



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# YMCA OF CENTRAL FLORIDA CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION Rules and Regulations

We take the safety of children, youth, and vulnerable adults **seriously**. The Y is about youth development: kids must be safe to grow, thrive and reach their potential in a nurturing environment. The mistreatment or neglect of children, youth and vulnerable adults is of primary concern to the YMCA.

## ZERO TOLERANCE INTERACTIONS

Such behaviors represent gross misconduct and can result in immediate termination of all staff (employee or volunteer). This chart is intended to give clarity to unacceptable interactions between all staff and children, youth and vulnerable adults. This list is not all-inclusive; other behaviors may be identified.

### 1. No Inappropriate Touch

- a) **Sexual abuse, molestation, physical abuse, punishment, discipline** (eg. use of physical force, striking, squeezing, whether used for behavior management or not)
- b) **Physical inappropriate interaction** (eg. tickling, wrestling, twisting nipples, swinging children by ankles or wrists, massages, caressing\*, sitting on lap\*, patting on bottom\*, kissing\*)  
\*only children who have a relationship with the staff person/volunteer prior to them working at the Y and must be discussed with Y leadership

### 2. No Inappropriate Language

- a) **Verbal abuse** (yelling in aggressive or threatening manner; belittling, including making fun of the individual/ individual's family, national origin, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation; threatening bodily harm to the individual or individual's family/friends)
- b) **Bullying, taunting; intimidation** of physical force
- c) **Using inappropriate consequences** for behavior (eg. closing child in closet, cabinet; restraining child inappropriately such as tying their hands with string, strapping child in a chair; taping their mouth)
- d) **Telling or asking a child not to tell** an adult or parent of words or actions of staff, volunteers
- e) Crossing boundaries of appropriate/**inappropriate interaction with youth** (including telling stories of personal sexual relationships, illegal activity, siding with participant as opposed to supporting staff with rules)

### 3. No Alone Time

- a) **Taking a child to the bathroom or locker room by self**—outside the view of others or without open door
- b) Use of an office, stairwell or locker room to have a **private conversation\***
- c) Unauthorized time alone; being alone with a single participant where you cannot be observed by other staff or adults.\*  
\*even private conversations must be done in clear sight of another adult

### 4. No Favoritism

- a) Singling a child out for **favored attention** or giving the appearance of grooming.
- b) No **presents or rewards for a single child**; all children deserve respect

### 5. No Outside Contact

- a) Online social media contact (email, texting, snap chat etc)
- b) **Transporting program participant in personal vehicle** without clearance from YMCA\*  
\*only children who have a relationship with the staff person/volunteer prior to them working at the Y and must be discussed with Y leadership

## APPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS

Generally to be encouraged. However, even appropriate touch can be inappropriate when excessive, or when the intention is to give preferential treatment.

1. Side hugs
2. "A" Frame hugs
3. Shaking hands
4. High fives or fist bumps
5. Hand signs and greetings
6. Touching upper back, shoulder, arms, hands, legs at knees and below.
7. Fixing hair (i.e. put clip back in, put hair in ponytail or braid to remove from face; group activity ok, but NOT ok for selected special attention or prolonged time with any one person)

The YMCA of Central Florida annually reviews all youth abuse prevention policies for relevance, utility and necessity, and modifies or rescinds as appropriate.



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**Abuse situations can occur:** 1) At home or away from the Y; 2) At licensed sites or in contracted programs; and 3) in any Y program. If signs are observed at the Y or a child makes a disclosure that they have been sexually abused, it is your responsibility to report to a Y staff immediately. **Possible situations at the Y:** 1) staff (employee or volunteer) can break rules or cross boundaries of appropriate interaction with children, youth or young adults; or 2) Children & youth can sexually act out by themselves or with other children, including bullying or intimidation.

**Educating participants:** Participants may be informed in a manner that is age appropriate of their right to set their own "touching" limits for personal safety, and they will be encouraged to tell an adult if someone is abusing them.

## REPORTING AND DOCUMENTING ABUSE/NEGLECT AND OTHER UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

1. I am aware that I am a mandated reporter in the State of Florida if I am over the age of 18 years and I believe someone has caused a child to suffer abuse or neglect; and I understand I am required by law to report known or suspected instances where a child, youth or vulnerable adult (or developmentally disabled person) has been abused or neglected, and not doing so is considered a gross misdemeanor.
2. I understand the YMCA expects me to follow the same abuse reporting procedures whether I am a mandated reporter or not. Information regarding abuse or potential abuse or neglect should be documented in writing. Suspected abuse should be reported to the Department of Children and Families:  
  
Call Abuse Hotline: 1-800-962-2873  
Report Online: <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>  
Fax Report: 800-914-0004
3. At the first reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect exists, it should be reported to a supervisor or program director and/or a leader in the Family Center so that proper reporting can be initiated. If the supervisor or program director is not available, I understand I should contact the next supervisory level up. Inability to consult with a supervisor or program director should not delay a call to authorities.
4. At the first reasonable cause to believe that a volunteer or staff has crossed the boundaries of acceptable YMCA interactions or has abused a participant, even if it was not during working hours, his or her conduct should be reported to a supervisor or program director and/or Family Center leadership. Appropriate actions will be taken regarding the employee or volunteer, including suspension or termination from YMCA employment or volunteer status, and the YMCA's protocol for making a report to the appropriate authorities will be followed.
5. Confidentiality of information related to abuse is crucial and should be limited to the immediate supervisor and/or Family Center leader and Risk Management. However, inappropriate and sexualized behaviors initiated by participants towards others in YMCA programs will be shared with the designated branch executive and other staff who work with the participant.