



YMCA Child Care

Ages 0-12

PARENT HANDBOOK
Last Issue Date: April 2024





Welcome to YMCA Child Care

Why We are Different

With our dedication to offering high-quality, research-based programs that are fun and enriching for your child, there are many reasons why YMCA Child Care is different.

Experience Matters

YMCA Northumberland has been providing high quality Licensed Child Care and education for children 0-12 years of age for over 30 years. Today we operate 22 Child Care Centres in 22 locations, 4 of which are full-day Centres.

Commitment to Quality

YMCA Child Care Programs are developed by a core group of Early Childhood Education experts at YMCA Northumberland in collaboration with other YMCA Child Care experts across Canada. We ensure we are always reflecting on current research and standards, including provincial frameworks. Our programs meet provincial licensing requirements, and we annually assess our programs to ensure our own YMCA Program Standards are met.

Our Scale

As Canada's largest Child Care provider, we are entrusted with the care of thousands of children every day at more than 1,500 locations across the country. No other organization in Canada or the U.S. is delivering a national curriculum in Child Care Programs at the scale we are.

We're a Charity

As a charity, all YMCA Child Care Programs are non-profit and reflect our core values of caring, respect, honesty, responsibility, health and citizenship. Our Educators embody these core values in their relationship with every child.

Participation in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC)

As long-standing providers of childcare in Ontario, the YMCA and its partners in the sector have long advocated for the necessity of government support to ensure every family has access to affordable and quality childcare regardless of individual circumstance. With the Ontario Government's introduction of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system (CWELCC), we are pleased to be able to participate in and move forward with the CWELCC in order to allow us to offer our families who qualify a reduction in their childcare fees.

We are pleased to be able to provide this reduction in fees to our eligible families and look forward to continuing collaborations with the Government of Ontario focusing on the importance of Early Learning and support for the Educators who work within the field. We will also continue to advocate for financial support for our School Age programs which at this time, are not part of the CWELCC agreement.



We Embrace the Power of Play

Research has shown that play is the natural way children learn and this serves as the foundation for all YMCA Child Care Programs. When children play, they are having fun, exploring their interests and therefore spend longer on a task. Most importantly, they are trying new things, using their imagination, problem solving and developing new skills. Our programs and Centres are designed to allow children to participate in independent or small group play while YMCA Educators support their learning.

Our Early Learning and Care Curriculum for Children 0-6 Years

An integral part of all Licensed YMCA Early Learning and Care, our YMCA Playing to Learn™ curriculum prepares children ages 0-6 for school and life-long achievement. The curriculum aligns with all provincial early learning frameworks adopted to date and is based on research and evidence that shows play is the most effective way that children learn and gain new skills.

We're Driven by the Child's Interests, not Teacher-led

In both our YMCA Playing to Learn™ and YMCA A Place to Connect™ curriculums, there are no pre-determined lesson plans. What happens in each program is driven by what children are showing an interest in at any given time and educators will work with the children to grow their interest and learning about the topic. Materials, props and activities are introduced to enhance these experiences providing opportunities for learning and development.

Accountability of YMCA Educators

Warm, caring and dedicated, our educators have a passion for nurturing each child's potential. They are qualified professionals and lifelong learners themselves, supported through ongoing in-house training. Our educators are held accountable for the implementation of our curriculum, our standards for communicating with parents and adherence to YMCA policies and procedures, including child protection policies. All educators are required to submit a Police Record Check/Vulnerable Sector Check.

This handbook outlines important information that will provide you with what you need to know while your child is in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your child and to embarking on a partnership that supports you to be informed, consulted, and involved in your child's YMCA Child Care Program.

Please visit our website ymcanrt.org to find complete copies of this Parent Handbook as well as our Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and our Menu.

YMCA Northumberland Program Statement

Purpose

Our program statement describes how our programs support and foster early learning. It will outline our view of the child, our philosophy and pedagogy as well as the goals and approaches used to ensure healthy child development.

The program statement will also outline how we assess and monitor our programs to maintain quality and how we support the professionals who work with the children in our care.

The YMCA Program Statement is reviewed annually to ensure it is aligned with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement.

Our View of the Child

Every child is special in the eyes of their parents and those who love them. The children are also special to us. As educators of young children, we know that each child is an individual of great human worth and potential. Every child is different in their looks, their growth patterns, their genetic make-up, their previous experience, the way they think and in every aspect of what makes them human beings. We appreciate each child's uniqueness and view the child's growth and development occurring in a holistic manner.

At the YMCA, we understand that children learn through play. Play, by definition, is enjoyable, spontaneous, active, and undertaken without external goals and sanctions. This means children are self-learners and do not require an adult to choose what or how they should learn. When the child's natural activity of play is supported by caring and responsive professionals in positive, developmentally appropriate learning environments, we believe, a child will flourish. The child's innate competence, capacity, curiosity and potential will be maximized.

"[YMCA Playing to Learn] is a wonderful, academically sound, and highly accessible document. At the heart is a view of children, teachers and parents as capable and competent. This is one document that will be highly valued in the field, not just sitting on a shelf."

Jean M. Clinton, BMus MD FRCP(C), Associate Clinical Professor,
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, McMaster
University



YMCA Curriculum

YMCA Northumberland has a well-established, research-based approach to early learning. Our Curriculum, YMCA Playing to Learn, has been successfully implemented in all Programs for children 0-6 since 2006 when YMCA Northumberland adopted this Curriculum.

YMCA Playing to Learn 2nd Edition was published in 2015. This edition incorporates new research, best practices, knowledge and experience. There is more information on infants and toddlers, and it has a greater focus on the social and emotional development of the young child.

The YMCA has been involved in shaping the development of the provincial early learning framework by sharing YMCA Playing to Learn and our training materials to support Educators in implementing a play-based approach. The goals and approaches of the YMCA Curricula align in philosophy, standards, and recommendations with the provincial frameworks below. It is gratifying to see Ministry of Education embrace play and adopt a very similar approach.

- ✓ Ministry of Education's Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy
<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/programCCEYA.pdf>
- ✓ "How Does Learning Happen?" Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>
- ✓ Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf/>

YMCA A Place to Connect is a new Curriculum that we adopted into all of our School Age Programs beginning in the fall of 2017. This YMCA School Age Curriculum is created for child care educators working with children aged 5-12 years who attend YMCA Before and After School Programs. A Place to Connect is based on research from the fields of developmental psychology, human development, neuroscience, education, risk management, diversity and social inclusion, social services and Child Care.

Our Statement on Play

Each child can reach his or her full human potential through play. Our intention is to provide the best possible environment that allows the best possible play for all children in our care. We endeavour to meet the play needs of all children and must do whatever possible to support the natural urge to play.

Play helps the child to be both engaged with everyday realities and to be absorbed in an ecstatic self-forgetfulness. It ensures involvement, enjoyment, and various forms of success. Play can be powerful or profound, but it is always purposeful.

Play is a vehicle that propels learning and development.

Play and development are intertwined; neither precedes the other. All domains of development are supported by play, and play has the additional benefit of being self-initiated and therefore a joy rather than a chore.



- ✓ Play makes discovery pleasurable, but it also propels the child into the vast realm of learning.
- ✓ Play provides a way for children to be healthy in body, mind and spirit.
- ✓ Play fosters skill development. It offers opportunities for gaining new skills as well as refining existing ones. Play is directly linked to the child's learning. His or her cognitive development and academic success are enhanced by the play experience.
- ✓ Play is physical and increases activity levels, fitness, balance, gross motor skills and fine motor actions. This provides a wide range of scientific, mathematical, perspective-taking and other cognitive processes in discovery and other types of play.
- ✓ Play is social and aids in language learning while supporting social skills development. Self-concepts and emotions are better understood through play, as is the building of emotional intelligence. Important self-regulatory skills may be acquired and reinforced through play.
- ✓ Play builds resilience and can help children manage stress. There are often therapeutic benefits to play. Typically, children direct their play in ways that address their own socio-emotional issues.

"The YMCA's Playing to Learn is a curriculum guide built on the importance and value of play for young children. The document makes, and backs up, arguments of why and how children's play is essential to the healthy social, physical and cognitive development of all children."

Martha Friendly, Executive Director of the Childcare Resources and Research Unit

"We believe that YMCA: A Place to Connect is the best approach to ensure a child's continued enthusiasm and capacity for life-long learning. A Place to Connect weaves our mission, vision and values into programming and strives to develop responsible, respectful, caring, honest, healthy and inclusive citizens."

Linda Cottes, Sr Vice President, Child Youth and Family Development

YMCA Curriculum Goals & Approaches

Promoting health, safety, nutrition & well-being:

Keeping children healthy and safe is a priority at the YMCA and we understand that the well-being of their child is a parents # 1 concern. Therefore; we have developed comprehensive, research-based procedures to support children.

Some of the procedures in place at the YMCA include:

- ✓ Safe supervision of children
- ✓ Child Protection procedures and training
- ✓ Sanitation and disinfection procedures
- ✓ Menu Planning working with our local Health Unit
- ✓ Communicable disease prevention
- ✓ Emergency procedures
- ✓ Standard First Aid and CPR – C training

Supporting relationships:

At the YMCA we understand that young children flourish in all areas of development when they are in positive and responsive relationships with adults. YMCA educators build a foundation of trust with children by being available, sensitive, responsive, and caring. Educators watch as children build solid relationships with each educator in the room, and then create primary care groups to further build on the relationships that the children naturally gravitate to. Through primary care groups, educators are able to build deeper connections and trust with the children in small groups settings, allowing them to fully engage and plan according to children's interests.

YMCA educators create an inclusive and respectful environment to foster positive, equitable, and collaborative relationships. When children feel safe, secure, valued and a contributing member of their world, they are able to explore, discover, try new things, grow, learn and develop.


To support each child's care, growth and development, YMCA educators interact and communicate with families daily, sharing observations, documentations, and reflections.

Encouraging children to interact, communicate, & self-regulate:

The YMCA believes that it is the role of the adult in a child's life to support them to learn how to interact effectively with the world around them including other children, adults, and the environment. Generally self-regulation involves gaining a degree of control over one's bodily functions and impulses, managing one's emotions, changing one's behaviours and maintaining focus or attention on something or someone.

"The better a child can stay calmly focused and alert, the better he integrates the diverse information coming from his different senses, assimilates it and sequences his thoughts and actions."

(Shanker 2012)



“Caring consistent relationships with adults, provide external supports that serve as the basis for developing self-regulation.”

(Gillespie & Seibel 2006)

Some of the approaches implemented by YMCA Educators to set the stage for positive interactions among children include:

- ✓ Provide primary care small group experiences that allow for more individualized adult attention
- ✓ Role model inclusive, respectful, and collaborative interactions with children and other adults
- ✓ Ensure the learning environment is flexible so they can respond in the moment and build on or scaffold the children’s interests
- ✓ Ensure toys, equipment, and materials are always plentiful and available to children
- ✓ Children are given freedom to make choices
- ✓ By engaging as a play partner with children, educators can demonstrate pro-social skills including promoting discussion, problem solving when conflict arises, and understanding how their actions affect others
- ✓ Educators are encouraged to attend trainings that address self-regulation and resilience

Fostering exploration, play & inquiry:

Children are born with a natural sense of curiosity and wonder. They play naturally. As caregivers and educators, we watch children explore their world through their senses, repetition of tasks, imitation, asking questions and pretending. But what are children really doing? Children are putting together all the pieces of how the world works through exploration, play and inquiry.

YMCA Educators understand the importance of play. They foster, expand and scaffold this natural talent called play by being:

- ✓ Active participants
- ✓ Architects of the play scape
- ✓ Keen observers
- ✓ Planners
- ✓ Reporters
- ✓ Collaborators
- ✓ Reflective practitioners

Observing a day-in -the-life of a YMCA Child Care program, you will note that most activities are directed by the children. Children decide where, when, what and how they wish to play. Their decisions are based on their interests and curiosity. The educator responds by adapting the environment; adding new toys, materials and equipment, posing questions, and being a play partner. This sets the stage for further play, inquiry, discovery and learning. The educator’s role is to support play so that learning and development flourishes.



Providing child-initiated & adult-supported experiences:

Children and parents are warmly greeted upon arrival. After a brief check-in to share news from the evening before; the children get down to the serious business of playing.

The room is set up with a variety of activities that support the observed interests of the children. The children might join some friends at the creative art table to work collaboratively on a collage, or they might work on a Lego structure they safely stored on the counter to complete the next day.

There are no expectations imposed by the educator or curriculum on where children play, or whom they play with, or how long they play at one activity. That is for the child to choose based on their interests.

You may overhear a small group of children in the dramatic play centre dressed in costumes acting out a scene of being “mama, papa, and baby at the doctor”. The educator has been assigned the role of “doctor” by the children and takes this opportunity to ask the children questions that expand their understanding of what happens at a check-up.

Tomorrow the educator supports the children’s interest by adding books about doctors and hospitals to the dramatic play centre hoping to build on the children’s interest and spark more questions and play – resulting in more learning.

Planning learning environments to support every child’s learning:

YMCA Child Care programs are located in a variety of facilities including schools, community centres, and YMCA owned buildings.

At the YMCA we understand that the parent is the child’s first teacher. The YMCA educator is the second teacher and the learning environment is the child’s third teacher.

The YMCA’s unique approach to planning and creating learning environments supports children’s play so that early learning and healthy development is maximized.

YMCA learning centres are designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the children.

In our Full-Day Centre’s, we have created home like environments that include calm colours, soft furnishings, items from nature like plants and pets, family photographs, and accessories that are intended to make children feel comfortable and safe.

YMCA Educators understand that children learn holistically, not in one area of development at a time. We understand that riding a tricycle involves gross motor and fine motor skills, but the play children engage in while riding a tricycle involves many more - communication skills, social skills, etc.

Therefore, you may find books, paper and crayons in the block area because children are using these items to figure out how to build a bridge from one shelf to another. Or you may find play dough in the dramatic play area where children are making pizza and on a beautiful day you may see indoor furniture move outdoors to take advantage of the weather.



Incorporating indoor, outdoor, active, rest & quiet activities:

YMCA Educators design a daily schedule that meets the needs of the children and provides for a balance of activities throughout the day. Consideration for the care requirements, age, developmental level, energy level, and interests of the children are included.

Generous blocks of time for children to explore, play, and inquire are included both indoors and outdoors.

The daily schedule is not rigid but operating in small primary care groups is mandated. One small group of children may be on a walk in the community, while the other small group may prefer to stay indoors to make a fresh batch of playdough. Periods of active and quiet play are interwoven throughout the day both indoors and outdoors.

At the YMCA we don't let the weather stop us from having fun in nature. The children love to bundle up in warm dry clothes and head out to jump in puddles or make snowballs. In very poor weather active play takes place indoors so that children get the physical activity their bodies require.

YMCA Educators are trained to keep transitions from activity to activity to a minimum so that children get to play more. However, young children thrive on regular schedules and feel secure when they can predict what will occur throughout the day, therefore snacks and meal-times are consistent as is the rest period in the afternoon for young children.

Fostering engagement & communication with parents:


At the YMCA we understand that a parent is the most important person in a child's life. YMCA Educators play a supporting role while parents go to work and school.

YMCA Educators and parents communicate daily about children's activities and health. In full day programs they keep a record of each infant, toddler, and preschool aged child's learning and development within the Weemarkable App or in their Continuum of Development booklet where access to the App is not possible. Although the Weemarkable App does not replace the face-to-face communication between educators and families, it does provide;

- ✓ Daily updates and photos about their child's play, nap and meals
- ✓ Direct messaging from their child's educator
- ✓ Direct notifications to their cell phone
- ✓ Weekly documentations written around their child's development
- ✓ The ability for the families to share access to other family members from around the world

Getting to know family members is critical as an educator and including family members in program helps a child to feel a greater sense of belonging.

Other strategies to engage parents and gain input in full day programs as well as before and after school programs include:

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- ✓ Documentations that describe play and its connection to learning
 - ✓ Celebrations & events
 - ✓ Parent surveys
 - ✓ Displays of children's artwork, sculptures, and creations
 - ✓ Photographs of children and educators at play
 - ✓ Posting planning documents that include observations of children's interests and activities introduced by YMCA Educators
 - ✓ Inviting parents into the program to see finished products of projects and activities that the children have been working on

Involving community partners:

While our range of community partners is broad, the largest and most important is the education system. Many of our centres are located in schools, so relationships with principals, faculty and staff are critical.

The YMCA works closely with local community agencies and partners in order to support the children and families in our programs. We view the community as a valuable resource and our educators plan learning opportunities to engage the community in our programs.

The YMCA actively seeks out opportunities to share our knowledge and to learn from others in the community through networking opportunities, community planning tables and conferences.

Supporting Educators' continuous professional learning:

The YMCA is committed to the ongoing professional development of all our educators. After all, what the educator learns, informs practice, and the benefit is passed onto the children.

YMCA Educators attend a series of YMCA curriculum training sessions throughout their career with the YMCA. Additionally, the YMCA provides opportunities for educators to attend external learning events and conferences and keep legislated training requirements like Standard First Aid & Infant and Child CPR up to date.

On a day-to-day basis the supervisor is responsible for the leadership, mentorship, coaching and development of educators. Based on the learning needs of the educators, the supervisor may request a meeting to suggest strategies individually, conduct learning huddles to focus on a particular area of YMCA curriculum with the entire team, conduct regular staff meetings to reflect and plan, invite speakers from other YMCA departments or community agencies to attend the centre, or provide materials including links, articles, and various readings to supplement educator's professional learning.



Documentation:

YMCA Educators participate in a continuous cycle of observation:

- ✓ Documenting play and its significance
- ✓ Determining the children's interests
- ✓ Planning activities that support the interests
- ✓ Discussion with team members
- ✓ Reflection that informs the planning of activities and the learning environment

Links are made between theory, research, YMCA curriculum, the YMCA program statement, government pedagogy, and children's interests to inform the planning decisions YMCA educators make.

You will see this cycle reflected in the toys, materials, and equipment provided in the play areas, the furniture arrangement, the creative work of children, the activities children are engaging in, on the planning documents posted weekly for parents to read and discuss with the educators, through our daily entries in Wee-markable for our full day programs, and in photographs and written descriptions of activities.

This process of continuous program assessment is called reflective practice. Daily, educators are observing and engaging with children and evaluating the effectiveness of the learning environment to build on children's interests. Weekly, they are reviewing planning and discussing with their team and supervisor to ensure they are supporting children's learning and development and monthly, they are meeting as a team to reflect and plan for the future.

Supporting children with Individual Needs:

As educators and play partners, we are constantly engaging with children, building individual relationships to create deeper connections and understanding of each child's needs. When we build these deeper connections, we are better able to recognize the individual needs of each child and to ensure that the set-up of our environment is built to support everyone. You may see a quiet corner set back in an area that is created specifically for a child that may require down time or a safe space to go when feeling sad or frustrated; you may see an active climbing area for a group that may have more of a need to keep their children physically moving.

For all children that require extra attention in specific areas such as needing a quiet space to go to when feeling overwhelmed or for a child that needs extra attention payed to them in order to keep them safe, we work with Five Counties Children's Centre, the families and any other outside agency needed to create individualized plans. We will support each other to ensure that the child's needs are being met within our program and abilities and ensure that all educators working in the program have read and understand the plans. These plans will be reviewed annually and adjusted accordingly to ensure that we are being inclusive to all children and supporting everyone to the best of our ability.



YMCA Playing to Learn

Early childhood is a special time when the seeds of future success are planted.

What is YMCA Playing to Learn™?

Developed in 2001 by a team of Child Care experts at the YMCA of Greater Toronto, our YMCA Playing to Learn™ curriculum prepares children ages 0-6 for school and life-long achievement by nurturing their curiosity and development in the most natural way possible...through play!

An integral part of all Licensed YMCA Early Learning Child Care across Canada since 2007, YMCA Playing to Learn™ aligns with all provincial early learning frameworks adopted to date and is based on research and evidence that shows play is the most effective way that children learn and gain new skills.

Designed to help young children discover the world through play and imagination, our YMCA Playing to Learn™ Curriculum offers kids an opportunity to develop their confidence, self-direction and self-regulation. Using play as the primary learning medium, children are introduced to literacy, numeracy, arts, science, and more, while in our care to ensure a smooth transition into primary school.

How does YMCA Playing to Learn™ use Play as a Learning Medium?

Exciting playscapes are set-up throughout the centre to provide planned play activities based on your child's interests.

Play activities incorporate the foundations of language and literacy, math and sciences, and creative arts.

Your child will actively explore and learn to become a self-directed problem solver, developing an excitement for learning!

Why is a YMCA Playing to Learn™ Centre different from other Child Care Centres?

Instead of bright primary colours, we create a calm environment conducive to learning by using lots of natural materials and by having living things like plants and fish for children to care for.

Instead of following a rigid schedule, children make their own choices based on their interests, joining small groups facilitated by an educator throughout the Centre.

Giving children these choices allow our play environments to be calm yet stimulating which supports the development of self-regulation and of course, learning.

Annual Assessments

Each YMCA Playing to Learn™ classroom is assessed annually by external auditors in order to assess quality curriculum standards.



How Will I know How my Child is Doing?

As a parent, it's important for you to know how your child spends their days and how they are progressing. Unique to YMCA Playing to Learn™ is our "learning evidence" documentation. We'll share written documentations regularly about a learning process your child experienced, independently or as part of a group. These documentations describe a play experience and the learning and development that this experience has enhanced. A supporting quote is given describing how the learning and development is supported by educational research.

As you read through these, over time, you'll see the amazing story of how your child is learning and developing as they grow up.

YMCA A Place to Connect™

YMCA A Place to Connect is created for Child Care educators working with children aged 5 - 12 years old who attend YMCA Before and After School programs. This school-age curriculum builds on many of the principles that guide YMCA Playing to Learn. YMCA A Place to Connect is based on research from the fields of developmental psychology, human development, neuroscience, education, risk management, diversity and social inclusion, social services, and Child Care. Just as importantly, this curriculum has evolved from the YMCA's long and rich history as one of the largest providers of programs for children and youth in Canada. It is designed to ensure that the YMCA Mission, Vision and Values guide every aspect of our work.

This curriculum will assist YMCA Child Care Educators working with children to deliver a comprehensive program that adopts a holistic approach demonstrated through planning, programming, and high-quality interactions. We recognize the important role families play in our programs.

At the YMCA we're committed to ongoing communication about your child's participation and development. Curriculum is an essential component in creating a high-quality school-age program. The approach we follow with school-age children is to adopt a 'living curriculum'. It is not a static set of unit outlines with rigidly- defined outcomes, but a flexible framework that assumes that *"learning is a natural process occurring through self-directed experience...optimized by a supportive environment as well as positive interaction with adults"*. -YMCA Playing to Learn

Self-regulation and Positive Behaviour

The YMCA believes that it is the role of the adult in a child's life to support them to learn how to interact successfully with the world around them including other children, adults and the environment. Self-regulation is a skill that children develop over time and involves learning how to respond efficiently and effectively to one's bodily functions, impulses, emotions, and to maintain focus or attention so they can learn. Calm, caring, and consistent YMCA Early Childhood Educators and a child's family provide external supports that serve as the basis for a child developing self-regulation.

YMCA Early Childhood Educators set the stage for positive behaviour by implementing the following approaches:

- ✓ Building dependable, positive and nurturing relationships with children and their families
- ✓ Fostering healthy social connections with other children
- ✓ Responding to each child's individual developmental needs through observation and reaction to cues
- ✓ Providing small group experiences which allow for more individualized adult attention
- ✓ Role modelling inclusive, respectful and collaborative interactions with children and other adults
- ✓ Ensuring the learning environment is flexible and materials are always plentiful and available to children
- ✓ Providing children with the freedom to make choices
- ✓ Engaging as a play partner with children, to demonstrate pro-social skills including promoting discussion, problem solving when conflict arises and understanding how our actions affect others
- ✓ Attending trainings that address developing self-regulation and resilience in children

YMCA Early Childhood Educators

Supporting your role as a parent during the early stages of learning and development.

Choosing a Child Care provider is a big decision. As Canada's largest Child Care provider, we always hear from parents that they want somewhere their child will be safe and well-cared for, where they'll have fun and learn new things, and most importantly, somewhere they'll look forward to going to every day. In other words, a home away from home. And that's what you'll find with our YMCA Early Childhood Educators.

College of Early Childhood Educators

The College of Early Childhood Educators is the professional self-regulatory body for registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) in Ontario. The College's role is to protect the public interest by setting requirements for registration to practice as an RECE, setting ethical and professional standards and holding RECEs accountable for their practice. RECEs are trained in child development and the planning and delivery of play-based learning in Child Care Programs.

Our educators must go through a rigorous screening process that includes demonstrating their values and skills, providing a police reference check that is renewed every 3 years, and holding a valid Standard First Aid and Infant and Child CPR certification. Once selected, new YMCA Educators participate in orientation and training on YMCA policies and procedures, Ministry of Education regulations, and YMCA Curriculum.


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- ✓ Attending trainings that address developing self-regulation and resilience in children

College of Early Childhood Educators

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children share a responsibility to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm. The YMCA recognizes its responsibility to promote safe environments and practices to protect children and vulnerable persons.

YMCA Educators are trained to recognize the indicators of neglect and abuse and are legally required to report any suspicions that a child may require protection. The role of the child protection agency is to investigate and determine if there is any proof of abuse or neglect and implement supports for the child and their family. It is important that YMCA Educators ensure all reports are kept confidential, including only discussing with the family that a report has been made if the child protection agency authorizes them to do so.



All volunteers and placement students must provide a Police Record Check/Vulnerable Sector Check before interacting with children and are required to adhere to all YMCA policies and procedures and Ministry of Education regulations. All volunteers and placement students will always be supervised by an Employee and never permitted to be alone with any child or group of children who receive child care and will never be counted in staff to child ratios.

Diversity and Social Inclusion

The YMCA is committed to creating and sustaining an environment that celebrates diversity and appreciates the dignity and worth of all members of the community. We are committed to pursuing equality and to creating an environment free from discrimination, harassment and barriers to equal opportunity.


YMCA programs are designed to develop children in spirit, mind and body. We believe every child is a unique individual and adds value to our programs. YMCA Educators strive to ensure the environment and programs are adapted to meet the needs of all children and will seek our community partners to enhance our ability to support children.

In situations where issues and concerns arise, YMCA Educators and Supervisors together with the family and YMCA Management will work as a team to reach a resolution in a timely, confidential, fair and consistent manner. It is expected that concerns and issues will be resolved in a respectful manner in keeping with the YMCA Values (Caring, Health, Honesty, Citizenship, Respect and Responsibility).

Prohibited Practices

A prohibited practice is any behaviour by an educator, volunteer or placement student that puts children at risk or that can inhibit a child's growth, self-esteem or healthy development. All YMCA Educators, Volunteers and Placement Students are aware that the following practices are prohibited practices as set out in section 48 of O. Reg 137/15 of the Child Care and Early Years Act:

- (a) corporal punishment of the child;
- (b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- (c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- (d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- (e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or

- 
- (f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Additionally, the following prohibited practices are not permitted in accordance with YMCA Northumberland's policies and procedures:

- (a) Leaving children unsupervised
- (b) Any form of abuse – physical, sexual emotional and/or neglect
- (c) Interacting or relating to children or vulnerable persons outside of YMCA program activity (e.g. avoid weekend visits, babysitting, calling or online chatting etc.)

YMCA Early Childhood Educators

Sleep Supervision and Position Requirements

YMCA Educators are required to follow the guidelines set out in the Joint Statement on Safe Sleep from the Public Health Agency of Canada which states that infants under 12 months of age are to be placed on their backs to sleep until such time that they can independently flip over onto their stomachs. Your physician may recommend otherwise in writing. The Joint Statement also sets out that infants under 12 months should not have blankets or toys in the crib.

Families will be consulted respecting their child's sleeping arrangements at the time the child is enrolled and at any other appropriate time, such as at transitions between programs or rooms or upon a parent's/guardian's request. YMCA Educators routinely perform direct visual checks of sleeping children that are documented on a chart. Direct visual checks of infants are performed every 15 minutes and every 30 minutes for toddlers and preschoolers. Anytime an educator observes a significant change in a child's sleeping patterns or health during sleep it will be communicated to parents/guardians.

Nutrition

YMCA full-day Child Care Programs for children 0-4 years of age, offer a variety of nutritious morning snacks, lunches and afternoon snacks prepared by a Dietary Manager. To ensure your child receives a well-balanced meal, our menus follow the Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide, Paint Your Plate with Vegetables and Fruit Document provided by Ontario Dietitians in Public Health and are reviewed and approved by our local Health Department. The current and following week's menus are posted for your information. Infants are fed according to their individual needs. Due to children with allergies and food restrictions the YMCA discourages sending any food from home.

Infant children too young to eat food from our menu will eat according to their individual needs and schedules provided by their caregiver. When reviewing the schedules with care givers, it is important to note that bottles should not be given to infants while they are lying down. They should be held up at least at a 45-degree angle when feeding and should always be held by an adult until the infant is able to do so independently. Although this is the recommendation, we will follow the instructions given by the caregiver.

Bottles should never be propped against something or left in a child's mouth when they are falling asleep or are sleeping. We recognize and support breastfeeding and encourage it for at least the first six months of life. Mothers are welcome to remain in the play space in a comfortable space to feed the baby.

Educators are responsive to and respectful of children's cues of hunger and fullness; intake of milk/formula and food should never be forced as children learn to self-regulate what their bodies require which helps reduce the risk of childhood obesity or other eating disorders as children mature.

YMCA Before and After School Programs offer a variety of nutritious morning and afternoon snacks prepared by the Program Supervisor and Educators. Our snack menus follow the Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide and are reviewed and approved by our local Health Department. The current and following week's menus are posted for your information.



Outdoor Play

All children in full-day Child Care Centres are required to play outdoors for a minimum of two hours each day, while School Age Programs are required to play outdoors for a minimum of 45 minutes each day, weather permitting. During inclement weather, alternate active play must be provided indoors. Weather can change quickly. A rainy cool morning can rapidly become a humid, sunny afternoon. We ask that you always prepare your child for any type of weather so that your child can participate comfortably outdoors.

Field Trips and Community Walks

Field trips and community walks provide valuable experiences for children and allow educators the opportunity to extend program activities outside of the classroom. When these opportunities arise, parents/guardians will be required to complete a permission form giving consent for their child to participate in the activity. Community walks may be part of the regular program and as such do not require a permission form.

YMCA Strong Communities Walk-A-Thon Challenge

The YMCA Strong Communities Walk-A-Thon Challenge is an annual event held every summer that aims to teach our children about philanthropy and living an active and healthy life. Funds raised will support vital programs and services or provide financial assistance so more children and families can access our health and fitness centres, Child Care and Camps. Be a healthy role model and support the YMCA Strong Communities Walk-A-Thon Challenge. Donate Today. We count on the generous donations of the community, members, staff and volunteers. A charitable receipt suitable for tax purposes will be provided for all donations of \$25.00 or more.

Extreme Weather

During extreme weather conditions, advisories or alerts, (heat, smog or wind chill) the YMCA follows the guidelines of the local health department. Our first priority is to keep children safe from serious adverse health effects such as frostbite and sunburn. YMCA Educators will adjust the amount of time spent outdoors or provide an alternative indoor plan.

What will your child need at the YMCA Child Care program?

By packing a few essential items for your child and providing any specific details about your child's health, rest, feeding, and activity, you help the YMCA Educators provide individualized care for your child.

See next page for YMCA Child Care packing checklist.



Packing Checklist			
	Infant 0 - 18 months*	Toddler 18 months - 30 months	Preschool 2 1/2 years – 5 years
Ratio of Adults to Children	1:3	1:5	1:8
Diapers, wipes and any creams or lotions labelled with your child's name and written instructions for application	Yes	Yes	
Pull ups or training pants (for toilet training)			Yes
Bottles/sip cups	Yes	Yes	
Formula (labelled with your child's full name, the date prepared or expressed milk labelled with your child's full name, the mother's full name, date milk expressed) and written instructions for feeding (baby foods and whole milk or 2% milk will be provided by the YMCA)	Yes	Yes	
Changes of clothing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seasonal outdoor clothing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Blanket and/or sleep toy for rest time	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Infants currently only offered in Family Grouping Setting

School Age children are encouraged to bring appropriate outdoor clothing, comfortable indoor footwear and a reusable water bottle each day.

Centre Information

Hours of Operation

At the YMCA our standard Child Care hours of operation are 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. in our full-day Centres. Our full-day programs operate year-round. Please note that our Before and After School Programs have varying hours and months of operation. Visit our website for the hours of operation of your closest Centres.

Arrival and Departure

The safety and well-being of all children participating in YMCA Child Care Programs is of utmost importance to us. Parents/guardians or their designate are required to personally escort their child into the program and to pick up their child at the end of the day. Please ensure the YMCA Educator is aware you have arrived or that you are departing with your child. Arrival and Departure times are recorded by a YMCA Educator prior to parents/guardians leaving the centre. Please also refer to YMCA Northumberland's Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy included at the end of the Parent Handbook for additional information regarding arrival and departure of your child(ren).

Authorized Drop off/Pick up and Emergency Contacts

At the time of enrollment you will be asked to provide the names and contact information including telephone numbers and addresses of any adults 16 years of age or older that you authorize to drop off/pick up your child or come to the centre in the event that you cannot be contacted when your child is ill or has been involved in an emergency. The YMCA does not permit children 15 years of age or younger to escort younger children home. If you require an alternate person to pick up your child who is not on the list please provide this information in writing (email) to the YMCA Educator. Any new visitors to the YMCA who come to pick up a child will be asked to provide photo identification. Please also refer to YMCA Northumberland's Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy included at the end of the Parent Handbook for additional information regarding authorized drop off/pick up for your child.

Late Pick up

YMCA Early Childhood Educators are counting on you to be on time to pick up your child at the end of the day so that they can meet their personal and family obligations. We do understand that weather and traffic accidents happen, however we appreciate you calling the program to let us know you will be late or making arrangements for an alternate adult to pick up your child. Child Care arrangements may be withdrawn by the YMCA for parents/guardians who frequently pick up their child late. A Late Fee will apply at \$1 per minute for every minute that you are late picking up your child and you will be required to sign our Late Pick Up Fee Form.

Continued late pick up may result in suspension of care or termination of care. Parents are responsible for child care fees during periods of suspension. Please also refer to YMCA Northumberland's Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy included at the end of the Parent Handbook for additional information regarding late pick up.

Inclement Weather Program Closures

Severe weather conditions can result in School Boards closing schools. In this case all YMCA Child Care Programs will also be closed unless otherwise stated. Please listen to local radio/television stations or check local School Board websites for information. The YMCA will make every effort to inform families of Centre closures due to inclement weather through our website, Twitter and Facebook accounts. Refunds will not be offered for these closures.



Closures

YMCA Child Care Programs are closed on all statutory holidays during the year. Please note when a statutory holiday falls on a weekend the YMCA will recognize this closure date on the following business day. Fee payment is required for all statutory holidays.

New Year's Day	Victoria Day	Labour Day	Boxing Day
Family Day	Canada Day	Thanksgiving Day	Easter Monday
Good Friday	Civic Holiday	Christmas Day	

Other Closures

In the event of an emergency closure of a Centre (e.g. snow storm, Centre without heat/hydro, job action/strike), fees will be payable for up to 2 (two) consecutive days. If the closure remains in effect after 2 (two) consecutive days, families will stop being charged until the centre reopens. The YMCA is fully committed to providing alternate care for our families in the event of an emergency closure. Should you choose to take advantage of the alternate care, current full-day rates will apply.

Program Cancellations

The YMCA will endeavor to keep programs operating which meet the needs of the community. The YMCA reserves the right to limit program components and/or locations based on enrolment.

Smoke Free

YMCA Child Care Programs are required to be smoke free environments under the Smoke Free Ontario Act 2005. Smoking or handling a cigarette or tobacco on the premises where a YMCA Child Care Program is located, including all in-door and outdoor areas is prohibited. This includes playgrounds, school property and surrounding areas. Failure to comply could result in a penalty of up to \$5,000.00.

Safe Schools Act

The Safe Schools Act, 2000 requires all schools in Ontario provide a safe and welcoming school, develop a code of conduct and consequences for infractions, and implement a program of bullying and harassment prevention.

YMCA Northumberland is a partner with the School Board and is required to report to the School Principal any student involved in an incident of bullying, harassment, violence, suspected child abuse or neglect or infraction of the code of conduct.

In the event that your child receives a 'mandatory' suspension or expulsion from school then your child cannot attend the YMCA Before and After School Program for the duration. If your child receives a 'discretionary' suspension, then the Principal will determine if your child can continue to attend the YMCA during the period of the suspension.

Registration

Child Care payments

A \$25 per family, non-refundable administration fee is required prior to admittance to our programs.

YMCA members who do not qualify for participation in the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system (CWELCC) will receive a 5% reduction in Child Care fees for those who attend a full-time program.

Families who do not qualify for participation in the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system (CWELCC) will receive a 10% reduction in Child Care fees for the second and subsequent child(ren) enrolled in a full-time program.

Payment amounts are established according to the current month's statement for Child Care services and will be withdrawn automatically from the provided bank account on the 1st and 15th day of each month. Payments will be split based on usage between the 1st to the 14th and the 15th to the last day of the month. (Payments will not be equal.)

Payments that do not clear your bank account will be subject to a \$35 administration fee which will automatically be processed on the next available withdrawal date. If paying with credit card, our system will retry every five (5) days for a total of three (3) times. Should your payment continue to be declined from your financial institution, your account will be forwarded on to an outside collection agency and care may be suspended unless other special arrangements have been made.

Families who qualify for the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system (CWELCC) will receive a 52.75% reduction on all child care base fees only.

Child Care Non-Base fees will not be reduced at any time.

Child Care payments

Child Care Base Fees:

Administration Fee: \$25.00/family

Infant: \$48/day

Toddler: \$44/day

Preschool: \$41/day

Preschool Excursion: \$47/day

Kindergarten/School Age Before School: \$20/day

Kindergarten After School: \$22/day

Kindergarten Before and After School: \$30/day

Kindergarten Full Day (PA Day/Holiday): \$41/day

School Age After School: \$24/day

School Age Before and After School: \$32/day

School Age Full Day (PA Day/Holiday): \$43/day

Kindergarten/School Age Excursion Day: \$47/day

Child Care Non-Base Fees:

Late Fee: \$1.00/minute

NSF Administration Fee: \$35.00

Registration Change Fee: \$2.00/change (without 2 weeks notice)

School Age Summer Holding Fee: \$150.00/family

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC)

To reflect participation in the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system (CWELCC), YMCA Base fees are reduced upon registration by 25% November to December 2022 and 52.75% as of January 1st, 2023 to a minimum of \$12.00.

Fee Category	Base Fee	CWELCC Reduced Fee	
Administration Fee	\$25 per family	\$11.81	
Program	Base Fee	Fee as of Nov. 1, 2022	Fee as of Jan. 1, 2023
Infant	\$48	\$36	\$22.68
Toddler	\$44	\$33	\$20.79
Preschool	\$41	\$30.75	\$19.37
Preschool Excursion	\$47	\$35.25	\$22.21
Kindergarten – Before School	\$20	\$15	\$12
Kindergarten – After School	\$22	\$16.50	\$12
Kindergarten – Before and After School	\$30	\$22.50	\$14.18
Kindergarten – Full Day	\$41	\$30.75	\$19.37
Kindergarten – Excursion Day	\$47	\$35.25	\$22.21



Absence from Care

Refunds for Child Care fees will not be processed for the following; missed days, sick days or inclement weather closures. Operating costs are based on the number of children enrolled. Two weeks' notice must be given in order to not be charged for a change in schedule. If a child is absent for three consecutive days due to illness, exceptions to payment may be given for any subsequent days. You can speak directly with your program supervisor in these cases.

Registration Changes

If you require changes to your current program registration, these requests can be made in writing to the program supervisor. Two weeks' notice for schedule change is required in order to not incur a \$2.00 fee for the change.

Summer Holding Fee

For school age families choosing to not attend a summer YMCA Child Care program for more than 4 weeks during the months of July and August (and are not using YMCA summer camp) a \$150.00 non-refundable holding fee per family will be withdrawn through your pre-authorized payment plan on August 1st, in order to secure your child care space in September.

For our infant, toddler and preschool programs, families may book up to 4 weeks off over the summer months of July and August, provided that families submit two weeks notice for booking time off, as per our two weeks notice policy. Due to the CWELCC government programs we do not offer the option to take additional holidays and charge a holding fee for these programs.

Space Limitations

The YMCA has the right to manage enrolment which may result in the YMCA not being able to accommodate your Child Care needs on a Part Time basis if a Full-Time space is needed for another family. Part Time children will be accepted where space is available with the understanding that if the program fills, they may lose their Part Time spot or be asked to change their days of care.

Payment Changes

Any changes to pre-authorized billing can be submitted to your Program Supervisor. If a new pre-authorized payment form is required, you can obtain this form from the Supervisor as well. Payment changes can take up to 10 business days for the changes to take effect.

Government Child Care Fee Subsidy

YMCA Licensed Child Care Programs hold a purchase of service agreement with Northumberland County. Families can apply for Child Care fee subsidy by contacting the County at 905-372-6846.

Privacy of Information

All YMCA Educators, Volunteers and Placement Students understand the importance of keeping all personal information in the strictest of confidence. The YMCA will not share any personal information with outside agencies including School Boards, and Resource Consultants for children with special needs without written parental consent.



Withdrawal/Waitlist

Withdrawal Notification

Should you choose to withdraw your child from a YMCA Child Care Program you will be required to submit two weeks' notice to the program supervisor. Payments will be adjusted upon receipt of the withdrawal notification. Withdrawal notifications received with less than two weeks' notice, will be charged for the two-week period.

*Please note for families receiving Child Care Subsidy, 10 days' notice of withdrawal is required to be given to the County as well as the program supervisor. *

Waitlist

The YMCA strives to accommodate all registration requests, however there may be times when space is unavailable in our programs and you may be offered to place your child on a waitlist. To address this issue the YMCA has created a waiting list procedure. Please note there is no fee to place your child on a waiting list. Please visit our website for a complete copy of our Waiting List Procedure or you can obtain a copy from your Program Supervisor.

Allergies, Medical, and Emergencies

Life-Threatening Allergies (Anaphylaxis)

The YMCA strives to protect the children in our care who have life-threatening allergies by reducing as much as possible exposure to their known allergens. A list of allergens to be avoided in the program is posted for all families near the entrance to the program. Families are advised to check frequently as the notice is updated as often as necessary.

Any parent/guardian of a child with a life-threatening injury is responsible for providing the YMCA with detailed information about their child's known allergens, signs and symptoms of an allergic response and the steps to take in an emergency prior to their child starting care. It is also very important that parent's/guardian's inform YMCA Educators anytime there is a change to a child's allergies.

Where food is provided from home for children, we ensure that appropriate supervision of children is maintained so that food is not shared or exchanged.

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that when food is provided from home that the following guidelines be adhered to:


- ✓ Meals meet the nutritional recommendations of the Canada Food Guide
- ✓ All containers must be labelled with the child's name
- ✓ YMCA Northumberland's allergy awareness procedures, including prohibited foods (e.g., peanuts); are followed at all times
- ✓ Proper food storage procedures are followed
- ✓ Written instruction is provided by the parent for all children younger than 44 months of age

Known Allergens are posted at all locations necessary to make families aware of what NOT to send with their child. Where a child arrives to care with any known allergens for snack/lunch, the item will be removed from the child's possession and an alternative will be offered.

Health and Illness

Young children do not have a fully developed immune system, therefore your child experiencing some illness while in Child Care should be expected. The local Public Health unit sets out and monitors a comprehensive cleaning and sanitation routine and personal health care practices including frequent hand washing for YMCA Educators to follow. These routine practices are designed to minimize the spread of illness.

You can help the YMCA prevent the spread of illness by keeping your child home from the program anytime they have the following signs and symptoms of communicable illness until symptoms have stopped for at least 24 hours (48 hours for vomiting/diarrhea) or a doctor has determined your child is or is not experiencing a communicable illness.

- 
- ✓ A temperature above 38 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit)
 - ✓ Difficult or rapid breathing or a severe cough
 - ✓ Vomiting more than twice in the last 24 hours
 - ✓ Unexplained (i.e. not due to diet, or medication) diarrhea more than twice in the last 24 hours
 - ✓ Sore throat especially if accompanied by a fever
 - ✓ Undiagnosed skin rash
 - ✓ Persistent scratching of body or head
 - ✓ Eyes are red or yellow, bowel movement is gray or white, or urine is dark or tea coloured

If your child experiences any of the signs and symptoms of communicable illness listed above while at the Child Care Program, the YMCA Educator or Program Supervisor will contact you or one of your authorized pick-up people to take your child home. While your child waits for you or your designate to arrive, where possible, they will be separated from the other children until it is determined they do not have a communicable illness.

Medication

Whenever possible, parents/guardians should administer drugs and medication to their children at home, if this can be done without affecting the treatment schedule. When a child is ill, it is in their best interest to remain at home where they are comfortable and able to rest and get better.

The YMCA is required to administer only drugs and medications either prescribed by a doctor, nurse practitioner or other licensed health provider, with a prescription label on the original container on the medication or accompanied by a doctor's note that outlines the following:

- ✓ Date note was written.
- ✓ Time to be administered or detailed reason for administering including signs and symptoms (e.g. fever above 38°C, wheezing or coughing, itchy and watery eyes, sneezing, etc.).
- ✓ Expiry date of the note (i.e. is it for a specific time period? or on going until further notice?)
- ✓ Child's legal first and last name
- ✓ Name of drug or medication
- ✓ Dosage to be administered

Anytime you bring prescription drugs or medications to be administered to your child at the Child Care Centre, the YMCA Educator will provide you with a Medication Administration Authorization form to complete that details the dosage, times of administration and permission for the YMCA to give your child the drug or medication.

Advil, Tylenol, Motrin (Pain Relievers, Fever Reducers, and Anti-inflammatory Medications)

It is not the YMCA's practice to administer medications such as Advil, Tylenol, or Motrin to control cold or flu symptoms. It is in the best interest of the child experiencing these symptoms to remain home, to rest, and get better. If the child has a chronic illness (e.g. headache, migraine, seizures) or is teething the YMCA may administer medications like Advil or Tylenol with a doctor's note. The doctor's note must be updated annually or as the child's age, weight, or medical condition changes. In cases of Anaphylaxis, Anti-Histamines such as Benadryl can be provided for children with an EpiPen as long as it is listed on the Anaphylaxis Plan.



Incident/Accident Reporting

Children are active and curious. It is not uncommon for young children to experience cuts, scrapes, and bruises while running, jumping, and playing. All YMCA Educators hold valid certification in Standard First Aid and Infant and Child CPR and have been trained in emergency procedures.

Anytime your child has an accident, YMCA Educators will record the details on the YMCA Incident Form and provide you with a copy.

In the event a more serious incident involving your child occurs, YMCA Educators have been trained to respond based on the severity of the injury. YMCA Educators will either call emergency support services (911), parent/guardian or your designated emergency contacts to take your child for medical evaluation.

Serious Occurrence incidents are reportable by the YMCA to the Ministry of Education Child Care Quality, Assurance and Licensing Unit within 24 hours of the Program Supervisor becoming aware of the incident. Details regarding the serious occurrence will be posted near the entrance of the program for 10 days. A serious occurrence incident is defined as; a life-threatening injury or illness of a child, an allegation of abuse by a staff, student, or placement volunteer, a missing or unsupervised child, and unplanned disruption to normal operations, or the death of a child.

Emergency Response

The YMCA is committed to being prepared and to keep all educators, volunteers and families safe and the Association functioning in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. We understand that YMCA families, educators, volunteers and placement students rely on our ability to deliver uninterrupted programs and services in safe environments. The YMCA trains all educators, volunteers and placement students before interacting with children and annually on emergency procedures including how to respond to personal injuries and medical emergencies, building emergencies (power failure, flood), fire drills and evacuation, inclement weather, threats from criminal activity (lockdown) and natural disasters.

In the event your child is involved in an emergency you will be contacted directly by the YMCA. If the YMCA is unable to reach you directly, they will call the emergency contacts you have identified in your child's registration package. The YMCA will also endeavor to post information on our website, and or Twitter and Facebook accounts. Depending on the nature of the emergency, the YMCA Educator and children may have to re-locate to an evacuation site until you can pick up your child. The YMCA evacuation site address is posted on the parent board of the program.

Setting the Stage for Positive Environments

A positive approach is used to guide children in all YMCA Child Care programs. Each situation and child is dealt with individually. Adults and children are expected to keep themselves safe, other adults and children safe, and their environments safe. Guidelines and expectations are consistent, clear and based on individual learning and development stages.



Methods used:

- ✓ Adjustment & Reflection of Environment: support positive outcomes, assuring the environment is stimulating for the child's age and interests.
- ✓ Re-direction: guiding a child into acceptable options when engaged in an unacceptable activity
- ✓ Logical and Natural Consequences: striving to make children aware of the results of their actions
- ✓ Limit Setting: developing boundaries for the children as a group
- ✓ Modeling: demonstrating appropriate ways of interacting
- ✓ Providing Choices: outlining appropriate choices and encouraging children to make decisions for themselves
- ✓ Anticipating Behaviours: planning and preparing the environment
- ✓ Ignoring: some inappropriate behaviour can be ignored with more emphasis given to appropriate behaviour
- ✓ Positive Reinforcement: encouraging
- ✓ Under NO circumstances will the following be used: Corporal punishment, harsh, belittling, sarcasm or degrading responses, depriving a child of basic needs or confining a child.

Programs follow three basic guidelines:

- ✓ All bodies must be safe
- ✓ All feelings must be safe
- ✓ All environments and equipment must be safe

We want all the children to have fun and enjoy our programs. It is for this simple reason that we have set up a system based on a few simple expectations that respect the rights of all members of the programs, children and educators.

Be safe... Be Respectful... Be Responsible... Have FUN!

The following behaviours are not acceptable and may result in the immediate suspension of a participant for the remainder of the day and the next two consecutive days.

- ✓ Endangering the health and safety of children and/or educators and volunteers
- ✓ Stealing and damaging YMCA, School or personal property
- ✓ Using vulgarity, profanity, or obscenity frequently
- ✓ Leaving the program without permission
- ✓ Refusing to follow directions as set out by the educator in the program

Ongoing incidents which cause concern for the safety of participants and programs require parental support and co-operation. Each child and case is managed individually.



Steps to be considered and implemented where appropriate to support children, families and educators:

- ✓ Evaluate program, delivery, set-up and content to ensure all requirements are in place. Bring in Manager, Program Integrity where appropriate for support.
- ✓ Create an individual support plan for the child and program
- ✓ Identify triggers – talk to child, parent, educator
- ✓ Remove or avoid triggers where possible; make program adjustments where possible
- ✓ Follow methodology from Program Statement
- ✓ Re-evaluate based on an established timeline, using successes as new reference points for the next goals to be set.

Documentation of concerns requiring parental involvement will be completed and provided to the parent upon pick up. Incident Reports act as a reference for further communication with the child and between the program educators and parents in an effort to ensure a full support system is in place. Adjustments for programming, schedules, toys and equipment will be accommodated wherever possible.

Considerations for ongoing or severe concerns:


- ✓ Written Notice
- ✓ Three day suspension (including the day the child was sent home)
- ✓ One-week suspension
- ✓ Continued consistent concerns may result in the termination of child care space

Parents are responsible for child care fees during periods of suspension. In severe cases where the program, participants or educator have been put in jeopardy, written warnings and three day suspensions may be bypassed, and one-week suspensions may be implemented. Each case will be managed individually with the participation of the child, educator, Supervisor, parent/guardian and when necessary, the Management Staff of Children's Services.

Every effort is made to keep all children in our programs according to their schedules, however, if ongoing safety concerns arise and all measures have been put in place to help support the child, consideration of suspension or termination of services may be necessary during this process.

Factors in this decision will include:

- ✓ Severity of injury or damage caused to the participant(s), educator or program equipment
- ✓ Parent engagement
- ✓ Each child's age, development and identified needs, will be a gauge affecting decisions related to service suspension



Please note: a child that leaves the program without educator permission will automatically receive a WRITTEN WARNING. This type of behaviour jeopardizes the immediate operations of the program, the safety of the child and the remaining group of children.

Shared Consent between the School and YMCA MUST accompany all registrations for the School Age Programs. The YMCA School Age Programs are trained with the Safe School's Act and accordingly will complete Safe School's Act Reports which are managed by the School Boards. These situations may result in suspension from School and as a result, suspension from the YMCA Programs.

Under Ontario Regulation 221/11, third party operator must report to a school principal where a pupil of a school in the board may have engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, that these employees must report the matter to the school's principal and this may result in suspension or expulsion of the student.

If any child is removed from program the CEO of YMCA Northumberland will also be notified.

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

Purpose

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the child care centre as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy

General

- YMCA Northumberland will ensure that any child receiving child care at the child care centre is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child care centre may release the child to.
- YMCA Northumberland will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The centre will not release any children from care without supervision.
- Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

Additional Policy Statements

- Children will only be released to an adult 16 years of age or older.
- Children will not be permitted to be released to an individual who is 15 years old or younger.



Procedures

Accepting a child into care

1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:
 - a. greet the parent/guardian and child.
 - b. ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up).
 - c. Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on the child's registration package and/or emergency card, or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).
 - d. document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record.
 - e. sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected:

Infant, Toddler and Preschool Programs:

1. Where a child does not arrive at the child care centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
 - a. Children with regular/consistent drop off times: Inform the Supervisor and the staff must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 1 hour after the children's regular/consistent drop off time.
 - b. Children with irregular/inconsistent drop off times: Inform the Supervisor and the staff must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 10:00am.
 - c. Staff shall contact the parent/guardian via phone call. If the parent/guardian does not answer, at least one phone message must be left.
 - d. If the parent/guardian does not make contact within 1 hour of the message being left, the Supervisor will contact them via email to confirm the child's absence.
 - e. A child's absence must be reported by an adult.
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

Before School Programs:

1. Where a child does not arrive at the child care centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
 - a. Inform the Supervisor and staff shall contact the parent/guardian via phone call or text message prior to the end of their morning shift. If the parent/guardian does not answer, at least one phone message or text message must be left.
 - b. After a phone message or text message has been sent, no further contact is required.
 - c. A child's absence must be reported by an adult.
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.
 - a. If no response is received from the parent/guardian before the children are dismissed to school, the child will be marked absent on the attendance and a note will be made in the daily written record that the child was absent.



Where a child has not arrived in care as expected (continued):

After School Programs:

1. Where a child does not arrive at the child care centre after school and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in attendance (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
 - a. Inform the Supervisor and the staff must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian immediately.
 - b. Staff shall contact the parent/guardian via phone call. If the parent/guardian does not answer, a phone message will be left and a follow-up text message will be sent.
 - c. While the staff is contacting the parent/guardian, the Supervisor will contact the school secretary or the child's teacher to confirm the whereabouts of the child.
 - d. It is acceptable that the whereabouts of the child can be confirmed by school personnel ie. The child was not at school that day or the parent picked the child up from school,
 - e. A child's absence must be reported by an adult.
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

Releasing a child from care

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),
 - a. confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
 - b. where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before centre closes)

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not be picked up within 30 minutes of the communicated specific time for pick up, the Supervisor or Educator shall contact the parent/guardian via phone call or text message and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
 - a. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff must leave at least 1 message, either by voice message or text message. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the centre.
 - b. Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child the staff shall wait until program closes and then refer to procedures under "where a child has not been picked up and program is closed".



Releasing a child from care (continued):

Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed:

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by closing time (6:00pm or 6:30pm), staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. One staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire about their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall contact emergency contacts listed on the child's emergency card and registration package.
4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) within 30 minutes of the centre's closing time, the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (Highland Shores CAS) at 905-372-1821. Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures:

1. Staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult 16 years or older. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

YMCA Northumberland is dedicated to the growth of all persons in spirit, mind and body, and fostering a sense of responsibility to each other and the global community. We are committed to strengthening the foundations of community; nurturing the potential of children, teens and adults; promoting healthy living; fostering a sense of social responsibility; and delivering lasting social and personal change.

Vision

Health and growth for life...YMCA for all.

Values

YMCA Northumberland is guided by values that influence our actions and the decision we make; Caring, Health, Honesty, Citizenship, Respect and Responsibility.

