



To: Parents of YMCA Participants

From: Angela Prenger, Executive Director

Re: "Child Abuse Prevention"

Child abuse is a serious national problem. YMCAs are especially vulnerable to the possibilities of child abuse because of the large number of children that pass through our programs on a daily basis. Because of this, the YMCA has a strong moral, legal and financial obligation to protect the children in our care from abuse. Given the nature of who we serve, our organization is especially appealing to potential child abusers. It is important that we be as rigorous as possible in screening out potential offenders, and that we train and supervise staff and volunteers to eliminate occurrences of abuse.

The safety of the children we serve must be our primary concern. For this reason, the Long Branch Area YMCA will begin conducting various screening activities, such as: criminal background checks, reference checks, signed code of conduct, and child abuse prevention training, for volunteers who work with children.

The YMCA also will keep written documentation evidencing successful completion of the Child Abuse Prevention Training in each of our staff member's personnel file who works with children.

The YMCA hereby advises and notifies parents of youth participants that we have a staff code of conduct, and that parents should report any suspicious activity to the Program Director or Executive Director. YMCA Staff are not allowed to have planned, one-on-one contact with YMCA participants when they are off duty.

Our coaches meetings will now be mandatory, as each volunteer coach must view the Child Abuse Prevention video and sign authorization for a criminal background check at the coaches meeting. Coaches will not receive their official team shirt until these two requirements are met. We recognize that this may be a small inconvenience for you; however, the payoff of protecting our children is worth the effort.

And, as parents, we can feel more assured that the YMCA is taking a proactive effort to protect our young people.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the YMCA. Private viewings of the Child Abuse Prevention video, at a time convenient for you, can also be scheduled at the YMCA.