

TIPS FOR SELECTING YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

Between soccer practice, tutoring sessions, and piano lessons, your child is frequently in the care of many different adults. By stepping up and speaking out to youth-serving organizations in your community, you have the power to protect your child and countless others against child sexual abuse.

PROACTIVE QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU START THE CONVERSATION

➤ IS THERE A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?

Youth-serving organizations should have clearly defined child protection policies.

➤ DOES THE POLICY INCLUDE LIMITING ISOLATED ONE-ON-ONE SITUATIONS?

One-on-one time is important to a child's emotional growth and development, but it does not have to happen behind closed doors. One-on-one interactions should take place in an open, observable, and interruptible setting.

➤ HOW ARE EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS SCREENED?

Employee screening best practices include an in-depth application, personal and professional references, a criminal background check, and an extensive interview.

➤ DO OLDER AND YOUNGER CHILDREN INTERACT, AND IF SO, HOW?

Supervising contact between children and older/bigger youth requires structure and adult supervision. There should be separate areas and activities for different age groups. Make it clear that you would always like an adult present with your child.

➤ ARE THERE CLEAR PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPICIONS OR INCIDENTS OF ABUSE?

Push for organizations to provide mandatory reporting training for their staff. Over half of all mandated reporters fail to report suspicion of abuse. In most cases, they are simply confused or uninformed about their responsibilities. You can help by sharing this information. If you have reason to believe abuse is occurring at an organization, trust your intuition and make a report.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

- Are parents encouraged to drop in at any time?
- Can parents tour the facilities?
- Are your staff and volunteers trained in sexual abuse prevention and response?
- Do you have a code of conduct? May I have it?
- How are your policies disseminated and to whom?
- Are the children aware of the rules?
- How are older youth screened, monitored, and supervised?
- Do you train, allow, and empower your staff and volunteers to report suspicions of sexual abuse?
- If a staff member or volunteer violates the child sexual abuse prevention policy, what procedures and penalties follow?

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE ANSWERS TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO LEAVE YOUR CHILD.