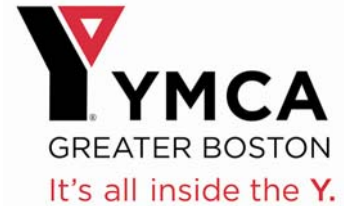


Important Information for YMCA of Greater Boston Families and Community Partners:



You may be aware that James Conner was recently arrested and charged with molesting two young girls at the Melrose YMCA in Melrose, Massachusetts. This is a horrific tragedy for the families involved and the community as a whole. While the Melrose Y is not affiliated with the YMCA of Greater Boston, we recognize that our families may have questions or concerns.

The YMCA of Greater Boston recognizes that awareness of potential abuse and reinforcing proven abuse prevention strategies is an essential element in protecting the children that we serve. Over the last 25 years we have learned a great deal about how predators target young children and how to detect them. We use this knowledge to hire, train and supervise our staff and select, train and oversee our volunteers in order to prevent predators from gaining access to our programs and the children we serve. To help keep the children in our care safe, the YMCA of Greater Boston takes a number of steps including:

Hiring practices

The YMCA's hiring practices are consistent at all 13 branches and over 65 program sites.

Every hiring manager is required to complete three professional reference checks. *We do not accept letters of reference.*

All potential employees are required to complete a Criminal and Sexual Offender Record Information (C/SORI) check. If the prospective employee has worked out of state, we utilize a third party vendor to conduct a national background check.

Potential childcare staff must also complete a state Early Education and Care (EEC) background check. This is a comprehensive check that indicates any documented issues involving children.

Employees must read and agree to the YMCA of Greater Boston Code of Conduct, Child Abuse Prevention and Personnel policies prior to the start of employment.

Training on detection of potential abusers

All new hires are required to take a nationally recognized child abuse prevention course within 30 days of the start of their employment.

Existing employees must take an annual, mandatory child abuse prevention training refresher course.

Supervision standards

Employees are prohibited from being alone with any child – in any part of the YMCA building, programs or in any YMCA vehicle.

Employees are prohibited from babysitting or otherwise being employed by YMCA childcare families without written consent and approval from YMCA management and the family.

Staff is prohibited from using cell phones, digital cameras or other recording devices unless this is a pre-planned YMCA event. In this case, a YMCA-issued digital camera will be used.

As a mandated reporter, the YMCA will report any and all complaints of suspected abuse. Employees involved will be suspended during any investigation. Substantiated allegations are cause for termination and potential prosecution.

YMCA volunteers are subject to all of the same policies and procedures as YMCA staff.

YMCA of Greater Boston has an anonymous confidential reporting system available on-line to all employees. https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/report_custom.asp?clientid=21329

Red flags to watch for:

A YMCA employee or volunteer that:

- spends time with children alone or away from the Y
- is spending time with a child in a non-YMCA activity
- allows rules to be broken and makes exceptions for certain kids
- shares too much personal info with kids
- keeps secrets with children
- uses social networking site to contact kids privately
- allows a child to sit on his/her lap
- is overly touchy or physical with children like tickling or massaging (violating a physical boundary)
- has obvious favorites
- gives gifts to children, particularly to only one or two children
- may convince a child to do 'something bad' like lie to a parent, drink alcohol or try marijuana
- has 'nicknames' for a specific child
- discourages other adults from helping or being around
- breaks rules to be around kids
- befriends single parents 'just to be a helper'
- has more of a 'friend role' versus an 'adult role'

Feedback System

As a parent, you have the opportunity to see certain rule-breaking practices that we may not, like gift-giving or a counselor spending time with a child they met at the Y away from YMCA programs. It's important that you know our expectations of Y staff and volunteer conduct and that you report to us any rule-breaking you observe.

We recommend that you periodically ask your child the following questions:

Has anyone at the YMCA touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?

Has anyone at the YMCA asked you to keep a secret?

If the answers to either of these questions causes you concern, please call us immediately.

The safety of your child is paramount to the YMCA of Greater Boston. We are vigilant in our hiring, training and supervision practices to make our programs safe.