

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

The YMCA of Metro Atlanta, as a premier child and family serving agency, recognizes its responsibility to always provide children and youth with the safest possible place. As an employee you are required to abide by the following



CODE OF CONDUCT

1. In order to protect YMCA staff, volunteers and program participants, at no time during a YMCA program may a staff person be alone with a single child where the staff and a child cannot be observed by others. As staff supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff can see them.
2. Staff shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Restroom supervision: Staff will make sure the restroom is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff. If staff are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open. No child, regardless of age, should ever enter a bathroom alone on a field trip. Always send children in pairs, and whenever possible, with staff. Staff supervising children with special needs for assistance shall be trained in appropriate assistance techniques and should always try to be where one other staff can see them.
4. Staff should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs--diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff shall not abuse children including: physical abuse, (strike, shake, slap); verbal abuse (humiliate, degrade, threaten); sexual abuse (inappropriate touch or verbal exchange); mental abuse (shaming, withholding care, cruelty); neglect (withholding food, water or basic care). Any type of substantiated abuse will not be tolerated and will be cause for immediate dismissal.
6. Staff must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Staff will have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint will be used only in pre-determined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), and is only administered in a prescribed manner and must be documented in writing.
7. Staff will conduct a health check of each child each day noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child by a supervisor or program director in a non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses should be documented by the supervisor or program director.
8. Staff will respond to children with respect and caring and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion or culture, ability or disability.
9. Staff will respect children's rights not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable and their right to say no. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.

10. Staff will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents and other staff.
11. The YMCA does not discriminate against an individual's lifestyle or habits away from the job provided such does not interfere with quality YMCA program work. It does require that in the performance of their job, staff will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the YMCA.
12. Staff must appear clean, neat and appropriately attired.
13. Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
14. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
15. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.
16. Staff must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.
17. Staff will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity. (Remember our values: honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility.)
18. Understanding that the YMCA cannot control staff outside of the work setting, staff understand that being alone with children they have met in YMCA programs (e.g.: baby-sitting or inviting children to their homes) puts both themselves and the YMCA at risk and is thoroughly discouraged by the YMCA. Staff also understand that all parent packets discourage parents using YMCA staff for baby sitting.
19. Staff are not to transport children in their own vehicles. If an exception occurs for program reasons, staff are required to call the branch and inform them when they are leaving and where they are going and the expected time of arrival. Staff will call when they arrive unless they are driving to the branch.
20. Adult staff may not date program participants under 18 years of age.
21. Under no circumstances should staff release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with the YMCA). If a dispute arises over child custody, supervisors are to refer to any legal papers filed (as in divorce or separation agreements).
22. Staff are required to read and sign all policies related to identifying, documenting and reporting child abuse and attend training on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor.

An adverse background report as established by the Georgia Department of Human Resources Child Care Division will result in termination as an employee of the YMCA. This includes but is not limited to arrest or conviction involving crimes against youth or children, or sex crimes, drug related convictions, or any felony conviction.

Staff further understand that if they see any staff person failing to "keep kids safe" they are to report concerns to their supervisor, program director or branch executive.

Employee or Volunteer Name: _____ Date: _____

Employee or Volunteer Signature: _____