

Prioritizing Child Protection at the Y

Keeping children safe at the Y is one of our most important responsibilities. With Praesidium Accreditation, YMCAs can strengthen child protection policies, foster a culture of safety at their Y, and demonstrate their commitment to the highest standards in abuse prevention.

This is critical work because every 9 minutes, child protective services substantiate a claim of child sexual abuse. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys experience sexual abuse during childhood. Ninety percent of the time, the victim knows the perpetrator.

Yet, every Y can strive to create a culture of safety where policies consistently align with practices by engaging in Praesidium Accreditation to help prevent child sexual abuse. Ys can engage all levels of leadership in child protection efforts by forming a safety committee, and Ys can assign a point person to lead child protection efforts. Prioritize child protection by including it in association strategic and operational planning processes. Lastly, Ys can create a calendar of events throughout the year to highlight child protection.

YUSA is committed to covering the cost of the Praesidium Accreditation for 100 Y associations each year as part of its 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. Currently, there are no North Carolina Ys certified at this level. [Learn more](#) about the process and email capinfo@praesidium.com to learn how your Y can join an upcoming cohort. Currently just two NC YMCAs (Rowan-Cabarrus YMCA and YMCA of Greater Charlotte) are in progress on accreditation.

As a separate opportunity, YMCA staff also can become a Certified Praesidium Guardian (CPG) through Praesidium at no cost. In North Carolina, we have 10 CPGs, represented at the Ys in Charlotte, the Triangle, Avery County, Greensboro, Rocky Mount, Eastern Carolina and Cleveland County. Learn more here and consider having a Youth Development or Risk Management leader at your Y become certified. (Registration is free for one staff person per year per association.) [Learn more](#) and join an upcoming virtual workshop March 4-8 or April 8-12. Details are at [LINK](#).

Five Days of Action

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Ys across the country are registering now to participate in Five Days of Action (April 15-19). The week-long campaign is aimed at raising awareness and inspiring adults to take action to protect children from sexual abuse. Only one NC association has registered so far; the Alliance is striving for 100 percent participation by our NC Ys. [Register your Y here](#); then you will receive information on how to access the toolkit. (The English toolkit is available now, and the Spanish toolkit will be available soon.)