



# PARENT HANDBOOK

## YMCA EARLY LEARNING CENTER



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# YMCA Philosophy and Values

## Goals & Philosophy

The YMCA Early Learning Center seeks to strengthen families and the community by integrating family support, parent education and enriched services. The Y is dedicated to enhancing the spirit, mind and body of all persons in a positive environment through quality programs, services and facilities. Upon that foundation, children, families and staff in our Learning Centers are considered to be the three components of our programs. Our integrated curriculum, consistent administrative policies, health and safety standards, and positive guidance are built upon these statements.

## Character Development

At the YMCA, character development and values are a part of who we are. We reinforce the values you teach at home. The YMCA is committed to embracing and demonstrating character through the modeling of the four core values: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Our goal is to challenge the people we serve to believe in and act on these positive values.

## Supporting Family Life

A major objective of the YMCA is to strengthen and support family life. YMCA Learning Centers are an ideal way to accomplish this objective. However, all those involved must play a role in the process of care and development if it is to succeed. Guardians, caregivers, children and other family members all play an important role in caring for the child.

## Adapting to Students' Needs

The YMCA offers a well-balanced, child-centered program focused on the developmental needs of children six weeks to 5 years. We provide quality, individualized attention for each child. We make every effort to work with parents and children who have special needs. All YMCA child care is family centered, involving guardians and other family members as partners in the child care experience. We offer referrals for parents to needed resources, assist parents in acquiring basic needs assistance, and advocate for parents when needed.

## Connecting with Families

The YMCA program is based on a concern for the developmental needs of each child. We are committed to nurturing individual differences and the growth of the whole child – physical, social, emotional and cognitive. We make every effort to keep families informed about what happens at the center concerning their child and appreciate receiving information about the child's activities and progress while at home. A strong communication between home and the center yields a better experience for both the child and the families.



# Program Overview

## Our Teachers' Promise

Develop strong relationships with the children in their classrooms, build connections with parents, develop a team approach for responsive caregiving, establish clear communication with other staff members and supervisors, adapt classroom environments to meet the changing needs of young children, utilize High Scope Curriculum in lesson planning, participate in the reflective practice, apply learned concepts from trainings to their position or classroom, actively participate in team meetings, keep all required trainings up-to-date, and supervise and involve volunteers in the classroom. Teachers will complete COR Advantage Assessment Profiles on each child. They will use them in lesson planning and bi-annual parent/teacher conferences.



## The Staff

Quality, continuity, and longevity of staff is a priority in a quality child care program. Our salary pay scale and employee benefits are given a priority in our budget to ensure that we have the most highly qualified staff available to care for your children. All staff have background checks and are fingerprinted. We pick our staff based on experience, competence, and education. We provide ongoing training for our staff so that they can be ready to work with your children.

## Quality Staff

In our Early Learning Center, lead and assistant teachers have a two to four-year degree in Early Childhood Education (or related field), or a CDA and practical experience working with young children. All staff receives ongoing training and attend monthly staff meetings. We focus on working on behavior guidance, child development, and curriculum. All staff are certified in First Aid, CPR, Sudden Unexpected Infant Death, and Abusive Head Trauma.

# Program Information

## Licensing

We provide enhanced childcare for children ages 6 weeks to the first day of Kindergarten. We are licensed through the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Care Licensing (651-431-6500). We accommodate both part-time and full-time schedules.

We are licensed to serve up to 42 children:

- 8 infants (6 weeks-16 months)
- 14 toddlers (16-33months)
- 20 preschoolers (33 months-first day of Kindergarten)

## Hours of Operation

The program is open Monday through Friday 7:45 am to 5:15 p.m. Our centers will be closed on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Families are charged regular rates for these days.

## General Education Methods

A planned curriculum provides a dependable sequence of learning opportunities for children. All of our staff members work hard to further each child's developmental progress. The High Scope curriculum that we use is designed to provide children opportunities to increase their language, cognitive, fine and gross motor and social-emotional skills. We provide plenty of opportunities for children to increase their knowledge and try out their new skills. Children are never shamed or punished for not making developmental progress in an area.

## Our Curriculum

Children will be supervised at all times by qualified staff members. Activities in their daily schedule will be consistent with their cultural background. Children will exercise their bodies by playing outdoors, playing in the gym, swimming and/or going on a walk on a daily basis. They will have a variety of quiet and active activities each day. Some parts of the day will be teacher directed and others will be child initiated.

Teachers at the center utilize *High Scope Curriculum* to cultivate lesson plans that promote the use of interest areas to promote learning experiences in all developmental areas. We do not utilize television as a learning method in our childcare facilities.

This curriculum is assessed by *COR Advantage*, which is an ongoing comprehensive assessment tool. It will help to document the development progress of each child. Assessments will be used to help plan lesson plans and conveyed in bi-annual parent/teacher conferences.

## Our Children Will:

develop strong relationships with responsive adults, meet developmental milestones (cognitive, physical, social and emotional), gain the skills needed to be ready for Kindergarten, be in a safe and healthy environment, be allowed to be curious and explore their world, play outside to develop their gross motor skills, benefit from nutrition and health services, and gain the ability to regulate a full range of emotions. The development of our children will be accessed by COR Advantage, which will showcase their developmental milestones.

## Our Parents Will:

develop strong relationships with responsive adults to reduce isolation, develop secure and healthy relationships with their children, learn coping strategies to help them become healthy and self-sufficient, be connected to needed services for themselves and their families, be able to concentrate on their job or schooling because they trust our caregivers, be involved in their child's education therefore increasing their child's success in school, increase their knowledge of child development, improve their parenting skills, and protect their children by reducing opportunities for neglect and abuse.

## Infant Program Plan

During the early years, infants are learning to trust their world, actively explore their environment, and do things for themselves. Staff show respect for children and interact with them in caring ways. They plan individual activities and interactions with every infant each day, centering on daily routines such as morning and afternoon transitions, diapering, feeding, eating or napping. They also introduce infants to a variety of activities including art, outdoor time, playing with toys, looking at books, singing songs, exploring water play, and more.



## Infant Program Activities

**Fine Motor:** small blocks, rattles, shape sorters, and eating utensils

**Gross Motor:** playing with balls, tunnels, riding toys, tumbling on mats, large foam blocks, rocking boat, baskets, and boxes

**Cognitive:** puzzles, pop-up toys, stacking rings/cups, shaker bottles

**Intellectual Activities:** looking at hard cover or cloth books for children to explore, both on their own and with staff reading to them, puppet play, nursery rhymes, and narrating play and activities throughout the day.

**Quiet Activities:** reading books, cuddling, sensory items

*Infants are changed on a two-hour schedule or if sooner if needed. Infants who are not yet mobile receive tummy time every day.*

## Things to bring for your infant's first day...

### Things to Bring:

- Bottles with caps
- Disposable diapers
- Wipes
- Extra set of clothing
- Ointment with a permission slip
- Family photo.

## Biting

The staff will work with families to understand why children bite and take measures to prevent potential bites from occurring. They do this by supervising children carefully, reacting quickly when children are in dispute (paying extra attention to children who have been known to bite), providing enough toys, activities and space to minimize frustration, providing teething toys to children who are teething, and meeting children's needs promptly before they become frustrated. If a bite should occur, staff will notify parents. If a child establishes a pattern of biting, staff will work with families to develop an action plan.

## Breastfeeding Policy

The YMCA is committed to provide ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity and location to breastfeed their child throughout the day and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Formula and solid foods will not be provided unless the parent has requested. Babies will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped. Breastfeeding mothers may store their expressed milk in the center refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with the infant's name and date. The center will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control in ensuring that breast milk is properly treated to avoid waste.



## Toddler Program Plan

For toddlers, we plan a variety of fun learning activities to help them solve, predict, plan, share, cooperate, empathize, and understand how to get along in their world. Again, our focus is on maximizing learning experiences in daily routines with art, outdoor time, stories, songs, sand and water play, food projects, creative movements and dramatic play. We promote positive self-esteem, self-help skills and encourage natural curiosity.



## Toddler Daily Schedule

7:45-8:20	Choice Time
8:20-9:00	Hand Washing and Breakfast
9:00-10:00	Large Motor Outside or Gym
10:00-10:15	Diapers/Hand Washing
10:15-11:15	Large Group Time and Free Play
11:15-12:00	Hand Washing and Lunch
12:00-12:15	Diaper Change/Wash Hands
12:15-12:30	Quiet Books on Rug
12:30-2:30	Nap or Small Group
2:30-2:45	Diapers/Hand Washing
2:45-3:00	Large Group Music and Movement
3:00-3:30	Snack
3:30-4:00	Choice Time
4:00-4:15	Diapers/Handwashing
4:15-5:15	Outdoor Play or Gym

## Toddler Program Activities

**Fine Motor:** blocks, musical instruments, peg boards, trucks, eating utensils, lacing, art

**Gross Motor:** playing with balls, tunnels, riding toys, tumbling on mats

**Cognitive:** puzzles, symbolic play, open-ended toys, puppet play

**Social-Emotional:** self-awareness of feelings, rules and limits, self-care materials, promoting positive relationships

**Intellectual Activities:** books, nursery rhymes, counting, narrating play

**Quiet Activities:** reading books, puzzles, sensory table

## Preschool Program Plan

Children will be supervised at all times by qualified staff members. Activities in their daily schedule will be consistent with their cultural background. Children will exercise their bodies by playing outdoors, playing in the gym, swimming and/or going on a walk on a daily basis. They will have a variety of quiet and active activities each day. Some parts of the day will be teacher directed and others will be child initiated. Our curriculum generated lesson plans will provide a variety of materials and equipment.



## Preschool Daily Schedule

7:45-8:20	Morning Message & Choice Time
8:20-8:30	Bathroom Break/Wash Hands
8:30-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-9:30	Large Group (Plan)
9:30-10:00	Small Group/Choice Time (Do)
10:00-11:15	Outdoors/Nature Exploration/Gym/Swim
11:15-11:30	Bathroom Break/Wash Hands
11:30-12:00	Lunch (Review/Recall morning activities during table discussions)
12:00-12:15	Large Group
12:15-12:30	Quiet Books on Cot
12:30-2:30	Turtle Time: Nap or Small Group
2:30-3:00	Choice Time
3:00-3:30	Bathroom Break/Wash Hands/Snack
3:30-4:00	Large Group Music and Movement
4:00-5:15	Outdoor Play or Gym

## Preschool Program Activities

**Fine Motor:** blocks, musical instruments, play dough, connecting toys, art, eating utensils, legos, magnets, puzzles

**Gross Motor:** running, jumping, climbing, playing with balls, riding toys, biking, tumbling on mats, playground

**Cognitive:** puzzles, verbal games, board/card games, symbolic play, open-ended toys

**Social-Emotional:** working in groups, rules and limits, self-awareness of behavior, and promoting positive relationships

**Intellectual Activities:** reading, puppet play, rhymes, letter structure, letter sound, letter formations, identifying shapes, learning/identifying numbers, counting

**Quiet Activities:** reading books, manipulatives, sensory bottles, puzzles, sensory table, art

# Enrollment

## Pre-enrollment

As part of the enrollment process, we ask that you make an appointment with the director to discuss your child's needs. This will give you an opportunity to meet the staff, tour the center and observe the activities.

You will be given several forms that will need to be completed before your child can officially enroll in the program. These forms need to be turned in before your child may start and we update the information annually. All the information is kept confidential and is disclosed only to pertinent staff. At the time of enrollment, we require you to pay the enrollment fee of \$50.

## Time to get to know each other

The first 30 days of your child's enrollment will be considered a "trial-period." If we feel the center is not an appropriate fit and we are not able to accommodate the child's needs, we reserve the right to give notice for removal from the program.

## Schedules – Adding Days

For Early Learning if you bring your child in on a day that you are not scheduled, you will be charged for that day. If you give no notice, there may not be room for your child and we might not be able to accommodate your request. If this is the case you will not be able to leave your child at the center. Please see your teacher if an additional day is needed. Any extra days will be charged on your next bill. You cannot swap days of care, but you may add days as availability allows.

## Change in Schedule

If you plan to change your schedule, you must give us a two-week written notice. You will be billed for your previous schedule until the change is effective. We cannot guarantee that you will be able to change to the schedule you wish and you may need to be on a waiting list for the scheduled days you are requesting. We do require a set schedule and we are not able to switch your child's day schedule for specific weeks. A day cannot be banked or made up if your child misses their scheduled day.

## Transitioning to a New Classroom

- Transitioning is based on age, development, available space and your child’s schedule.
- Each child progresses at their own rate.
- Readiness to handle the different demands of each group is the major factor in determining placement.
- When we feel that your child is developmentally and chronologically ready to transition to the next classroom, you will be notified.
- We usually do not consider transitioning children until they are at the chronological age for the classroom.
- Sometimes, we may want to transition your child sooner or later than you would like. Please talk to your director about your concerns and they will try to help work with you to do what is best for your child.

## Withdrawal from Program

Families choosing to withdraw from the program must submit a two week written notice as a minimum. You will be billed for two weeks following your notice.



# Tuition and Fees

## Enrollment Fee

A \$50 non-refundable enrollment fee will be charged at the time of registration for both full time and part time enrollees.

This fee will be charged as we set up your account in order to initiate the registration process. If you leave the center and decide to return, you will need to pay another enrollment fee if gone longer than 6 months.

## Tuition

We require fees to be automatically withdrawn either weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly by checking or savings account or credit/debit card. You can select your payments to be processed one time per month on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, twice per month on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> or weekly on Mondays. It is your responsibility to change your billing methods if your card expires. A full day of daycare will be \$42 for preschoolers, \$44 for toddlers, and \$46 for infants. Tuition will be charged for each tuition period, including holidays when the center is closed (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Black Friday, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day), and any other times the center is closed due to extenuating circumstances such as weather closures. Our rates are subject to increase annually depending on the amount needed to meet financial obligations and increase staff wages.

As your child grows and transitions from infant to toddler to preschool, you will see a rate change when your child has been moved into a classroom approved for the older rate.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, if your child's room needs to close due to exposure, tuition will be billed at ½ price for the duration of the closure.





## Payment made by a Third Party

Upon enrollment in a YMCA program, it is to be understood that all child care fees, tuition, and expenses are the responsibility of the guardian(s) enrolling in the program. All families enrolled in the program are subject to the same policies, including policies related to the payment of fees.

In the event that a third party (i.e. Social Services, Child Care Assistance program, employer-sponsored flexible benefit account, non-custodial parent or extended family member, etc.) is responsible for all or part of the fees due, the agreement is between the guardian enrolling the child and the third party only. The Duluth Area Family YMCA enters into the child care and payment agreement with the enrolling guardian(s) only. Under no circumstances will any family be permitted to attend the child care program without payment of tuition. If family is receiving any financial assistance granted from the YMCA, if any portion of a refund is of those funds that amount will not be refunded to the family.



## Late Pick-up Policy

Please pick up your child at the time you are scheduled to pick up as we plan staffing according to children's schedules and are only licensed to care for children during the center's hours of operations. If you are picking up your child from the program and you are running late, please call to let the staff know.

You will be charged \$1.00 per minute past the center closing time. Late fee charges will be added to a future tuition statement. After 30 minutes if we are not able to reach the guardians or an emergency contact person, the police will be called to pick up the child.

Please make sure your phone numbers and emergency contacts are kept up-to-date and notify us immediately if any phone numbers or addresses change. It's extremely important in the case of an emergency situation involving your child that we have a fast, reliable way of reaching you

## Flexible Benefit Programs

We will make every effort to accommodate your needs when involved with the flexible benefit plan. Please talk with your site coordinator/director to work out the best system for you.



## Waitlist Management Guidelines

Child care is in high demand across the country. We are here to help! We do our absolute best to accommodate as many families as we can to make the biggest impact possible. Our waitlist management system is an important tool to ensure a fair and accurate process when determining who to give open spots to. The YMCA daycare operates under a priority system for new enrollees. Open spots are sent out via email several times a month to all current families and waitlist families. Once that email is sent, families have 48 hours to reply whether or not they want to contract for the spot. Families are offered contracted spots based on the following order of priority.

- A) People needing full-time care.
- B) Active YMCA and ISD 166 employees (based on start-date) if employment status changes, people in this category may move down to category c or d.
- C) Current families and siblings of current families (based on enrollment date).
- D) All other waitlist families (based on waitlist enrollment date).

Placement on the waiting list doesn't guarantee that a space will be available when you want it, even if you are in a high-priority category. The earlier you apply, and the earlier you enroll (even if you do not need the spot yet) the greater your chances will be to contract for future openings or pick up extra days as they become available. Because of this priority system, an applicant's place on the waiting list order is not fixed. Within each category, applicants will be offered space in the program on a first-come, first-served basis; nevertheless, regardless of the date of your application, your place on the waitlist may be moved down by an applicant subsequently submitted by an applicant from a higher-priority category.

Once somebody from category D enrolls, they become part of category C with an enrollment date as opposed to a waitlist date. On occasion, people from the waitlist may contract spots prior to actually needing them to guarantee a spot will be held and to move up on the priority list. For this reason, any time an email comes out with openings, please respond about your intentions so we know if your needs have changed. If you pass on an opening or do not respond and someone lower than you on the waitlist responds, the spot will go to them. In general, we will not contact you directly about your waitlist status. We therefore strongly encourage you to periodically check your email and respond each time about your needs.



# Meeting Children's Individual Needs

## Guidelines Specific to Age Groups

**Infants:** We believe that you cannot spoil infants. When an infant cries, we will immediately respond. This establishes the foundation of emotional security for later self-control. Behavior Guidance, or discipline, begins with consistently and responsively meeting infants' needs. This will build the trust needed to help children listen and follow directions as they grow.

**Toddlers:** Providing structured daily routines and responding with flexibility allows toddlers to have more control over their environment. We work hard to create a "yes" environment where children can be successful and the need for discipline is low. Learning self-control and appropriate behavior is a lifelong process. As adults, we model this behavior and help children begin to understand the way the world works and their place within it.

**Preschool:** Helping children acknowledge their emotion and control their reactions is our goal when guiding behavior. We look for everyday "teachable moments" to practice these skills.

If a child is enrolled in one of our programs or would like to be enrolled in our programs and has needs that may be difficult for us to accommodate, we ask that you note the following section. All children with diagnosed special health needs must have a current care plan signed by a health care provider and guardian as well as a release of information signed by the guardian. Care plan must be updated at least yearly. Emergency medication and/or equipment specified in the care plan must be available at the program at all times and when the child is taken off site during child care hours.

If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or receives outside services, we will require a copy of the IEP and a pre-enrollment meeting between with Program Director and families/guardians to ensure your child's success in our program. Depending on your child's needs, our program may or may not be the best fit for your family. Communication is very important between families and staff so that care can be continued to the child's benefit. When care plans do not have adequate progress, guardians or staff can terminate care at any time.

### After the Child is enrolled, the following should be done on a regular basis:

1. Regular meetings with the classroom staff as needed.
2. Child Care staff should be included in all IEP meetings.
3. Review of care plan developed for the child to assure that we are continuing to meet the child's needs as needed.

**WE WELCOME  
EVERYONE**



## Helping Your Child Understand Limits and Boundaries

At the YMCA, we strive to use age-appropriate behavior guidance techniques that allow children to learn what is appropriate and what is not acceptable behavior. Our behavior guidance approach teaches lifelong skills. It is about teaching children how to acknowledge their emotions and control their reactions, rather than punishing children for their behavior. We look for everyday “teachable moments” to practice these skills. We will take the following steps to support your child:

- **Create** a positive environment: We believe that many challenging behaviors can be prevented by setting up a proactive environment. At YMCA Early and School Age Learning Centers, teachers provide children with stimulating choices, treat children with respect, reinforce positive behavior, set reasonable limits, provide a consistent schedule, and approach situations with flexibility.
- **Understand** the reasons for your child’s behavior: Many behaviors occur because a child has not yet developed a way to communicate their needs or feelings. For example, is your child tired, scared, curious, bored, shy, ill, over-stimulated, embarrassed, lonely, or in need of toileting? Once we know why a behavior is occurring, we will help your child meet their personal needs.
- **Provide** natural and logical consequences: For example, if a child is throwing blocks, the teacher will remind him/her that blocks are for building. If the action continues, the child will be done playing with blocks for a short period of time.
- **Teachers will help** children to choose an alternate activity: We will redirect your child to an appropriate activity.
- **Support** your child by providing calming time: If your child becomes upset we will assist him/her in calming down. This is done by sitting with the child, often with a book or activity. Your child may always rejoin the group as soon as he/she is ready. The YMCA Early and School Age Learning Centers refrain from using “time outs.”
- **Protect** your child’s confidentiality: If a child in our program has a situation occur with another child, we will inform both families of the incident. However, because confidentiality is a keystone of our program, we will not disclose a child’s name or information to another family.
- **Work** with you to create win-win solutions for your child: If challenging behavior is on-going, we will set up a time to talk with you about what can be done to best meet your child’s needs and create a joint action plan for approaching specific behaviors. Sometimes a child may display a need that is beyond the scope of our expertise.

## The YMCA Supports the Nurtured Heart Approach

At the YMCA, we believe guidance should be positive and approached in a fair and caring manner consistent with the developmental needs of individual children. Clear behavior limits are set and modeled and reasons for the guidelines are explained. We encourage children to develop self-control and to handle conflicts in peaceful, effective and acceptable ways that protect the safety of both children and staff. We use positive redirection toward constructive activity, as well as immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior as the situation warrants.

### The following actions are not permitted by or at the direction of the YMCA staff:

Corporal punishment | Emotional abuse | Punishment for lapses in toilet habits | Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as punishment for unacceptable behavior | Use of physical restraints other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm | Use of mechanical restraints

### Behavior Guidance

We are aware that all children are curious about their surroundings, including the physical environment and people around them. If a situation arises that requires discipline, the teaching staff will redirect the child to another activity or offer appropriate choices. The child will also be reminded about acceptable behavior. In a situation where a child may become too disruptive to redirect, he/she may be asked to calm down with a staff member. If a preschooler has difficulty calming down, he/she may need to be separated from the group. Any separations are documented and you will be notified. For a full list of policies and procedures surrounding behavior guidance, ask the center director.

### Persistent Unacceptable Behavior

In the event that a child is having consistent disruptive behavior, a meeting will be requested to discuss the behavior, share tips, and brainstorm ideas to improve the behavior. If the child continues the behavior after an appropriate interval of time given to try the new ideas, staff will request permission for a social emotional health consultant to observe the child, and then have a meeting following the observation time to discuss the findings. If after another appropriate interval of time to implement the recommended changes the child is still having consistent disruptive behavior, staff may make referrals to therapists, family support programs, or a different setting for the child. If families are willing to work with our staff and other professionals to make the situation better, we will make every effort to make it possible for the child to remain at the center or assist with placement in an appropriate alternative setting.



# Parent/Guardian Information

## Guardian/Parent Center Communication

Quality child care includes an open line of communication between the family and the center. A newsletter describing center activities and events, announcements, items of interest and parenting tips will be sent home regularly. A calendar is prepared on a monthly basis. Please read the newsletters and monthly calendars, along with any occasional letters and reminders you will receive in your parent mailbox, which is best to check daily. This will ensure that you are kept informed of all center events and news. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher or leader with any questions or concerns you may have at any time. Daily written reports are made to the parents of infants and toddlers about the child's food intake, elimination, sleeping patterns, and general behavior. Verbal reports are provided to preschool parents at the end of the day.

## Families Are Welcome at Any Time!

Families are welcome visitors to our programs at all times. We hope that parents/guardians will attend family functions, help with classroom projects or attend field trips with us. We also encourage you to help with swimming or schedule lunch with your child occasionally.

## Pick up Authorizations

All pick up persons must be authorized. If someone other than yourself is picking up, you must inform us and the designated pick up person must provide photo identification. If a parent is not allowed to pick up a child, we will need a court order stating this. If any person under the age of 18 will be picking up your child, you will need to sign a release form authorizing that pick-up. Please be aware that you are responsible for your child when you sign them out for the day.

## Photo Release/Public Relations

You will be asked to sign a permission form before we use your child's picture for public relations. You will also be asked for your permission before your child participates in any research projects or public relations activities. A permission form will be given to parents for each occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relation activity which may involve their child. We are not able to release information about your child to any unauthorized person. We can only accept authorization from the legal guardian to release information.

## Conferences

Conferences may be called upon by the request the center staff or the guardians. They will also be offered two times per year in the Early Childhood Program to go over your child's progress. Conferences for children attending school will be set up at your request. Each teacher wishes to visit with you as time allows. If the teacher is unavailable (working with children or gone for the day) when you come, please call or email them if you have a concern.

## Grievance Procedure for Guardians

We believe that each parent is the expert on his or her child. With that in mind, we want to partner with you in providing care for your child and to ensure that it is in a manner acceptable to you. To this end, please inform staff whenever you have a question, concern, comment, or request pertaining to your child's time here. We welcome input from parents and will make every effort to accommodate your wishes and/or explain our rationale behind a particular policy.

If you have a grievance concerning something regarding our program, you should follow the following procedure. If you do not feel that you have reached satisfaction, then you must continue through the process stopping when you feel you have satisfaction on the matter. Persons served by Cook County Child Care Center, and their authorized representatives, have the right to bring a grievance to the highest level of authority at Cook County Child Care Center. Final decisions lie with the President of the YMCA.

1. Teacher or Room Leader of your child, if appropriate.
2. Child Care Director
3. Executive Director
4. President/CEO

If a parent/caregiver ever feels abuse took place at the center, they have the right to report directly to the State Child Care Licensing Department 651-431-6500.

## Signing In and Out

We ask that you sign your child in and out of the program every day he/she is in attendance.



## Make Saying Good-bye Easier

Sometimes it's difficult to know what to do when your child cries or clings when it's time for you to leave. Such behavior is not unusual or unreasonable for young children. Even ones who have been to school before can fall apart at the last minute and it may continue for some time. Here are a few suggestions.

### Arrive on time and greet the teacher like an old friend.

If you're among the first to arrive, the room will be quieter. Your child will have the chance to see you talking in a friendly way to the adult who will care for him. It's easier for a child to accept a new teacher as a caregiver (and human being!) if it's clear that you like him/her, too.

### Bring along a comfort item to leave with your child.

It might be a picture of you, a special blanket or stuffed toy. A wise person once described such security items as being like a "portable parent." They do help. In much the same way, a parent who leaves a hat or other personal item with a toddler is also leaving a concrete message "A piece of me with you. I'll be back."

### Don't slip away while your child is busy playing.

Doing so may cause her to mistrust you and will only lead to more determined clinging next time. Always let your child know that you're leaving. You'll be helping her learn that separation can be faced and managed.

### Tell your child when you'll return.

Although your child can't tell time yet, he can understand ideas like, "I'll be back when you're playing outside after naptime." Be sure to return when you said you would.

### Say good-bye quickly.

Say it cheerfully and confidently. (Even if you don't quite feel that way the first few times.) Ever since he was a baby, your child has checked the expression on your face to find out how to react. When you look worried, he feels worried. Looking cheerful and confident says, "You can handle this!"

### Call the school later if you're concerned.

Just as you might give a regretful sigh when seeing a loved one off at the airport, so might your child cry briefly when you say good-bye. Because she's sad when you leave doesn't mean she'll be sad all day. Give the school a call later on. Knowing that she's settled in can help you feel better.

*It's okay to take a while to learn to say good-bye to someone you love. It helps to keep in mind that saying good-bye gets easier with time and experience. Eventually, your child will understand fully that you'll always return, and will be able to let you go with trust and confidence.*



# General Information



## Clothing

Play clothes are best for days spent at the program. Comfortable, sturdy, washable clothing that will enable the children to participate freely in all activities without undue concern for spills, spots, and rips. Please mark all clothing and personal articles permanently with your child's name. Occasionally check the lost and found box for misplaced sweaters, jackets, etc. We are not responsible for lost items. Sturdy, well-fitting tennis shoes or non-skid shoes are essential for active play. Socks are required so the children can play in the gym. Sandals, flip flops and cowboy boots are fun, but difficult to run and play in. We recommend that you send other shoes when children want to wear these. When skirts are worn, we ask that your child wear pants or shorts underneath. Please provide the following: a full change of clothing including socks and underwear to be left at the center, a bathing suit to be left at the center, snow pants, hat, mittens and boots for

winter play and other appropriate outdoor clothing for other seasons. Please send a swim suit for swimming days, as swimming in normal clothing is not allowed in all local pools. (Please do not send your child in a scarf, as that is a strangulation hazard.)

## Pets

Some sites may have small pets or fish in their activity rooms. Please inform your child's caregiver if your child is allergic to any pet in particular. Children may not bring their own pets for a visit unless they can show their pet has the proper vaccinations and there are no allergies in the classroom. Please contact the site director/coordinator for more information.

## Social Media

For privacy purposes, we ask that you not post pictures of children from our programs on your Facebook page. These pictures may be taken innocently at school and program events. Note that the YMCA does not condone posting pictures of children without written permission from a parent.

## Staff Babysitting Policy

As a client of the YMCA, you are notified that the YMCA supervises its employees and programs within the confines of the facilities under the policies of the YMCA and the programs approved and managed by the YMCA. If you would like an employee to baby-sit for you, please put it in writing stating that you know the YMCA is not supervising the staff. The employees of the YMCA are not supervised by the YMCA during their off-duty hours and are not acting within the scope of their employment.



## Toys, Blankets, and Naptime Items

Toys from home are brought at your own risk. The YMCA Child Care Services does not assume responsibility for personal toys. In the event that an item brought from home causes disruptions or problems, it will be taken away and the guardians will be asked to take it home. Please refrain from allowing your child to bring any type of weapon toy, electronic toys of any sort or action figures to the center. Blankets/naptime items are only allowed for Early Learning children. We ask that you put them in a backpack that is small enough to fit in your child's cubby. If your child has a naptime toy, please send only quiet toys and ensure all nap items are taken home and washed weekly.

## Birthdays and Celebrations

We like to make each child feel special on his or her birthday and we welcome you bringing treats for your child's birthday. However, our YMCA follows the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards. In order to do our part, we ask you to join the movement by bringing in healthier options for birthday celebrations and special events. Special days at the YMCA are celebrated in the classroom and we ask that families reserve the cake, ice cream, and sweets for celebrations at home. Birthday celebrations and other special events can be celebrated with the following options: Stickers, veggies, low fat yogurt, fat free pudding cups, sugar free Jell-O, pencils, mini Playdough, book, string cheese. For health and sanitary reasons, we require that all treats be store bought.

Since children have a difficult time when they are not invited to parties, we ask that you not bring invitations to the center.

Christmas, Kwanzaa, winter celebrations, events of the world (such as the Olympics), Hanukkah, Halloween, July 4th, Valentine's Day, and Thanksgiving are times when we often have center parties. Parents and guardians are encouraged to help us celebrate these days and any other times that are important to your family. We are always looking for other cultural and ethnic celebrations that we could include in our program.



## Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a planned part of each day, weather permitting. We play outdoors as much as possible as the fresh air and exercise is so important for all of us! We do not go outside if the heat index is over 95-degrees or below 15 degrees. Children are supervised at all times. For staffing reasons, all children must go outside if they are in attendance for the day. Please bring appropriate outdoor clothing for your children and put their names on them. Talk to the director if you need assistance with clothing items.

When it is warm, we will take water with us outside and on walks. We may take children for walks to destinations that are no farther than one mile from the program, depending on the age of the children.



## Safety & Courtesy: Doors

We want to prevent children from getting their fingers pinched in the doors. We ask that you open and close the doors for your children in our center. Always look through windows before opening any door and look behind you before closing any doors. Please remind your child(ren) that "At Cook County Child Care Center, grown-ups open doors."

## Parking

Parking can be an issue to ensure the safety of the children. Please drive extremely carefully in our lots. The site has specific drop off and pick up areas.

## Field Trips

Field trips and outings are an integral part of the center activities. Families will be given advance notice of upcoming field trips. In our Early Learning Programs, we ask parents to provide a signed consent prior to the trip. Parents and guardians are welcome to join us on field trips, although you may need to arrange for your own transportation. Talk to your child's teacher if you are interested.

## Swimming

We have planned swimming time on a regular basis with the preschool class. The YMCA facility provides towels. Please send a swim suit labeled with your child's name. The YMCA pools are staffed by trained lifeguards at all times and children wear lifejackets during their entire visit. Children will be kept in site at all times and child to staff ratios will be maintained at all times during water activities. Children in diapers are required to wear swim diapers (provided by the family and available for purchase at the front desk). Children with diarrhea or open sores will not be allowed to participate in water activities.

## Lost and Found

Although we are not responsible for lost items, we do make an effort to keep all of your child's things in order. Please check lost and found bins for anything you may be missing.



## HighScope Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers

**How we teach:** Your youngest learners need to feel safe and supported so they can learn with their whole body and all of their senses. In a HighScope infant and toddler program, teachers focus on developing supportive, trusting relationships with the children in their care. We create rich environments that encourage very young children to explore and discover the world around them, helping them to engage in experiences designed to support their optimal development in all domains. We value and respect parents as their children’s first teachers. That’s why we encourage teachers to partner with parents in learning everything they can about their infants and toddlers to better care for their needs and plan for their development. As a result, our programs create a strong three-way bond between child, parent, and caregiver. **Active learning is at the center of the HighScope Curriculum.** It’s the foundation where young children gain knowledge through their natural play and interactions with the environment, events, and other people.



### Adult-Child Interaction

Nurturing, responsive teachers practice primary caregiving and continuity of care by scaffolding the individual needs and temperaments of infants and toddlers. Key strategies for adult-child interactions are touching, holding, playing alongside infants and toddlers at their level and pace, communicating in give-and-take exchanges verbally and nonverbally, respecting children’s choices and encouraging their efforts, acknowledging children’s strong emotions, and involving toddlers in resolving conflicts.

### Learning Environment

The physical space is safe, flexible, and child oriented to provide comfort and accommodate the changing developmental needs and interests of the earliest learners. The space is organized into play and care areas that serve the needs of infants and toddlers and stocked with a variety of sensory-motor materials that infants and toddlers can reach, explore, and play with in their own way at their own pace. With nurturing and responsive caregivers as a home base, infants and toddlers are free to move about, explore materials, exercise creativity, and solve problems.

### Schedules and Routines

A consistent yet flexible routine that accommodates individual children’s natural rhythms and temperaments gives infants and toddlers a sense of security and stability that creates trust between the child and teacher and builds independence as children engage with their environment and the people around them. Each routine is built around daily events and caregiving routines that value infants’ and toddlers’ active learning.

### Observation

Ongoing child and program assessment is an underlying component of the HighScope Curriculum. Objective observations of children allow teachers to intentionally plan to build on individual and group interests and scaffold development by supporting what children know while gently extending their learning.

**How we teach:** Grounded in current child development theory and research, the HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum is evidence-based. The framework for understanding and supporting infants' and toddlers' learning from birth to age three is based on 42 key developmental indicators (KDIs) which align with national and state early learning guidelines and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

In the HighScope Infant-Toddler Curriculum, learning is focused on these six content areas:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Communication, Language, and Literacy
- Cognitive Development
- Creative Arts



### Infant-Toddler Curriculum Content

Early learning and development in these six content areas is guided by 42 key developmental indicators (KDIs) — the skills and behaviors at each stage of development that pave the way for school and adult success. Each KDI is connected to and reinforced by scaffolding strategies to help teachers appropriately support and gently extend children's learning. The HighScope key developmental indicators

- Provide teachers with a child development “filter” for observing and choosing appropriate interactions and activities
- Help teachers interpret what young children say and do along a developmental continuum
- Enable teachers to maintain reasonable expectations for young children
- Reinforce children's play as the primary mechanism for learning
- Allow teachers to be more knowledgeable and intentional in their daily planning for individual children and the class.



# HIGHSCOPE®

## HighScope Curriculum for Preschoolers

**How we teach:** In a HighScope preschool program, teachers ignite children’s interest in learning by creating an environment that encourages them to explore learning materials and interact with adults and peers. We focus on supporting early learners as they make decisions, build academic skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become part of a classroom community.

**Active learning is at the center of the HighScope Curriculum.**

It’s the foundation where young children gain knowledge through their natural play and interactions with the environment, events, and other people.



### Adult-Child Interaction

Teachers act as partners, working alongside children and communicating with them both verbally and nonverbally to encourage learning. Key strategies for adult-child interactions are sharing control with children, communicating as a partner with children, scaffolding children’s play, using encouragement instead of praise, and taking a problem-solving approach to supporting children in resolving conflicts.

### Learning Environment

To create a predictable and active learning environment, teachers arrange and equip the classroom with diverse, open-ended materials that reflect children’s home, culture, and language. The room is organized and labeled to promote independence and encourage children to carry out their intentions.

### Daily Routine

A consistent framework for the day provides a balanced variety of experiences and learning opportunities. Children engage in both individual and social play, participate in small- and large-group activities, assist with cleanup, socialize during meals, develop self-care skills, and exercise their small and large muscles. The most important segment of the daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence, in which children make decisions about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect upon their activities with adults and other children. These higher-level thinking skills are linked to the development of executive functions, which are needed to be successful in school and life.

### Assessment

Ongoing child assessment is also an underlying component of the HighScope Curriculum. Objective anecdotal observations of children collected throughout children’s natural play allow teachers to assess child progress and plan meaningful learning experiences.

**How we teach:** The HighScope Preschool Curriculum is based on more than 50 years of research on early childhood development and has been validated by direct evaluation of the curriculum. Our framework for understanding and supporting children’s learning from ages 3–5 years is based on 58 key developmental indicators (KDIs), which are aligned with national and state early learning standards, Common Core State Standards, and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

In the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, learning is focused on these eight content areas:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Language, Literacy, and Communication
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies
- Creative Arts



### Preschool Curriculum Content

Learning in these eight areas is guided by 58 key developmental indicators (KDIs). Each KDI identifies an important learning goal for young children. We recognize that the normal pace of children’s development and learning varies widely across these eight categories and the KDIs reflect that continuum of widely held expectations. Our curriculum is designed to help teachers appropriately scaffold learning for every child across all areas. The HighScope key developmental indicators

- Provide teachers with a child development “filter” for observing and choosing appropriate interactions and activities
- Help teachers interpret what young children say and do along a developmental continuum
- Enable teachers to maintain reasonable expectations for young children
- Reinforce children’s play as the primary mechanism for learning
- Allow teachers to be more knowledgeable and intentional in their daily planning for individual children and the class

## For all children our goal is to teach and enforce the following life skills.

**Following instructions:** Look at the person, say Okay," do it right away.

**Getting the teachers attention:** Look at the teacher and wait for a response followed by using a pleasant voice.

**Listening:** Look at the person, remain quiet and listen, nod your head or say "okay."

**Staying on task:** Look at the task, think about what you need to do, focus all of your attention on the task, ignore distractions, work until you are told to stop.

**Reporting to the teacher:** Look at the teacher and stay calm, ask the teacher if he/she has time to talk to you alone, tell what you have to say and/or heard, answer the teacher's questions truthfully.

**Disagreeing appropriately:** Look at the person, use a calm voice and tell why you feel differently, give reason, and listen to the other person.

**Talking with Others/appropriate voice tone:** Look at the person, use a pleasant voice, listen when others talk, match your voice to the setting.

**Accepting "No" or a consequence:** Look at the person, listen, say "Okay", and stay cool. If you disagree, ask later.

**Sportsmanship:** Appropriately request to be a part of an activity, cooperate with others in the group, take turns, and play by the rules of the game, use a pleasant voice when talking to others, and remember to accept losing or winning appropriately.

## Accreditation

All of the Early Learning Centers are currently accredited or are working on accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Accreditation signifies that our programs meet the highest standards in ten core areas, exceeding standards required by state licensing. The ten core areas are: Relationships, Curriculum, and Teaching, Assessment of Child Progress, Health, Teachers, Families, Community Relationships, Physical Environment, and Leadership/Management.

All centers are currently working towards becoming rated 4 of 4 stars in the MN Parent Aware Program. The Parent Aware program helps families find quality childcare programs that use best practices that prepare children for Kindergarten. Childcare programs are given a 1-4 star rating based on the training of the staff, the use of an approved curriculum, the use of an approved assessment and other indicators that show the program is safe and high quality. Early learning scholarships are available for three and four-star rated programs. Income eligible families in a 4-star rated program may receive up to \$7,500 per year per child to help pay for childcare costs. For more information about parent aware, visit [www.parentaware.org](http://www.parentaware.org).

# Health and Safety Information

## Liability Insurance

The center is covered under liability insurance in case of a major accident or incident involving your child. Your insurance would be required to cover injuries for your child, as the YMCA coverage is secondary. Your insurance coverage would include the calling of 911 and other emergency room care needed for your child.

## Release of Information

If you would like information to be released to another person, ask your director for a Release of Information authorization form. This is appropriate for courts, schools, counselors or agencies.



### Fire Procedures

In case of a fire during the program, we will ensure all children are out of the building safely. The center has an evacuation plan posted by the exit at each location. Fire drills are done once per month at alternate times.

### Tornado procedures

In case of a tornado warning, the children will be sheltered. Each location has shelter areas. We practice tornado drills in the months of April through September

## First Aid procedures/Accident procedures

We make every effort and precaution to keep all children safe while they are at the center. However, in the course of a hard day of playing and having fun, children sometimes get injured. If this happens, staff will call you immediately if the injury seems to require medical attention. Otherwise, staff will complete an Accident Report that details what happened, where it happened, and how the injury was treated. All staff is certified in First Aid and CPR. We will provide basic first aid for your child in the event that it is necessary. We will not remove splinters, wood ticks, etc. We are not able to put any creams, gels, or any type of antibiotic ointments on the injury, due to possible skin allergies and adverse reactions. In an emergency situation staff will call 911 and notify caregivers immediately.

A form authorizing emergency medical care for your child is signed at the time of enrollment. In case of an emergency, you will be called. If our center staff is not able to reach you, we will attempt to notify the emergency contact(s) indicated on your child's authorized form. If, after a half-hour we feel the child needs medical attention and we are unable to reach the family or emergency contacts, we will take your child to receive such medical attention.



## Lock Down Procedures

When instructed by the authorities or when necessary, we will lock down the program until a dangerous or questionable situation has subsided in the neighborhood, school or community. We will not be able to notify parents in most cases of the event. We do lock down drills during the year with the children.

## Medications

We can administer medication to your child only in an emergency situation. Emergency medications must be in the original container, be current, and labeled with your child's full name. A medication release form must be filled out completely and signed by a guardian before a medication is given. Instructions on the form must match the instructions on the container exactly. A note from a doctor outlining the purposes of the medication, recommended dosage and the length of time that it is to be given must accompany all medications. Medication will be placed out of the reach of children.

## Child Sickness Policy

Our goal is to provide a full day of activities for your child. If your child is not feeling well, they may take longer to feel better and they may have a very unpleasant day at the center. We ask that you keep your child home until they are well enough to participate in all activities, including gym, outdoor play and swimming. Our health policies will not be superseded by a doctor's authorization for attendance. A child may not be contagious and yet not be well enough to attend a full day of care. We follow the State of Minnesota licensing guidelines (Rule 3) regarding attendance of children who are sick. Children with any of the following symptoms will not be permitted to attend the center, as these symptoms can compromise the health and safety of other children:

- Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit axillary (under the armpit) or higher temperature before fever reducing medication is given (unless there is documentation from the patient's medical provider that the fever is due to a non-contagious condition such as teething).
- Significant respiratory distress; uncontrolled, persistent coughing; wheezing; difficulty breathing.
- Chicken pox until no new poxes are developing and all pox are crusted over and dry (typically six days).
- Bacterial infection such as strep or impetigo until treated for 24 hours.
- Vomiting of two or more episodes until 24 hours have passed from the last episode and the child can keep food down. One episode if other symptoms are present or if child has recent history of a head injury.
- Strep throat until the child has been on medication for 24 hours.
- Rash or unusual skin conditions until a physician documents that the child is not contagious.
- Evidence of lice or nits, ringworm, pinworm, or scabies
- Pus draining from the eye
- Diarrhea if it is not contained in the diaper; or if it causes accidents for toilet-trained children; or if bowel movement frequency exceeds three or more stools above normal for the child; until the child has a normal stool or 24 hours have passed since the last episode.
- Unexplained tiredness or appearing uncomfortable and cannot participate in programs.

If a doctor diagnoses an infection and places your child on prescription medication, your child may not be brought back to the center until he/she has taken the medication for at least 24 hours (ear and urinary tract infections excluded depending on the child's condition). Other symptoms (fever or diarrhea) must be gone for at least 24 hours. Your child must be able to participate in activities.

If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will call you immediately. If you cannot be reached or an hour has passed, we will call the emergency person indicated on your child's authorization form. We will try to keep your child as comfortable as possible until you arrive. We will notify you if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease such as chicken pox, pink eye, or strep throat. We will post this information in a pertinent area in the program. Please notify the program if your child contracts any of these illnesses so that we can notify other families in the program.

## Immunization Policy

All children are required to be up-to-date with their immunizations and guardians are expected to provide their child's immunization record prior to the first day of care. The Health Care Summary is due within 30 days of enrollment. Child care programs cannot refuse to provide care to unimmunized children who are otherwise eligible if the parents or guardians present a valid exemption from immunization requirements. If a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs at the program, it is recommended for unimmunized children to be excluded for the duration of the possible exposure.

## Infection Control & Disinfection

To help control the spread of germs we follow these standards.

- Hands are washed upon arrival to classroom
- Before and after all meals
- Before food preparation (including bottles)
- Setting tables
- After Toileting
- After sneezing, coughing, or wiping runny noses
- After diapering
- Coming in from outside or playing in gym
- Before and after using sensory table

## Sanitizing/Disinfecting

All toys are washed at a minimum each week or when dirty. Infant/ Toddler toys are sanitized after being mouthed. Toilets and sinks are cleaned and disinfected daily. Tables are sanitized before and after each meal. Blankets are washed weekly. Cots are disinfected each day and between uses. Floors are swept and vacuumed daily.

## Smoking Policy

The YMCA prohibits smoking at YMCA facilities and on YMCA grounds. Staff are prohibited from smoking during work hours – if they smell of smoke they will be asked to go home and shower before returning to work.

## Gun Policy

The YMCA prohibits carrying concealed weapons and firearms of any kind at YMCA facilities and on YMCA grounds.

## Sex Offenders

Sex offenders are not allowed into the YMCA regardless if they are a guardian or relative.

## Child Abuse Laws

State Law considers us mandated reporters. If we suspect any signs of abuse or neglect, we are required to report it to the proper authorities.



## Toileting

We encourage the children to use the toilet by themselves. We would like all children to be completely potty trained and independent prior to transitioning to a preschool room. The staff will remind the children before going outside and before naptime to use the restroom; however, we do want the children to become in tune with their own bodies and gain skill in using the restroom as needed.

We want children to be independent in wiping their bottoms and other toileting needs. We will instruct the children how to wipe their bottoms but for health and sanitary reasons we will not do it for them. We will help the children clean themselves if they have soiled their pants, but we do require them to do most of the cleanup so they understand that toileting is their responsibility.

If soiled clothing is not taken home from the center within 24 hours, it will be discarded. Please teach your child how to wipe properly at home as well. Encourage them to do it with your supervision. We allow pull-ups in the toddler room only, unless there are special circumstances.

We use the correct terms for body parts and bodily functions with children of all ages. Children learn about their bodies and sexual differences in the same way they learn other information –in a simple, gradual, natural way. We gently and clearly redirect typical sexual behavior (playing doctor, removing clothing, masturbation) and involve the children in other activities. We teach the difference between “safe” and “unsafe” touch as appropriate.



## Toilet Learning

The staff will discuss toilet training with families as their child approaches readiness for learning. The following toilet learning criteria have been developed with families and staff. We will agree as a team how we will proceed. It is best to have consistency between the child's home and the center to allow the child to be successful. We view toilet learning as a developmental process and take its success and failures in stride.

A child may begin toilet learning when:

- The child shows some interest at home or at the center.
- The child is able to retain bowel movements and urination for short periods of time. The child is willing to sit on the toilet.
- The child understands what is expected of him/her.

Toilet learning procedure:

- Place child on the toilet at routine times (cues taken from the child and/or center's schedule). Place child on the toilet at the child's request.
- No toys in the bathroom while the child is on the toilet. Give immediate rewards such as hugs, cheers, or praise.

Do not use material rewards such as candy, stickers, etc. Offering these things can be effective in the short term, however many experts warn against using food as a reward. You don't want your child to begin to look at certain foods or items as something he/she receives when they please you or does something "good." This may cause unnecessary problems in the future. Keep in mind the following:

- Be **CONSISTENT**.
- Present a relaxed attitude.
- Remember, learning to use the toilet is the child's job not yours.
- Let the child assume responsibility for this function themselves. They are, after all, the only one who can.
- If the child is showing signs of resistance, stop for a few days and try again later.



## Nap and Rest Policies for Parents

1. Infants nap according to their own internal clocks and are never forced into sleeping. Toddlers and Preschoolers will have quiet rest time after lunch.
2. Confinement limitation: A child who has completed a nap or rested quietly for **30 minutes** is never required to remain on a cot or in a crib or bed.
3. Placement of equipment: Naps and rest are provided in a quiet area that is physically separated from children who are engaged in an activity that will disrupt a napping or resting child. Cribs, cots, and beds must be placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Cribs, cots, and beds must be placed directly on the floor and must not be stacked when in use.
4. Bedding: separate bedding must be provided for each child in care. Bedding must be washed weekly and when soiled or wet. Blankets must be washed or dry cleaned weekly and when soiled or wet.
5. Crib Standard: A crib must be provided for each infant for which the center is licensed to provide care. The equipment must be of safe and sturdy construction that conforms to federal crib standards under Code of Federal Regulations, title 16, part 1219 for full-sized baby cribs, or part 1220 for non-full-size baby cribs. See Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.146, for additional crib safety standards including routine crib inspection requirements.



6. Reduction of risk of sudden unexpected infant death: Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.1435, the license holder must place each infant to sleep on the infant's back, unless the license holder has documentation from the infant's physician directing an alternative sleeping position for the infant. The physician directive must be on a form approved by the commissioner Physician's Directive for Infant Sleep Position form and must remain on file at the licensed location. An infant who independently rolls onto its stomach after being placed to sleep on its back may be allowed to remain sleeping on its stomach if the infant is at least six months of age or the license holder has a signed statement from the parent indicating that the infant regularly rolls over at home. Parents of infants will be given a form titled "Infant Less than Six Months of Age Regularly Rolling Over" that must be on file to meet this requirement.
7. The license holder must place each infant in a crib on a firm mattress with a fitted sheet that is appropriate to the mattress size that fits tightly on the mattress, and overlaps the underside of the mattress so it cannot be dislodged by pulling on the corner of the sheet with reasonable effort. The license holder must not place anything in the crib with the infant except for the infant's pacifier as defined in Code of Federal Regulations, title 15, part 1511.
8. If an infant falls asleep before being placed in a crib, the license holder must move the infant to a crib as soon as practicable and must keep the infant within sight of the license holder until the infant is placed in a crib. When an infant falls asleep while being held, the license holder must consider the supervision needs of other children in care when determining how long to hold the infant before placing the infant in a crib to sleep. The sleeping infant must not be in a position where the airway may be blocked or with anything covering the infant's face.
9. Placing a swaddled infant down to sleep in a licensed setting is not recommended for an infant of any age and is prohibited for any infant who has begun to roll over independently. However, with the written consent of a parent or guardian according to this paragraph, a license holder may place the infant who has not yet begun to roll over on its own down to sleep in a one-piece sleeper equipped with an attached system that fastens securely only across the upper torso, with no constriction of the hips or legs, to create a swaddle. Prior to any use of swaddling for sleep by a provider licensed under this chapter, the license holder must obtain informed written consent for the use of swaddling from the parent or guardian of the infant on a form approved by the commissioner Parent Consent for Swaddling and prepared in partnership with the Minnesota Sudden Infant Death Center.



## Nutrition and Physical Activity

We are dedicated to enhancing the spirit, mind and body of all persons in a positive environment through quality programs, services and facilities. Upon that foundation, our programs follow a healthy living standard to include nutritional meals and snacks, and daily physical activity for the development of living a healthy lifestyle and being a part of a healthy community.

Meal and snack times are presented in a family style manner intended to make meal time a pleasant social experience that is positive and enjoyable. Children are offered all of the foods on our menu and are encouraged, but not required, to try them. Our nutrition program includes educational activities that promote proper nutrition and meet the MN Department of Health and USDA requirements. We follow the Healthy Eating Standards put forth by the National YMCA. These standards include a fruit/vegetable at every meal, water as the beverage choice and physical activities. Menus are posted on the door of each classroom.

We provide all meals for breakfast, lunch and snack. If your child has special dietary needs or food allergies, please contact your site director. We will work to accommodate your request(s). We encourage children to eat the foods provided and try new foods. Our menu includes whole grains, fruits and fresh vegetables. We avoid fruit juices and all other sugary beverages by serving milk or water at every meal. For this reason, we do not allow parents to bring food for their child. We do encourage your child to try new foods. Infants are fed according to their needs and schedules. We will provide baby formula and baby foods. Guardians must provide formula if different from our choice in an unopened, sealed container.

We ask that the children do not bring gum, candy treats or food to the center. The YMCA is a Treat and Sweet free facility. If your child would like to share a birthday or special occasion treat, this treat must be store bought and meet our Treat Sweet Free Policy. Please inform the staff of what you are bringing, and please keep in mind that we like to have the children learn good nutrition habits when you are choosing your treat.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact

USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) [found online](#) at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil  
Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(4) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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## MALTREATMENT OF MINORS MANDATED REPORTING POLICY

### Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

### Where to Report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed child foster care or family child care facility should be made to county child protection services.
- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in all other facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651)431-6600.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency at 218-387-3620 or local law enforcement at 218-387-3030.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services Licensing Division at (651)431-6500.

### What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violation. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

### Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

### Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report was made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

### Internal Review

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- Related policies and procedures were followed
- The policies and procedures were adequate
- There is a need for additional staff training
- The reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved
- There is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care

### Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed

The internal review will be completed by the Early Learning Director. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Executive Director will be responsible for completing the internal review.

### Documentation of the Review

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

### Corrective Action Plan

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

### Staff Training

The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) The license holder must document the provision of the training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

