

# Greater Austin YMCA

## Child Abuse Prevention Plan

### **Summary and Purpose:**

This plan is designed to foster a safe environment for children within our childcare services while ensuring the financial viability of our operations. The guidelines are informed by best practices, regulatory requirements, and the documents provided, including the YMCA of the USA's Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Praesidium's training materials.

### **1. Limiting One-on-One Interactions**

- Group Settings: Encourage all interactions with children in group settings where possible. Avoid private or isolated areas for one-on-one time.
- Rule of Three: Ensure another adult is always present or in proximity (the "rule of three") when a single child is present.

### **2. Identifying High-Risk Areas**

- Physical Spaces: Recognize areas that create isolation as spots as high risk for potential abuse or accidents. This includes:
  - Bathrooms or locker rooms
  - Isolated or unmonitored areas like stairwells
  - Mixed age groups
  - Transition and Free Time
  - Playground and recreational areas
  - Personal care assistance
  - Consumers supervising consumers
- Activities: Activities involving personal care (e.g., changing clothes, applying sunscreen), water activities, or those requiring physical contact (e.g., sports coaching) are higher risk and require special attention.

### **3. Reporting Abuse**

- Immediate Action: If you suspect abuse or unsafe behavior, report it immediately to a supervisor or the designated child protection officer.
- Mandatory Reporting: Under Texas state law, everyone is a mandated reporter; this means all staff must report suspected abuse to legal authorities. Familiarize yourself with these obligations.
- Confidentiality: Maintaining confidentiality regarding the situation while prioritizing the child's safety.

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**4. Lowering Risk of Abuse**

- **Visibility:** Ensure activities are conducted in open, visible areas. Use transparent doors or windows in activity rooms where possible.
- **Boundary Setting:** Clearly define and communicate boundaries for physical and verbal interactions between staff and children.
- **Consistent documentation and reporting** of any policy violations, concerns of abuse, or sexual activity between children.
- **Employee and volunteer behavior** set the tone for appropriate consumer behavior.
- **Maintain a minimum ratio of 1 adult per 17 children** for school-aged children to ensure adequate supervision.

**6. Documentation and Accountability**

- **Record Keeping:** To demonstrate due diligence, keep thorough records of all training, incidents, and staff acknowledgments of policies.
- **Audit and Feedback:** Regularly review safety measures through internal audits and incorporate feedback for improvements. Risk Management conducts an annual child abuse prevention audit at each center to ensure compliance.