



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

EARLY LEARNING

YMCA OF GREATER GRAND RAPIDS
PARENT HANDBOOK
2020





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WELCOME TO THE YMCA OF GREATER GRAND RAPIDS EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Dear Parents,

We are committed to providing your child with a safe, enriching childcare experience that incorporates the YMCA core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, and Inclusion. We are honored that you have become a part of the YMCA family. We share a small amount of your child's life and are privileged to be given the opportunity. Our goal is to impact our students' lives educationally, emotionally, and socially so they are provided with a strong foundation for their educational career. We look forward to working as a family to help each child reach goals that are set for them throughout their time at YMCA Early Learning Centers. We strive not only to provide a challenging academic program but a secure, personal environment of care to each individual student. We hope that we can exceed all your families' expectations and want to take this time to personally welcome your family to The YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids.

You have made a great investment in your child's future!
YMCA Early Learning Leadership

This parent handbook provides valuable information about your child's activities, the program's philosophy, policies, and general information about our program. Families should be looking at this together prior to a child's admission to the program. Any questions parents may have regarding this handbook are to be referred to the program director.

YMCA MISSION STATEMENT

Guided by our Christian principles, we strengthen the spirit, mind, and body of all individuals.

The YMCA opens its doors to anyone, regardless of race, gender and religion or socioeconomic background, and we are committed to serving everyone who comes in. As a result, we look to meet each person where they are, including providing opportunities for financial assistance.

Our Cause At the Y

Strengthening community is our cause. We believe that positive, lasting personal and social change can only come about when we all work together to invest in our kids, our health, and our neighbors. That is why we focus our work on three areas of focus, known as Pillars:

- Youth Development: Empowering young people to reach their full potential
- Healthy Living: Improving individual and community well-being
- Social Responsibility: Providing support and inspiring action in our communities.

Our Purpose At the Y

Our purpose is to be the most impactful convener of community resources focused on helping all youth and adults succeed and be their best selves.

CORE AREA OF FOCUS

Youth Development: Empowering young people to reach their full potential

The objective of the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids Youth Development Programs is to substantially increase our capacity to prepare children for school and to support their year-round success. We are developing evidence-based Early Learning, Out-of-School Time Learning and Summer Learning Loss Prevention curriculums to improve the academic outcomes of every child and teen in our care. Our new programming aligns the Y's strengths with key educational milestones: **being ready to learn for kindergarten, reading at grade level and being academically on track in elementary school, middle school and high school.**

Healthy Living: Improving individual and community well-being

The objective of the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids Healthy Living Pillar is to improve lifestyle health and health outcomes in West Michigan. The Y will help lead the transformation of health from a system largely focused on treatment of illnesses to a collaborative community approach that elevates well-being, prevention, and health maintenance. Our programming aligns with Y's strengths with key health and wellness milestones: **achieving personal health and well-being goals, emphasizing prevention for all people including those at-risk or reclaiming health, and healthy choices are easy, accessible and affordable for all.**

Social Responsibility: Providing support and inspiring action in our communities

The objective of the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids Social Responsibility Pillar is to foster connectedness, strengthen support networks, and encourage investment in our communities. The Y will activate resources and engage people from diverse populations and perspectives for individual and collective action. Our programming aligns with the Y's strengths and seeks to address critical social issues affecting our communities. **We seek to ensure diverse, underserved and isolated communities feel supported by the Y, people give their time, talent and treasure in support of community needs, and our Y convenes and collaborates to develop local, state and national solutions that address key issues facing our communities.**

Core Values

The YMCA partners with families to instill our mission and values in every person. Therefore, it is important for every staff member to know the mission of the YMCA, as well as the 5 core values, Honesty – Respect – Caring – Responsibility – Inclusion.



PHILOSOPHY

The YMCA Early Learning Program is geared to the individual needs of children. Each room provides a play centered environment with a wide range of materials and developmentally appropriate activities, which allow children to manipulate, discover, explore, make choices, and create according to their interests. Each child is recognized and valued as a unique individual with a capacity for growth and development. Through group and individual activities, each child is encouraged to develop emotionally, socially, creatively, and intellectually, at his/her own rate.

Our definition of quality is formed from the YMCA using standards established by the Michigan Department of Education, YMCA of the USA, and most importantly the needs of the individual children and parents we serve.

The essential component of our program is our staff. Staff are trained in growth and development and set age appropriate expectations. Staff guide and direct children with warmth, concern, acceptance, approval, and respect enabling children to develop a strong, positive self-concept. A warm responsive atmosphere is provided to foster a sense of trust and autonomy, as well as to encourage cooperation, communication, and respect for others.

The YMCA believes strongly that quality child programming is only possible when parents are involved in the makeup of the program, directly or indirectly. A variety of options are available for parents to participate in some way.



ADMISSION

Parents may enroll their children in either a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the availability of the program. Children will be enrolled on a first come first serve basis, regardless of nationality, race, gender, or creed. Full-time enrollment will be considered first, over part-time. Part-time families may be asked to change their schedule to accommodate incoming children or at classroom transition time.

Before a child can begin attending the program, it is mandatory that the program have the following items:

- Online enrollment packet including financial policy and agreement
- Food program enrollment form and income eligibility statement (if applicable)
- Health appraisal form along with immunization record.
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire (within 2 weeks of enrollment)

Hours of Operation and Holidays

The YMCA early learning programs will be open Monday through Friday. Hours vary at each location. In the case of an unexpected closure the YMCA will not be responsible for refunds, the Chief Operating Officer of the YMCA will reserve the right to make any changes to this policy per the situation. In the event of severe weather, closings will be posted via TV broadcastings, media websites and the YMCA website (www.grymca.org). In these cases, the YMCA will make every effort to communicate this information with as much notice as possible. Additionally, tuition remains the same, regardless if the program closes for any planned (holiday, professional development) or unforeseen circumstances (severe weather, power outage, as examples).

The program will be closed on the following days:

New Year's Day

President's Day – YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids Early Learning Professional Development

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Friday after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve Day

Christmas Day

Professional Development Day (up to one additional day per calendar year with a 30-day notice)



INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In case of inclement weather the Y will be open normal hours at our program locations. The Y believes childcare program participants rely on the services of the Y, especially for employment purposes, and participate at their own risk.

Early Learning programs located in school or community buildings will typically remain open even if the school day is canceled by the district, or the building closes.

- In the event a program closes mid-day, families will be notified and given one (1) hour from the time the decision has been made, or unless otherwise noted, to pick up their child.
- If a situation arises when a program is dismissed for a storm moving in, the Y reserves the right to cancel the program as approved by the YMCA Senior Leadership
- Child Care Staff will contact parents of facility/program closure. If appropriate, closure will be included on the Y's social media and GRAIL (TV/Radio) communications.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE AND FEES (WAITLIST)

Parents will be informed of their tuition payments, and payment due dates upon enrollment. The YMCA reserves the right to change tuition only after a minimum of two weeks' notice has been given to parents. Billing will occur according to the payment schedule you received at the time of enrollment.

All funds are expected to be available on the designated draft date. If for any reason they are not available, the account will be charged a \$10 late payment fee. Three consecutive weeks of nonpayment may result in termination of enrollment. We will make every effort to work with our families in the case of challenge/hardship; families should communicate with their Directors as early as possible to explore possible solutions. Failure to keep your account current is grounds for disenrollment of your child. When you enroll and sign up for specific days, you are reserving the time, space, staff, and provisions for your child whether he/she attends or not. Part time families may add additional days if space is available. Switching of days is only allowed with director approval.

Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee is required per child. The registration fee is waived for YMCA members.

Discounts and Financial Aid

We know that providing the best quality care for your child represents a financial commitment. Just as our community is full of diversity, this program has a rich diversity of families including economic diversity. The Y has scholarships available through its Annual Campaign to help reduce tuition. If interested in applying for assistance, please see your program director for the application. In addition, the Y also accepts childcare subsidy payments through the Department of Human Services, however, most subsidies do not cover all our tuition costs. Parents are responsible for all co-pays that they will incur for their child's tuition. Parents are also responsible for filling out all necessary paperwork to keep their subsidy current. If for some reason the parent loses their subsidy, the parent is responsible for the full payment of tuition.

We offer a 5% sibling discount, which is applied to the oldest child in attendance, school age programs are exempt.

Waitlist

Locations offering a waitlist will have \$25.00 non-refundable fee per child. Once a spot becomes available, after two weeks the Y has a weekly holding fee of two (2) days per child per week. This would also apply in cases where the child will not be attending the program for a period, over several months, but the family is interested in holding their spot.

SCHEDULE AND SCHEDULE CHANGES

We understand things change and there may be a need to adjust your child's attendance schedule. Part-time families may add additional days if space is available. We require at least two weeks' notice to make the appropriate adjustments, scheduled changes must also be done in writing and sent to the Director of the program. To ensure we are being cognizant of our required ratios, we need adequate time to assess the staffing and ratio needs of the program. Every effort will be made to accommodate schedule changes.

We do not deduct absences or holidays from your fee. Your fee pays for direct operational costs. When you enroll and sign up for specific days, you are reserving the time, space, staff, and provisions for your child, whether he/she attends or not.

Late Pick Up

In the case of late pickups, the staff are trained to handle the circumstance by following the steps detailed below:

- All attempts will be made to contact the parents by phone.
- After 15 minutes, the emergency contact person will be contacted.
- After 60 minutes, with no contact from parent or emergency contact, Child Protective Services will be called.



Should an emergency arise causing the delay in pick up, please notify the program site as soon as possible and specify an expected time of pick up so the site staff have an opportunity to plan accordingly.

Late pickups do require an additional charge of \$1 per each minute; the parent will also be required to sign a late pickup notice upon arrival.

Vacation Time

As a full or part-time enrollee, your child is entitled to vacation time with the following stipulations:

- The family must be in good financial standing with the center.
- Children must be absent from the center.
- Days of vacation will equal one week of enrollment. Example: Your child attends 3 days a week; therefore, you are entitled to 3 vacation days.
- There are no rollovers. Vacation time must be taken before Dec. 31.

Vacation time will be distributed as follows for full-time families based on when your child is enrolled during the first year.

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| January-March | 5 Days |
| April-June | 4 Days |
| July-September | 3 Days |
| October-December | 2 Days |

Vacation time will be distributed as follows for part-time families, enrolled 2-3 days a week, the first year:

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| January-June | 2-3 Days (depending on days enrolled) |
| July-December | 1 Day |

DROP OFF/RELEASE AND AUTHORIZED PICK UP PROCEDURES

Parents must always accompany their children to the classroom. There is an attendance sheet where parents will note the date and time of arrival and initial this information. When the child is picked up, the same information will be noted. No child will be released to a parent unless they come into the center. We will check identification on everyone until the faces become familiar. Anyone picking up a child needs to be 16 or older.

The Y will give either parents or legal guardians' equal access to the child. We cannot withhold or limit access to a child per parent request, regardless of the reason. Current court documentation must be on file with the center to deny release to either of the legal parents or guardians of the child.



Children will only be released to the parties whose information was included in the enrollment packet. If there is an immediate need to authorize a different pick up, this notification should come in the form of written communication (if the information cannot be provided in writing a call to the Program Director or Site Coordinator will serve as notification). A child shall be released to either parent unless a court order prohibits release to a parent. A copy of the order specified is to be kept on file at the program. The YMCA staff are trained and required to address the following circumstances in the manner detailed below:

Intoxicated Parent

If a parent arrives at the program site or branch to pick up a child, and appears to be intoxicated, the staff member will write down the parent's name, date and time of the incident, and give the information to the Program Director. Staff may offer to call someone else to pick up the child but are not allowed to stop the parent from leaving. The Director will follow up with the family.

Separated Parent

If parents are separated, but not legally divorced, the YMCA has no right to deny access to a child from either parent. If one parent is concerned about the safety of the child when the child is with the "other" parent, action should be taken through the court system.

However, without a restraining order, the YMCA childcare staff will not prevent access to the child by either parent.

Emergency Release

If a parent is unable to pick up their child, they should decide from another adult, already listed on the emergency card, to pick the child up. If this is not possible, and an adult that is not on the emergency card must pick the child up, the parent should notify the staff either in writing or over the phone. Any adult, that staff do not recognize, must show proof of photo ID.

Release to an Older Sibling

If a parent wishes for a YMCA staff to release their child to an older sibling, they need to be at least 16 years of age and on the emergency card, or the parent must have given written prior notice.

GRIEVANCES

We believe that communication is key for a strong teacher/family relationship. If a concern arises while your child is enrolled, we recommend the following suggestions:

Talk with the child's teacher or the program director. Try to not "drop in" to talk. Schedule a time that is convenient for both of you so you can give your undivided attention. Be clear on what your question is about. State the nature of the concern and what you would like to see happen. Be sure that when you are finished, you both are clear about what you have discussed and the desired outcomes including time frames.



WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

If you are planning on leaving the program, you are responsible for giving a two-week advanced notice. If a parent withdraws a child without two weeks advance notice, the family is responsible for paying for two full weeks. Two weeks un-notified absence is considered grounds for termination.

Disenrollment Policy:

Due to the nature of our programming cycles, children who are removed from a YMCA program because of noncompliance with our outlined Behavior Management Policy will not be eligible to enroll in future programs (i.e. *Winter Break Day Camp, Spring Break Day Camp, Summer Day Camp, Before and After School Programming*) for a minimum of 6 months from date of disenrollment. After that timeframe has past, a redetermination will be made at the discretion of the Program Director. When a family wishes to re-register, a meeting with the Program Director must take place prior to program starting to discuss expectations and a trial period.

PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

Staff Supervision

The center shall always provide appropriate care and supervision by sight and sound of children. The ratio of teachers to children present always shall be based upon all of the following provisions for:

INFANTS AND YOUNG TODDLERS, 0-30 months, there shall be one teacher for 4 children

OLDER TODDLERS, 30-36 months, there shall be one teacher for 8 children

CHILDREN 3 YEARS OF AGE, there shall be one teacher for 10 children

CHILDREN 4 YEARS OF AGE, there shall be one teacher for 12 children

If there are children of mixed ages in the same room, then the ratio shall be determined by the age of the youngest child.

YMCA Membership

Each YMCA offers a variety of programs for family members, as well as memberships for individuals and families. We encourage childcare families to take this opportunity to plan for healthy, fun activities together. Through fitness/wellness activities families can become healthier and grow closer when the family comes to the Y together. Children enrolled full time, will receive a Youth Program Membership to the YMCA for as long as they are enrolled full time. Families are responsible for acquiring paperwork through the childcare director or YMCA membership department



Curriculum

The YMCA believes learning takes place as children touch, manipulate, and experiment with things and interact with people daily. At the YMCA Child Development Centers, children's play is an essential component of our curriculum and through their play experiences, themes or projects are developed that guide our daily activities and interactions.

The YMCA has ten core content areas: literacy, mathematics, science, and technology, physical, language, cognitive, social/emotional, language acquisition, social studies, and the arts.

By using this framework, we focus on:

1. How children develop and learn.
2. The learning environment in which children learn.
3. What children learn.
4. The role of the teacher.
5. The role of the family.

Sample Daily Schedule

(Toddler and Preschool, schedules may vary among sites)

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| From time the Center opens-8:00 a.m. | Arrival/Child Choice |
| 8:00-9:00 a.m. | Breakfast/table toys |
| 9:00-10:00 a.m. | Small group/large group time |
| 10:00-11:30 a.m. | Child choice/outside/gross motor |
| 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Lunch |
| 12:30-2:30 p.m. | Rest time/quiet activities |
| 2:30-3:30 p.m. | Snack/table toys |
| 3:30-4:30 p.m. | Small group/large group time |
| 4:30-to the time the center closes | Child choice/outside/gross motor/departure |

Please note, this is a typical schedule. Each classroom will have a personalized daily schedule to guarantee children's developmental needs are being met.

To assure that the changing developmental and individual needs of each infant and toddler are met, the program will permit children (0-2 1/2 years) to eat on demand and children (0-18 months) to sleep on demand and will not be required to function as a whole group. Teachers will plan developmentally appropriate activities based on the age and individual needs of each child. The lesson plan for infants will include daily "tummy time" with teachers interacting with children at their level.

Based on developmental readiness and availability, the director, teaching staff and parent will work together to ensure a smooth transition process for each child into the next classroom

Outdoor Time

Outdoor time is considered an integral part of our program. Physical activity helps children obtain fine and gross motor skill development and coordination which are necessary to reach developmental milestones. Daily moderate to vigorous activity will be provided outdoors whenever possible. Children will be required to dress appropriately for the weather. It is assumed that if the child is well enough to attend the center, he/she is well enough to go outside. Extreme temperature may determine limited play.

Children up to 12 months of age will be permitted to go outdoors when the temperature is above 30 degrees (with no negative wind chill) due to their inability to verbalize if they are cold and are less active physically. Children 12 months and older will be permitted to go outdoors when the temperature is above 20 degrees (with no negative wind chill) however, children 12 months to 2 ½ will limit their time to 20 minutes per scheduled time (until the temperature reaches 30 degrees). Preschool children 2½ and older may play outdoors when the temperature is 20 degrees (with no negative wind chill) with no time limits.

Days when there is a high heat index, children will remain indoors when the temperature is above 90 degrees (heat index factored in). At times, play will be limited, and additional factors will be considered (hydration, shade, limited active play, etc.).

Prior to going outdoors staff are required to ensure the safety of the area.

Screen Time

The Y is committed to the well-being of the children in our communities. We are part of a national initiative led by YMCA of the USA, and adhere to the Healthy Eating, Physical Activity Standards.

HEPA Standards:

- NO screen time for children under the age of two years.
- Preschoolers and School-agers: Short videos or movies (30 minutes or less per day and rated G only) related to weekly theme or special event and only viewed on special occasions.
- Computer/iPad use will be limited to 15 minutes per day, per child or less.

Screen time is permitted in limited dosage, short videos, or movies (30 min or less per week and rated G only) content must be related to weekly theme or special event(s) and must include program director approval and parent notification. Parent notification can be met by including the details/activity on the curriculum calendar, if the information has not been made available on the calendar a notification must be sent.

Field Trips

In the case a field trip has been planned, parents/guardians will be made aware of any field trips at least 14 calendars days prior to the field trip. All children must have a signed permission slip from the parents/guardians. This permission slip will provide details on the field trip, describing all travel details, intended experience and any meal information.

Altering Appearance

Childcare staff members doing children's hair, adding nail polish, or other means of altering a child's appearance can be perceived differently from family to family. If a program requires long hair to be in a ponytail for swimming, or may have a hair salon in the dramatic play area etc. parent approval is required prior to engaging in the activity. We need to ensure we have parents' verbal consent to do the child's hair (comb out, braid, ponytails, etc.) or polishing nails, or any other means of altering a child's appearance.

Birthday Celebrations

In support of our core areas of focus, the YMCA celebrates the milestones of each child in our program. Our locations strive to acknowledge a child's birthday in a way which supports creating equitable experiences and lifelong healthy habits. We serve a diverse community which means every child may have varying access to resources and may also have different personal needs and dietary restrictions. For this we discourage families from bringing in items such as goody bags, homemade sweets, and snacks. We ask that families work in coordination with the program leadership to determine what celebratory items are most appropriate for the program. This may mean encouraging families to bring in items which enhance the curriculum and enrichment activities.

Bringing Items from Home

The nature of our program allows children to experience a variety of engaging activities while in attendance, for this setting its best to minimize distractions by discouraging items from home. We thoughtfully plan days when students may be encouraged to bring items in to share with others. Out of respect for the activities taking place in the program, the connections amongst peers, and to ensure things are kept safely, we ask that children refrain from bringing items. Should they come to the program with an item from home, we will ask them to keep it stowed away with their belongings until they are picked up (unless it is a share day). Nap time items, comfort items, and blankets are welcome at any time.

Lost and Found

The YMCA will not be held responsible for lost items. A program lost and found box will be made available during programming. Please check with staff if you need assistance. Unclaimed lost and found property will be kept for one week and then donated to local charities.

Screening and Assessment and Classroom Transitions

Our program uses a variety of screening and assessment tools and are inclusive of family culture, experiences, and children's abilities. Teacher and family communication are critical to the child's developmental success. Upon enrollment, parents will be given the Ages and Stages Questionnaire screening tool to complete on their child. This tool allows the teaching staff to have background knowledge on the development of each child to set curriculum and educational goals for a successful transition into the YMCA program. This screening tool is also utilized by YMCA teaching staff as needed throughout the year and will be conducted in the child's familiar environment.

The YMCA conducts assessments on all children at least twice annually (generally fall and spring). The teaching staff assess each child in their environment by documenting observations, collecting samples of work, and creating portfolios. The YMCA uses the Teaching Strategies Gold as the tool for these assessments. Through these intentional observations, teaching staff is able to have a comprehensive picture of the developmental needs of the individual child as well as the classroom as a whole, which will be the basis of planning for individual, small and large group activities. The teaching staff will conduct conferences with families to discuss the child's progress and together create a plan based on the child's needs and developmental goals.

If the teaching staff and/or the parents feel there is a need for further formal assessment or assistance based on our evaluation, the YMCA will provide additional resources or refer the family to the appropriate agency. All results of the screening/assessment are kept confidential.

Based on developmental readiness and availability, the director, teaching staff and family will work together to ensure a smooth transition process for each child into the next classroom. Limiting the number of transitions between rooms and number of caregivers, help children develop deeper relationships with adults, and a feeling of trust in the world. There are times when it is necessary to transition children from one classroom to the next. Transition to a new classroom should be built into the schedule, and parents, children and staff should all prepare for the change. Parents should be involved, from the beginning, in establishing the plan for transitioning their child to the new room. All persons involved should know what to expect and feel comfortable with the changes that are about to take place. Transitions involve the teaching team, center director, and family. There must be space in the classroom for the transition to occur, and licensing ratios will always be maintained during the transition period. The family will always have an opportunity to meet with the director/teaching team and ask questions about the transition (if needed)

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVMENT AND COMMUNITICATION

The YMCA is committed to maintaining close, positive relationships with the parents of every child enrolled in our program. We strive to include family culture, language, and experiences as part of our curriculum and daily routines. Staff are required to communicate daily with the families and other staff members, in a positive and professional manner.

General information as it relates to the classroom/program experience should be shared during parent interactions discussing things related to the child's overall experience in programming. Infants, toddlers, and children requiring special accommodations, a daily report describing the following information must be shared with the parent:

- Food intake; time, type of food, and amount eaten.
- Sleeping patterns, when and how long they slept.
- Elimination patterns, including bowel movements, consistency, and frequency.
- Developmental milestones.
- Changes in the child's usual behaviors.

We want to encourage participation and awareness of our program experience. Teams are expected to work collaboratively to send out regular communication. Communication should come in various forms:

- Overall program updates, highlights and needs (typically done in newsletter format) monthly at minimum.
- Program specific curriculum, events, updates, highlights, and needs (typically offered by way of program communication areas).
- Memos and notifications for immediate needs and program changes.
- Volunteer opportunities (typically offered in a "Ways to Engage" board/communication area)
- Ouch reports (Parents will be notified the same day an incident or injury has occurred.
- Field Trips
- Changes to program operations such as holidays and closures.

Photos of children taken by the YMCA and/or taken by the family are not to be shared on social media unless we have written consent from the families of all children in the photo. Family members may be reminded by the staff that they will not be able to take the photo if other children in the picture should not be photographed. The program director will have a list of children approved to be photographed.

Hello Cards, are posted in each programming site to help families identify their child's caregivers and program staff. Each staff member will have their picture and Information posted within their first week of work, this is a great way for families, guests, and volunteers to meet and learn more about our team.

Tadpoles

Each classroom has an iPad with a program called **Tadpoles** which enables teachers to create daily reports that are sent to parents for every child, every day. These reports include information about daily activities, meals and snacks, diapering/toileting, educational achievements and more. Reports are automatically emailed to the parent when their child is signed out for the day. We also use our iPads to send pictures, and occasionally short videos, to parents so they can stay connected throughout their child's day.

A free mobile app, for smartphones, will be provided so that this information, about their child can be received anywhere that email can be accessed.

MULTICULTURAL AND GENDER FREE ENVIRONMENT

The YMCA encourages diversity within our program. We offer an anti-bias curriculum and encourage families to share their cultures with the children. Books, activities, posters and foods provide the children with a chance to experience a range culture.

Inclusion

The YMCA is inclusive and makes every attempt to reasonably accommodate any child based on whatever their needs may be. Whenever possible, YMCA programs will work in partnership with the families to ensure an impactful experience may be provided for any child who needs extra support and attention for developmental and/or physical growth. We are open to working with any additional professional supports which have been secured by the parents. Our goal is to work together to create thoughtful approaches that are in the best interest of the child. At the time of enrollment, families are expected to share additional information about their child's needs with the staff. Program Directors will review all child enrollment information including the Health and Behavioral Notification form and communicate this information to staff.

Therapy

At times students may be scheduled for behavioral, physical, occupational or speech therapy. YMCA programs will make every effort to accommodate therapists and to make time and space available for treatments. If a child receives therapy, parents must contact the program prior to treatment so they can schedule treatment times that are most appropriate for the student, as well as the other program participants. A visible space must be used. Therapist must sign in and out in volunteer logbook.

HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

Supervision

The program shall always provide appropriate care and supervision by sight and sound of children.

Behavior Management

Self-management skills and positive social interactions among children and adults are encouraged and maximize everyone's enjoyment of the program. Y programs use positive guidance methods including reminders, distraction, logical consequences, and redirection. Children are expected to support the classroom experience by adhering to the following guidelines:

- Consistent rules are clearly stated. Children are expected to work and play within known limits.
- Behavior expected of children is age appropriate and according to their developmental level.

An atmosphere of trust is established for children to know that they will not be hurt nor allowed to hurt others. Staff members strive to help children become acquainted with themselves and their feelings. This will help them learn to cope with their feelings and control them responsibly.

Staff will avoid the use of competitive situations, comparative remarks, threats, physical punishment, shaming, or labeling children. At no time will spanking, shaking, hitting, or slapping be allowed. Children will not be deprived of meals, snacks, rest, necessary toilet use, or outdoor play or activity time as a means of punishment, nor will any child be confined in an enclosed area. Each child will be cared for and disciplinary techniques will be used which are appropriate to the age level of the child and which foster positive self-esteem and encourage the eventual internalization of self-control. When a child misbehaves, he/she will be redirected to another activity. A discussion between child and staff will help the child to learn why his/her behavior was inappropriate. Occasionally a child may be removed from the immediate situation until he/she is able to gain control. Time out will not be used with children under the age of 3.

When a child's ongoing challenging behavior must be addressed, we will assess the function of the behavior. We will work with the family and we are open to working with families who have sought out professional support to develop an individualized plan to address the behavior as needed. Included will be positive behavior support strategies to help the child be successful. Repeatedly disruptive or dangerous behavior may result in loss of privileges or activities, suspension, or termination from the program.

Health

The YMCA is committed to the health of every child in our program. All staff will be required to meet center policies and attend training in health and safety practices. We will also provide additional family resources throughout the year.

Physicals/ Immunizations

Physicals and immunizations need to be updated on a regular basis. Failure to meet these basic requirements, as set by the Michigan Department of Public Health, in absence of a valid waiver, requires the childcare program director to exclude the child from any childcare program. Local health departments may set requirements that exceed and take precedence over these minimum requirements. Parents are required to update the center with the child's immunization and physical records annually.

Beverages

The classroom is a busy area with plenty of movement. To avoid any incidents, it is in the best interest of our programs not to have any hot beverages present in the classroom, center, or program spaces. All hot beverages are prohibited from every classroom no matter what type of container. Glass and/or porcelain containers are not permitted in programming.

Medication

The program will administer prescription and over the counter medication with written consent of the parent/guardian and the child's health care provider once a day. Non-prescription, over the counter medication may only be given according to the directions on the label.

All medication must be stored in its original container with the label attached. The label must list:

- Child's first and last name
- Physician's name
- Name and strength of the medication
- Instructions
- Date the prescription was filled
- Expiration date

The Program will administer:

- Antihistamines/decongestants
- Cough suppressants
- Topical skin ointments
- Fever reducing medications will not be administered for fevers due to illness.

All medications will be checked for expiration upon administration. Expired medications will be returned to the parent for disposal. Any left medications will be destroyed or disposed.

Communicable Diseases

To provide a healthy and engaging environment, staff will handle any case of communicable diseases in the following manner:

- Fever 100 by mouth and 99 under arm (one-degree calibration) will require a call to the family for the child to be picked up, this guideline follows the recommendations of the CDC.
- Diarrhea (2) – loose, watery stools (even if no other sign is noted)- call parent for consult, if no explanation remove child from program/encourage pick up
- Any vomiting (exceptions for burp up) will require a call to the family to have the child picked up.
- Rash (any rash) already known to parents do not call parents- unless there is a difference in appearance.
- Bodily drainage (even with no other symptoms) will require a call to the family and for the child to be picked up.

The Program leadership reserves the right to decide whether a child is healthy enough to be in programming; the site leadership works closely with the headquarter office representative to ensure there is thorough consideration in these cases.

We reserve the right to remove a child from programming in the case of concern for disease exposure.

Returning to Program:

- Child must be symptom free for 24 hours to return to program.
- Temperature has been below 100 degrees for 24 hours without Tylenol or Aspirin.
- Having taken an antibiotic for at least 24 hours, if prescribed.
- It has been 24 hours since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea, without medication.
- The nasal discharge is not thick, yellow, and/or green.
- Eyes are no longer discharging, or the condition has been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- The rash has subsided, or the physician has determined that the rash is not contagious.

Lice Procedures

Children are exposed to many things in their environment leaving them vulnerable to many circumstance, one common occurrence is lice. When handling a lice situation our programs follow the steps listed below.

If parent notifies the program after child has attended programming:

- Clean Materials immediately – soft spongy absorbent
- Post notifications of exposure (always include a footnoted date)
- Post at the site on entry and exit doors- classroom specific door of parent communication area.

When appropriate (large exposures) an email notification may be sent. Any email communication sent to describe communicable disease and/or lice must be approved by the association licensing representative.

When the child returns to the program the lead program staff will complete a louse check before being permitted to attend program.

Pest Management

State of Michigan law requires that schools and childcare centers that may apply pesticides on property must provide an annual advisory to parents or guardians of students attending the facility. Please be advised that the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids utilizes an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to control pests. IPM is a pest management system that utilizes all suitable techniques in a total pest management system with the intent of preventing pests from reaching unacceptable levels or to reduce an existing population to an acceptable level. Pest management techniques emphasize sanitation, pest exclusion, and biological controls. One of the objectives of using an IPM approach is to reduce or eliminate the need for chemical applications of pesticides. However, certain situations may require the need for pesticides to be utilized. As required by State of Michigan law, you will receive advance notice regarding the non-emergency application of a pesticide such as an insecticide, fungicide or herbicide, other than a bait or gel formulation, that is made inside or outside of the center or grounds, both during the school year and in the summer. Please note that notification is not given for the use of sanitizers, germicides, disinfectants, or anti-microbial cleaners. In certain emergencies, such as an infestation of stinging insects, pesticides may be applied without prior notice to prevent injury to enrolled children, but you will be notified following any such application.

Advance notification of pesticide applications, other than a bait or gel formulation, will be given by at least 2 methods. The first method will be by posting at the main entrance of the center. The second method will be by one of the methods listed below:

- Posting by classroom entrances
- E-mail to all families
- Sending a letter home

An advance notice shall contain information about the pesticide, including the target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of the application, contact information at the center, and a toll-free number for a national pesticide information center recognized by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Liquid spray or aerosol insecticide applications may not be performed in a room of a childcare center unless the room will be unoccupied by children for not less than 4 hours or longer if required by the pesticide label use directions.

Please be advised that parents or guardians of children attending the center are entitled to receive the advance notice of a pesticide application, other than a bait or gel formulation, by first class United States mail postmarked at least 3 days before the pesticide application, if they so request. If you prefer to receive the notification by first class mail, please contact your center director and we will provide you a form to return. Please be advised that parents or guardians of children attending the school may review the school's Integrated Pest Management program and records of any pesticide application upon request.

Meals

Mealtime allows children the chance to make healthy choices, develop relationships, and practice self-help skills. It is also a time for socializing, using table etiquette and learning about nutrition and new foods. Children participate in helping with meal set-up, as well as serving their own food. Meals are served family style with adults sitting at the table, fostering socialization.

The daily meal program includes two snacks and two meals for infants, toddlers and preschool children attending the center for the full day. The menus and portions will follow nutritional guidelines established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Serving sizes for fruit and vegetables is between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup depending on the age of the child. Under these guidelines, we offer children a variety of healthy foods. A current menu will be posted. Children with special dietary needs, such as those with allergies or diet restrictions, will work with the childcare director to accommodate the needs. All food allergies or restrictions must have a written doctor or family statement of the allergy/restriction on file.



Food served in our program will be primarily low-sugar, low fat in nature. For children two years and older, low fat (1%) or nonfat milk is served. Whole milk is served for children under 2 years of age. Only 100% juice will be served and no more than 4ozs will be served daily. The center will ask families to refrain from bringing in sugar sweetened beverages (soda, energy drinks, sports drinks, powdered drinks, etc.) or fried foods for classroom parties and center events. Water will be available to children throughout the day and at every meal and snack. Meal requirements for the childcare food program are available on request.

Parents are responsible for bringing in premade bottles labeled with the child's name, amount, contents, and date. Bottles will be kept refrigerated until use and then warmed with hot water to a proper temperature. Children will be fed by staff and at no point a bottle will be propped. After one hour, any unused food (bottle or table food) will be discarded. Bottles will be rinsed after use and sent home with the family each night.

The YMCA enthusiastically supports parents' plans to breastfeed their baby. We believe that breastfeeding ensures the best possible health, development, and psychosocial outcomes for your baby. In support of this commitment, we will train staff in skills necessary to inform women and families about the benefits and management of breastfeeding and provide additional resources and tools. The center welcomes onsite breastfeeding in the classroom or if preferred, we will ensure you have a comfortable and private space.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.



Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

Vision and Hearing

All preschool children enrolled in a YMCA program will be tested by the Kent County Health Department annually for vision and hearing concerns. Results of these tests, conducted by the local health department, will be shared with parents along with any appropriate recommendations.

Diapering and Toileting

In our programs, diapering and bathroom use are part of the daily schedule. Staff check diapers minimally every two hours or as needed. Diapers, wipes, creams, powders, and any other necessary diapering/bathroom items are provided by the parents. All items are to be labeled and are child specific (not to be used among multiple children). If a family chooses to use cloth diapers, each diaper must be covered with an outer waterproof covering which is not re-used until washed and sanitized by the family. Soiled diapers shall be placed in a plastic lined covered container which will be taken home by the family daily. Staff are not allowed to rinse diapers prior to placing in the container.

When the family feels their child is ready to start toilet learning, they will work with the child's classroom staff to ensure consistency is happening between the home and the center. During this time, parents will be asked to bring in multiple changes of clothing, including socks and shoes. Once your child is ready to transition into the preschool classroom, your child's teacher will work with you on toilet learning and bathroom expectations.

Toothbrushing

At least once daily in our programs, children will have the opportunity to brush their teeth.

Sleeping

All children enrolled in the program will have an opportunity to rest/sleep. Infants and toddlers are required to sleep on demand. As recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and regulated by the Department of Human Services, infants will only sleep in an approved crib. They will be placed on their backs (until they can turn themselves over), with their heads remaining uncovered and cribs will be free from soft objects (pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, etc.). While sleeping, they will be supervised by sight and sound and checked on a regular basis throughout the sleeping period. Children with medical conditions that require alternative sleeping method, must have a signed physician's statement on file.

EMERGENCY AND PREPAREDNESS

Staff members are trained in basic emergency procedures. This includes, fire evacuation, tornado, lock down, serious accident or injury, intruders, bomb threats and other natural or man-made disasters (inclement weather, gas leaks, chemical spill, electrical, heat, water, structural failure, etc....). We will adhere to guidelines and recommendations from emergency personnel with regards to other emergencies and proper evacuation and protocols.

Fire Drills / Tornado Drills

Each room has emergency plans, routes, and procedures posted. The program practices fire drills and tornado drills on a regular basis.

First Aid Kits

First aid kits are in each program space. When leaving the program area, even going out of the school, staff will take along the first aid kit. Our staff is required to wear gloves whenever they are dealing with any bodily fluids. This includes, but is not limited to, blood, vomit, and fecal matter.

Accident/ Injury

For minor accidents (bump, scrape, etc....), parents will be notified no later than the end of the day. In the event a child is seriously injured (head injury, excessive bleeding, broken limb, seizure, etc.), the parent will be notified immediately. If a child needs to go to the hospital via ambulance before the parent arrives, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital until the parent arrives.

Incidents

Families will be verbally notified within one hour if an incident should occur while their child is in care of the program. An incident includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- A child is lost or left unsupervised.
- Alleged sexual contact between children or a child and a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical discipline of a child by a staff member or volunteer.

Evacuation and Relocation

The program will have a shelter-in-place/lock down plan (example: tornado, intruder) to keep children and staff in place inside the building, an on-site evacuation plan (example: fire, facility issue) and an off-site evacuation that will be directed by a government agency in the event of a threat (natural or man-made). Families will be notified of the relocation and reunification process by their program director. Children that require individual care will be assigned to a caregiver.

STAFF/ VOLUNTEERS

In all staffing decisions, every attempt will be made to hire the most competent and qualified people to work with children. Thorough screening and interviewing procedures will be consistently followed. All childcare staff will be required to submit to a criminal background check prior to offer of employment being made, which includes in and out of state felony and misdemeanor checks, sex offender clearance, and reference checks. Staff will also be required to submit proof of a negative TB test. In addition, staff will have blood borne pathogen, diversity, and child abuse and neglect prevention training. At a minimum, one person in the program, always, will be certified in CPR and First Aid. Staff hiring and promotion decisions will be made based on education and experience with children. Staff will be trained in youth development so that they are knowledgeable and able to intervene in situations involving safety, using a developmental approach.

Volunteers

Volunteers, including parents, are welcome and very much appreciated in YMCA programs. All volunteers are required to submit a criminal background check and have a Michigan State Police Sex Offender Registry clearance. Volunteers that give 4 hours or more of their time, per week, are also required to attend training sessions and show proof of a negative TB test. Volunteers are always supervised by the classroom teacher and/or director. Volunteers are a vital part of the childcare program and their help is greatly appreciated.

LARA Compliance/Regulation Management/Mandated Reporting

The YMCA provides childcare programs which are regulated by the State of Michigan, and therefore we work in partnership to provide the childcare programs we offer. Our programs are regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA), this entails being subject to interim visits which are utilized to check on the day to day operations of the program confirming our commitment to compliance. This also includes renewal visits which confirm our eligibility to maintain our licensing status, when an incident or complaint is received our sites are subject to special investigation visits.

Any time an incident occurs during the program operating hours, we are required to self-report this information to maintain our commitment to partnership and transparency with the state licensing office. Types of incidents which may be reported include a child tripping over a shoelace all the way to a more serious injury or occurrence. The state makes the decision on whether to further investigate an incident, this investigation is done to identify the programs role in the occurrence. Investigations may include the state representative contacting the families involved.

Youth development staff are mandated reporters, therefore in alignment with the Child Protection Law, we will and are required to report any suspected child abuse/neglect.

More information on the LARA can be found at www.michigan.gov/lara.



Staff Relationships with Families Outside of YMCA Programming

Staff may not be alone, outside the YMCA, with children they meet in the YMCA programs. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting children to a staff member's home.

Confidentiality Statement

The YMCA maintains confidentiality, and will respect the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information (including health and assessment information) and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, we will share confidential information with agencies, as well as with individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest. Disclosure of children's records beyond family members, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality, shall require familial consent (except in cases of child abuse and/or neglect).

Child Protection Laws

The YMCA is mandated by the Child Protection Law of Michigan to report to the Department of Human Services any "suspected cases of abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.