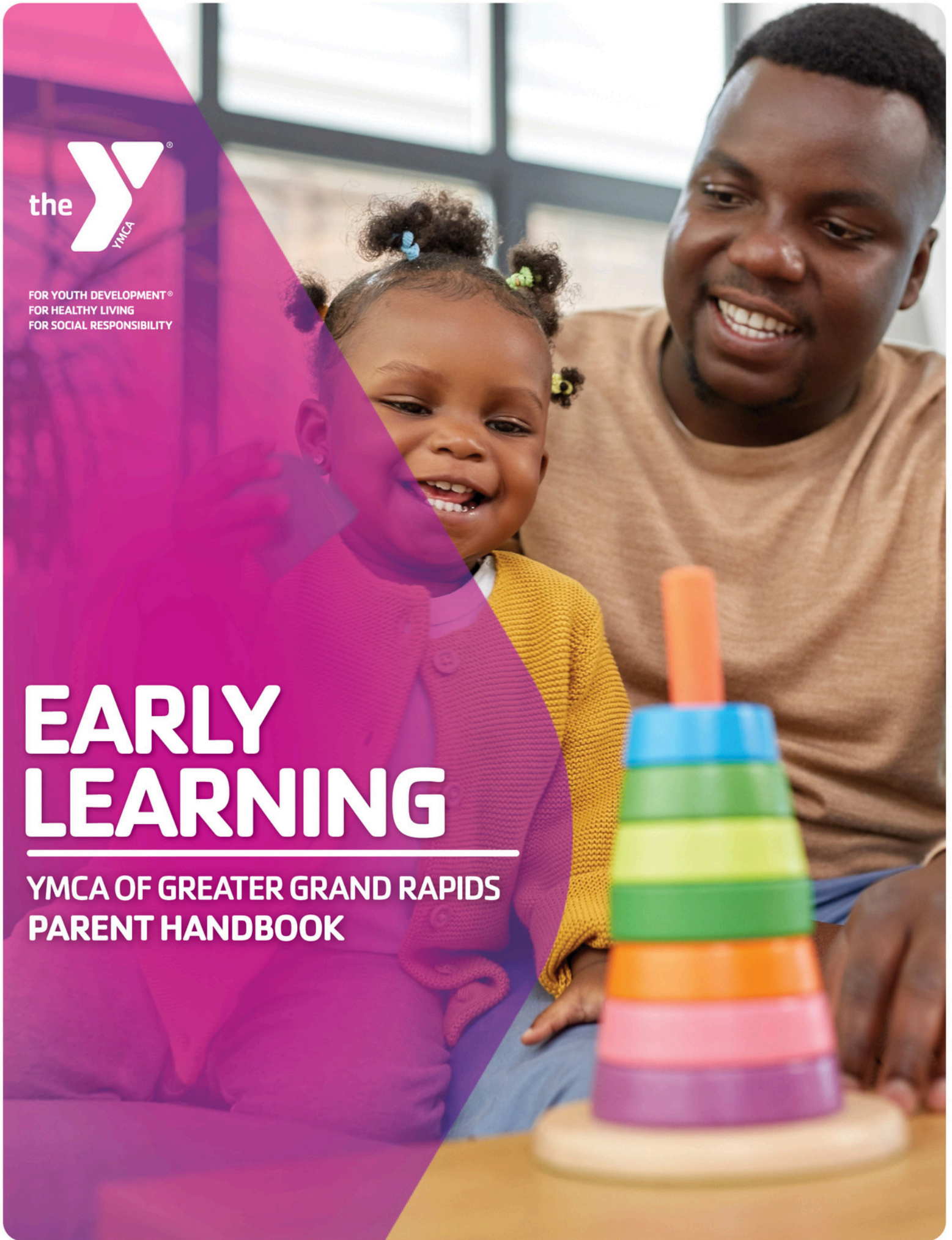




FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# EARLY LEARNING

YMCA OF GREATER GRAND RAPIDS  
PARENT HANDBOOK





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# WELCOME TO THE YMCA OF GREATER GRAND RAPIDS EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS!

## **Dear families,**

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. We look forward to patterning with you 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 for each 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!

This parent handbook provides valuable information about the program's philosophy, policies, and general information about our program. Any questions your family may have regarding this handbook should be referred to the program director.

Click here to learn more about our [Y Leadership Team](#)



## 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, religion, or socioeconomic background, and we are committed to serving everyone who comes in. As a result, we strive to meet each person where they are, including providing opportunities for financial assistance.

## OUR CAUSE

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 youth, 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

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.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

The YMCA Early Learning Program is geared to meet 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 their own rate.

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

The essential component of our program is our staff. Staff are trained in growth and development and establish 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 programming is only possible when families are involved in the makeup of the program, directly or indirectly. Families are encouraged to participate in our programs.



## ADMISSION

Families may enroll their children, either on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the availability of the program. Part-time enrollment requires a minimum of 2 days, however 1-day spots may be available determined by center enrollment. Children will be enrolled on a first come first serve basis, regardless of nationality, race, gender, or creed. Full-time enrollment will be considered priority, over part-time. Part-time families may be asked to change their schedule to accommodate incoming full-time children or at their child's classroom transition time.

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

- Online enrollment packet including, Child Information Record, Financial Policy and Agreement filled out and submitted.
- Food program enrollment form and income eligibility statement.
- Health appraisal form along with the official immunization record.
- Permission slip for Family Futures for Ages and Stages Questionnaire (within 2 weeks of enrollment)

## HOURS OF OPERATION

The YMCA early learning programs days and hours of operations vary at each location. Please visit [www.grymca.org](http://www.grymca.org) to confirm your location's hours of operation. In the case of an unexpected closure the YMCA will not be responsible for refunds. 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 our parent communication platform and media websites. In such cases, the YMCA will make every effort to communicate this information with as much notice as possible. Additionally, tuition remains the same, regardless of the program closes for any planned (holiday, professional development, etc.) or unforeseen circumstances (severe weather, power outage, as examples).

The program will be closed on the following days:

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Presidents Day – YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids Early Learning Professional Development Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day
- Professional Development Day 2 (up to one additional day per calendar year with a 30-day notice)



## INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCESS

In case of inclement weather, the Y makes every effort to remain open. When severe weather causes safety concerns or renders buildings inaccessible, programs may close. The Y believes childcare program participants rely on the services of the Y, especially for employment purposes, and participate at their own risk.

- In the event a program closes mid-day, families will be notified and given one 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 Leadership
- Early Learning Staff will contact families of facility/program closure. If appropriate, closure will be included on the Y's social media (TV/Radio) communications.

Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), Head Start (HS), and Early Head Start (EHS) classrooms follow district closures for snow days. When the district a GSRP, HS, or EHS classroom is housed in closes, so does that classroom.

GSRP/EHS/HS classrooms are in the following districts:

David D. Hunting YMCA	Grand Rapids Public Schools
SpartanNash YMCA	Wyoming Public Schools
Yankee Clipper Library	Grand Rapids Public Schools
Jacqueline Baber Bey	Head Start for Kent County
Sylvan Head Start	Head Start for Kent County
Wolverine Worldwide YMCA	Belmont Public Schools

## PAYMENTS AND FEES

At the time of registration, families will complete the Childcare Payment Agreement, which details tuition amount and ways to pay. Families 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 families. Billing will occur according to the payment schedule families received at the time of enrollment. All fee changes will be communicated to families via email and Kaymbu message.

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 past due payment fee. Two 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 workable 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's approval, two weeks prior to change.



## Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee is required per child. The registration fee is \$100 for non-members and \$50 for members per child. The fee will be drafted along with a family's first week of tuition.

## Wait List Fee

Our association offers a waitlist for locations that are at enrollment capacity. Families are responsible for a non-refundable \$50 fee to join the waitlist. Once a space becomes available for a child on the waitlist, the family will be notified, and care will begin within two weeks. If the family is not ready for care to begin, they can pay to hold their place for up to three months.

## Hold Fee/Extended Leave Fee

When holding a spot, families will pay 50% of their weekly tuition rate, until they begin care. This hold fee would also apply to an extended leave case where the child will not attend the program, for up to a three-month period. If a family is interested in taking an extended leave, they need to connect with the program director, minimally two weeks prior to the leave starting. Extended leave is available for currently enrolled families who need more than two business weeks off or an altered schedule until regular care resumes. The family will be financially responsible for paying a hold fee for their regular schedule.

## Annual Fee

Every October, there is an annual supply fee charged to current families enrolled in Y programs. Newly enrolled families will be charged upon enrollment. The fee is \$100 per child, \$50 for each additional child and is non-refundable. This fee helps cover the costs of essential materials and resources that support your child's learning, development, and a safe environment.

This annual fee helps cover:

- **Learning Materials:** Blocks, puzzles, age-appropriate toys, educational manipulatives, and board games.
- **Art and Craft Supplies:** Markers, crayons, paints, paper, glue, and scissors.
- **Classroom Essentials:** Tissues, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and paper towels, ensuring a healthy environment.
- **Outdoor Play Equipment:** Balls, chalk, and other items for physical development.
- **Administrative/IT Costs:** Supporting the general operations of the center and ensuring smooth enrollment and record keeping and family communication with Kaymbu.

We understand that tuition costs are a significant expense for families. We are committed to providing the highest quality care and a positive learning environment for your child, and these fees are crucial to maintaining those standards.





## 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, our programs have 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 our childcare website for the application, [www.grymca.org](http://www.grymca.org).

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. Families are responsible for all co-pays that they will incur for their child's tuition. Families are also responsible for filling out all necessary paperwork to keep their subsidy current. If the family member loses their subsidy, the family member is responsible for the full payment of tuition.

### We offer the following discounts:

- Sibling discount 5% to oldest child. If multiple siblings, then all except the youngest child will receive sibling discount
- Staff discount: 20% staff discount for Toddler-Preschool rooms, discount not valid in the infant room
- Childcare Staff discount: 50% staff discount for Wobbler-Preschool rooms, discount not valid in the Infant room

## SCHEDULE AND SCHEDULE CHANGES

We understand things change and there may be a need to adjust your child's attendance schedule. 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; however, schedule changes are not guaranteed.

We do not deduct absences or holidays from your fee.

There are no discounts, credits, or refunds for absences due to illness or quarantine.

## LATE PICKUPS

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

- Upon center closure time, staff will attempt to contact families via phone calls and messages.
- The emergency contact person will be contacted when primary guardians are unavailable.
- After 60 minutes, with no contact from a family member or emergency contact, Child Protective Services will be called.
- Late pick up may result in permanent schedule changes.

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 minute; the family will also be required to sign a late pickup notice upon arrival.

## **DROP OFF/RELEASE AND AUTHORIZED PICK-UP PROCEDURES**

Upon arriving at the Early Learning Program, families must sign their child in or out on the Weekly Attendance Sheet and accompany their children to and from their classrooms.

The YMCA will give both legal guardians equal access to their child. The Y cannot withhold or limit a parent/guardian's access to a child based on another family members' request. Current court documentation must be on file in the program to deny child release to either legal guardian.

All guardians must provide staff with at least one phone number that can be contacted at any time throughout the day. Families must also name at least one emergency contact that can also be contacted at any time.

Upon enrollment, guardians will list all adults allowed to pick up their child on the Child Information Record. Children will only be released to the individuals whose information is included in the Child Information Record. If a guardian is unable to pick up their child, they will need to appoint another adult, already listed on the Child Information Record, to pick the child up. If that is not possible, and an adult that is not on the emergency card must pick the child up, the parent/guardian must notify the staff in writing, via Kaymbu.

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 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 for another adult, already listed on the child information record, to pick the child up. If this is not possible, and an adult that is not on the child information record 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 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. The person picking up will need to show photo ID (school ID is acceptable).

## WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

When withdrawing from care, families are required to give two weeks' advanced notice. If a family withdraws a child without two weeks' advanced notice, the family is responsible for paying for two full weeks. A spot is considered relinquished when a family does not attend the center for two weeks without communication to the center.

Children can be removed from a Y childcare program because of nonpayment or noncompliance with our outlined Behavior Management Policy.

## PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

At the Y, we believe that communication is key for a strong teacher/family relationship. If a concern arises while your child is enrolled, we recommend discussing your concerns with the program director at a scheduled time.

## STAFF SUPERVISION

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

Age	Staff	Max
0-30 months	1 staff to 4 children	12 children
30 months-3 years	1 staff to 8 children	24 children
3 years-4 years	1 staff to 10 children	30 children
4 years to first day of Kindergarten	1 staff to 12 children	40 children

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

## DAILY SCHEDULE & CURRICULUM

Each classroom will have their own unique daily routine and schedule. The schedule will be posted on the parent/guardian board and updated if changes are made. The schedule includes all elements of the required curriculum, meals, and transitions with a brief description and time for each event. (Schedules may vary among sites)

### Preschool Typical Schedule

A well-timed and intentional daily routine helps the classroom run smoothly and efficiently. Staff thoughtfully plan transitions throughout the day to reduce waiting times and keep children engaged. Each preschool daily schedule may include at least 60 minutes of uninterrupted free play time (work time), 60 minutes total of outdoor gross motor play, and designated rest time.

All daily schedules vary by class but must have the following components:

Arrival	5-10 minutes	Children enter the classroom; guardians stay until the child is ready to start their day.
Breakfast	20-30 minutes	Students and staff engage in a family-style breakfast.
Morning Meeting	20 minutes	Staff gather the children to start the day together with a read-aloud and/or activity.
Planning	10 minutes	Children decide where they will play during Learning Programs and share their plan with staff and/or classmates.
Work Time	60 minutes	Staff support children's learning through play while students explore Learning Programs.
Clean Up	10-15 minutes	Class and staff pick up toys used during Learning Programs.
Review	10 minutes	Students share with their staff and/or classmates what they did during Learning Programs.
Large Group	10-20 minutes	Large group time used to introduce or review concepts that will appear in Small Group.
Small Group & Select Programs	45-60 minutes	Staff provide direct instruction to a group of 3-4 children. 2-3 small groups run at a time. Students play in selected learning programs when it is not their turn for Small Group.
Outdoor Exploration	60 minutes	Children and staff engage in free play outside.

Lunch	20-30 minutes	Students and staff engage in family-style lunches.
Rest Time	45-120 minutes	Children are given quiet time to rest. Children who do not wish to sleep are provided with a quiet activity to play with on their cot.
Snack	10 minutes	Staff and students have snack
Afternoon Meeting	20 minutes	Staff gather the children to start the day together with a read-aloud and/or activity.
Planning	10 minutes	Children decide where they will play during Learning Programs and share their plan with staff and/or classmates.
Work Time	60 minutes	Children decide where they will play during Learning Programs and share their plan with staff and/or classmates.
Clean Up	10-15 minutes	Children decide where they will play during Learning Programs and share their plan with staff and/or classmates.
Review	10 minutes	Children decide where they will play during Learning Programs and share their plan with staff and/or classmates.
Large Group	10-20 minutes	Children decide where they will play during Learning Programs and share their plan with staff and/or classmates.
Small Group & Select Programs	45-60 minutes	Children decide where they will play during Learning Programs and share their plan with staff and/or classmates.
Outdoor Exploration	60 minutes	Children decide where they will play during Learning Programs and share their plan with staff and/or classmates.
Dismissal	10 minutes	Children decide where they will play during Learning Programs and share their plan with staff and/or classmates.

## Infant and Toddler Typical Schedule

A typical infant and toddler daycare schedule includes arrival, play time, meals and snacks, naps, and structured activities like circle time, story time, or sensory play. Diaper changes and hygiene routines are integrated throughout the day, with a focus on consistency to help children feel secure and regulated. Infants and Toddlers will vary and allow for eating and sleeping on demand.

Arrival	Children enter the classroom; families stay until the child is ready to start their day.
Breakfast	Younger infants receive bottles, while older infants and toddlers have breakfast.
Play Time	Includes floor time, tummy time, and sensory play with soft toys, music, or rattles. Free choice in the classroom.
Diaper/Bathroom	Regular diaper checks and changes happen before and after activities
Bottles/Snack	Younger infants receive bottles, while older infants have a snack if needed.
Activities and Outdoor Time	Structured activities like songs and stories, or outdoor play if weather permits
Bottles/Lunch	Lunch is served, followed by clean-up and handwashing.
Rest Time	Children are given quiet time to rest. Children who do not wish to sleep are provided with a quiet activity to play with on their cot.
Diaper/Bathroom	Regular diaper checks and changes happen before and after activities
Snack	Younger infants receive bottles, while older infants and toddlers have snack





Play Time	Open ended play with blocks, puzzles, books or floor time.
Goodbye	Families arrive to pick up their children.

## PRIMARY CAREGIVING

The YMCA uses a primary caregiving model for infant and toddler classrooms. Children remain with the same caregiver for nine months or as accommodation needs to be made based on a child's growth and development

## CURRICULUM

YMCA Infant, Toddler and Three-year-old classrooms use High Scope Curriculum. All YMCA Preschool 4-year-old rooms use the Connect4Learning (C4L) curriculum. Both High Scope and C4L are research-based curriculum that aligns with Michigan's Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Early Childhood and Prekindergarten. The curriculum has a strong emphasis on math, literacy, science, and social-emotional learning.

To ensure that the changing developmental and individual needs of each infant and toddler are met, the program will permit children birth to two and a half years of age to eat on demand. Children zero through eighteen months of age will be allowed to sleep on demand. 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.

## OUTDOOR TIME

Outdoor time is considered an integral part of our program. Physical activity helps children obtain the fine and gross motor skills 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, they are well enough to go outside. Extreme temperatures may determine limited play.

Children up to 12 months of age will be permitted to go outdoors when the temperature is above 15 degrees with no negative wind chill. Children 12 months to 2 ½ will be permitted to go outdoors when the temperature is above 0 degrees with no negative wind chill however, children 12 months to 2 ½ will limit their time to 20 minutes 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.

Children will remain indoors when the temperature is above 95 degrees. 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

Our YMCA programs limit screen time and provide activities that support a child's physical, social, and cognitive development. Any screen we do use will be educational, age-appropriate, and used only as a supplement to other activities and follow these guidelines, recommended by organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics and YMCA of the USA, and MiLEAP.

- NO screen time for children under the age of two years.
- Preschoolers and School-agers: Short videos or movies (30 minutes or less per week and rated G only) related to learning and only viewed on special occasions.
- Computer/iPad use will be limited to 15 minutes per day, per child or less.
- Parent notification is required and will include the details/activity on the curriculum calendar.

## FIELD TRIPS/TRANSPORTATION

Families 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 families. This permission slip will provide details on the field trip, describing all travel details, intended experience and any meal information.

Y programs do not provide transportation for children to or from the program. Transportation may occasionally be provided for field trips with prior written consent and approval by program administrators. All transportation activities will comply with Michigan Rules for Child Care Centers and YMCA safety policies.

## ALTERING APPEARANCE

Childcare staff members doing children's hair, adding nail polish, nail trims or other means of altering a child's appearance can be perceived differently from family to family. In order to respect each child's and family's choices, Early Learning staff are required to obtain parental permission before altering a child's appearance. This could include needing to put hair in a ponytail in order to participate in swim or allowing the child to participate in dramatic play scenarios.

## 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 ask families not bring in items such as goody bags, homemade sweets, and snacks. We ask that families work in coordination with the program director 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. Out of respect for the activities taking place in the program, the connections amongst peers, and to ensure things are kept safe, we ask that children refrain from bringing items from home. 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 donated to local charities.

## **SCREENING AND ASSESSMENTS**

Our program uses a variety of screening and assessment tools that are inclusive of family culture, experiences, and children's abilities. Teacher and family communication are critical to the child's developmental success. Upon enrollment, families 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. The YMCA uses the COR Advantage system to capture intentional observations. Teaching staff use their documentation as a comprehensive picture of the developmental needs of the individual child and the classroom. This documentation will be the basis of planning for individual, small and large group activities. All staff receive training on COR Advantage to ensure that the assessments documented are authentic.

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 family 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.

## **ROOM TRANSITIONS**

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/guardians, children and staff should all prepare for the change. Families should be involved, from

the beginning, in establishing a plan for transitioning their child to the new room. All people 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.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

The YMCA is committed to maintaining close, positive relationships with every family 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 regarding 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 that are potty training children requiring accommodation, a daily report describing the following information must be shared with the family:

- 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, including but not limited to:

- Monthly newsletter from center or classroom.
- Program specific curriculum, events, updates, highlights and needs.
- Memos and notifications relating to immediate needs and program changes.
- Volunteer opportunities
- Families will be notified the same day that an incident or injury has occurred in our communication platform.
- Notification of 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 personal social media. 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

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, to allow anyone visiting learn more about our team.

## COR ADVANTAGE / KAYMBU

Each classroom has an iPad with a program called COR Advantage which enables teachers to create daily reports that are sent to families for every child, every day via the Kaymbu app. 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.

Through the Kaymbu app, teachers can take photographs that capture educational and playful moments throughout your child day. Some of those photos may include group photos. The Y asks that families only post photos of their own child on social media platforms.

## 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. To accomplish this, the Y will:

- Model appropriate behaviors with children as well as model appropriate expressions of their feelings.
- Tailor behavior expectations to the child's development level.
- Anticipate problem situations and intervene by distracting the child and redirecting him/her to a positive alternative.
- Engage children in cooperative problem solving (examine alternatives, identify consequences, and choose appropriate action).
- Protect the safety of the children and staff by establishing clear expectations and creating a safe environment through teacher proximity in the classroom/playground setting.

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from using corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, humiliation, or isolation with children. Children will not be deprived of food, rest, or outdoor time as a form of discipline.

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. When a child's ongoing challenging behavior must be addressed, we will assess the function of the behavior. We will work with families to develop an individualized plan to address the behavior as needed. Included will be positive behavior support strategies to help the child be successful.

In the case that consistent behavior continues the Y will:

- With parental consent, conduct a structured observation of the child's behavior within the program setting.
- Schedule a feedback meeting with staff to identify supportive strategies and develop a behavior Plan.
- Schedule a parent meeting to review Behavior Plan (Failure to meet or attend may result in a withdrawal from care.)



- Implement the strategies determined in the Behavior Plan based on the identified period.
- Once the Behavior plan is implemented, the director, staff, and family will meet to review and re-evaluate the outcome of the behavior plan. The plan will be updated to continue, or other support will be recommended.

Disruptive or dangerous behavior may result in reduced schedule, suspension, or termination from the program. Disenrollment from the program is at the discretion of Y leadership.

## **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 food are provided to give the children chance to experience a variety of cultures.

## **INCLUSION**

The YMCA is inclusive and makes every attempt to reasonably accommodate every 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.

The YMCA believes that everyone is a unique individual, regardless of how they identify themselves. We encourage all participants to experience a variety of activities. Books, visual aids, and special guests may be provided to challenge traditional gender roles and expectations. Exploring concepts of personal identity is a common theme in early childhood, and teaching staff will be supportive of children's expressions of self.

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.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

At times students have scheduled support services like 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, families must contact the program director 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.

## **YMCA MEMBERSHIP**

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



## 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 are both clear about what you have discussed and the desired outcomes including time frames.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

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 following county guidelines. We will also provide additional family resources throughout the year.

### PHYSICALS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Within 30 days of a child's initial attendance, a center shall obtain, keep on file, and make accessible in the center a record of a physical evaluation of the child that notes any restrictions and is signed by a physician or the physician's designee. An electronic record from a physician's office will be accepted. Health appraisals must be updated yearly children's birth until 30 months of age and every two years for children 30 months of age until eligible to attend kindergarten. Failure to meet these basic requirements, in the absence of a valid waiver, requires the childcare program director to exclude the child from the childcare program. Immunization record must be official signed MCIR copy.

### BEVERAGES

The classroom is a busy area with plenty of movement. To avoid any incidents, all hot beverages are not allowed in the classroom, center, or program spaces. Glass bottles, for children and adults, must have silicone sleeves.

### MEDICATION

The program will administer prescription and over the counter medication with written consent of the family and the child's health care provider for each 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

All medications will be checked for expiration upon administration. Expired medications will be returned to the parent for disposal. Any medications left will be destroyed or disposed of. Medications should not be left at the center overnight other than emergency action plan medications.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

To provide a healthy and engaging environment, children will be sent home from programming, if any of the following occur:

- Fever 100.4
- Diarrhea (3) – loose, watery stools
- Any vomiting(that is not spit up)
- Unexplained or change in known rash.
- Lice or nits
- Red eyes with discharge
- Sores that are draining open or appear infected.
- Not feeling well enough to participate in activities.
- Uncontrollable cough

Children may return to programming when symptom-free for 24 hours or per the health department's guidance. The Program director reserves the right to decide whether a child is healthy enough to be in programming. All communicable disease cases will be posted for families through the Kaymbu app and on the classroom door.

The Y reserves the right to remove a child from programming in the case of concern for disease exposure. All children being sent home with any illness must be picked up from programming within an hour of receiving notification from the center.

### Children may return to program when:

- The child remains symptoms free for 24 hours to return to program.
- Temperature has been below 100.4 degrees for 24 hours without medication.
- Prescribed antibiotics have been taken for a full 24 hrs.
- 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 and
- Eyes are no longer discharging, or the condition has been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- The rash has subsided, or a physician has determined that the rash is not contagious.



## LICE OR NITS

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

When a family notifies the program after child has attended programming we will:

- Clean all materials immediately
- Post notifications of exposure
- Post at the site on entry and exit doors- classroom specific door of parent communication area.

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 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 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 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 families 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 with 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; practice using table etiquette and learn 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 meals and one snack for children attending the center for the full day with times listed for service. The menus and portions will follow nutritional guidelines established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). 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 in a place visible to parents with substitutions noted. Families will work with the childcare director to accommodate the needs of children with special dietary needs, such as those with allergies or diet restrictions. 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 and 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.

Families with infants (children 12mths and younger) are responsible for bringing in premade bottles labeled with the child's first and last name, amount, contents, and date. Bottles will be kept refrigerated until use and then warmed with a bottle warmer to a proper temperature. Children will be fed by staff and at no point will a bottle 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 Y supports a family's plan 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](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](mailto: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 County Health Department annually for vision and hearing concerns. Results of these tests, conducted by the local health department, will be shared with families 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 and as needed. All diaper changes will be documented for families to review in their child's daily report. Diapers, wipes, creams, and any other necessary diapering/bathroom items are provided by the family. All items are to be labeled with child's first and last name 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 or wet bag 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 teachers to ensure consistency is happening between the home and the center. During this time, families will be asked to bring in multiple changes of clothing, including socks and shoes.

## REST TIME

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 in the crib, with their heads remaining uncovered and cribs will be free from soft objects (pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, etc.). Swaddling with a sleep sack swaddle attachment or swaddle wrap is allowed only for infants up to 2 months of age. If a child has a health issue or special need that requires the child use a swaddle attachment or swaddle wrap after the child is 2 months of age, documentation from the health provider is required. The documentation must include specific sleeping instructions and time frames for how long the child needs to sleep in this manner, including an end date. 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 methods 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.

### DRILLS

Each room has emergency plans, routes, and procedures posted. The program practices fire drills every three months and tornado drills two times during the months of March through November. Power outages and flood drills are practiced annually.

### FIRST AID KITS

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

### ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

For minor accidents (bump, scrape, etc....), a family will be notified, via Kaymbu, no later than the end of the day. In the event a child is seriously injured (head injury, excessive bleeding, broken limbs, seizure, etc.), the family will be notified immediately via phone call. If a child needs to go to the hospital via ambulance before the family arrives, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital until the family 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. These plans are to keep children and Y staff safe inside the building in case of a tornado or intruder. In the event of a fire or facility issue, the Y has a designated on-site evacuation plan. Should there be a reason to evacuate off-site, families will be notified of the relocation and reunification process by their program director. The Y staff will follow all direct instructions from Fire and Rescue personnel. Children that require special accommodation will be assigned a caregiver.





# STAFF/VOLUNTEERS

The Y strives 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. All childcare staff members who work directly with children are required to be trained in first aid and pediatric, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) Courtesy of Michigan Administrative Rules within 90 days of being hired. 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 families, are welcome and very much appreciated in YMCA programs. All volunteers are required to have a sex offender clearance through Michigan PSOR and the national registry (Dru Sjodin). Volunteers that give 4 hours or more of their time per week are also required to attend training sessions. Volunteers are always supervised by the classroom teacher or director. Volunteers are a vital part of the childcare program, and their help is greatly appreciated.

## MILEAP

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 Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP), which 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.

To maintain our commitment and transparency with the state licensing office, we will notify the state of required incidents that occur within our program:

- Unsupervised child
- Allegations of inappropriate contact
- Evacuation
- Fire
- Medical treatment for an injury, accident or medical condition that happened during program

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 MiLEAP can be found at <https://www.michigan.gov/mileap>



Our programs maintain a licensing notebook that contains all inspections, special investigations, and any related corrective action plans. This notebook is available for review during regular program hours. Licensing inspection reports are also available on-line at <https://www.michigan.gov/mileap>.

## **STAFF RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES**

Staff may not be alone, outside the YMCA, with children they meet in the YMCA programs. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, transporting children to or from programs, birthday parties, 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 LAW**

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.