

The City of Santa Monica is committed to creating opportunities for enrichment and learning at every age. Our programs and services are designed for our youngest community members to older adults. We take the safety of youth, and vulnerable adults seriously. Whether you are taking advantage of a City homework help program, sending your child to swimming lessons at a City pool, or letting your child participate in any other City-managed youth program, you will be entrusting your child to the care of another adult. Here are some steps you can take to help keep your child safe.

The City of Santa Monica has ZERO TOLERANCE for abuse and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of participants in its programs.

KNOW who is working with your child. Become familiar with the program and staff. Know what will be covered when, and check with program staff to get specifics about planned activities, including field trips. Know the rules the program sets for interactions between youth and adult staff. City-managed programs place strict boundaries on interactions between youth and adult staff and generally prohibit all of the following: isolated, non-public, one-on-one interactions; exchanges of emails, texts, or calls without express parental permission, and then only as absolutely necessary for program purposes, such as scheduling; giving gifts, including food, without express parental permission; sharing secrets; and engaging in inappropriate physical interactions such as lap sitting, kisses, wrestling, piggyback rides, tickling, massage, or any touching of inappropriate areas. These boundaries are set out in a Code of Conduct for Providing Services to Youth and Standards for City-Managed Youth Programs. Both of these documents are available on the City's website at santamonica.gov/topic-explainers/child-abuse-prevention, or you can ask any staff member for a copy. The more you know about the boundaries that should be in place between youth and adult staff, the better you will be able to identify and report a violation of these boundaries.

GO visit the program. Take any scheduled opportunity to meet program staff and see the facility the program uses. Consider dropping in unexpectedly on the program when your child is there. If you observe any violation of boundaries or other program rules, make sure to report it to a program supervisor. The city has standards for responding to reports of inappropriate conduct that are available on the City's website at santamonica.gov/topic-explainers/child-abuse-prevention, or you can ask any staff member to see them. The more you know about how to report violations, and how those reports should be addressed, the more easily you will be able to assist program supervisors in ensuring that staff are complying with boundaries and program rules.

SHOW your child you are interested in what happens in the program. Talk with your child after program sessions about what your child did during the session. Notice your child's mood and whether your child is willing to describe what happened during the program session with confidence and specificity. If your child appears hesitant or upset, explain that it is alright to tell you about anything that happened. If your child tells you about conduct that violated boundaries or other program rules, make sure to report it to a program supervisor so that it can be addressed.

If you are interested in receiving more information on how to help keep your children safe, the City has sponsored training for parents on how to help prevent child abuse. Additional training sessions are offered periodically. You can find information on the City's website.

REPORT ABUSE OR CONCERNS

Los Angeles County CPS

(800) 540-4000

Santa Monica Police

(310) 395-9931