread of exposure to disease:

- Wearing gloves when handling or cleaning body fluids, such as wiping noses, mouths, or tending sores
- Specifying that an employee with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits hand- washing, such as casts, bandages, or braces, must not prepare food or have close contact with children in care
- Removing gloves and washing hands immediately after each task to prevent cross- contamination to other children
- Excluding the employee from direct care when the employee has signs of illness

All campers must have been examined within the past year by a licensed physician and must be mentally and emotionally able to participate in the program activities. Immunization information is required at the time of enrollment. Campers with food allergies are required to have an emergency plan in place. The camper's health care professional and parent must sign and date the plan. The plan should include: allergy, cause, severity and treatment.

General Health Practices

- Campers with colds or illness will not be admitted. Please do not put us in the position of refusing your child.
- Campers with head lice will not be allowed to attend camp. Our camp follows the same guidelines

as the public school system.

- All campers are required by the Texas Department of Health and Texas Health and Human Services to have current immunization record information on file. Campers age 4 are required to have a physical examination from a doctor on file. Please let us know immediately if your child has a communicable illness or infection. This will allow us to notify the parents of children attending our program. Campers with communicable conditions may not return to camp without a note from their physician.
- Prescription medications will not be administered unless a Medication Authorization Form has been filled out. All medication must be in the original container and a medication form must be completed. Over-the-counter medication will ONLY be administered if a doctor orders for the medication to be given. Medication will be administered during lunch.
- No camper may attend the program barefoot. All campers must wear closed-toe and closed-heel shoes at all times. Flip-flops and sandals are not safe in a camp environment. Campers will be sent home if this policy is not followed.
- Staff will not be permitted to transport any camper.
- Anyone working with children is required by law to report any suspected child abuse. This includes physical, sexual, emotional, mental abuse and neglect.
- Staff are not permitted to babysit or participate in non-Y organized activities with participants in the program.

ILL Campers

If a camper develops symptoms of a fever of 100.4 while in the program, the following will take place:

- Camper will be separated immediately from the group.
- Parent will be called to be picked up camper immediately.
Cleaning guidelines will be followed immediately in the area the camper was.
- Communication for Covid19 exposure the Communication department will notify families via email.

IF CHILDREN, STAFF, OR PARENTS DEVELOP COVID-19 OR SYMPTOMS

Staff or youth with symptoms should be excluded from childcare facilities and stay away from others. Youth with household members who are known to have COVID-19 should also be excluded from the childcare facility.

If a youth or staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at the facility, immediately separate the person from the well people until the ill person can leave the facility. If symptoms persist or worsen, they should call their health care provider for further guidance. Advise the employee or child's parent or caregiver to inform the facility immediately if the person is diagnosed with COVID-19.

If a child or employee tests positive for COVID-19, you should contact the local health jurisdiction to identify the close contacts who will need to quarantine. It is likely that all members of the infected child's or adult's group would be considered close contacts.

Facilities experiencing a confirmed case of COVID-19 among their population might consider closing at least temporarily (e.g. For 14 days, or possibly longer if advised by local health officials.) The duration may be dependent on staffing levels, outbreak levels in the community and severity of illness in infected individual. Symptom-free children and staff should not attend or work at another facility,

which would potentially expose others.

If the infected individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 spent 15 minutes within 24 hours in close contact with those in the childcare facility, the facility may consider closing for 2-5 days to do a thorough cleaning and disinfecting and to continue to monitor for ill individuals. The facility may also decide to require individuals in close contact with individual to self-quarantine 5 days plus wear a mask when around others if asymptomatic and mildly ill.

MEDICATION POLICY

Your camper's safety is most important to the Y. If your camper requires medication during their time at camp, please complete an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form which can be downloaded from www.ymcahouston.org or is available at your camp location. This form requires the listing of the specific dosage your child is to be given and it must accompany all medications. Medications must be in the original container with your child's name and all labels intact. If over-the-counter medication must be administered, it must also be accompanied by signed "Authorization to Administer Medication" form, in its original container, labeled with your child's name, with all labels intact and have a signed doctor's order outlining when the medication should be administered and in what dosage.

ACCIDENT OR MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Our staff makes sure your camper's safety is their number one priority. Should your camper need medical attention, the Camp Director will try to notify you immediately. Parents are asked to notify the Program Director immediately of any change of address or telephone numbers. If parents cannot be reached, the Director has the authority to seek medical attention at the parent's expense.

If the situation is a major medical emergency, the Camp Director will call 911 immediately. The parents will assume fees for the emergency transportation. The YMCA takes head injuries seriously. Suspected head injuries will require a 911 call. Bumps, jolts or blows that cause the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth can be serious even if it appears to be minor.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Staff members are trained in basic emergency procedures. Necessary responses to issues regarding natural disasters (floods, tornados, hurricanes, hostile situations) and fire escape routes are addressed in staff training. Monthly fire drills and periodic severe weather drills are conducted at sites. In the event of a gas leak, your child will be relocated and you will be notified immediately to come and get him/her. Each camp location has a lock down plan in place for how to handle and respond to a hostile or dangerous situation. At all times, we will place an emphasis on keeping children safe.

If the weather begins to worsen during the day, we will ask you to pick up your camper as soon as possible so you and our staff may get home safely.

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION

Open communication is very important to the success of your child's Y camp experience. Parents are welcomed visitors to our programs. Please check daily for posted notices, fliers or other information. We welcome your feedback regarding our program at any time. We appreciate your ideas regarding program expectations, suggestions and comments on ways to improve our service to you and your family.

You may direct suggestions, concerns, compliments and complaints to the immediate Camp Lead Staff, Camp Director, Senior Director, and Executive Director.

Notification of policy changes will be made in writing through newsletters and updated handbooks.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Y is community-based and believes that its programs and services should be available to everyone regardless of age, background, ability or income. The Y offers financial assistance to participants that is designed to fit your individual financial situation. The Y has two different types of financial assistance available.

Texas Work Force Solutions

To enroll for Summer Day Camp under Texas Workforce please follow these steps:

1. To determine eligibility for Workforce funding contact Work Force Solutions and complete the required paperwork.
2. Apply to the YMCA (If qualified a maximum of 30% will be awarded)
3. Provide an acceptance/denial letter to the YMCA.
4. If accepted, YMCA will adjust account for NCI payments and parent co-payments.
5. If denied, YMCA will reassess original application and determine if an increased percentage is needed and available.

Child Care Licensed Summer Camps who are vendors with Work Force Solutions include:

- Alief Family YMCA
- Aristoi Classical Academy
- Baytown Camp @ St. Paul Lutheran Church
- The Woodlands Family YMCA @ Branch Crossing
- Duncan Family YMCA
- Holcomb Family YMCA @ Birnham Woods Elementary
- Houston Community College Main Campus
- Huntsville Children's Academy
- Thelma Ley Anderson Family YMCA
- Texas Medical Center YMCA
- TMC Children's Academy
- Trotter Family YMCA Day Camp
- University Park Children's Academy
- Weekly Family YMCA
- Wendel D Ley Family YMCA Day Camp
- West Orem Family YMCA

Annual Campaign

To enroll in Summer Camp using YMCA Annual Campaign dollars completed Financial Assistance applications and supported documents may be accessed from the YMCA of Greater Houston website at www.ymcahouston.org and applications may be submitted to your local YMCA.

Please allow 2 weeks for your application to be processed once you have submitted a completed application.

Limited financial assistance is available to individuals and families who substantiate a need.

Camps licensed through the Texas Department of State Health Services include:

- Conroe Family YMCA @ Tree of Life Lutheran Church
- D. Bradley McWilliams Family YMCA
- Fort Bend Family YMCA
- Harriet & Joe Foster Family YMCA
- Texans Family YMCA
- Lake Houston Family YMCA
- Langham Creek YMCA
- Mark A. Chapman YMCA @ Katy Main Street
- Perry Family YMCA
- MD Anderson Family YMCA
- Monty Ballard Family YMCA @ Camp Cinco Ranch
- Monty Ballard Family YMCA
- Tellepsen Family YMCA
- The Woodlands Family YMCA @ Shadowbend
- TW Davis at Jones Creek
- Vic Coppinger Family YMCA
Perry Family YMCA

VOLUNTEERING AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parents are welcome to participate with their children in a variety of activities. Parents and volunteers need to have cleared a criminal and/or FBI background check based on licensing and YMCA requirements in order to volunteer in a Y camp program. Parents and volunteers will also need to complete an online child abuse recognition and awareness training. Parents and volunteers are never left alone with a group of children.

As your child learns and grows with us, we hope that you will choose to participate in parent engagement activities during the summer. We hope you will attend an orientation prior to camp and summer family events to meet your child’s new friends. We will plan activities to help families be physically active and learn healthy eating/nutrition habits. Please read our newsletters and watch for tips to help your family be healthy and active.

ANIMALS

Parents and campers will be notified in writing if their campsite has animals. All animals will be current in vaccinations and visits to the vet. Health records from the vet visits will be available for your review. Campers will be required to practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in to contact with an animal and items used by the animal, such as water bowls, food bowls and cages. Personal pets or animals are not allowed at camp.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES CHILD CARE LICENSING

YMCA Camps are licensed through one of two state agencies. By choosing licensed camps, you and your family join your child in new experiences and relationships. You, the Program Director and site staff have a responsibility to protect the health, safety and well-being of your child. The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Licensing Division may also be a part of this partnership.

A copy of minimum standards required for licensing school age programs is available for your review at your camp site. You may also request a copy of these standards from your local child care office. A list of these offices may be found on the DFPS website www.dfps.state.tx.us or by calling the Child Care Information line at 1-800-862-5252. The operations most recent licensing report is also available for your review at the camp site.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Child Care Licensing Division, www.hhs.texas.gov 713-287-3238. A copy of minimum standards from this department is available for your review at the camp.

Texas Department of State Health Services Youth Camp Division 512-834-6600

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Y staff are trained in recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Staff are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. The child abuse hotline is 800-252-5400.

The YMCA of Greater Houston is committed to keeping all children safe and we make every effort to prevent child abuse. The Y recognizes that child abuse exists in a number of forms, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as child neglect. As mandated reporters, it is our responsibility to recognize and report all suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

Staff are trained to **KNOW** the signs of abuse and supervise the youth in a way that they can **SEE** them at all times so that they are ready and able to **RESPOND** appropriately.

To help prevent child abuse the YMCA of Greater Houston has implemented the following procedures: For the safety of children entrusted in our care, the YMCA conducts and requires a background check and references for all camp staff, as well as every person employed in or by our centers and programs.

1. Allegations or suspicions of child abuse are taken seriously and are reported to the police and state agencies for investigation.
2. YMCA programs are structured and observed so that staff and volunteers are never the only adult present with children with the possible exception of emergency situations.
3. Evaluations are conducted with parents regarding day to day experiences, encouraging reports of any event out of the ordinary.
4. Staff are required to report all incidents and/or the disclosure of abuse.

A key to keeping children safe is a child's ability to seek help. They need to know that there are adults at the Y, and at home, who will listen and respond in a supportive way. It is important to be aware that child abusers can be parents, caretakers, friends, neighbors, or even other youth.

- Talk to your child – Share with your child that he or she can say “NO” to an adult friend, family member, or an older child, if they act inappropriately.
- Be Proactive – Create an environment that encourages children to share their views and concerns. Then really listen to them. Establish safety rules online and offline.

If faced with your child disclosing abuse, or if there is a situation where you suspect abuse, but are not sure or don't have proof, call the child abuse helpline and get support. Trust your gut and your instincts and take action immediately.

If you would like to report a suspicion that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by abuse or neglect, call the **Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400**. The website is www.hhs.texas.gov **IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OF HARM, CALL 911 FIRST**. Thank you for helping us keep our children safe.