

Keeping Youth Safe: Key Strategies for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention for Organizations*

Screening and selection of employees and volunteers:

- Develop criteria in advance and follow a consistent process
- Conduct background checks, in-person interviews, and reference checks

Guidelines on adult/child interactions and those between youth are clearly outlined in code of conduct or child protection policy:

- Define behaviors that are appropriate, concerning/questionable, and harmful or prohibited
- Establish adult/youth ratios and minimize isolated one-on-one situations when possible
- Restrict certain activities, including contact outside of program activities
- Address interactions between youth

Ensuring safe environments:

- Identify specific strategies to reduce risk and ensure interactions are observable and interruptible
- Identify situations or areas in the environment that pose an increased risk and monitor accordingly
- Provide proper supervision of youth at all times
- Establish a process for controlling access by those outside the program and for monitoring movements within the organization/activity

Responding to inappropriate behavior, policy violations, and allegations or suspicions of abuse:

- Specify which behaviors can be dealt with internally and which must be reported to authorities – and communicate the policy for each
- Ensure that all suspicions or disclosures of abuse are reported immediately to the proper authorities, based on state law

Training for employees and volunteers:

- Provide information and promote skills to prevent, recognize and respond to maltreatment
- Ensure all staff/volunteers are trained in an organization's policies and procedures designed to keep youth safe
- Develop a process to ensure all new staff/volunteers are trained and require periodic re-certification or review

*Adapted from *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations: Getting Started on Policies and Procedures*: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007.



The mission of Pat's Place is to drive resolution of child sexual abuse cases through investigation and collaboration with key partner agencies; to provide a safe and compassionate environment that puts the well-being of the child first; and to break the cycle of abuse through training, education, and community outreach.