



April 12, 2024

Dear Hockomock Area Members,

The safety and well-being of children is, and always will be, our top priority.

As part of our commitment to social responsibility and to the communities we serve, our YMCA, along with YMCAs throughout Massachusetts and across the nation will be sponsoring Five Days of Action for Child Abuse Prevention, a campaign committed to raise awareness and inspire adults to take an active role to protect children from sexual abuse.

While child protection is our Y's top priority every day, this critical campaign will run April 15th through April 19th and will help shine a collective spotlight on how everyone can do something to prevent child sexual abuse. Our Y will share information and resources each day to our members and community partners in our branches and online about how adults can prevent, recognize and respond to child sexual abuse situations to keep children safe. Help us prevent child sexual abuse through Know, See, Respond.

When adults know how abuse happens, see the warning signs, and respond quickly to prevent abuse, they foster a culture of child abuse prevention. Together we can bring awareness to the issue of child sexual abuse in our communities and have important conversations on how we can all work together to prevent it from happening. Please join our YMCA to spread important awareness and resources around this devastating epidemic.

Statistics from Praesidium and the CDC indicate that 1 in 20 boys and 1 in 4 girls in the United States are sexually abused, typically by someone they know and trust. Child sexual abuse is happening regardless of age, gender, race, religion or socio-economic class.

But these are not just numbers. Behind every number is a child, a child who has been robbed of their innocence. A child whose life will forever have been changed by the heinous act of an adult. We owe it to our children, and we owe it to their future, to do better.

For more information and resources, visit our [website](#) or email protectkids@hockymca.org. Here is our [trifold](#) which outlines our commitment to child protection and safety.

Our Y is proud to partner and collaborate with school systems, municipalities, and other human service organizations throughout our service area to help bring awareness, education and training regarding this issue. We also work with organizations including Darkness to Light and Praesidium to work towards a world free of child sexual abuse. Our YMCA was awarded Praesidium Accreditation® in February by Praesidium, the leader in abuse risk management, for our commitment to the highest standards in sexual abuse prevention. We are proud to be part of the 24 YMCAs across the nation to reach this status. We look forward to helping mentor other YMCAs in their process of becoming accredited.

Thank you for your confidence in our YMCA and the trust you place in us to be a leader in youth development. We remain committed to this collaborative cause and our effort to be part of a community-based prevention movement.

Sincerely,

Jim Downs,
CEO, Hockomock Area YMCA