



# *PRESCHOOL PROGRAM*



## PARENT HANDBOOK

Updated February 2014

*Building healthy communities*

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## **WELCOME TO THE YMCA**

The YMCA is a powerful association of men, women and children of all ages and from all walks of life joined together by a shared passion: to strengthen the foundations of community.

With a commitment to nurturing the potential of children, teens and young adults, promoting healthy living and fostering social responsibility, the YMCA ensures that every individual has access to the essentials needed to learn, grow and thrive.

Rooted in more than 1,000 communities around the country, the YMCA has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.

Though the world may be unpredictable, one thing remains certain – the YMCA is, and always will be dedicated to building healthy, confident, secure and connected children and youth, families and communities.

## **OUR EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM**

YMCA Child Care is an exciting and challenging place, helping children stretch their skills in mind and body. It is also a safe comfortable place where children build positive relationships with caring adults.

Proven experience in child care delivery along with the latest body of knowledge on how the brain develops and how children learn, are combined within the YMCA Playing to Learn curriculum. We all know children love to play. Research proves that kids at play are already building the foundation for their major life skills including language, literacy, mathematics, science, technology and the arts. Our curriculum takes all areas of your child's development into account, including physical, emotional, cognitive and social behaviour. We then adapt it to meet the needs of your child. That way, your child's interests help shape their learning experience. YMCA educators build upon and plan for activities that will inspire a child to explore their interests while the concept is still significant and important to them. Fostering a child's sense of discovery, research and problem solving enables children to explore and learn in new and different ways. Our goal is to ensure a child's continued enthusiasm and capacity for lifelong learning.

Our teachers themselves benefit from a unique training program that lets them access the latest educational tools and processes. Playing to Learn gives them a framework to improve their own professional knowledge and includes formal training and on-site mentoring. The YMCA's commitment to our educators ensures that our teachers can always deliver on their own commitment to your children. Curriculum plans are developed through a shared process involving children, families and educators. Curriculum development becomes a dynamic, living process that captures the moments of wondering and transforms them into consequential

learning for today and tomorrow. YMCA Child Care fosters a child's growth and development along with a desire to explore and learn.

## **YMCA COMMITMENT TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN**

The YMCA of Northern BC has been providing child care in Prince George since 1978.

Located at eight locations in Prince George, we are the largest provider of licensed child care in our region, caring for 363 children from three months to twelve years of age.

Our child care staff are qualified caregivers who believe in the Y values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility – they genuinely like children and understand, and appreciate their differences. YMCA child care staff are licensed, have earned ECE and ECE Assistant accreditation in addition to internal training in the *Playing to Learn* curriculum. Their training allows them to recognize behavior that indicates distress, provide loving and warm guidance, tailor games and activities to the ages and interests of the children and work with parents in their child's development.

YMCA child-centered programming develops imagination, encourages learning and promotes life skills and positive values. Our centres are clean, safe and comfortable with quiet spaces for rest as well as both indoor and outdoor play experiences.

With 160 years of experience in providing programs for children and youth the YMCA has grown to be the largest provider of not-for-profit child care in Canada - 55,000 children annually.

## **INCLUSION**

The YMCA is committed to a philosophy of inclusion that recognizes and responds to the individual strengths, needs, interests and learning styles of each child, the priorities of their family and the services and supports needed to meet the child's developmental and support needs. The YMCA believes that children of all developmental abilities should be able to attend the program of their families choosing, with the necessary services to support their full and successful participation in the program.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

- Open Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9am – 11:30am or 12:30pm – 3pm
- Open Tuesday and Thursday 9am – 11:30am or 12:30pm – 3pm.
- Closed Statutory Holidays, including Boxing Day and Easter Monday.
- Pre-school operates according to the school calendar and will be closed during statutory holidays including Easter Monday, closed through Christmas break and Spring break.

### Unscheduled Closures

In the event of severe weather conditions, such as a heavy snowfall, our child care programs will be closed if public transportation cannot operate and or if the child care facility is located within a public school which is closed.

In the event of a labour dispute, power failure or water main break our programs may be unable to open or may be required to close early. When possible, parents will be notified of a potential closure or called if the program must close earlier than the scheduled program ending/closing time.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

### Arrival Procedure

- Children may not be dropped off before class starts.
- Parents/guardians must sign their child in. Always ensure that a staff member is aware that you are dropping off your child.
- Please notify the centre if your child will be absent.
- Please let a staff member know any pertinent information about your child's previous night or morning that might be helpful to staff.

### Departure Procedure

- Your child must be picked up by closing time.
- Parents/guardians must sign their child out and check for any messages.
- Always ensure that a staff member is aware that you are taking your child home.
- **A CHILD WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO ANYONE OTHER THAN A PARENT OR GUARDIAN OR AN AUTHORIZED PERSON LISTED ON THE REGISTRATION FORM UNLESS STAFF IS NOTIFIED IN WRITING.**
- Photo identification will be required to verify the identity of the person picking up your child. Our staff will often substitute throughout all our locations in case of illness and vacation so please be prepared to show photo ID each time you pick up your child.

## **CUSTODY**

- If a custody agreement is in place for your child(ren), a copy of your custody or court order must be on file. Staff will act in accordance with this legal document.
- If issues around custody exist and there are no legal documents, the enrolling parent/guardian must provide written information about access. Staff will follow the information provided by the enrolling parent/guardian.
- If a family's custody issues result in continuous conflicts at the centre (eg. non-custodial parent continually attempting to pick the child up at a time not specified on the court order), and places the child, staff and other children at risk, then the family will be asked to make alternate care arrangements.

- Parents requiring copies of documentations for personal or court use will be charged a minimum \$75 + HST administration fee and allow for a three week processing time.

## RELEASE OF A CHILD

### YMCA Child Care will only release your child to:

- An authorized person 19+ (parent and/or guardian.)
- Person named on the registration form or emergency card as being authorized to pick up the child.
- Parent or guardian who is recorded on a legal document, i.e. custody agreement.
- A person who is not listed on the emergency card or registration form that arrives to pick up the child, i.e. family member **only if** a staff has received written consent from the parent/guardian confirming that the person is permitted to take the child. Staff will check identification.
- All people, including parents should be prepared to show photo identification upon picking up children.

### Child will not be released from care when:

- The person appears incapable of providing safe care. (eg. intoxication/drug use). Staff will suggest that the parent/guardian or authorized pick up person call a friend/taxi for alternate transportation. If staff feels a child is at risk and the person makes the decision to drive; staff will call the police.
- Person who arrives to pick the child up (eg. friend or family member) but is not listed on the emergency card or registration form as authorized to do so or parent/guardian have not given written permission for the child to be released to that person.
- Persons who are unable to provide proper photo identification.

## LATE PICK-UP

- Your child (ren) must be picked up by closing time: 11:30am or 3pm.

### If a parent/guardian is late picking up their child:

- A fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged. This money is paid directly to the staff member when you are picking up your child.
- Please note that three late pick-ups in any six month period may result in withdrawal of services.

## FAILURE TO PICK UP

A fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged. This money is paid directly to the staff member.

If your child is not picked up five minutes after closing time and there has been no contact with the parent/guardian, the staff will:

- 1) Check the sign-in sheet for any information regarding alternate arrangements for your child's pick-up.

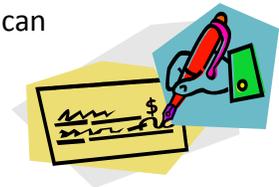
- 2) Call parents/guardians at home and/or work. If alternate arrangements were made, staff will call alternate's phone number as well as the parents/guardian.
- 3) After fifteen minutes, emergency contacts will be called if parents/guardians cannot be reached.

If after thirty minutes staff are unable to contact the parents/guardians or any of the designated emergency contacts, staff will call the Ministry for Children and Family Development, Emergency Services, who will come and take your child into care until a parent or guardian can be located.

## FEES

### Payment

- Fees are due and payable on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Your monthly fees can be paid by Pre-Authorized Payment Plan (PAPP) through VISA, MasterCard, and American Express or directly from your bank account. Pre-authorized payment forms may be obtained from our Coordinator of Child Care Administration or the front desk on Massey Drive. Please be sure to include your child's full name with your payment. Failure to pay the full child care fee can result in termination of your child care space.
- If your child is absent due to sickness, vacation or for other personal reasons, it is necessary to pay the full fee in order to maintain your child's space.
- If part of your child care fee is paid through Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD) Child Care Subsidy, you are responsible to apply for and **keep current** your child care subsidy and understand that you are responsible for the full child care fee if you fail to renew your subsidy or subsidy is cancelled.
- Child care fees may be tax deductible. If you require a receipt for income tax purposes please contact the Coordinator of Child Care Administration at 250 562 9341 ext. 109.



Failure to pay the full child care fee can result in termination of your child care space.

### Deposit

A non-refundable deposit of \$75.00 is required annually to secure a space. All deposits will be credited to your first month of child care.

### Facilities Enhancement Fee

An annual fee of \$25 + HST is due upon registration and subsequently every September.

### NSF Fee

If a payment withdrawal is returned to the Family YMCA of Prince George as NSF you will be issued an NSF notice and a \$20 fee will be charged to your child care account for each NSF occurrence. You will then have five days from the date of the notice to clear up the account or make payment arrangements with the Coordinator of Child Care Administration. If you

have not cleared the account or made payment arrangements within five days, your child will be withdrawn from our program and transportation services. We will then open this spot to our wait list.

### Withdrawal

If you withdraw your child from our program, you are required to give written **notice by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month** for withdrawal the following month. An additional month's fee will be charged if the required notice is not given.

Upon withdrawal, if there are outstanding fees the YMCA will attempt to withdraw at a later date or may release your personal information to a third party collection agency for the purpose of recovering any outstanding debt.

### Provincial Child Care Subsidy – Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)

The government child care subsidy program is available to families based on provincial eligibility requirements. Please contact the Ministry office at 1-888-338-6622 or [www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/) for more information. Parents/guardians who receive the Ministry child care subsidy are responsible for the difference between the subsidy and the YMCA Child Care fee.

If you are a new participant and are awaiting Child Care Subsidy, you will need to pay the minimum parent portions, determined by the Coordinator of Child Care Administration. We will wait a maximum of three weeks for your child care subsidy to be processed before proceeding to the next step. If your claim is not processed in this time you will be required to pay the full amount of your remaining monthly fee.

Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping their subsidy current and are responsible for the full fee if their subsidy expires. We will refund the subsidy portion of the payment once subsidy has resumed and payment has been received from the Ministry.

## **HEALTH**

### Immunization

The Ministry of Health Services ([www.gov.bc.ca/health/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/health/)) recommends that your child's immunizations are current before your child enters the program.

- Written record of each child's immunization must be on file. Children's immunizations should be kept up to date.
- If a child is not immunized, a letter stating so must be provided for the child's file.
- If an outbreak of a communicable disease occurs, the non-immunized child will be excluded immediately. There will be no compensation for time away from care.
- In the event of an outbreak, Community Care Facilities Licensing and/or Centre of Disease control will be notified.

### Sick Child

According to the health department, your child is considered too sick to attend when he/she has any of these symptoms:

- Difficulty in breathing – wheezing or a persistent cough
- Fever of 100° Fahrenheit (38.3 ° Celsius or higher)
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Infected skin or eyes, or an undiagnosed rash
- Severe headache or stiff neck (should see a physician)
- Diarrhea
- Nausea and vomiting
- Hacking or excessive coughing
- Swollen glands
- Red itchy eyes
- Severe itching, dry skin of either body or scalp caused by head or body lice or scabies.
- The YMCA of Northern BC has a Nit Free Policy and children who have had head lice may not return to the centre even after being treated until all the nits have been picked from their head. Staff reserves the right to check the child in private to make sure there are no nits present.
- Is infectious
- Has a communicable disease (chicken pox, measles etc.)



### Sick Child Policy

- Your child may not return to the centre until 24 hours after the above symptoms subside and the child is well enough to participate in all areas of the program including outdoor play.
- If your child suffers from nausea and/or diarrhea they must wait 48 hours after symptoms subside before returning to the centre.
- If your child comes to the centre ill, parents will be asked to find alternate care for that day.

If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be notified to pick up your child immediately. If we cannot contact you, we will call your emergency contacts. Your child may be given a quiet area to rest away from the other children, but within supervision of a caregiver, until an authorized person arrives to pick up your child. You or your alternate must arrive within thirty minutes.

- Please keep your child at home if you feel that your child is ill and cannot participate in the program including outdoor activity.
- Please call the centre and let us know if your child will be absent.
- It is important that you inform the supervisor of any illnesses or communicable disease. We can then notify the other parents and when required CCF Licensing.

*We respect that sometimes the stress of ill children is difficult for parents and their employer but you can rest in the knowledge that illness policies protect all children and the staff that care for them each day.*

### Medication

- If your child is receiving medication for a communicable disease, he or she must be on medication for a minimum 24 hour period prior to returning to the centre.
- Only medications prescribed by a doctor can be administered by staff.
- Parents must complete the “Consent to Administer Medication Form”.
- All non-prescription medications require a parent/guardian to provide a completed “Request for Administration of Non-Prescription Medication at a Child Care Facility” signed by a doctor.
- Medication must be in the original container stating your child's name, dosage and time range to be given.
- We ask all parents/guardians to hand deliver their child’s medication to YMCA staff. When you are in the program, please ensure that personal medications are not accessible to other children in the room. (eg. purses and bags are placed out of reach of children)
- If your child has an inhaler or epi-pen a care plan must be created between the parent/guardian and the Child Care Coordinator to ensure that the staff are aware of all the steps necessary to properly care for your child should an emergency occur.

### Food Allergies

Please inform staff of any food allergies or restrictions. Please remember all of our centres are Peanut Free.

### Sun Safety

Please apply sunscreen in the morning and make sure your child has a hat and extra sunscreen at the centre. A broad rimmed hat is recommended. Baseball hats do not shade a child’s ears or the back of his/her neck.

### Physical Care

- We encourage individual responsibility for dressing and toileting.
- We assist and support children to develop these self-help skills.
- Depending on the age of the child, we will encourage him/her to clean themselves after a bowel movement and will help those children who require assistance.

## **CLOTHING**

Your child needs to come dressed for play. They should wear play clothes which are weather appropriate, comfortable and easy for him/her to handle. Play time with the children is an integral part of our philosophy. Please do not send your child in clothing that is inappropriate or not suitable to get stained or worn. We do not take responsibility for damaged, worn, or stained clothing.

Please provide the following items in your child's backpack:

- Your child should wear play clothes which are weather appropriate, comfortable and easy for him/her to handle
- A change of clothing in case of an accident including socks
- A small blanket for rest time
- Muddy buddies, puddle pants or a warm jacket and snow pants depending on the season
- Boots
- Hat & gloves for winter
- Part of each day will be spent outdoors therefore it is important that your child be dressed appropriate for rain, shine or cold. **PLEASE** make sure your child's items are **LABELED**. This way we can ensure that your child's clothing is returned.

## FOOD

- Please provide a healthy snack and drink for your child each day.
- Pop, chips, candy etc will be sent home with your child
- All of our programs are Peanut Free. Please ensure that you check food labels carefully for the safety of all participants.

## EMERGENCIES

The staff and children will practice monthly fire drills and an emergency evacuation drill will be practiced on a yearly basis. As part of this evacuation, you will be contacted.

### Fire and/or Site Evacuation

In the event that we need to evacuate the building, you will be notified where to pick up your child.

### Earthquake

In the case of an earthquake, if possible, we will remain on site. If the centre is badly damaged emergency crews will relocate us to the nearest emergency centre.

### Accidents

It is essential that you keep us informed of current phone numbers so we can notify you or your emergency contact in case of an emergency.

In the case of an emergency/disaster situation we will attempt to contact parents/guardians as soon as possible.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important part of our child care program. We often take children for neighborhood walks or to visit local parks, which allows them to get to know their community.

This is considered a part of our regular routine and is often done spontaneously. However, parents will be notified ahead of time when a major field trip is planned and if the children will be using public transportation.

## **GUIDANCE AND TREATMENT OF CHILDREN**

### Principles

As a charitable association dedicated to the development of people, the YMCA has a role in helping children learn self discipline and to develop socially acceptable and appropriate behaviours. Our program provides an environment where children are treated with respect, adults are caring and activities are planned based on children's interests and developmental needs.

YMCA Child Guidance Policy and Procedures have been developed to provide a framework to:

- Assist children in developing self control, self confidence and self discipline.
- Assist children to develop socially acceptable and appropriate behavior.
- Recognize that each child is an individual whose age, experience, environment, developmental level and background influence his/her behavior.
- Ensure staff uses positive and proactive strategies for guiding children's behavior.

### Child Care Regulation

The YMCA complies with the Ministry of Health – Community Care Assisted Living Act, Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR) regarding Guidance and Treatment of Children.

## **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE**

We are required, by law, under the Child, Family and Community Service Act, to report any suspected cases/disclosures of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation. Our responsibility is to report suspicions/disclosures, not determine if abuse has occurred. Investigations are the responsibility of the Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD) and/or the Police. They are responsible for contacting the parent/guardian.

## **STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Our programs may accept work experience students from local high schools, early childhood practicum students and volunteers to help in our programs. A clear Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Search is a requirement.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

We welcome and encourage parent involvement in our program. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit at any time.

## TERMINATION OF SERVICES

When a conflict arises, YMCA staff will make every attempt to work with the family to resolve the issue to the mutual satisfaction of all parties, provided the arrangement does not:

- Compromise the Mission and Values of the YMCA;
- Put staff, the child or other participants at risk;
- Diminish the value of the YMCA experience for other participants.

All situations are dealt with on an individual basis taking into account the specific needs and circumstances of the family. After working with the family and making every attempt to resolve the situation, the Coordinator, in consultation with the Director, may come to the decision that it is not appropriate for a child to continue involvement in YMCA Child Care. The following are some situations where this would be the case.

### a) Behavioral Concerns

The YMCA is not equipped to deal effectively and appropriately with a child whose behavior requires ongoing significant intervention (eg. persistent unprovoked physical violence, persistent bullying, verbal harassment of peers or staff and unauthorized departure from the centre.) The Coordinator in consultation with the Director will make every attempt to link the family and child to the appropriate services.

### b) Unresolved Custody Issues

If a family's custody issues result in continuous conflicts at the centre (e.g. non-custodial parent continually attempting to pick the child up at a time not specified on the court order), and places the child, staff and other children at risk, then the family will be asked to make alternate care arrangements.

### c) Philosophical Differences

Occasionally, the needs and opinions of a family do not fit with the principles, policies and procedures of the YMCA. The Childcare Coordinator, in consultation with the Director, will try to promote discussion to come to some agreeable terms with the family. If this is not possible, it is in the best interests of the family to enrol their child in a program that is more in line with their needs and beliefs. The YMCA reserves the right to ask the family to find a more suitable child care arrangement.

### d) Inappropriate Conduct

If a family member harasses, threatens or commits a violent act toward a staff person, child or other family involved in the child care program. Services will be terminated immediately.

**e) Late Pick-Up Issues**

If the centre is unable to satisfactorily resolve problems of late pick up with a family, services may be terminated. As well services may be terminated if late pick up occurs three times in a six month period or parents/guardians fail to pay the late payment fees to staff. Late fees are due to staff upon the late pick up.

**f) Non-Payment of Fees**

The Coordinator of Child Care Administration in consultation with the Director of Child Care Services will work with the families to develop alternate payment plans. Default on fees will result in termination of services.

## COMMUNICATION



Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have with program staff, as we encourage open communication between parents and staff.

The Coordinator of the program is responsible for ensuring that YMCA and child care standards are followed and that parent issues and concerns are addressed. It is important that you contact us in a timely manner if you have concerns - ideally within 24 hours. If you wait days or weeks, it affects our ability to solve the issue.

Contact the Coordinator if you feel that your concerns are not being addressed/resolved or if your concern involves the Coordinator; please contact our child care office at 250 562 9309 ext 202.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The YMCA of Northern BC is dedicated to the spiritual, physical, mental and social development of people. We are committed to providing a friendly, respectful environment and reinforce socially responsible behavior. We do not tolerate abusive behavior.

This means employees, volunteers, program participants, and others using YMCA facilities are expected to treat others with courtesy and respect. Discrimination or harassment on such grounds as age, race, ancestry, colour, place of origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, family status, marital status, political beliefs or because that person has been convicted of a criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to the employment of that person is against the law, and is not acceptable in YMCA programs or on YMCA premises.

## **MORE ABOUT THE YMCA**

### Volunteer Opportunities

As a YMCA volunteer you can make a difference as part of a community of people that helps individuals and our community, succeed. You are an essential part of an organization that can deliver lasting personal and social change for you, your family, your community and communities across Canada. You will be a critical part of an effective and leading international charity with strong values and a mission to build healthy communities through programs and advocacy. For more information, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator at 250 562 9309 ext 209.

### YMCA Philanthropy

As an independent charity, the YMCA relies on the generosity of people in our community. You can show your support through a variety of fundraising programs.

### Strong Kids Campaign – February 15 – March 15

The YMCA's annual giving campaign raises much needed funds to provide financial assistance to those in our community who otherwise could not afford a YMCA experience.



### YMCA Financial Support

The YMCA works hard to ensure no one is turned away because of their inability to pay. Donations from individuals, service groups and businesses help families or individuals whose financial circumstances would prevent them from participating in YMCA programs. If you would like information on financial assistance, please ask our Membership staff.

## **COMMITMENT TO PRIVACY**

The YMCA of Northern BC is committed to protecting personal information by following responsible information handling practices, in keeping with privacy laws to:

- Better meet your needs
- Ensure the safety of children in our care
- Collect statistical data
- Inform you about the YMCA program in which you are registered
- Satisfy government and regulatory obligations

Thank you for taking the time to read our Parent Handbook. Please use it as a reference during your child's stay at our program.