

# YMCA CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



## FAMILY HANDBOOK

Policies and Procedures

YMCA OF GREATER HARTFORD  
BELONG TO SOMETHING GREATER

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### MISSION STATEMENT

The YMCA of Greater Hartford is a charitable association, open to all, and committed to helping people develop their fullest potential in Spirit, Mind and Body. This commitment is reinforced by our belief in living out universal values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

### OUR VISION

**Belong to Something Greater:** Passionate about strengthening our communities by positively impacting the lives of every person.

**Committed to Serving Communities:** The YMCA of Greater Hartford consists of 10 branches and two resident camps providing programs and services in 52 towns in Hartford, Tolland and Wyndham counties.

### PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the YMCA's Child Development Program is to develop the whole child—spirit, mind, and body—by fostering the social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative needs of all children, regardless of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, disability, and/or ability to pay.

We recognize that each child has unique needs, abilities, and experiences, thus all activities and materials are geared to each child's developmental level. This will enhance a child's self-esteem and desire to learn, while providing a positive, happy and nurturing environment.

### PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Our goal is to offer quality childcare and educational services, with age-appropriate activities. Our staff commits to recognize and meet the learning and developmental needs of the children we serve in a caring and nurturing environment. All programs and centers are licensed by the CT Office of Early Childhood and our Early Childhood Programs or have a valid OEC Exemption through the Local Board of Education. Our Early Learning Centers are either currently accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or are working to follow such standards when it is possible, per the Director.

Our staff strives to continually develop professionally in order to:

- Provide a safe, supervised, structured environment in which a child may choose from a variety of activities that help them develop socially, intellectually, physically and emotionally in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Develop a child's gross and fine motor skills.
- Develop and foster a child's language skills and literacy.
- Promote a positive value system by encouraging a child's self-worth and emotional development that will enhance self-esteem.
- Develop a child's healthy habits such as nutrition, dental care, cleanliness, hygiene and physical fitness.
- Create a partnership with parents that offer the opportunity for parental support, engagement in all facets of their child's experience, and educational training and workshops.

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The YMCA of Greater Hartford is an inclusive organization open to all. We welcome all people regardless of ability, background, ethnicity/race, faith, gender identity or sexual orientation. The Y believes that, in a diverse world, we are stronger when we are inclusive, when our doors are open to all and when everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

### CULTURAL/LINGUISTIC SENSITIVITY

The Greater Hartford YMCA and staff are committed in respecting diversity and teaching the same to the children through culturally sensitive practices. In order to help and support the families with varying linguistic and cultural needs we will try to provide/maintain the following:

- Linguistically diverse staff
- Translators/interpreters on an as need basis
- Literature in the families primary language
- Referrals to community resources/agencies to assist the family to foster independence.

The Greater Hartford YMCA promotes an anti-bias education experience for all children and families. This is to provide a sense of belonging for all families and children and to allow them to have access to and participate in the educational activities of the program. Please see the Child Guidance and Discipline Policy for information that might be useful for collaborating during challenging times as well.

## 2) STAFF POLICIES

The YMCA child development staff is a group of dedicated professionals who are committed to providing a warm, caring and stimulating environment for your child. Staff is hired based on their education, experience and desire to work with young children.

Head Teachers in each program are required to have a valid Office of Early Childhood Head Teacher Certificate for their age group. Requirements for this can be found on the Office of Early Childhood website.

All staff are required to attend ongoing training in areas such as recognizing child abuse, positive discipline, child development and more. A reference check, criminal background check, finger printing, and Department of Children and Family review are completed on each employee.

### STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

#### Staff Relationships with Program Participants and Families

YMCA staff are not allowed to babysit or provide other services to the children and families within our programs outside of the YMCA Child Development program. The only exception to this rule is if there was a pre-existing relationship prior to enrolling in the YMCA program, which should be noted by both staff and family at the time of enrollment. Staff that violates this policy are subject to discipline including potential immediate dismissal.

Likewise, YMCA staff are not allowed to communicate with parents via text, connect through online communication channels (including social media) or outside meeting at other venues (i.e., the mall, etc.). This is only permissible through YMCA-designated apps or channels/ways of communication.

Staff that violates this policy is subject to discipline including potential immediate dismissal.

### ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT

We strive to ensure that the day-to-day operations of our program are aligned with the current Connecticut Statutes and Regulations for Child Care Centers, the program policies, plans and procedures, program vision and philosophy, and best practices. Our programs work hard to ensure that all children, families, and program staff have a daily positive experience.

Most concerns can be resolved by:

1. Discussing the issue with the classroom teacher.
2. Discussing the issue with the program director, or director's designee.  
(These individuals will vary by Early Learning Center, and be posted on your state board as well as shared at orientation. At any time with concerns, we encourage you to reach out to the Child Development Director and Executive Director if needed).
3. If the problem is not resolved you may contact the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Licensing Division. Complaint procedure will be posted on each center's state and parent board.

In case of an emergency, the program will notify the Licensing Division as soon as the emergency is under control. They will do this online at [www.ctoec.org/contact-us/file-a-complaint](http://www.ctoec.org/contact-us/file-a-complaint), or by phone to the Complaint Desk at (800) 282-6063 or (860) 500-4450. In case of abuse/neglect or lifethreatening situations the program will call 911 or the Department of Children and Families (DCF) at (800)842-2288 at the OEC Division of Licensing. All inspection reports and corrective action plans are available for your review: – At your child care program – Online at [www.211childcare.org](http://www.211childcare.org), or – By FOI request from the OEC Licensing Division: [https://oecct.govqa.us?WEBAPP/\\_rs/](https://oecct.govqa.us?WEBAPP/_rs/)

## 3) ENROLLMENT POLICIES

YMCA Child Development Centers vary on ages accepted at each center, however across all of our Greater Hartford YMCA programs we serve children 6 weeks of age to 13 years of age.

To enroll in a YMCA of Greater Hartford's Child Development program, the following is required:

- All previous YMCA accounts must be in good standing.
- Registration forms must be completed in their entirety and updated annually.
- A separate registration form must be completed for each child in each family.
- A physical (CT Health Assessment Record is preferred) must be signed and dated by a physician, which includes up-to-date immunization information that meets Office of Early Childhood requirements. Children are required to have an updated physical form annually before entering kindergarten and then as required by the town Board of Education policies.
- Signed Medical Emergency Permission in the registration packet—giving staff trained in first aid/ CPR permission to administer first aid/CPR and obtain care from a licensed physician or dentist if a medical emergency should arise.
- Emergency Transportation permission in the registration packet—giving permission to staff to have a child transported to a medical facility by police or ambulance.
- An Individual Care Plan and Authorization of Medication form (dated within 1 year) for any medications needed, and if a child has Asthma, Allergies, or any special health conditions on their Health Assessment Record.
- Receipt of the family's first payment for services.
- A minimum two-day administrative processing time for paperwork before your child may start a program
- A two-week written notice must be provided to the office when changing your child's schedule or when withdrawing from the program.
- For enrollment in an Early Learning Center, a child may enter as a preschooler if they are at least thirty-two months of age, provided we receive written authorization from the parent and the director.

**Important: \*Forms are kept in the child's file on site**

### INCLUSION

The YMCA welcomes children with special needs. Parents and family are asked to identify any health concerns or special needs their child may have. Together, we will then be able to determine what accommodations the child may need to be successful in our program. We will do our best to accommodate these needs; however, and if we are unable to meet said needs, we will work with each family to find a solution. Referrals to outside agencies will be made with the permission of a child's parent or guardian.

The Greater Hartford YMCA values and embraces diversity and is committed to the development of an inclusive environment that attracts, retains, and maximizes the potential of a diverse workforce, volunteers, membership, children and the families we serve.

### ORIENTATION TO PROGRAM

Head Teachers and/or Child Development Directors will provide an orientation opportunity for all new incoming families in our Early Learning Centers.

### PAYMENT POLICIES

All payments are due and scheduled 15 days before the end of the prior month. Example: February's payment due on 1/16/25, and March's due on 2/13/25. While the YMCA can be flexible with payment plans, it is important that you stay in contact with your business office and/or child development director. If no contact or payment agreement is made, delinquency by more than 2 weeks may require dismissal of the child from the program.

**The YMCA has financial assistance available for all families in need. If you are unable to make your monthly payment, please speak with the business office or child development director at the YMCA regarding a financial aid application to help support the cost of care.**

No payments will be accepted by on-site teaching staff. Please connect with leadership at each center, or a YMCA Business Office.

### PROVISIONAL PERIOD

The first 30 days will be regarded as a trial period, in which case either party may terminate the contract without notice. After the first 30 days of enrollment, a two week written notice must be provided to the office when changing your child's schedule or when withdrawing from the program.

## **PAYMENT CONDITIONS**

1. Fees are payable on a monthly basis. There will be no adjustments made for half days, snow days, or holidays. There is a two-week written notice required for withdrawal of a child from a YMCA program. Failure to properly notify of withdrawal will result in charges.
2. There is no discount for the holidays or closings due to weather.
3. Failure to pay a family share or tuition for two consecutive weeks may result in dismissal of the child from the program.
4. Any parent/guardian having difficulties in making payments should consult the appropriate YMCA staff to apply for financial assistance based upon income and family size or to discuss the situation.
5. A late fee of \$3.00 per minute will be charged if children are not picked up by the program licensed time of closing. The State of CT has an "Abandoned Child Policy". If a child is not picked up within 1 hour of the Center's closing, and all efforts have been made to contact the parent/guardian or authorized emergency list persons, the YMCA is to assume the child has been abandoned, and providers must contact the CT Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the police to have the child picked up and brought to the local DCF office.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Financial assistance is made possible through donations to the YMCA's Annual Campaign. For more information, please contact the YMCA of Greater Hartford's office. In addition, we require all participants who apply for Financial Assistance to also apply to Care 4Kids.

\*Please inquire for more information at the branch or at [ghymca.org](http://ghymca.org)

## **CREDIT/REFUND**

- Full credit/refund if YMCA cancels the program due to unforeseen circumstances/without notice.
- A credit/refund will only be considered when a child is absent for a 3 days or longer, and with a doctor's note, or if the child is removed from the program due to behavior/discussions with the Child Development Director.
- There may be up to a \$30 returned payment fee through Daxko or other third parties if payments are bounced/returned. The Greater Hartford YMCA is not responsible for this fee.
- YMCA program credits are valid; there is a 1 year expiration date.
- Families must give the YMCA of Greater Hartford at least 14 days written notice before withdrawing a child.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is always practiced in our programs and reiterated with teams annually. Information about children in the program will not be discussed among other parents or in the program in front of any child/children. The YMCA will retain any information you share with us, to enable us to better meet your child/children's needs, in the strictest confidence. This applies to information you share in writing or verbally.

Every effort is made to keep information about children and families confidential. Only staff members directly involved with the family are permitted to examine files and/or discuss file contents. Written consent must be obtained from Parent/Legal Guardian before program information can be transferred to other programs, schools, or agencies. Information gathered from other agencies or organizations about a child/family cannot be transferred and the family should be instructed to contact those organizations directly. All documentation about children/family can be given to parents who can review and distribute it as they see fit. Local and Federal agencies have the right to request to see a child's file at any time. All staff members are urged to handle the content of files carefully and to place or replace documents properly.

Staff and volunteers must be professional and protect the rights and privacy of the children and families regarding confidential matters.

All financial information will be kept confidential between the child development administration and the families. Information verifying your eligibility for this program may be released to funding sources upon their request. All medical, behavioral or emotional information will be confidential between the staff involved with the child and the Director.

## REMOVAL FROM PROGRAM

The determination to ask a family to leave a child development program is difficult, and may be disruptive to the program, staff and to the family. We strive to provide the best possible care to everyone who has chosen our program. However, in the following circumstances, the YMCA may be unable to continue to provide child care:

1. Failure to provide complete, accurate and up-to-date paperwork. Ongoing challenges with any of the following:
  - GHYMCA Child development enrollment packet (updated annually)
  - State of CT Early Childhood Health Assessment form (updated annually)/State of CT Department of Education Health Assessment Record (updated according to Board of Education requirements)
  - For any medication to be stored and administered in a program, the YMCA requires appropriate paperwork signed by a medical professional. Any children with expired medication will not be allowed at the program until new medication is provided.
  - For any illness or disability requiring accommodation in a program– Specialized Care Plan (updated annually)
2. Failure to pay for child care services in a timely and consistent way, following payment policies.
  - Payment for the first month of child care is due before the child starts in a program
  - The YMCA accepts reimbursement from Care4Kids. It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to ensure that required documentation is submitted to Care4Kids. There may be delays in processing incomplete, inaccurate, or late paperwork. If Care4Kids has not approved payment, or if a Care4Kids certificate has expired, parents or guardians are responsible for the full cost of care.
  - The YMCA strives to serve everyone regardless of ability to pay. Thanks to our generous donors, our Annual Campaign raises money to provide financial assistance to those in need. If your family could benefit from our financial assistance program, please contact your Child Development Director.

**\*Please Note:** In the case of missing paperwork or late payment, the Child Development Director will contact the family through phone calls, emails and/or letters home and at the program. Families will be given one week to provide up-to-date paperwork or to make arrangements for payment. If the problem has not been resolved, the YMCA will be unable to provide care until the requirement has been met.

3. Failure to comply with Greater Hartford YMCA policies and procedures.

The YMCA strives to resolve disagreements and challenges in order to maintain strong, positive relationships with members and families. Under certain extraordinary circumstances, the YMCA may be forced to ask a family to leave a child development program. These circumstances may include: repeated late pick-up from program; excessive absenteeism from program; repeated failure to supply necessary supplies (for example, diapers and baby wipes), food or weather appropriate clothing for a child; abusive behavior toward YMCA staff, volunteers, or other members.

4. Dangerous or disruptive behaviors The YMCA is committed to working with children and families to resolve challenging behavior issues. YMCA staff may work with supervisors, peers, and outside consultants to find a solution that will help children develop positive behaviors. However, in extreme circumstances, YMCA administrators may ask a family to leave a childcare program. In these cases, every effort will be made to provide families with advance notice and to help families identify community resources and alternate care arrangements.

## 4) GENERAL POLICIES

Enrollment in the YMCA's Child Development programs constitutes an understanding that families will abide by the policies listed below:

### ABSENTEE POLICY

If a child is going to be absent from a YMCA Child Development program, parents are asked to notify the YMCA as far in advance as possible by phone, in writing, email or through a communication app (for example: Remind or Class Dojo). It is strongly encouraged that all children are dropped off at the center by 9:00 AM, as most of the learning opportunities will start around that time. If the child is going to be late or absent from an Early Learning Center, it is requested that parents and family notify the YMCA by 9:00am.

Except for prolonged illness, you will be charged the monthly rate. Instances of prolonged illness will be handled on an individual basis. If your child is absent for more than 3 days due to illness, a doctor's note will be required for your child to return to the program.

## **SCHEDULE CHANGE POLICY**

The YMCA office must be notified, in writing, two weeks prior the child's last day of the program or with any changes in schedule.

## **AUTHORIZED PICK-UP LIST**

When enrolling a child in a YMCA Child Development Program, families are required to provide the name of both legal guardians, as well as at least TWO Authorized Pick Ups for the child (other than the legal guardians). We would prefer to have additional contacts, so that there is never a situation where we cannot get a hold of a family member or emergency contact. YMCA staff is not permitted to release children to anyone not designated by a parent or caregiver on the authorized pick-up list (enrollment form). If any changes need to be made to a child's authorized pick up list, the YMCA requires that these changes be submitted in writing.

## **ACCURATE RECORDS & CUSTODY AGREEMENTS**

The YMCA holds the safety of the children in our care as a highest priority. In addition to current health records, the program is required to keep accurate personal records for each child in the program. Changes in information indicated on the forms must be reported, in writing, to the YMCA immediately. Parents are asked to update their child's health and safety information as soon as it changes, and annually in the case of no updates.

A copy of any court ordered custody decree or injunction that the YMCA is required to comply, must be kept on file at the YMCA. Please disclose to us any court-ordered custody situations, or restraining orders that affect your child or your family as soon as possible/upon enrollment.

Emergency numbers for children enrolled in our programs must be kept up to date. This is to ensure that staff members may be able to contact parents or guardians, at any time, in case of an emergency. Please notify YMCA staff on a timely basis.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICY**

According to the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, daily attendance records for both children and staff must be recorded daily at the time of arrival and departure. Therefore, an authorized adult (YMCA staff, parent/guardian or individual authorized by the parent/guardian on the enrollment form), must document the time of arrival and/or departure each day. This policy will be strictly enforced.

In all of our early learning centers, (except certain circumstances when a child is transported by a third party), this must be completed by the authorized adult that is completing pick up/drop off.

## **LATE PICK-UP POLICY**

Children must be picked up from the YMCA program by closing time. If an emergency necessitates that a child be picked up late, call the YMCA staff to update them beforehand.

A **\$3.00** per minute late fee will be charged for each minute a child remains at the program past the closing time, **regardless of staff notification of the late arrival**. Two staff over the age of 18 will remain at the program until all children are picked up. At least one of these staff members will have current CPR, CT Child Care First Aid, and Administration of Medication certificates. If the child is still there at 6:30, an additional \$25.00 fee will be applied every hour in addition to the \$3.00/minute.

If a parent or guardian has not called and all emergency contacts listed on the child's Emergency Contact sheet cannot be reached after one hour, the CT State Department of Children and Families requires the childcare and education program to regard this situation as child abandonment. The YMCA staff will notify the local Police Department and the CT State Department of Children and Families. Please refer to section 4.34 on Child Abuse and Neglect.

## **PROGRAM CLOSING POLICY**

The YMCA Child Development Programs will not operate on these specific holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day



If needed, the YMCA also reserves the right to close Early Childhood Education programs for up to ten (10) calendar days for staff development and training. Advanced notice of at least 30 days will be given to parents for closure due to staff training. Most branches will have programs that will cover days when school is closed for school vacation, snow/weather related emergencies or staff Professional Development. Contact your local YMCA branch for specifics.

## **MEALS AND SNACKS POLICY**

If programs do not participate in CACFP, families will provide their own lunch. YMCA programs will provide a morning and afternoon snack that will contain two food groups and menu will be posted and accessible to the family at least one week in advance. Some programs and early learning centers will also provide a breakfast, and may omit an AM snack based on their daily schedule.

In programs that serve meals, monthly menus are posted in each classroom and can be provided to the parent upon request. Breakfast as a meal will contain at least 3 food groups, and lunch will contain five food groups. For children two and older, we serve low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk, or 100% fruit juice (no more than one 4-6 oz. serving per day.) We serve only whole milk to children of ages 12 months to 24 months.

In programs that provide only a morning and/or afternoon snack, the menu will be posted and accessible to the family at least one week in advance. The morning and afternoon snack will contain two food groups.

Staff are trained upon hire and annually on food and food safety policies. All fruit and vegetables will be thoroughly washed prior to serving. Staff will discard any foods with expired dates and check regularly. Staff shall never use Styrofoam containers, plates, bags or wraps when microwaving children's food or beverages.

Items that may be considered high risk choking hazards, and nuts, may not be allowed at the center. Please check with each individual Early Learning Center, or school-age program to get specifics about what can and cannot be sent in.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES/SENSITIVITIES**

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the staff of any dietary restrictions or food allergies a child may be experiencing. Each child, with documented food allergies/sensitivities, must have a Special Care Plan on file for reviewed by Child Development Director and Nurse Consultant. For infant/toddler, and preschool classrooms families of children with special feeding needs will receive daily documentation of the type and quantity of the food the child consumes. In programs that provide meals (i.e., breakfast, lunch, snacks) food is not allowed from home due to allergies and sensitivities of the children and staff. If the program does not provide meals, and food is needed, food must be brought from home within properly sealed, labeled containers. For centers whose participants bring in their own lunches, please check with the Center Director about possible allergy concerns.

\*Please check with the program's Site Director to see if the child's program provides food

## **SUPERVISION**

Children are curious and active. Adequate supervision is essential to maintain a safe environment and minimize challenging behaviors. All staff are responsible for ensuring that all children are always supervised/able to be seen and heard. Staff will supervise children by sight and sound at all times.

Supervision Policies:

- Teachers will position themselves strategically so that they are facing into the majority of the children. And, together with their team/other staff members can supervise all areas of the classroom.
- When sitting with a group of children in a particular area for an activity, it is important for the teacher to position himself or herself so that they can easily make visual contact with other children in the room and the doorway.
- Children are carefully watched while outside at play. Staff members are stationed at the equipment and in busiest (or most strenuous) area of equipment. Other staff members rotate among the play areas. When a child goes inside to use the bathroom from outdoors, a staff members will accompany them, still maintaining the appropriate ratio and not allowing a 1:1 situation to occur.
- When one or more children are present, there will be at least two staff members on the premise.
- When dealing with children in emergency or one to one conversations/situations, staff is to position themselves so that they are in view of another adult/staff so that their actions can be observed by others.
- When traveling from one location to another, staff should position themselves with one staff in front of the group, and the other staff behind the group (whenever possible).

- Teachers must position themselves away from each other in the classroom except when completely necessary to communicate about the classroom happenings and work together. Teachers must communicate any time that they are leaving the room and/or if they are taking any children with them.
- Staff will position themselves in infant and toddler classrooms to be able to see and hear any sleeping children at all times when engaging with other children whom are awake.
- During naptime, ratio and supervision will remain the same.
- Teachers must move around the room frequently– although there are times where staff may be sitting doing activities and actively engaging with children.
- Office of Early Childhood ratios will be followed in each age group. Currently, these ratios are:
  - Children Under 2: 4 children to 1 staff
  - Two Year Olds: 5 children to 1 staff
  - Preschool (3–5 year olds): 10 children to 1 staff
  - School Age Programs (Kindergarten and up): 15 children to 1 staff
- Office of Early Childhood maximum group sizes will be followed in each age group. Currently, these max group sizes are:
  - Children Under 2: 8
  - Two Year Olds: 10
  - Preschool (3–5 year olds): 20
  - School Age Programs (Kindergarten and up): 20 (30 for field trips, outdoor play, and activities exclusive for school-age programs)

## **BATHROOM SUPERVISION**

Children are encouraged to follow their natural rhythms. However, the class can be encouraged to use the bathroom at appropriate times as a part of the day (before rest, before outside, etc...) Toilet learning should be free of undue stresses, and a pleasant experience rather than one in which the child is rushed. At times, parents and staff should collaborate to support each child in their own bathroom/potty training experience.

Staff will encourage children to utilize their self-help skills, use appropriate words when referring to body functions, and encourage children to flush the toilet and wash their hands independently.

If a staff member must assist a child due to an accident, they should first coach them through doing it on their own, and if assistance is needed the child should remain in the standing positions as the teacher supports only when there is another staff member there to witness. Accidents should remain confidential between staff, children, and parents and soiled clothes should be discreetly stored in a watertight bag. Children and staff hands will be washed when complete.

As each of our bathroom areas and age groups differ, staff will be aware of all activity in the bathroom while following age-appropriate supervision.

Staff will make sure the restroom is not occupied by unknown or outside individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom, or if that is not possible send school-age children in on a 1:1 basis. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff (not being alone with a child). If staff are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open.

## **OUTDOOR/PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION**

It will be the responsibility of all program staff to ensure the safety of children on the playgrounds. Supervision of children will include the following:

- A head count will be taken before leaving the building and before returning inside to the facility.
- Children will be escorted by the staff to their designated play areas
- Program staff will encourage and demonstrate proper equipment use and play
- Program staff will circulate through the play areas, supervising and interacting with the children in a positive manner. Program staff will coordinate positions so that all play activities and equipment is supervised.
- Ratio and group sizes will be maintained outside.
- Children will not re-enter the facility on their own unless they are escorted by a guardian or program staff member.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIP POLICY**

The YMCA utilizes licensed school busses or certified YMCA vehicles, with state approved drivers, for its transportation needs, including field trips and emergency situations.

Upon registration, parents are required to give permission for the YMCA to transport their child as required. Prior written notice will be obtained for all field trips.

## **SWIMMING POLICY**

When children are participating in swimming or wading as part of a program, whether at the facility or on a field trip, the following staff to child ratios, shall always be maintained with the children:

- all non-swimmers shall be clearly identified in a way that is visually and easily recognized by lifeguards and staff;
- for infants twelve (12) months of age and younger, there shall be at least one (1) program staff person with every child. for toddlers under three (3) years of age, there shall be at least one (1) program staff member with every two (2) children;
- for preschool children (3 years to 5 years of age) there shall be at least one (1) program staff member with every four (4) children.

The YMCA operator shall be responsible for assuring the supervision of the children at all times while the children are at the facility, indoors or outdoors, or on field trips. At no time shall a child be left unsupervised. A certified life guard will be present at any pool or waterfront.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

### **During warm weather months**

Families should apply sunscreen BEFORE children come to the program for the day. If sunscreen needs to be reapplied to your child before outside activities, a sunscreen application form will be required. Please fill out the form, sign it, and return it to the child's classroom teacher. This form is valid for one calendar year. Be sure to send in the child's sunscreen labeled with the child's name.

### **During cold weather months**

Children shall wear hats, gloves, boots, and snow pants (as needed). Their clothing should be layered and dry. Staff will frequently check on children's extremities for warmth and dryness.

### **Water**

Water will always be accessible to children. Staff will bring water outdoors daily or have it immediately accessible to children. Please make sure children are well hydrated before prolonged physical activity and on extremely warm days.

### **Insects**

Insect repellent is not permitted within our centers and will not be applied by staff. If parents would like their children to have insect repellent on, we ask that they apply it at home (or outside the center) before the child is signed in to the program.

## **HAND WASHING POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Hand washing is critical to maintaining a healthy environment. We will train and encourage all who enter the center to follow OEC (Office of early Childhood) best practices when it comes to handwashing.

### **Proper handwashing technique:**

1. Wet the hands and apply a small amount of liquid soap to the hands
2. Rub hands together vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (about two rounds of the "Happy Birthday" song!)
3. Wash all surfaces of the hands, including the backs of the hands, palms, wrists, between fingers, and fingernails
4. Rinse hands thoroughly to remove the soap lather
5. Dry hands with a single use disposable towel
6. Turn the faucet off with the towel

Staff will assist children with hand washing as needed to ensure hands have been thoroughly cleaned and hand washing procedural signs are posted at each hand washing area. Each classroom will have a designated sink for children to wash their hands. Teachers will ensure that the sink is sanitized regularly throughout the day. On field trips, staff will bring liquid soap for proper handwashing. Only when hand-washing facilities are not available off program, antiseptic towelettes or wipes are to be used following the guidelines mentioned above. The use of alcohol-based sanitizers should never be used as a substitute to hand washing.

**Staff and children are required to wash their hands at the following times:**

1. Upon arrival to the classroom
2. After toileting or being changed (if in diapers/pull-ups)
3. After handling bodily fluids (i.e. blowing or wiping a nose or touching: mucus, blood, or vomit). Refer to OSHA training on Universal Precautions.
4. After handling pets or other animals
5. Before preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (i.e. meat, eggs, poultry)
6. Before & after feeding a child a meal or a snack
7. Before & after handling ANY sensory materials (i.e. sand, playdoh, water, slime)
8. Before & after playing in water
9. Before & after outdoor play

**Staff are also required to wash their hands:**

1. Before & after administering medication
2. After diapering children
3. Before & after treating an injury, following the removal of protective gloves
4. After coming in contact with garbage
5. After cleaning

**CLASSROOM CLEANLINESS & SANITIZATION**

The overall cleanliness, organization, and appearance of the classrooms are a vital part of our program as they serve young children, families, and they represent the YMCA. All staff are trained annually on cleaning policies and procedures, follow the YMCA Classroom Daily Checklist for daily and ongoing sanitization. Staff will use fragrance-free and the least-toxic cleaning products possible for ongoing cleaning and sanitization.

A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or that is otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion is either to be (a) washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized, and air dried or (b) washed and dried in a mechanical dishwasher before it can be used by another child.

Policies developed as recommended by NAEYC's "Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Frequency Table".

**TOYS/ITEMS FROM HOME POLICY**

Children that are enrolled in before and after school programs are typically permitted to bring their own toys, including electronic devices, to the program, upon permission from both the YMCA program staff and the child's parent. Any and all toys brought in from home must be clearly labeled. The YMCA strictly enforces a "no trading" policy and only allows toys from home at certain times of the program designated by head teacher/director. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or damaged toys, technology, or other items that are brought into program.

Across our Early Learning Centers we do not allow toys from home. Exceptions are made for small comfort items to be utilized by the child only during nap time. This comfort item should be small enough to fit in the child's cubby and we ask that it remains there until naptime. Utilizing the comfort item outside of nap and during transitions will be permitted at times needed with the head teacher and director's discretion.

**Please contact your child's YMCA program to discuss the specific rules about your classroom or any specific situations.**

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

The YMCA maintains program facilities free from harmful animals, insects/pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), so the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.

**ANIMALS / PET POLICY**

Personal pets are not typically permitted in the classroom due to allergies. However, if a Head Teacher and Director decide to introduce a classroom pet into the center, they are responsible for the following procedures as well as meeting with the Child Development Director or Executive Director to review specific policies.



1. Any pet or animal present at the facility, indoors or outdoors, must be in good health, show no evidence of carrying any disease, and be a friendly companion for the children. Dogs, cats, and other furry animals, if allowed, will be immunized for any disease which can be transmitted to humans and will be maintained on a flea, tick and worm control program. The following animals will not be permitted in child development program (as a pet):
  - Ferrets
  - Birds of the parrot family
  - Turtles or other reptiles that can carry Salmonella
  - Any wild or dangerous animal.
2. Pets will be kept clean and housed in clean living quarters. Children will not be allowed access to the pet's food or excrement. Animal tanks and cages will be secured in such a manner that prevents children from climbing on the structure and prevents the structure from tipping over.
3. All pets will be enclosed in cages or separated by some other means from the children, except when the children are handling them under adult supervision. Children will not 'mouth' pets or put their hands in their mouths after touching the pet or areas used by the pet. Pets will not be allowed in areas where food is prepared, stored or eaten.
4. Children, caregivers, and staff will follow proper hand washing procedures after handling animals. 5. In the event of an animal bite or scratch, procedures for first aid and notification of parents or legal guardians contained in these policies will be followed.

## **IDLING VEHICLES**

In all programs, we strongly discourage idling vehicles in our parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures. Please park your vehicle safely in a designated spot at pick up and turn off the engine during pick up and drop off times.

# 5) EARLY LEARNING CENTERS

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **FOR OUR EARLY LEARNING CENTERS: INFANTS, TODDLERS & PRESCHOOLERS**

Our curriculum is based on the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CTELDS) for Children in Pre-School and Infant/Toddler Programs. Additional updates about curriculum will be shared by Child Development Directors.

Our staff uses the developmental domains of personal, social, physical, cognitive and creative development to assess children and provides the focus for individualizing learning to meet each child's needs. Child-initiated and teacher-selected activities are designed for children to experience areas of literacy, language, math, science, creative experiences and motor development.

## **UPON ARRIVAL**

For Early Childhood programs, children are encouraged to arrive at the program everyday by 9:00 AM. The program day begins promptly at 9:00 AM and late arrivals disrupt the children and staff, as well as activities in the program. For grant funded program slots, funding contracts require that your attendance meet specific criteria for days and/or hours in the program. If a child arrives after the designated start times, advance notification is needed.

Repeated late arrivals will cause loss of funding for your slot based on the requirements of the grant funding. This will necessitate paying the current full tuition rate to continue receiving care.

All children entering an Early Childhood Education YMCA Child Development program **MUST** wash their hands upon arrival. It will be the responsibility of the person dropping your child off in the morning to walk to the bathroom or sink and ensure that your child washes his/her hands properly.

## **CHILD ASSESSMENTS**

Upon enrollment in an Early Learning Center, the family shall complete a questionnaire regarding the child's developmental level and abilities. Lead staff will complete a developmental screening (varied by center). Additional screening in some programs will be done to evaluate children's language, cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, and social-emotional development. The information is used to provide individualized instruction and to better observe and assess the child's developmental goals.

Ongoing assessments are regularly conducted by staff to identify children's interests, strengths, and areas of need; and this information is then used in alignment with teaching strategies to meet goals set for the child. At least one individual assessment will be done with the head teacher and child individually, and others may be done individually or in a small group setting.

Progress is monitored at a minimum of 2 times per year and results are shared with the child's family to help improve curriculum and teaching to ensure children are learning and growing to their potential.

Assessments are also used to identify children that may require referral for further diagnostic assessment with written permission from parents.

All information is kept confidential, and children's records are kept in a locked file. Information is shared with parents both informally and formally. The leadership staff at the center (Directors and head teachers) will review child assessment outcomes at least once annually during head teacher meetings to design activities and lesson plans that meet the differing and adapting needs and interests of the children. Assessment outcomes will be reviewed as possible on an ongoing basis to inform planning for overall program improvements.

## **CONFERENCES**

Parent/teacher conferences are offered a minimum of two times per year and on an as needed basis, to discuss each child's development and behavior while at our program. However, a parent, teacher or the director may request a meeting at any time throughout the year. These are scheduled at a mutually convenient time for all parties involved. Parents or guardians are invited to attend workshops or round table discussions as they become available.

Parents or guardians are encouraged to call upon the knowledge and expertise of the staff and the additional parent resource materials available. These include books, videos, articles, and reference materials. The YMCA employs a diverse staff and can provide translations as needed to interpret communications.

## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES FOR ECE PROGRAMS**

Activities for the Early Childhood Education program (ECE) include free choice, creative activities, process and product, quiet time/nap, physical activities, group time, story time, music, and age-appropriate technology opportunities at times.

For details on activities for the ECE program, please visit Appendix 1 found at the end of this document. \*A daily schedule for your child will be posted in the classroom. Activities will be differentiated based on age group and developmental level of the children in each classroom.

## **PROGRAM TRANSITIONS**

Our groups are designed based on the size of the group, program space and age of the child. The YMCA works with the teachers to make decisions regarding creating appropriate groups, led by the Child Development Director and Head Teacher. The YMCA staff work as a team to develop routines and schedules that allow for smooth transitions between activities during the day. The YMCA staff provide ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect children's well-being.

The program is organized and staffed to minimize the number of groups, staff, and classroom transitions experienced by an individual child during the day and program year. For infants, toddlers and twos, we are intentional in our attempts to keep children with their teacher for nine months or longer to develop a sense of stability for the child.

Children need time to become familiar with new situations. It is suggested that the child, contingent upon his/her adjustment should stay at the program for gradually longer periods of time to ensure a successful adjustment/transition in the program. This allows family members to assist the child in developing relationships with the children and staff members in his/her program.

The YMCA makes every effort to provide each child with a stable, consistent, and caring environment. For young children, specifically infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, when a transition to another program space is needed, the decision will be made in consultation with the family. The following procedures will be implemented to ensure a successful transition:

1. The child will visit the new classroom with a familiar staff person for a short period of time during the day.
2. The time in the new classroom will increase over several days.
3. The child will visit the new classroom independently for a short period of time during the day.
4. The child will join the new classroom for morning activities.
5. The child will join the new classroom for morning activities and lunch.
6. The child will be enrolled in the new classroom.
7. At all times, the parents will be informed of the transition process prior to implementation and how the child is handling the transition daily.

## **CLOTHING POLICY**

For all Early Learning Centers, we ask that children have **TWO** clean sets of clothes always kept in each child's cubby space. Please be aware that some activities may result in clothes becoming unclean (ex: painting) and having an extra set of play clothes is helpful. The YMCA and its staff are not responsible for lost, stolen or vandalized items.

## **INFANT & TODDLER SAFETY POLICIES**

In the Infant room (children 12 months and younger), it is important to note the additional precautions and safety measures in place to ensure that the individual care needs of each child are met. All office of Early Childhood Regulations are followed, including (but not limited to below):

- Infants under 12 months of age shall be physically observed at least every 15 minutes to assess the infants breathing, color, temperature, and comfort.
- All infant diapers, creams, and supplies must be checked for proper labeling weekly
- All staff must accurately document diaper changes, feedings, naps, notes about skill development, and concerns on a Daily Sheet for the parent. Feedings will specifically document the type and quantity of food the child consumes.
- No child under 3 years of age shall have access to teething necklaces, teething bracelets or other jewelry that could present a choking or strangulation hazard.
- It is our priority to keep a clean, safe, and healthy environment in all areas, but especially in our Infant areas. Therefore, the infant room is a "shoe-free" environment. Adults and mobile children that enter the infant room should remove their shoes, replace them with 'indoor' shoes, or use shoe covers provided to them.

### **Feeding:**

- All infant bottles, food containers, storage bins, and personal belongings must be checked for proper labeling with the child's name prior to feedings
- All infants and toddlers are held for bottle feedings, and are not given bottles while in a crib or on a cot
- Bottles and cups may not be propped at any time
- Staff will work with parents to decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup
- Children of any age may not carry bottles, sippy cups, or regular cups with them while crawling or walking. Sippy cups or regular cups are to be given while the child is in a highchair or is sitting at a table.

### **Bottle Safety:**

- To promote and protect a child's health and to control infectious disease, the YMCA does not allow infants and toddlers/twos to have bottles while on their cots during naps. We also do not allow children to eat from propped bottles at any time. To safeguard our toddlers, we do not allow them to carry bottles, sippy cups, or regular cups while crawling or walking. All bottles and sippy cups should be labeled with the child's full name.
- Infant children receiving breast milk must have their bottles labeled with the infant's full name and the date and time that the milk was expressed. Staff will discard any unfinished and unrefrigerated formula or breast milk after one hour. We do not accept frozen breast milk. All breast milk must be thawed and ready to serve to the infant.

### **Sleeping:**

- Infants under 12 months of age shall be placed in a supine (back) position for sleeping in a well-constructed, free standing crib, or other piece of equipment designed for infant sleeping and appropriate for the particular child. Crib/equipment will have a snug fitting mattress covered by a tightly-fitted sheet unless the child has written documentation from a Physician, PA, or APRN specifying a medical reason for an alternative sleep position or alternate piece of equipment.
- When infants can easily turn over from the supine to the prone position, they shall be put down to sleep on their back, but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep.
- No soft items including, but not limited to, pillows, soft bumpers, toys and blankets (including weighted blankets), weighted sleepers, and weighted swaddles, shall be placed with an infant (under 12 months of age) or hung over the side of a crib or other piece of equipment designed for sleeping. The only exception of this shall be a pacifier without attachments unless the child has written documentation from a v assistant, or APRN specifying a medical reason for its use.
- No toys or objects shall be attached to sleeping or rest equipment.
- Bibs and/or garments with a hood will be removed from infants that are placed to sleep.

- No infant shall be put to sleep on a sofa, bed, couch, soft mattress, waterbed, or other soft surface. No infant shall be put to sleep or allowed to remain asleep in a child restraint system intended for use in a vehicle, an infant carrier, a swing or any place that is not specifically designed to be an infant bed unless the child has written documentation from a Physician, PA, or APRN specifying a medical reason for their use.
- Any infant that arrives to the program asleep, or falls asleep in equipment not suited for sleep will be moved immediately and placed in a crib or on their back.
- No infant shall be swaddled unless the child has written documentation from a physician, PA, or APRN specifying instructions and timeframe for swaddling the infant.

## **DIAPERING & TOILET SUPPORT**

The Greater Hartford YMCA works with families to assess where their child is in the toilet training process upon enrollment, and throughout their development in the center. While it's developmentally understood that children may have toileting accidents at times, if a child is requiring diapers/pull-ups and wipes consistently at a preschool age, teaching staff must be notified upon enrollment so a plan can be developed.

## **DIAPERING POLICIES**

Teaching staff utilizing the diapers/pull-ups and wipes will be responsible to notify the child's family when the individual child supply runs low. Teachers will continue to assist children to potty train as appropriate based on each child's stage of development.

As children need to be changed, staff will ensure they follow the diaper changing procedure steps BELOW. All children with diapers will be changed in the designated diaper changing area. Children will never be laid on the floor. Staff will ensure that all supplies necessary are available before getting the child. Staff will refer to the "Hand Washing Procedure" frequently throughout the diaper changing process. Daily, staff will restock the diapering area with appropriate supplies. If an enrolled child has a pull-up that needs to be changed, staff may assist the standing child in the classroom bathroom. Staff will assist the child, remove, clean the child, and put on a fresh pull-up (following safety and sanitation best practices).

## **DIAPER CHANGING PROCEDURE**

1. Before getting the child, ensure the diapering supplies are within reach.
2. Place fresh paper on the changing table
3. Staff will put on protective gloves
4. Place the child on the changing table (or assist them in getting up). After this point staff will NEVER leave the child unattended.
5. Staff will take off the dirty diaper. For heavily soiled diapers (bowel movement), place the diaper in a disposable diaper bag, tie and dispose in the designated garbage can.
6. If gloves are soiled, staff will remove (as trained) and put a new pair on. Staff will use wipes to clean the child. Child will be wiped front to back with a clean wipe each time. If wipes are heavily soiled, place them in a disposable bag before disposing them in the designated garbage cans.
7. Staff will talk with the child, reassure them, and always keep one hand on or directly next to the child.
8. Staff will place a diaper on the child
9. Staff will change child's clothes (if necessary) and assist them off changing table.
10. Staff will remove changing paper
11. Both staff AND child will wash their hands (with support from staff if needed)
12. Changing table will be disinfected after each use

Children's diapers are changed every two hours or as needed. Diapers are also checked and changed when a child wakes up from a nap at any age.

## **Cloth Diaper Policy:**

When cloth diapers or training pants are used, a plan for their use and care shall be submitted to and approved by the program prior to implementation of the plan. This plan shall include, but not necessarily be limited to these procedures:

- a) placing soiled (by urine or feces) clothing and diapers in a sealed air tight container (without rinsing or avoidable handling),
- b) removing soiled (by urine or feces) clothing and diapers from the child day care center daily for laundering, and



- c) cleaning and sanitizing the container daily. For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper has an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit.

## SELF HELP SKILLS AND TOILETING

Preschool children are expected to be able to toilet independently under the supervision of the staff. While it is not uncommon for the children to have bathroom accidents, if an accident occurs, the staff will address the incident calmly. Children will be encouraged to change themselves independently according to developmental capability. When a child needs assistance or is unable to use the toilet in a consistent manner, the staff and family will set up a plan to address these concerns.

## WATER PLAY

To ensure that the environment is healthy for all during water play, the children wash hands prior to and after playing in water. Children with open sores on their hands will be redirected to other activities until the sores are healed, or given their own area to play in. Fresh water is used to fill each table. The water is emptied after each group of children and all equipment is cleaned and sanitized.

## TOOTHBRUSHING

Some of our Early Learning Centers and classrooms will introduce toothbrushing at designated times as the children are developmentally ready. Toothbrush storage, sanitization, and brushing policies will be shared and on file for programs this pertains to.

# 6) CHILD GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES

The YMCA is committed to working with children and families to resolve challenging behavior issues. YMCA staff may work with supervisors, peers, and outside consultants to find a solution that will help children develop positive behaviors. **The goal within each of our centers is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures.** However, in extreme circumstances, YMCA administrators may ask a family to leave a childcare program. In these cases, every effort will be made to provide families with advance notice and to help families identify community resources and alternate care arrangements.

For all age groups, if a behavior issue arises the staff will address the child or children directly following the YMCA policies of positive guidance and discipline techniques based on developmentally appropriate practice, including positive guidance, redirection and setting clear limits that encourage children to develop self-control, self-discipline and positive self-esteem. Regardless of these behavioral situations, there are no times where it is permissible for staff to use any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion. Staff will communicate any behavior issues to parents promptly and be available for discussion. There will be continuous supervision of children at all times, including times throughout discipline (even if some space is given to a child).

### Tactics Staff Trained to Utilize:

- Diverting attention away from any activity that they disapprove of by substituting another toy or object or leading the child to another activity.
- Offering children choices of activities/games they can participate in.
- Setting clear limits for children that are consistently enforced and are based on reasons children can understand.
- Giving children warnings when they have done something wrong. Warnings are necessary to allow children to know in advance what to expect, reduce resistance and ease transitions
- Structuring the environment in such a way to help reduce misbehavior and accidents.
- Redirecting behavior. It is necessary at times to move a child away from a behavior by suggesting an alternative acceptable behavior.
- Modeling appropriate behaviors for children.
- Being hyper-aware when a conflict between children arises. Staff will engage children in helping to solve the problem by analyzing the situation and all possible solutions and working with the children to pick one they all agree as the best one.
- Separating children if they are having difficulty getting along.
- Remaining objective when there is a problem with a child

- Giving attention to positive behaviors in classroom and positive reinforcement
- Explaining the consequences of misbehavior to all children and continually sharing expectations throughout activities.

No child will be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child and others. If restraint is necessary, staff will notify the director and parents immediately when it is safe to do so.

Head teachers/leadership staff will share positive guidance techniques as needed with parents during the period of the child's enrollment.

**At no time may a staff member utilize physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. All staff members receive training in positive guidance and discipline upon hire and annually.**

**Staff have been trained to not allow or engage in any of the below type of inappropriate discipline:**

- Isolating a child without an adult present
- Punish/shaming child
- Threatening a child with a parent's action
- Isolate a child inappropriately
- Ostracize or withholding affection from a child
- Criticize parents in front of child
- Using physical force or rough handling, as well as using force around food

Any abusive, neglectful, physical, corporal, humiliating or frightening treatment or punishment — including, but not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, shaking or striking a child is prohibited.

## CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR PROCESS

If behaviors are outside of our Participant Behavior Guidelines (see below), or unsafe/causing an inability for the program to run as expected, the parent/guardian will be required to pick the child up from the child development program. When the parent(s)/guardian(s) have been called more than two times to pick up the child and there has not been an improvement in their behavior, a meeting between the parent(s)/guardian(s), staff, and Program Director will be held to develop a Behavior Management Action Plan. At this time, the program will work with the parent to support the child in the program and identify collaborative efforts, and address safety concerns/behaviors that cannot continue to be seen in the program. The goal is that in this meeting a plan can be developed with the family to support positive behaviors and continue to collaborate for growth between the lead teacher, Program Director, and family. Functions of the behavior will be assessed, and specific positive behavior support strategies agreed upon by all parties. Outside resources (including consultants) may be called in at this time.

Following this meeting, if a child's behavior has not seen any improvement and another incident occurs, the child will be suspended from the program. Before returning, another meeting with additional Greater Hartford YMCA leadership (Executive Director or Compliance Director) must be had to discuss next steps and a plan before allowing the child back into the program. **At this point, all other interventions possible will be arranged and discussed, and plan that both parties can agree on will be shared. Specific behaviors that will not be tolerated in the program (and those that we can allow with some growth) will be documented and clearly discussed. NAEYC's definitions and guidance of addressing challenging behaviors will be referred to and followed.**

After returning to the program, if continued challenging behaviors occur, the child will be asked to withdraw from the program. Program Director will reach out to discuss last day and offer to help parent in accessing services and alternative placements.

This policy will be shared with families upon orientation into the program/enrollment. Policy is reviewed by social service, health, and education consultants annually and complies with federal state civil rights laws.

## PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

While we will collaborate with families to prevent any exclusion from the program, disrespect toward staff, property, or repeatedly injuring other children or staff will not be tolerated. If a child is unresponsive to the staff team for improvement of the situation, and exhibiting unsafe behaviors, a parent or guardian will be contacted in order to remove the child from the program. The staff and parents together will develop a plan to prevent future inappropriate behavior (See Challenging Behaviors Process above). If the behavior continues, the child may be suspended from the program for a determined amount of time or expelled entirely from the program.

Inappropriate behavior can be, but is not limited to the following:

- Biting
- Kicking, Hitting, Pinching, or other physically aggressive behaviors towards peers or staff
- Swearing repeatedly
- Bullying
- Flight Risk (running away from the program)
- Other behaviors that do not allow peers to participate in the experience and/or require staff to redirect their focus from the group for an extended period of time.

Parents or guardians must advise staff of any physical or emotional conditions for which the child is being treated. Any changes in a child's behavior (i.e. sudden aggressiveness or withdrawal) noted by the staff will be brought to the attention of the parents or guardians. Parents or guardians should make the staff aware of any problems that the child may be experiencing, for the staff to better understand and assist the child.

## 7) MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

The CT Office of Early Childhood requires that each child enrolled in a Child Development program have an up-to-date medical form (Health Assessment Record is preferred) signed and dated by a physician or physician's assistant, with the date of the last exam specified. This form is to be kept on file at the YMCA's Child Development program. An updated Health Assessment Record/medical form will be required annually for children 5 years of age and under, and then as required by the local board of Education. The YMCA cannot accept a child without the proper medical forms. When a child is overdue for any routine health service, parents/guardians must provide evidence of an appointment for that service before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program. If a child does not have a physician or health insurance, the YMCA staff can assist in locating those services.

If a child has a valid Office of Early Childhood religious or medical exemption and is under immunized, they will be excluded from the program if a vaccine-preventable disease that children are susceptible to occurs. Details will be based on recommendations from the Office of Early Childhood as well as our program nurse consultant.

### CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS, RASHES, AND PARASITES

Parents are required to notify the center whenever a child has been exposed to a contagious disease or illness. This includes, but may not be limited to: Strep Throat, Pink Eye, Fifth Disease, Meningitis, Hepatitis, Ringworm, Impetigo, Lice, etc. If an outbreak occurs in the child's program, YMCA staff will notify the parents by way of a written posting at the site, as well as a posting on the child's classroom door. Information will be given to families explaining the symptoms of the outbreak or illness, along with suggested action to be taken by the parent or guardian of the child. Any child contracting a contagious illness must submit a doctor's note stating when the child may return to the program.

If a child is absent due to an illness, they are not allowed to return to the Center until free from any of the following symptoms or infections:

SYMPTOM/CONDITION	EXCLUDED FROM THE CENTER UNTIL:
Temperature over 100°	No fever for 24 hours (unmedicated)
Vomiting	No vomiting for one full day
Two or more loose stools beyond what is normal for the child	When bowels have returned to the child's normal. Stool should be contained in diaper or child should be able to make it to the bathroom in time.
Nasal secretions with behavioral changes	Until child is able to participate in activities
Rash with behavioral changes; with itching, oozing, pain	Rash is diagnosed & treated
Strep	24 hours of antibiotic treatment and fever free for 24 hours
Ringworm	May remain in center, but ringworm must be covered up always
Impetigo	If lesions can be covered up and kept dry, there is no need to exclude prior to the end of the day. Then, the child may return after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
Head Lice	May return after treatment
Chickenpox	6 days after onset of rash, or until lesions are dried and crusted
Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)	In an Early Learning Center, a child must be on medication (eyedrops, etc.) for 24 hours before returning to the program.

If an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children, then the child will be made comfortable in a location where she or he is supervised by a familiar caregiver. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until s/he can be picked up by the family, the child is located where others will not be exposed.

\*In programs located in public/elementary schools, the Board of Education's policies will be followed; if a child is allowed to participate in school, they may attend before/after school. However, staff may call parents and ask for the child to be picked up if symptoms are not allowing the child to fully participate in the program, or are a clear sign of illness.

\*In programs located in public/elementary schools, the Board of Education's policies will be followed; if a child is allowed to participate in school, they may attend before/after school. However, staff may call parents and ask for the child to be picked up if symptoms are not allowing the child to fully participate in the program, or are a clear sign of illness.

**The YMCA encourages staff to not come in when they are ill/showing any ongoing symptoms of illness. Staff will also follow the same policies as above, unless they are unable to fully perform their duties due to any illness in which case they may be out for longer.**

## **SICK CHILD**

If a child is ill with a temperature, diarrhea or vomiting during the program hours, the following steps will be taken:

1. The child will be immediately removed from the other children and placed in sight of a staff member at all times.
2. A staff member will make the child as comfortable as possible.
3. A staff member will attempt to contact the child's parent/guardian. If the child's parent/guardian cannot be reached the staff member will then call the authorized persons listed on the emergency form to pick up the child. It is requested that the child must be removed from the program within one hour of parent notification.

Other conditions warranting the child leaving the program include but are not restricted to: a rash or other skin irritation, lice, severe pain in any body part or other signs of a contagious disease. This procedure is for the ill child's protection, as well as the protection of the other children and staff members in the program.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR SICK CHILD**

A child that has had a temperature above 100 degrees (with behavioral changes) or has been vomiting must be cleared of symptoms for at least 24 hours before returning to the program (one full school day). If your child is out for 3 or more days, a signed doctor's note stating they can return to the program on such date. If antibiotics are prescribed, the child must be on an antibiotic for the first 24 hours before returning to the program.

Parents must advise staff of any physical or emotional conditions for which the child is being treated, particularly when the child is using mood-altering medications. Other physical conditions that staff should be made aware of would be, but is not limited to, allergies, asthma, or any restriction of activities.

**Parent should notify staff of any medications taken at home prior to arriving at center. This will be helpful to medical staff treating the child in the event of an emergency.**

## **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY**

In compliance with Public Act 02-84, Child Development Program may not deny services to a child who has an allergy or a prescription for an automatic pre-filled cartridge injector (such as an EpiPen). The YMCA requests, however, that whenever possible, medication be administered to the child outside the program hours by the parent or guardian. Only those prescription medications that must be administered during the program day will be administered.

The YMCA Child Development Programs will provide staff trained in the administration of medications, including the use of automatic pre-filled cartridge injectors with a written order from a physician and signed by the parent or guardian. The YMCA requires that, always, at least one staff person in the YMCA program be certified in the Administration of Medication as mandated by the CT Office of Early Childhood (Section 19a-79-9) and on site when a child requires this medication in program. A parent/guardian has the option, and is welcome, to come to the center to administer medication personally.

All medications will be checked in and documented in the child's file. Controlled medications will be counted by two staff upon arrival each day, upon distribution to child, upon return to parent, or upon disposal. Medication must be picked up upon termination of the medication order. Any controlled substance not picked up within one week following termination of a medication order will be discarded through local police stations, CT Drug Control Division, or the OEC-suggested routes.



In order to administer any medication, an Authorization for the **Administration of Medication by Child Care Personnel** for all types of medication (prescription and non-prescription) must be filled out and signed by the physician and by the parent. **One form is required for each medication.** This form must include the name of the medication, dose, method of administration, time of administration, reason for medication, dates of administration, expiration of medication, relevant side effects, potential allergies, prescriber's name and verification statement of prior use without adverse side effects.

Non-prescription medications include all types of over-the-counter medications (e.g. Tylenol, Advil, lozenges, cough drops, antibiotic creams, peroxide, etc.). The same form will be required for these as well and signed by a doctor.

All medication names (on the label) **MUST** match the Authorization of Medication form. All medication must be in the original bottle or packaging and the prescription label must include:

- child's name
- dosage/route of administration (mouth, inhalation)
- specific time/intervals to be given
- current date of order
- physician's name and telephone number
- individual measuring spoon as may be required with medication
- medication expiration date

Prior to the administration of any medication, at least one dose (two doses if antibiotic) must have been administered outside the program, without adverse side effects, even if taken before for another illness.

Trained staff will document the administration of medication on Medication Administration Record form maintained on site, upon completion of medication treatment order. Any unused medication will be promptly returned to parent after completion of treatment or will be destroyed within one week of termination of the order if not removed.

## STORAGE AND HANDLING PROCEDURES FOR MEDICATION

Rescue medication, such as inhalers and Epi Pens will be unlocked and stored out of the reach of children, but accessible to adults easily in case of emergency. All other medications will be stored in a locked medication box. Controlled substances will always be double locked within the storage cabinet. All staff handling medications of any kind will observe proper hand washing procedures both before and after application of medications. It is preferred that staff wear gloves when possible when administering medications. All application devices (including spacers) will be thoroughly washed after use or disposed of according to package or application directions.

Children's privacy will always be respected when administering medications.

## MEDICATION EXCLUSION POLICY

The YMCA reserves the right to exclude certain types of medical applications including, but not limited to, needle injections and rectal routes of administration, except for emergency situations such as an epi-pen. Parents will be required to seek alternate means of administration of medications if these forms are required during operating hours of the YMCA Child Development programs.

# 8) EMERGENCY PLANS AND POLICIES

**Each center will create and have available their own, site-specific emergency plans and policies.** Policies will be reviewed at least annually. Drills will be completed at least annually which include demonstrations of all staff, program staff, and children sheltering, locking down and evacuating the facility.

In consultation with the child's parent, program staff will develop a plan to ensure the special needs of all children are met during an emergency, including the provision of necessities such as medications, diapers, wipes, formula, and other comfort items. Cribs can be used to evacuate infants, toddlers, and children with special health care needs or disabilities.

## CONTINUATION OF OPERATIONS

If an emergency causes the facility to be unsafe for childcare, for any extended period of time, program staff will notify parents and refer them to 211 for other childcare options. The Operator will submit an initial application for Change in Location and will notify the Office of Early Childhood when an alternate location has been identified so that an inspection can be completed as soon as possible so it can be approved for childcare.

## MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If a child becomes injured during program hours, the following steps will be taken by the staff:

**In the case of a Minor Injury:**

Injury will be treated on-site, in accordance with the accepted CT Child Care First Aid Practices. Parent will be notified as soon as reasonably possible, incident will be documented, and a copy of report given to families within 24 hours.

**In the case of a medical emergency:**

- a. A qualified staff will perform emergency first-aid.
- b. Another staff member will dial 911.
- c. A staff member will notify the parents and senior branch staff as soon as possible.
- d. A staff member over 18 years of age will accompany child to the hospital by ambulance, if parent is not present at the child care facility.
- e. Documentation and Reporting done as soon as possible and shared with family.

**FIRE EMERGENCY AND EVACUATIONS**

Emergency notification and parent/emergency contact numbers are in each program space. Emergency evacuation maps are in each program space with two evacuation routes. If the first route is inaccessible, then the second route will be used. Emergency evacuation drills are conducted monthly.

The Head Teacher in each class is responsible for taking attendance before and after an evacuation. They are also responsible for taking along the classroom attendance and first aid kit. The director or designated responsible person will check all program areas including classrooms, bathrooms and kitchen to ensure no one remains in the building.

Each YMCA has its own evacuation plan. Please check with your child's program to find out the meeting location in the event of an evacuation. Once all the children are outside, the director or designated responsible person will ensure all are accounted for before children will be released to families.

In the event of a civil emergency evacuation, local police, fire, hospitals and radio stations will be contacted immediately to inform the public of the evacuation. YMCA officials will be responsible for informing the appropriate authorities. If the town instructs us to vacate the town, we will follow the town wide evacuation procedures as instructed. YMCA staff will make every effort to contact parents as soon as they are physically able to do so. If time permits, parents will be contacted prior to the evacuation. As the safety of the children and staff are paramount, notification may occur after any evacuation.

**Procedure:**

1. Staff will line children up at the designated area in the program space and follow the posted evacuation plan. If the exit is obstructed or inaccessible, escort children out the secondary designated exit.
2. Staff will take with them attendance (sign in/out sheet), emergency contact book, first aid kit and cell phone and/or walkie talkie.
3. Remove all children from the building and walk them to designated meeting area.
4. Take attendance to make sure all children and staff are accounted for.
5. A staff member must then contact the YMCA to notify the Child Development Director. If a staff member does not have a cell phone to place the call, they are instructed to go to a nearby location and ask permission to use a phone.
6. If the children must leave the site for the day, the YMCA will provide transportation to a designated emergency location where their parents will be contacted.

**PROVISION FOR SHELTER**

If evacuation out of the building is not permissible, children and staff will relocate to a determined area indoors. Please contact the YMCA to learn where the determined area is located at your child's program.

Once children are safe and secure, the Director and/or designated staff will gather the appropriate supplies necessary for the evacuation.

If emergency shelter is required, the children will be transported by local emergency vehicles to a designated emergency location per site/early learning center.

**WEATHER-RELATED EMERGENCIES**

The YMCA reserves the right to close all Child Development Centers and programs, due to inclement weather, emergencies, or the

inability to maintain State required staff to student ratios. If severe weather develops during the day, parents will be contacted and will be expected to pick up their children as soon as possible. If the parent or guardian is not able to pick up the child, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to arrange for the child to be picked up by an authorized person as determined by the child's pick-up list. The YMCA staff will only call persons on the child's authorized pick-up list if unable to contact the parent or guardian.

In the event of extreme weather conditions, the YMCA reserves the right to delay opening, close early, or close for the day. Staff will remain until the last child is picked up. An announcement will be made as soon as possible prior to the start of a program. Our priority is to provide care for families who need our services. The decision will be announced on the communication app, and/or Channel 3, and local radio stations.

In the event of tornadoes or hurricanes, staff and children will remain indoors away from windows and doors.

## **LOCK DOWN**

Should an emergency or threat that involve potential violence in or around the facility requires the need to stay put, the director/person in charge will notify the staff through the intercom/phone system or walkie talkies that they should begin lock-down procedure. 911 will be called.

Each program staff is responsible for the children in their care at that moment. The program staff will gather children to the safest area of the room, away from any windows or doors. Doors and windows will be locked, lights turned off, and curtains/blinds closed to all interior windows.

Program staff will calm the children and help them stay quiet. Attendance will be taken frequently.

Director/lead staff will remain in constant communication with emergency personnel. And, director/lead staff will do all they can to notify parents by communication apps, texting, and through emergency personnel. However, certain emergency situations may affect this ability to communicate.

Parents are not permitted access to the facility until it is determined that it is safe to do so. Staff will wait for all-clear from the emergency personnel. The director/person in charge will communicate all-clear to staff and children. Staff will take final attendance and wait for further instruction from Director and Emergency Personnel.

## **UNIDENTIFIED GUESTS**

While our centers all differ, all of our programs have policies to support building security and restrict access to those whom are not connected to the program or should have access. At no time should there be unidentified persons at the center. All staff will ask, "Can I help you", or approach the person to identify them when an unidentified person enters their Center. Staff will show and escort the guest, if possible, to the office for proper sign-in procedures.

## **CHILD PROTECTIONS**

The YMCA has a responsibility to prevent any child enrolled in the center from being abused or neglected and takes that very seriously. To help ensure the safety and well-being of children, and in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes, the YMCA, shall make a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC), when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, neglected or at imminent risk of abuse.

All YMCA staff are trained annually in the knowledge of mandated reporter responsibilities and reporting requirements, child abuse and neglect prevention techniques and detection methods, as well as the definitions of child abuse and neglect as defined below. All staff members are mandated to read and sign a comprehensive code of conduct to which they are expected to adhere. No staff member can have any contact, including, but not limited to, babysitting, phone, email, or texting with any YMCA participants under 18 outside of YMCA programs and activities. Parents who have any concerns or questions with respect to these issues may contact the YMCA Child Development Program Director.

Staff will report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect, or imminent risk of serious harm of any child to the Department of Children and Families as mandated by section 17a-101 to section 17a-101e inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes. Connecticut General Statutes identifies professionals who, because their work involves regular contact with children, are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. All YMCA employees are considered Mandated Reporters by the State of CT. Mandated Reporters are required to report abuse or neglect based on a reasonable cause to suspect, such as what is observed, what is told or said.

## **DEFINITIONS**

## **CHILD ABUSE**

Defined as any child under the age of eighteen who has had a physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him or her by a person responsible for his/her health, welfare or care or by a person given access to the child by the responsible person other than by accidental means, or has injuries which are at variance with the history given to them, or is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, cruel punishment or has been neglected.

## **CHILD NEGLECT**

Is defined as any child under the age of eighteen who has been abandoned, is being denied proper care or attention, physically, emotionally or morally or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his or her well-being or has been abused.

## **CHILD AT RISK**

Defined as reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is in danger of being abused as opposed to believing that the abuse has occurred.

## **CHILD ABUSE INCLUDES**

- Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning)
- Any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation)
- Neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)

These are Sample Policies only. They are to be used as a guide to assist programs in the development of their program's policies. You are free to adapt any and/or all of these Sample Policies. All policies, plans and procedures should be developed according to the requirements as outlined in the regulations, reviewed annually by consultants, and staff shall be trained on them annually.

Revised 2/10/25

- Emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth)
- At risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

## **CHILD ABUSE IS DEFINED AS**

A child who has had

- Non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him
- Injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
- Is in a condition, which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

## **CHILD NEGLECT IS DEFINED AS**

A child who has been

- Abandoned
- Denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally
- Allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his wellbeing (CT statutes 46b-120)

## **PROGRAM STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

As childcare providers we are mandated by law to report any suspicion that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk.

## **SPECIFICS ON REPORTING A SUSPECTED CASE OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

- Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at 1-800-842-2288.
- The reporter's name is required but may be kept confidential.

### **Information needed:**

- Name of child/Date of birth
- Address of child
- Phone number of child
- Name of parents or guardians
- Address of parents or guardians
- Phone number of parents or guardians
- Relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicators, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect
- Exact description of what the reporter has observed
- Time and date of incident
- Information about previous injuries, if any
- Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
- Name of any person suspected of causing injury
- Any information reporter believes would be helpful
- Any action taken to help or treat the child
- Seek medical attention for the child – if needed



Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF – 136) to DCF.

Program staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e).

All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

4. The management of this program supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a program staff member abused or neglected a child.

The administration will protect the child, including immediate notification of a parent or guardian, once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program.

Any program staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF's investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the program staff would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed to return to work.

5. Program staff training:

Program staff will be required to attend an annual program staff mandated reporter training. This training will focus on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect, the role of a mandated reporter, and the recognition and prevention of child maltreatment, abuse and neglect. All new program staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.

6. Provisions for informing families of abuse and neglect policy:

A copy of this policy will be included in our parent information packet, and each family will be given a copy upon enrollment.

When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a program staff member is made, the Director must immediately inform the parents or guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child's parents to access the cause of the child's injuries and offer support and guidance.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

1. All YMCA child development employees are considered Mandated Reporters and will make a report to CT-DCF and CT-OEC when a situation arises where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, neglected or in imminent risk of abuse by parent/guardian, YMCA staff member, or any other individual.
2. All staff persons and volunteers making a report in good faith are immune from any criminal or civil liability. A person required to report who fails to do so shall be fined not more than \$500. All staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting abuse or neglect.
3. A staff person must report a situation directly to the Child Development Director. In the absence of the Child Development Director, the staff member will follow the chain of command. A mandated reporter must make an oral report within 12 (twelve) hours of suspected abuse or neglect to the CT-DCF HOTLINE at 1-800-842-2288.
4. Within 48 hours of an oral report the mandated reporter must submit a written report to the CTDCF and CT-OEC notifying them of the incident.
5. Requirements of oral and written reports:
  - i. The names and addresses of the child and his parents or guardians.
  - ii. The age and gender of the child.
  - iii. The nature of the child's injuries, maltreatment, or neglect.
  - iv. The approximate date and time of injuries, maltreatment, or neglect.
  - v. Any information concerning any previous injuries or neglect.
  - vi. The circumstances in which the injury, maltreatment or neglect came to be known to the reporter.
  - vii. The name of the person suspected of abuse, maltreatment or neglect.
  - viii. Whatever action, if any was taken to treat and assist the child.
6. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall be kept on file.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR STAFF**

YMCA administration requires a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child. YMCA staff who are named in an allegation will be placed on paid administrative leave until the investigation has been completed. A meeting will be held with the employee, and at least one of the following: Center Director, Child Development Director or Executive Director. The Executive Director will consult with the Human Resources Department to inform them of the allegation. If the internal YMCA investigation concludes that abuse may have occurred, appropriate actions will be taken, up to and including termination, depending on the situation. If the internal YMCA investigation concludes that abuse did not occur, the employee will be allowed to return to work with no documentation in their file and a plan of action for future situations as appropriate.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

If you have a complaint, or a situation arise that is troublesome to you, we ask that you first approach the head teacher of the classroom or the Director on site right away, as it's always best in our experience to address situations directly and early.

Most situations can be resolved by discussion, set agreements at times, and ongoing communication with the classroom teacher and/or center director.

The chain of command you should follow should situations not improve, are:

1. Classroom teacher
2. Center/Program Coordinator or Director
3. Executive Director of Branch
4. Additional Greater Hartford YMCA Leadership, including Association Compliance Manager/Association Child Development Director

While we anticipate all would be addressed and moving forward at that point, if further assistance to make a complaint is needed, parents should contact the CT Office of Early Childhood.

### **CT Office of Early Childhood**

450 Columbus Blvd., Hartford, CT 06103

Phone #: 860-500-4412, [www.ctoec.org/contact-us](http://www.ctoec.org/contact-us)

All YMCA Child Development program inspection reports are posted for 30 operating days, and information is available online about inspections.

## **9) PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND CONTACT**

### **EARLY LEARNING CENTERS**

The YMCA staff are available by appointment to meet with parents as needed upon orientation of the program or as situations arise. This enables parents to meet with teachers, plan events and help evaluate the program. A strong home/program connection is important to building a good environment for your child. Parent participation is important as it enhances the programs and provides balance in the life of your child.

The facility will promote communication between families and staff by using different modes of communication- emails, apps, newsletters, and phone calls when needed. If you would like to increase any communication at any time with the center, please reach out to your classroom or school site head teacher directly.

### **NEWSLETTERS**

Monthly newsletters will be sent home informing parents and guardians of daily activities, monthly happenings, and special events. Our monthly newsletter also includes informational topics such as literacy activities and nutritional guidance. Any parent that would like to add to the newsletter is encouraged to speak to the child's teacher or the Child Development Director.

### **BULLETINS**

Notices and letters will be posted on the Parents' Information Board. Special notices and letters regarding children and/or parents will be placed in the child's cubby, as needed. There is a special bulletin board specifically for CT State Licensing Information.

## **PARENT OPEN DOOR POLICY**

The YMCA's Child Development Programs encourage parents to participate in activities with the children and welcomes parents to visit the program during the day. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child, drop by and tell a story or share a family tradition. Parents are also encouraged to participate and chaperone field trips.

In addition, the YMCA strives to incorporate multicultural learning experiences. If the YMCA Child Development Program is not parallel with your family's values and practices, please feel free to speak to the Child Development Director or any classroom teacher at any time.

## **FAMILY RESOURCES**

There is a Family Service area available at many centers with listed resources. The following consultants are also available and can-do on-site evaluations and meetings:

- Education Consultant
- Social Service Consultant
- Health Consultant

## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES – FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAMS**

### **FREE CHOICE**

Children can choose from a variety of activities in our learning centers that include science and nature, dramatic play, blocks, art, gross and fine motor skills, language arts, math, sand and water activities. When children can choose activities, they will choose what is most important to them. They use the materials in ways that meet their own developmental needs. We create the environment to allow each child to choose activities that are developmentally appropriate for their age. When children work at a task they selected, they find it very satisfying and this is the most effective and engaging way to learn.

### **CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

Activities such as arts and crafts, puppet play, storytelling, dramatization, block building, music and dance are a great time for children to learn to follow directions, use their imagination, employ their own ideas, and work in groups or individually.

### **PROCESS AND PRODUCT**

Children are learning all the time. They need the time to explore and learn about cause and effect (i.e., what happens if I do this?). Children need the freedom to try new experiences without worrying about the final product. Children will focus on the process of doing things. Therefore, a child will do the same puzzle repeatedly or pour sand from one container to another repeatedly. The child may be learning coordination or beginning writing skills or making discoveries about gravity. Mostly, he/she is building confidence. Your child's artwork will center on the process. Patience is important as the child will need the time to grow and learn that this is part of the task. Your child is learning to be creative and to problem solve at the same time.

### **QUIET TIME/NAP**

Children in Early Childhood Education programs lay down for a quiet or rest time each day to allow children to relax and refuel for the afternoon. Each child will rest on an assigned cot. Please provide the following for your child:

- small sheet (crib size),
- blanket and pillows

\*Please label these items with your child's name. Parents are responsible to take these items home weekly to be washed and returned to the center.

### **PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**

Twice daily children may play outdoors, take a walk or play group movement games inside. Music/ movement activities are provided throughout the day as well. Water play is incorporated during summer season when weather permits.

### **GROUP TIME**

This is a time where staff and children share experiences and talk about topics of importance for that day or activity. This is also a time to learn about the world around them by discussing the weather and what is happening outside the classroom. New materials may be introduced as well as how to care for and use these items. The children are also developing their social skills such as: listening, taking turns, sharing, and empathizing during group time. The children are discovering how to solve problems, ask questions, brainstorm, as well as the importance of the sequencing of events and consequences. They are learning how to be fair, to be respectful and to gain an understanding of one another.

### **STORY TIME**

This is an interactive time when children will have the opportunity to listen to stories, develop literacy skills, and learn how to expand on different subjects. Stories often enhance deeper learning of topics that have been discussed during group time. Children are learning to value language as well as basic reading skills.

### **MUSIC**

During music time, children are learning different concepts and skills. Skills such as numeracy, alphabet, basic shapes, vocabulary, order and sequence, increasing attention span, enhancing listening skills, learning rhythm, tone pattern, developing manual dexterity and increasing muscle control are all learned through songs, finger plays, nursery rhymes, dance and movement.

### **COMPUTER TIME**

Each preschool classroom has scheduled computer time with developmentally appropriate software. Children rotate in the computer center using the computer for 15-minute intervals. A log is maintained to ensure that all children wanting to use the computer have equal access to this learning enhancing tool in both individual and group activities.