



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION & SAFETY



Whatcom Family YMCA
360 733 8630
www.whatcomymca.org

COMMITMENT TO YOUTH AND CHILD SAFETY

The Whatcom Family YMCA serves over 23,000 members, more than half under the age of 18. We provide early childhood learning at two locations, school age enrichment at 21 off site locations and youth sports, dance and swim at our 4 activity centers in Bellingham, Ferndale, Lynden and Sudden Valley.

We are proud and respectful of the trust parents place in our YMCA. A safe environment for children combined with quality programming is an important part of our focus on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Our core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility are part of everything we do. We place great value on providing the most child-safe environment possible and creating an atmosphere where children grow and thrive.

We are a
**KNOW. SEE.
RESPOND.**
Organization



KNOW



SEE



RESPOND

CHILD SAFE RESOURCES

For reporting suspected child abuse or neglect in Washington, call the Department of Children and Family Services:

Whatcom County DCFS Office:

Toll-Free Intake: 1-866-827-2153
After Hours: 1-800-562-5624
Hotline: 1-866-ENDHARM
(1-866-363-4276)

Washington State's toll-free, 24 hour, 7 day a week hotline that will connect you directly to the appropriate local office to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

TTY Callers 1-800-624-6186
to place a direct TTY call

Anonymous Reporting Hotline for our YMCA
www.FRAUDHL.com or 1-855-FRAUDHL
(1-855-382-8345)

OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Whatcom County Children's Advocacy Center Coordinator:

Gail Tierney 360-734-4616 ext 28
gtierney@bridgidcollins.org

Brigid Collins Family Support Center Parenting Academy:

Megan Douglas Brown, MSW, LICSW
360-734-4616
mbrown@bridgidcollins.org

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services:

360-715-1563 or 1-877-715-1563
24 hr mental health crisis line
1-800-584-3578
ParentHelp123 1-800-322-2588

CREATING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

We take the following steps to keep children in our programs safe:

- Detailed employment application forms.
- Comprehensive reference checks that include standardized questions that assess risk for abuse.
- Criminal Offender Record Information (COR) check & Sexual Offender Registry Information (SOR) check.
- Statement of compliance with the Whatcom Family YMCA Code of Conduct and Abuse Prevention Policies. Please read our staff Code of Conduct. If someone is non-compliant, let us know immediately.
- All staff complete an extensive Child Abuse Prevention Training Program.
- Supervisors complete additional training to further promote a child safe environment.
- Staff and volunteer are mandated to report any suspected child abuse.
- Staff are prohibited from working 1-on-1 and contacting youth outside of the Y (including baby sitting and social networking).
- Policies exist to ensure staff and volunteers are not alone with a child. All interaction between a staff and child must be observable and interruptible.

Employees who are trained in abuse prevention are more likely to understand their role as protector, to recognize the signs that abuse is occurring, and to report suspicious or inappropriate behaviors. Trained staff members are also less likely to place themselves in situations where they could be falsely accused.



INFORMATION ABOUT ABUSE

We want all children to be safe. Unfortunately child abuse does exist, it takes on many forms.

Emotional: Threatening a child or using words that can hurt a child's feelings and self-esteem, withholding love and support from a child.

Physical: Causing injuries to a child on purpose, such as bruises, burns, scars, broken bones, etc.

Sexual: Having sexual contact in any form with a child, including exposing, fondling, intercourse, pornography or internet solicitation.

Neglect: Not providing children with enough food, clothing, shelter, medical care, hygiene, supervision, etc.



9 WARNINGS SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

- Unkempt or malnourished appearance
- Unexplained bruises, welts or burns
- Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns
- Abrupt changes in behavior, anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Sexually transmitted diseases and infections
- Discomfort with physical contact
- Fear of a certain person or place
- Fearfulness or depression



WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT ABUSE?

- REGISTER for child abuse prevention training to learn more about protecting your child. Go to <http://www.d2l.org/> to register for an online training (\$10 fee for this training). Brigid Collins Center offers monthly Stewards of Children trainings as well. Contact them at 360-734-4616 or <http://brigidcollins.org/stewards-of-children-1/>.
- TALK regularly to your child about his or her experiences in YMCA programs, school, sports and other activities
- DROP IN on your child's programs
- TRUST your instincts. Don't wait to tell us if something seems 'strange'. Speak up.
- LEARN to recognize and WATCH for warning signs of abuse.
- LISTEN & WATCH for signs of your child receiving special attention that other children or teens are not receiving.
- Periodically ASK your child these questions:
 - ◇ Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
 - ◇ Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
 - ◇ Has anyone said anything to make you feel bad?
 - ◇ Is anyone touching you in a way you do not like?
- EDUCATE your child about self-protection, including information about strangers and good and bad touches.
- LEARN to control the stress level of yourself and family members.
- COMMUNICATE with our child and really listen to their concerns.
- Recognize the fact that most abuse happens by people that children know and trust.
- BECOME AWARE of your community resources.
- KNOW where your children are and who their friends are.
- TEACH your children it's not okay to keep secrets from you; that they can always tell you the truth.