



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

West Suburban YMCA

Preschool Center for Youth Development

Family Handbook



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Family Handbook

WSYMCA MISSION STATEMENT

The West Suburban YMCA, a charitable non-profit organization, strengthens the foundations of our community by supporting youth development, healthy living and social responsibility for all. The West Suburban YMCA, founded in 1877 in Newton Corner, is among the oldest YMCAs in the United States.

Our staff and volunteers deliver on our cause to strengthen community. Whether we are building confidence in kids, encouraging someone to achieve a health goal, or bringing people from different backgrounds together to improve neighborhoods, every connection made contributes to a better "us."

When you join the Y you belong to a place where:

- Families find a safe, positive environment for children to learn values, social skills and behaviors
- Families come together to have fun and spend quality time with each other
- Adults connect with friends, pursue interests and learn how to live healthier
- Communities thrive because neighbors support each other and give back
- We all build relationships that further our sense of belonging and purpose

Our promise to you, as you walk in the door, is to find "your fit" with the activities, facilities and programs that we offer. We offer the resources and the flexibility to help you, your family and the community to be healthier, happier and more connected.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

We believe that children learn and grow best within the context of their family, cultural background and community, and in a setting that is safe, comfortable and active. Our environment is inspiring where young children can learn, play and grow while developing self-esteem, social-emotional, cognitive, language and literacy, physical and artistic development. Staff, children and families are expected to model the Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility ensuring that everyone puts their best selves forward every day. Our commitment is to make a difference in the lives of every child and family who choose the Y. The Y's assurance of high quality includes:

- Learning experiences that are engaging and developmentally appropriate
- Focus on social emotional growth
- Active play and physical fitness combined with nutrition education
- Emphasis on self-confidence, self-esteem and leadership, while encouraging independence.
- Experienced, well trained educators
- Warm, positive interactions between educators and children
- Family involvement

The major objective of the YMCA is to strengthen and support family life. Our Preschool is an ideal way to accomplish this objective. Family members, educators and children all play an important and vital role in caring for and facilitating the development of your child and in strengthening and supporting your family.

The YMCA Preschool Center for Youth Development is committed to serving all families without regard to race, creed, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, family lifestyle, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or financial ability. Children are provided with an environment and personal relationships that foster optimum growth and development. Since all children develop and grow at varying rates, we strive to make our program broad enough to meet the needs of the individual child. Our program is designed to foster cognitive, social-emotional, language and physical development. We are committed to nurturing individual differences and the growth of the whole child.

Our philosophy is a developmental one. In order to meet individual needs and to give equal emphasis to all aspects of development, our program is structured to provide access to materials which help each child develop to his/her highest potential. Opportunities are presented which encourage the child to make decisions and to take responsibility.

In order to develop each child's physical capabilities, we have scheduled gross motor activities each day. Outdoor gross motor time provides physical and social-emotional benefits for children. The gym, auditorium, dance studios, and pool are also used for gross motor development.

Positive peer interactions, cooperation and relationship-building, based on mutual caring and respect, are some of our main goals for the development of each child's social competence.

Each child's emotional needs are important to us. Our teachers realize the value of consistency, security, warmth and love and provide an environment that nurtures the development of emotional capabilities. Healthy self-esteem, independence and self-regulation are among our primary emotional goals.

We know that children learn best by exploring their environment, by being exposed to a variety of "hands on" experiences and by being allowed to figure out their world through trial and error. Our teachers understand their responsibility to set limits, to maintain safety and to act as role models who generate love, respect, understanding and generosity. Teachers communicate clear expectations regarding values, acceptable social behaviors and respect for others and the environment.

BUILDING CHARACTER...ONE CHILD AT A TIME

The YMCA is committed to incorporating character development as the foundation of everything we do. By reinforcing the importance of values such as *Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility*, we are providing children with the tools and self-esteem necessary to make healthy decisions in life.

Curriculum: The Preschool Center for Youth Development provides children with an age-appropriate and comprehensive curriculum designed to assess the social-emotional, physical, cognitive and language development of each child. An individual child planning approach is used to foster each child's next level of success within different learning domains. Children participate in individual, small and large group activities, consisting of language and literacy, introductory math concepts of numbers, shapes, and measurements, science, social studies, the arts, and sensory exploration. Positive and consistent guidance nurtures preschool developmental milestones, essential for kindergarten-readiness. We align our curriculum with Common Core Standards for Early Education and Massachusetts State Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences.

Assessments: Child assessments are completed in the late fall and spring. A copy will be provided to the family with the option of scheduling a conference with the teacher to discuss their child's achievements and developmental goals. A child progress report will be completed to outline individual child goals for the upcoming assessment period.

Sample daily schedule (daily schedules are very flexible to meet the needs of the children)

7:45AM to 9:00AM	Arrival, free choice
9:00AM to 9:30AM	Morning Snack
9:45AM to 10:30AM	Circle Time
10:45AM to 11:00AM	Choice Time/Teacher Directed Activities
11:00AM to 12:00PM	Gross Motor Time
12:00PM to 12:30PM	Lunch
12:30PM to 1:00PM	Clean up/Bathroom
1:00PM to 3:00PM	Rest time
3:00PM to 3:15PM	Clean up, mats away
3:15PM to 3:45PM	Afternoon snack/books
3:45PM to 4:00PM	Group meeting time
4:00PM to 4:30PM	Afternoon activities
4:30PM to 5:00PM	Departure & Activities (books, table games)

Swim Lessons

Children enrolled in the program receive a ½ hour swim lesson one morning per week (lessons may be canceled for some circumstances with little notice). Swim lessons are an important part of our program, and it is encouraged that all children will participate in the swim program. Children will change in the preschool classroom. Please be sure to send in a bathing suit, towel, goggles if needed, and appropriate water shoes (sandals or crocks are preferred). Children who are not yet potty trained must wear a swim diaper. Please make weather appropriate clothing to change in to after swim. During swim lessons, there is a combination of aquatic staff and preschool staff in the water. There is always a lifeguard on duty.

Hours of Operation:

The Preschool Center for Youth Development opens at 7:45AM and closes promptly at 5:00PM. Children enrolled in the program can be dropped off any time after 7:45AM. Children must be picked no later than 5:00PM or a late fee will be assessed.

Registration and Admission

Enrollment is ongoing until the program is full. For a child to enroll in the Preschool Center for Youth Development they need to be 2.9 years of age on their first day in the program. **A child will not be enrolled in the Preschool Center for Youth Development until all required paperwork is submitted and the required deposit is received.**

- A current West Suburban YMCA Youth or Family membership is required during registration and throughout enrollment in the program.
- Completed Preschool Center for Youth Development enrollment packet
- **A deposit of one week's tuition is required**, this deposit is non-refundable, and space will not be held for your child unless all paperwork and deposit are submitted.
- A current physical dated no later than 12 months from enrollment (physical must remain current while child is enrolled in the program).
- A copy of your child's current immunizations.
- **A current copy of an IEP, 504 plan or IFSP must be provided if applicable.**
- **Allergy/Chronic Illness: if your child has an allergy or chronic illness an Individual Health Care Plan is required before your child can start in the program.**

Please note that this documentation is required by the Department of Early Education and Care through the State of Massachusetts and your child may not start the program until the documentation is obtained.

Enrollment in our program is open to all, we do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, marital status, cultural heritage, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs or disability.

Tuition assistance opportunities are available and can be applied for on a confidential basis.

The Y's attention to quality care for every child includes an equal responsibility by parents/guardians to uphold the fee schedule agreed upon during registration. The Y's financial guidelines include:

- Rates are charged weekly and are not reduced for weeks containing holidays; closures due to inclement weather; or when a child is absent or suspended (there are no refunds or credits)
- Participants need to have a current West Suburban YMCA Youth or Family Membership
- Payments are due on Mondays for the week of services being provided.
- Parents using vouchers must keep them current, if your voucher expires your weekly fee will be reassessed and parents will be responsible for the full payment of the new fee.
- Parents must notify the Y two weeks in advance in writing if they are withdrawing a child from the program, otherwise they will be liable for payment.
- Parents have the opportunity to visit the preschool classroom at the time of enrollment of the child.

Termination or Suspension of Service

Unfortunately, there are circumstances that necessitate the suspension or termination of program services. If a child behaves in a way that jeopardizes the safety, health and well-being of himself/herself/themselves, another child or staff member, the Y reserves the right to suspend or terminate program service immediately. In less severe circumstances, the Y will provide a two-week advance notice if staff believe that it is in the best interest of all for a child to discontinue participation in a program. Possible reasons for suspension/termination from the program include:

- Inappropriate behavior considered harmful to your child, staff or others.
- Inappropriate parent behavior toward a child, staff or other parent(s).
- Chronic absenteeism.
- Chronic tardiness of parent at pick-up.
- Overdue fees.

The Y staff will first attempt all appropriate methods of positive child guidance and/or progressive methods of discipline (outlined below) before resorting to suspension or termination. The Director of Preschool and Family Services may recommend additional supportive services or make a referral for services when deemed appropriate. All incidents and subsequent actions will be documented in the child's file. If a child is suspended or terminated after exhausting all avenues for sustaining enrollment, the Director of Preschool and Family Services will provide the parent/guardian with all relevant information, including the circumstances under which a child may return, if applicable. In all cases, the final disciplinary decision is made in consultation with the Director of Preschool and Family Services and/or the Senior Program Director and/or the Chief Operating Officer.

Registration/Enrollment Packet

The following forms are included in the registration/enrollment packet. It is very important that they be completed in detail for they provide the staff with valuable information about your child and are required by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. These forms must be updated annually or whenever circumstances change.

Please remember to let us know immediately whenever there are changes with your information.

Forms included in the registration/enrollment packet:

- Registration Form
- Enrollment Form
- Emergency Authorization and Consent Form/Child's Medical Information
- Emergency Contacts and Pick-Up Authorization
- Authorization and Consent Form
- Transportation Form
- Preschool Developmental History
- Medical Form (physical and immunizations)
- Individual Health Care Plan (if child has an allergy or chronic medical condition, etc.)
- Medication Consent Form (for any physician-ordered medication your child will take while at program)
- Custody agreements/restraining orders if applicable
- IEP, IFSP, 504 plans if applicable

Registration Changes

Any changes in registration/enrollment information need to be updated immediately and in writing with the Preschool and Family Services Director—especially changes to cell phone, home or workplace numbers, emails, home addresses, emergency contacts or medical information.

You must provide a two-week notice for any changes related to child’s schedule or you will be responsible for the weekly payments.

Accommodations will be made space permitting.

Teachers

Teachers are selected carefully based on their experience, education, talents and interpersonal skills. All teachers are qualified by the Department of Early Education and Care standards. Staff training is continuous, and comprehensive on topics that include Academic Instruction, Curriculum Development, Bullying Prevention, Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Safety and Protection; Family Engagement and strategies to promote children’s social and emotional growth.

Criminal and Sexual (CORI/SORI) background checks are run annually on all teachers and all are required to have certificates in First Aid and CPR.

Attendance

If a child is going to be absent from a program, the parent/guardian must notify the Preschool Center for Youth Development at 617-795-1747 or email heatherp@wsymca.org Payment fees are required for all days your child is registered to attend the preschool program, rates are charged weekly and are not reduced for weeks containing holidays, closures due to inclement weather; or when a child is absent or suspended (there are no refunds or credits).

Billing: Tuition is paid weekly and are paid the Monday of participation in the program. If tuition is not paid by Monday the week of participation in the program, your child will not be able to participate until tuition is paid. The West Suburban YMCA reserves the right to suspend any child if payment is more than fourteen (14) days late. Parents will be notified by mail and/or email and by a “hand delivered” letter if such action is to be taken and the balance may be sent to collections. All children will be welcome to participate in the program when the balance is paid in full and space is available. Please be aware that if your child is suspended from the program, his/her space will become available to other children on the waitlist. I understand that changes to my child’s schedule must be made in writing at least two weeks in advance. I understand that my child may not be enrolled in the Preschool Center for Youth Development while having any outstanding balance at the West Suburban YMCA. All Preschool Center for Youth Development tuition rates are reviewed yearly, and new rates start in September. **Families are responsible for keeping their vouchers current and will be required to pay the full tuition fee if the voucher expires.**

Pick-Up Authorization

A Pick-Up Authorization Form, identifying individuals who are allowed to pick-up a child from our program, must be on file for every child registered in the Preschool Center for Youth Development Program. If a child will be picked up by anyone other than a previously designated adult, the program must be notified in writing of the change. No child, under any circumstances, will be allowed to leave the premises without an authorized adult. Unfamiliar authorized adults who pick up are required to show identification. Authorized adults must be 18 years of age or older. If staff has a concern that an authorized adult, including a parent/guardian, is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, staff will

contact another authorized person for pick up. Incidents of this type may be reported to the Department of Children and families (DCF).

Late Pick-Up

It is expected that children will be picked-up no later than 5:00PM. Recognizing that there may be unintended delays, parents must call the program with an expected arrival time and/or alternative pick-up plan. Late pick-ups are assessed a late fee of \$10 for any portion of being 10 minutes late per child and \$1.00 per minute/per child after 10 minutes. The late fee will be added to your weekly tuition bill. If a parent is 2 hours late after closing and contact cannot be made with a parent or emergency contact, the staff will notify the Department of Children and families (DCF) Emergency Unit, and follow the instructions provided by DCF.

Transportation

Transportation is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Children must be escorted by an authorized adult to and from the preschool program at the beginning and end of every day. The authorized adult will be greeted by a staff member at the Youth Development main entrance (side parking lot).

Field Trips

Preschoolers participating in field trips may be transported in YMCA vans, rented vehicles, or by walking. In the event a vehicle breaks down, alternative transportation will be secured. Y staff is responsible for children while on field trips. There will always be a staff member present who is certified in CPR and First Aid. Any special activity not on the common use list is presented to parent/guardian with specific details for consent. The YMCA Preschool Center for Youth Development follows all state requirements for the transportation of our preschoolers. There may be an additional fee for field trips.

Field Trip Emergency Plan

If a child is injured during a field trip, a staff member certified in First Aid/CPR will assess the injury and instruct a fellow staff member to call 911 (if necessary) and immediately notify the child's parent/guardian or designated emergency contacts and the Y's administrative staff. The child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest medical facility accompanied by a Y staff member who will have the child's emergency forms. The staff member will stay with the child until the parent/guardian or emergency contact arrives at the medical facility. Parents will receive written documentation of the injury/incident within 24 hours of the injury.

Children's Records

Information in a child's record is privileged and confidential, meaning that the Y will not release information contained in the record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian requests access to the child's record or specific information contained within, the Y will provide within two (2) business days of the initial request. The YMCA follows the Department of Early Education and Care guidelines governing access to, duplication and dissemination of such information. The Y also documents to whom and for what reason information in the record was released. This documentation is available to parent/guardian and program staff responsible for record keeping. A nominal fee may be charged for copies. *Authorized representatives from the MA Department of Early Education & Care, Department of*

Public Health and the Department of Children & Families have the right to review all records for regulatory or intervention purposes.

Special Accommodations

The Y will consider special accommodation requests to meet the specific needs of a child, including change or modification in the child's participation in regular activities. Identification of special equipment, materials, ramps or aids will be reviewed and discussed as well. It is the goal of the Y to work with each family in an effort to serve every child; however, if such accommodation creates an undue burden on the program, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing regarding the Y's inability to serve the child and the reasons for the decision. Parents have the right to contact the Department of Early Education and Care to review any such decision.

Referral Services

Through the Y's connections with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), we are linked to information and services regarding social, mental health, educational and medical services for families. The Director of Preschool and Family Services maintains this referral information. When needed, the Y provides to parents/guardians a document detailing the reasons that referral services are being recommended for a child. This will include observations related to the child and the efforts made by the Y Program to accommodate the child's needs. The Y requires written parental/guardian consent before a referral is made, so it is important for all to work together. The program maintains a written record of any referrals, including conferences with parents and any results or actions discussed.

If a child is at least 2.5 years of age, the Y informs the child's parent/guardian of the availability of services and their rights, including the right to Appeal under Chapter 766.

Parent Engagement

The Y encourages parent/guardian participation and input, and parents/guardians are welcome to visit the program at any time. Individual conferences can be arranged by appointment. Parents are welcome to share their creative talents, skills or share some family traditions with the children. If you have a specific concern, question, program suggestion, etc., please contact the Preschool and Family Services Director in person, via email, heatherp@wsymca.org or phone, 617-795-1747.

Fundraising

The YMCA is a charitable organization. We do a variety of fundraising activities throughout the year. We encourage all families to participate. Thank you in advance for your support.

Children's Rights: Children are treated with care, respect and honesty at all times; enjoy an environment that is safe and free of hazards; have the opportunity to express their feelings and be heard in an appropriate manner whether they are happy, angry, frustrated or excited. No child shall be subjected to any abuse, neglect or corporal punishment including but not limited to: any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, punishments which subject a child to verbal abuse, ridicule or humiliation, denial of rest or bathroom facilities, punishment for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet or any punishment related to eating or not eating food.

Child Guidance

Exhibiting and teaching respect is the foundation of the YMCA's Child Guidance Policy. Children are encouraged to show respect for each other and each other's property and the Y facility in the interest of every child's safety and the security of the group.

Educators employ positive strategies and tactics that are consistent, age-appropriate and respect the individuality of every child. These include:

- Establishing predictable daily routines.
- Helping children learn social, communication and emotional skills in place of challenging behaviors.
- Intervening quickly when children are physically aggressive with one another and teaching them alternatives for conflict resolution.
- Allowing children to help set rules and procedures for interactions with each other so they better understand the why behind policies that are in place.
- Encouraging children to be part of the solution in problem solving.

If a child displays negative behaviors (throwing toys, hitting children, etc.) a teacher will talk to the child about making better choices. If the child repeats the behavior, the teacher may ask the child to make a different choice, possibly in a different area of the classroom.

The staff will never use any form of physical or verbal abuse, punishment or humiliation; nor deny a child meal, drinks, outdoor time or the use of bathroom facilities.

A teacher may supportively hold a child in the rare case of an emergency where a dangerous threat to the child, or others near the child, exists. The teacher may hold the child long enough to remove the child from the situation. All staff provide a positive and consistent guidance to children based on their individual needs and development.

Restricted Methods of Child Guidance

- No spanking or other corporal punishment.
- No cruel, unusual, or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, abusive treatment.
- No denial of meals or snacks, drink, rest, or bathroom facilities as punishment.
- No force feeding.
- No punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet or other excessive practices of toileting.
- No punishment related to eating or not eating food.
- No excessive time outs; time out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.
- No deprivation of outdoor time.

Staff Responsibilities for Child Guidance

One of the many roles of the teacher is to introduce children to a social environment and to guide them in understanding appropriate behaviors. The following guidelines are used:

- All educators in the Preschool Center for Youth Development serve as role models.
- Staff will handle inappropriate behaviors in a calm, clear and consistent manner which is based on the development level of the child.
- All behavior concerns will be logged in a behavior log.

- Parents will be kept informed of their child's behavior and progress.

Children's Responsibility

Children of all ages are expected to model the Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility, ensuring that everyone puts their best selves forward every day. This includes (but is not limited to): understanding the consequences of their actions; sharing; controlling their anger; participating in activities; wearing seatbelts while in a Y vehicle and respecting and following the Y's rules and policies.

Incident Reports

In the event a child exhibits a pattern of negative behavior, the teachers may ask a parent to sign off on an incident report. The primary purpose of incident reports is designed to be a tool for communication between families and educators. In the event that 3 or more behavioral incident reports have been sent home or the staff feels the child's behavior threatens his/her safety or the safety of others, the Preschool and Family Services Director may ask the parent/guardian to meet to discuss how to help that child be successful in the classroom. The Preschool Center for Youth Development reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a child for unsafe behavior with or without advanced notice to the family, depending on the severity of the behavior.

Toys from Home

Please refrain from bringing toys from home to the Preschool Center for Youth Development Program. Stuffed animals will be permitted for rest time only. The day's activities are full and engaging, and there are many items for recreational play and learning in our classrooms. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or broken toy/items that a child brings from home.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of a storm (snow, etc.) we will make every effort to remain open during our regularly scheduled hours. However, if the safety of our staff or our members is at risk, we may close the building and/or cancel programs. If the Newton Public Schools has a **delayed opening** than the West Suburban YMCA Preschool Center for Youth Development will have the **same delayed opening**. If Newton Public Schools are closed, the preschool will be closed.

HEPA Standards: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

The Y is expanding its longtime commitment to children and youth by adopting a set of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity standards. The standards we are adopting will build a healthier future for our nation’s children by providing healthy environments rich in opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. Specifically, they will:

- Establish a minimum of expected physical activity for children of different ages enrolled in our programs;
- Define food and beverages offerings, including designating water as the primary beverage during snack times and offering food from home;
- Limit the amount of screen time (use of computers, watching TV or videos).
- Commit Y’s to conducting parent education to encourage healthy behaviors at home.

Meals

Families are asked to provide two snacks and a healthy lunch for their child. All items must be **PEANUT AND NUT FREE**. Children’s lunch including snacks are required to be healthy and sugary drinks are prohibited. See attached list. Snacks will be served at approximately 9:00AM and 3:30PM daily. Please provide wholesome and nutritious snacks, consisting of a fruit or vegetable and a whole wheat or dairy food item. Water is always available for children throughout the day. Please note that candy is prohibited from the preschool program.

If your child has a **food allergy**, please notify the Director of Preschool and Family Services at the time of enrollment and identify this on the appropriate space on your child’s enrollment packet. An Individual Health Care Plan is required for children with a diagnosed food allergy. Children must sit while eating snack and lunch.

By sending your child to Preschool with a healthy lunch, you are joining the Y in their commitment to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) Standards. Doing so provides your child with healthy habits and proper energy to fuel their day.

The program is unable to refrigerate lunches or heat lunches. Please include an ice pack to keep food items cold and use a thermos to keep food items warm. Some helpful suggestions:

Pasta	Quesadilla	Pasta salad
Soup	Vegetables (cut up)	Egg salad
Pizza	Fruit	Cheese and crackers
Cereal	Yogurt	Cheese sticks
Sandwiches	Applesauce	Granola bars
Bagels	Humus	

Soda, candy and sugary treats are not permitted in the preschool program.

All food items must be **PEANUT AND TREE NUT FREE**.

Y Child Protection Policy

The West Suburban YMCA reviews all prospective staff, members and guests through the Massachusetts Registry of Sex offenders and prohibits membership or access to our Y's for individuals who are classified as offenders. In addition, fingerprinting is required of all staff who works regularly with children in Y Programs for safety.

Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention

Education and awareness are central to the Y's commitment to keeping children safe. The following strategies are consistently adhered to in our Preschool Center for Youth Development for the protection of children, educators and volunteers:

- All educators, branch staff and volunteers participate in mandatory annual trainings to help identify the signs of potential child abuse (physical and sexual), between adults and children and among children. Policies are in place to avoid situations where children may become vulnerable.
- Communication is open and honest among educators, parents and children. Children are encouraged to speak up in any situation where they may feel uncomfortable, regardless of the reason. Parents are encouraged to share behaviors that are out of the ordinary.
- Providing children with affection is important to their emotional and social growth, but there are boundaries and staff recognizes every child's need for personal space. Side hugging, pats on the back and high-fives are all acceptable ways for staff to show warmth and encouragement. At no time will the following disciplinary techniques be tolerated: physical punishment, striking, biting, kicking, squeezing, shaming, withholding bathroom privileges, confining children in locked rooms, verbal or emotional abuse.
- Parents may visit, unannounced, any program in which their child is enrolled.
- Y policy further prohibits educator/child interaction outside of a Y program (i.e. babysitting, Facebook friendships, texting or phone calls.)

Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse (Commonly referred to as filing a 51A)

All YMCA staff are required under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51 A, to report incidents of possible neglect or abuse—physical, sexual and psychological—to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF). This is not discretionary. Educators will file a 51A whenever they have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been harmed by anyone, including non-family members. In the most grievous instances, the matter may be referred directly to the police or consult with the District Attorney. In the event of an accusation or suspicion of child abuse, the following protocol is activated:

1. The staff person will notify the Director of Preschool and Family Services who will review the incident with the Director of Operations. The Branch Executive Director is also notified. All pertinent information is collected and assessed.
2. Once all pertinent information is secured, the Director of Preschool and Family Services or their designee will notify the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Protective Services Unit. A written 51A Report must be filed within 48 hours of the incident. If a YMCA staff person or other staff has been named in the 51A Report, the Department of Early Education and Care; Department of Public Health or another appropriate regulatory agency will be notified.

3. If a staff person or volunteer is implicated, without exception, the individual will be removed from direct care responsibilities immediately and will stay removed until all investigating authorities have completed their review. A positive finding will result in immediate termination. Reinstatement of an accused staff member or volunteer will occur only after investigation is complete and allegations are cleared and dismissed to the satisfaction of the Director of Preschool and Family Services and the Chief Operating Officer.
4. No YMCA administrator or director has the authority to supersede the protocol for reporting.
5. The parents or legal guardians of the child(ren) involved in an alleged incident will be notified in accordance with the directions set forth by DCF.
6. Information maintained in the handling of all 51A filings is considered confidential and privileged.

Health Care Policy

The following processes safeguard children and staff from spreading communicable illnesses. The protection of every child's health and wellness is a priority. Although some of these restrictions may be inconvenient, they have been proven to be effective in containing the transmission of common childhood ailments. The full health care policy is available upon request.

Children should remain home if he/she is listless, unusually irritable, complains of aches, pale or flushed. In particular, the child should not attend programming with any of the following symptoms:

- Earache
- Fever over 100 Degrees
- Sore Throat
- Stomachache
- Diarrhea/Vomiting
- Contagious Rash
- Head Lice
- COVID-19, RSV, Chicken Pox, Whooping Cough, Conjunctivitis, Impetigo.... any condition deemed contagious.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the Y if a child has and/or has been exposed to a communicable condition. The Y will also notify all parents if a child in the program has been reported to have a contagious illness. Notices will include symptoms and general information on the contagion.

Children may attend programming with:

- Ear infection, Strep Throat, Conjunctivitis provided they have been on medication for a full 24 hours and have been symptom free for 24 hours
- Colds, provided they have been fever free, medication free and symptom free for 24 hours
- Seasonal allergies and other non-contagious conditions

Children will be sent home if a child is unable to keep up with the pace of activities due to an illness that is evident or developed during program hours. Parents/guardians or an authorized release person will be expected to pick up the child as soon as possible and within one hour of being notified.

Preventative Health Procedures

Described below are the infection control measures to prevent the spread of communicable disease. We follow exclusion policies for serious illnesses, contagious diseases and reportable diseases in conformance with the regulations and recommendations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control, The Department of Public Health. Procedures shall include the notification of all parents in accordance with the Department of Public Health's recommendation.

1. Illness

All children, within a group setting, are continuously exposed to other's germs.

Parents/guardians are asked not to send their child to the program if he or she is sick or contagious. If a child becomes ill during the program hours (fever, vomiting, etc.) an educator will place the child away from children on a rest mat. The parents or emergency contacts will be called immediately to come and pick up the ill child. **The child will not be able to return to the program until they are fever free and symptom free for 24 hours.**

2. Handwashing and Personal Hygiene

Transmission of infection in a group setting can be dramatically reduced by frequent and proper washing of hands. Staff and children are encouraged to follow the method recommended by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Wash your hands with soap and warm running water for 20 seconds (long enough to sing the ABC song) and wipe your hands with a paper towel, then use that paper towel to turn off the faucets. Children are required to wash their hands upon arrival, before eating, after using the rest room, after outdoor time and before and after sensory play (water table, sand table, playdough, etc.)

3. Tooth Brushing

The Department of Early Education and Care require all children to brush their teeth who:

1. Are in an early education program for more than 4 hours
2. Consume a meal or snack while in the program.

Educators will assist children as needed.

Allergies must be disclosed in advance

Any food, drug or environmental allergies **must be disclosed** in the Allergies section of a child's enrollment information. This information will be placed on a master list and posted in food preparation and food service areas in the classroom. All staff will be informed. The Y does not serve or allow products containing peanuts and tree nuts in its programs as an overall precaution. Any and all emergency medications, including Epi Pen's, must remain up to date and not expired.

Lead Test

Children under the age of six must have evidence of a lead test on file per Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) regulations and requirements.

Toileting Procedures

For children who are not toilet trained staff will change diapers every two hours or as needed. Please provide pull-ups/diapers and wipes for your child.

Children who are toilet trained use the bathroom as needed. For those who are learning, teachers will provide the opportunity throughout the day for a child to become accustomed to the toilet.

Children using the toilet will follow EEC guidelines for hand washing and will use disposable towels to dry their hands and shut off the water.

Toileting Accidents If a child has a toileting accident, the teacher will escort the child to the bathroom where he/she will be cleaned up and provided a clean change of clothes. The soiled clothes are put into a plastic bag, labeled with the child's name and given to the parent/guardian at pick-up.

Clothing

Children should wear clothing that is seasonally appropriate, comfortable and practical. **All belongings must be labeled with the child's name.** The Y is not responsible for lost or damaged items. Children must wear protective footwear at all times. Please provide extra sets of clothing in case of spills, toileting accidents, etc. These should include shirts, pants, underwear and socks.

Dispensing Medication

Prescription medication is administered pending a written authorization from the child's physician and parent/guardian. For chronic medical conditions, an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) must be completed and signed by the child's physician and parent/guardian. Written medical consent from the physician and parent/guardian is required for the administration of emergency medication. **All medications must be in the original packaging and prescriptions must have a current prescription label.**

The YMCA keeps a written record of the administration of all medication and follows a protocol called the *5 Rights of Medication*: the right child; medication; the date, time and route. Every time a medicine is administered by staff, detailed information on the dosage is logged and kept in the child's file. All medications are stored under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety. Unused medications will be returned to the parent/guardian. All pertinent information regarding the dosage, date and time will be recorded and retained in a child's file.

Emergency Procedures

A child that is seriously injured at the YMCA will be transported to the nearest emergency medical facility by ambulance. Parents will be notified immediately. A staff member accompanies the child with child-specific emergency forms and stays with the child until parent/guardian arrives. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact on file will be notified. If a child is seriously injured while on a field trip, the same protocol is followed. Parent/Guardian receives all written documentation related to the injury within 24 hours.

Fire Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

Emergency evacuation procedures are posted conspicuously throughout the YMCA facility. Staff are orientated with their location and procedure. Practice emergency evacuation drills are held every month with the staff and children, using different exit routes. The date and time of the drill and the effectiveness of the drill are documented in the evacuation log located in the Preschool and Family Services Director's office. The Preschool Center for Youth Development meets on the sidewalk near the gate entrance to the turf or the track near the playground unless instructed otherwise by proper authorities.

Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

Daily cleaning and sanitizing are a best practice followed by the Preschool Center for Youth Development. In our efforts to ensure children's health and well-being, our daily routine includes the washing, sanitizing and/or disinfecting of surfaces, including floors, toilets, sinks, faucets and tables. The disinfectant used a commercially prepared disinfectant that has been approved by the Environmental protection Agency (EPA). Solutions are prepared in accordance with the Mass Department of Public health guidelines. All cleaning supplies are stored in secured places and out of the reach of children.

Program Closures

September 5 – Labor Day	November 10 – Professional Development Day – closed	January 16 – Martin Luther King Jr., Day
September 6/7 – Staff Set Up and Professional Days	November 11 – Veteran's Day	February 20 – President's Day
September 8 – First Day of Preschool	November 24 and 25 – Thanksgiving Break	April 7 - Good Friday
September 26 – Rosh Hashanah (open)	December 26 – Christmas Day Observed	April 17 - Patriots Day
October 5 – Yom Kippur (open)	January 2 – New Year's Day Observed	May 29 - Memorial Day
October 7 – Professional Development Day – closed	January 13 - Professional Development Day – closed	June 19 - Juneteenth
October 10 – Indigenous People's Day		June 23 - Tentative Last Day of School year (subject to change)
		July 4 - Independence Day

The Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) requests that the YMCA share its obligations to parents/guardians as outlined in State regulations related to early education and afterschool programming:

Parent's Rights (Licensee = Program)

Parent visits: the YMCA encourages parents to visit the Center and their child's room while their child is present.

Availability of Regulations

The Center maintains copies of CMR 102 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises, and makes them available to any person upon request. If parents/guardians have questions about any of the regulations, a copy may be requested from the Preschool and Family Services Director.

Please make sure your contact information is up-to-date and on file.

This includes your cell phone, home phone (if applicable), email address and all emergency contacts.

The Preschool Center for Youth Development is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and is mandated to uphold all rules, regulations and policies set by EEC. Information regarding program regulatory compliance history can be obtained from the Department of Early Education and Care.

Metro Boston

1250 Hancock Street, Suite 605 North

Quincy, MA 02169

Phone: (617) 472-2881

Fax: (617) 472-2722

Dangerous Foods

Do NOT serve these foods to children under 4 years of age:

Hot dogs	Sausages
Chunks of meat or cheese	Whole grapes
Fish or meat with bones	Raisins
Marshmallows and marshmallow fluff	Popcorn
Hard, gooey or sticky candy	Chewing gum
Chunks of peanut butter	Lollipops
Raw vegetables	Nuts and seeds
Whole olives	Ice cubes
Potato / corn chips	Pretzels



This list is provided for information purposes only. Please consult resources on the back of the brochure for more information about

For Addition Information:

Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards, Guidelines of Out-of-Home Child Care (3rd Ed.). American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource for Health and Safety in Child Care (2011).

American Academy of Pediatrics
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/125/3/601.full>

<http://www.aap.org>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: www.cdc.gov/injury/.

USDA Food Safety: www.foodsafety.gov

Department of Early Education and Care

51 Sleeper St. 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02210
(617) 988-6600

www.mass.gov/eec



Preventing Choking In Our Children



Choking Prevention

Choking is a leading cause of unintended injury in children under age 4.

Injury and death from choking are preventable. The risk of choking depends on the size, shape and consistency of the object, as well as the developmental age of the child.

The most common items on which children choke are food, coins, balloons, and other toys.

If an item can fit inside a cardboard toilet tube roll, it can become lodged inside a child's airway.

***Caregivers should be educated about choking hazards.**

Steps to Avoid Choking Include:

1. Learn CPR (basic life support).
2. Be aware that balloons pose a choking risk to children of any age.
3. Insist that children eat at the table, or at least while sitting down. They should not walk, run, play, laugh or lie down with food in their mouths.
4. Cut food for infants and young children into pieces no larger than one-half inch, and teach them to chew their food well.
5. Supervise mealtimes for infants and young children.
6. Be aware of older children's actions. Many choking incidents occur when older siblings give dangerous foods, toys or other objects to younger children.

7. Follow the age recommendations on toy packages. Age guidelines reflect the safety of the toy based on possible choking hazards as well as a child's physical and mental abilities at various ages.
8. Check under furniture and between cushions for small items that children find and put in their mouths.
9. Do not let infants and young children play with coins.
10. Do not prop bottles. This can cause choking and aspiration.
11. Don't feed children while driving. It is difficult to drive and supervise eating.
12. If using a rub-on teething medication, watch toddler closely as the medicine can numb his throat and interfere with swallowing.



Tips To Make Food Safer

- Cut into quarters lengthwise, then into **small pieces**.
- Peel fruits and cut in half lengthwise.
- Chop finely or into thin strips.
- Spread peanut butter **thinly** on crackers or bread.
- Avoid round or tube-shaped foods.

Remember: *never* leave children unattended while eating.

Never Let Young Children Play With

Latex balloons	Coins
Marbles	Small balls
Pen or marker caps	Small button-type batteries
Medicine syringes	Jewelry
Toys with small parts	Crayon pieces
Toys that can be compressed to fit entirely into a child's mouth	

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge receipt of this parent handbook which contains our statement of non-discrimination and purpose, philosophy, current fee schedule, YMCA organizational information, statement of parental rights, plan for behavior management, yearly schedule, open door policy, health and illness policies and other pertinent information about our program.

(Parent Signature)

(Date)