



# THEIR SAFETY OUR PRIORITY

The Y's cause is to strengthen communities. Child abuse is a community issue; therefore, it is our issue. The safety of children is the number one priority for our organization. We have a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse and report any allegations to the appropriate state agency.

## **Policies implemented at the YMCA of Greater Houston to ensure that children are protected while in our care:**

- Criminal background, sex offender registry and reference checks are conducted on all staff prior to hiring.
- Staff are required to complete a state-approved online Child Abuse Prevention training prior to, or at the beginning of their first scheduled shift and renew this training on an annual basis.
- Staff must agree to and sign a Code of Conduct document which remains in their employee file.
- Staff are not permitted to be alone with children.
- Through our partnership with Praesidium, a continual review of our program policies and procedures is conducted to mitigate inappropriate interactions with children.
- The Nationwide Sex Offender Database is used to screen members daily.
- Staff, parent coaches and volunteers must annually complete a state-approved Child Abuse Prevention training. Parent coaches and volunteers must also pass an annual background check and sign a Code of Conduct. All center and Association board members serve a 3-year term and complete a state-approved Child Abuse Prevention training once per term.
- YMCA staff are mandated reporters and will report suspected child abuse or neglect to the authorities.

## **Additional policies specific to Child Care & Day Camp:**

- The YMCA operates within ratios as outlined in Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards.
- Child Watch, Child Care and Day Camp staff are required to participate in continuing education trainings on ways to appropriately engage with children.
- All staff who work in a licensed child care program (infant/preschool, before and after school care) must pass a DFPS background screening which includes an FBI criminal history check prior to employment.
- Diapers may not be changed by staff who are under 18 years of age. Diapering cannot occur in a separate room unless there is a ½ door and 2 staff are present.
- If an adult is needed to assist in the restroom, a second adult must be present. Adults will check/clear bathroom before children enter and after all children exit. Adults will stand at the door and listen for anything unusual and watching for the appropriate number of feet under the stalls.
- Any staff person interacting with a child must be within eyesight of another staff member at all times.

## **Additional policies specific to Overnight Camp:**

- Overnight camp cabins have a maximum of 14 campers, with three counselors assigned. Nightly rounds are performed by supervisory staff.
- Cabins are designed to provide changing and showering privacy for every child, with individual shower stalls and changing areas as well as individual bathroom stalls.
- Overnight Camp is American Camp Association (ACA) accredited and adheres to the Texas Youth Camp License standards. We operate within ratios as outlined in Texas Child Care Licensing and ACA Minimum Standards.
- Overnight Camp staff are required to participate in continuing education trainings on ways to appropriately engage with children in a resident camp setting.

**Interested in learning more about how to keep kids safe?**

**Visit [ymcahouston.org/know-see-respond](https://ymcahouston.org/know-see-respond)**