



Shine On



YMCA BC Early Years Handbook
Northern and Interior Regions

We acknowledge, with much gratitude, that YMCA BC's work takes place on land steeped in rich Indigenous history and the traditional, unceded territories of the Coast Salish, Interior Salish, and Dakelh or Carrier Peoples, who have been the lands' traditional stewards and continue to protect and care for the lands, waterways, and airways that YMCA BC currently operates on.



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WELCOME TO THE YMCA

YMCA BC is the result of the unification of YMCA of Northern BC, YMCA-YWCA of Kamloops, and YMCA of Greater Vancouver. Families, children, and seniors in communities from the Sunshine Coast to Fort St John, British Columbia, all have opportunity to belong, grow, thrive, and lead through YMCA BC.

We are part of an international and national movement that has brought lasting social change for over 136 years; we've cared for children, shaped leaders for tomorrow and helped generations of people come together to find support, get healthier and make friends for life. Together we create vibrant and healthy communities with a shared sense of social responsibility, where children and families can thrive and experience better health in spirit, mind, and body.

As one association with one mission to strengthen our impact for communities across British Columbia, YMCA BC combines the collective strength of each association and collectively we're able to achieve more with more, together.

Our Vision (Where we are going)

We envision vibrant, healthy, and inclusive communities for all.

Our Purpose (Mission, why we exist)

We ignite belonging by enabling everyone in our communities to have equitable access to healthier outcomes.

Our Values (How we show up)

In pursuit of this purpose, we will be: **Inclusive, Supportive, Innovative, and Accountable.**

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 and 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.

YMCA educators themselves benefit from a unique training program that allows them access to 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 educators 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 BC has been providing child care in BC since 1976.

We are located in twelve communities, at 30 locations throughout Northern & Interior BC. We are the largest provider of licensed child care in our region, caring for children from three months to 12 years of age.

Our child care staff are qualified caregivers who believe in the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and inclusivity – they genuinely like children, 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 behaviour that indicates distress, provide loving and warm guidance, tailor games and activities to the ages and interests of the children, and work with parents/guardians 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 – caring for 55,000 children annually.

YMCA Child Care Programs:

- Offer values-based programs that recognize that each child is an individual and that each family has different needs, interests, and expectations.
- Employ staff who are dedicated professionals who demonstrate the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and inclusivity and strive to meet the highest standards of the child care profession.
- Offer a child-focused approach that stimulates interaction, creativity, and learning through active hands-on play and exploration based on children's interests and developmental needs.
- Offer activities to help children develop self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence to build their social and emotional competence.

- Involve children in philanthropic activities.

INCLUSION

The YMCA is committed to a philosophy of inclusion that recognizes and responds to the individual strengths, needs, interests, learning styles of each child; as well as 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. Families who choose or are unable to receive necessary support may be required to withdraw their child when safety is a factor.

HOURS OF OPERATION

- Open Monday-Friday – hours vary by location, visit our website for more information.
- Closed Statutory Holidays, including Boxing Day and Easter Monday.
- Christmas Eve: if falling between Monday-Friday, centres will be open until 2:00pm.
- Election Days: when required, centres will be closed early to allow staff voting time, as required by law.
- Closed Christmas Day through New Year's Day each year.
- Closed for four staff professional development days per year, released October 1st for the upcoming year.
- Closed for four days following the August long weekend during summer for annual deep cleaning.
- YMCA Fort St. James Care, YMCA Vanderhoof Care, YMCA Chetwynd Care, YMCA Tumbler Ridge Care, YMCA Princeton Care, and YMCA Kamloops Care will be closed for 5 days prior to the August long weekend during the summer for employees to have scheduled holidays/ vacation.

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/guardians will be notified of a potential closure or called if the program has experienced an emergency and/or must close earlier than the scheduled program ending/closing time.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Arrival Procedure:

- You may not drop your child off before the program starts.
- Parents/guardians must sign in their child. 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.
- Please ensure that your child arrives before 10:00am. Arrivals later than this time are disruptive to the program and the children's schedules. If you must drop off later than 10:00am, please contact the Coordinator in advance.

Departure Procedure:

- Parents/guardians must sign out their child 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/guardian or an authorized person listed on the registration form unless staff are notified in writing.**
- Government-issued, 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 (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.
- Parents/guardians requiring copies of documentations for personal or court use will be charged a minimum \$75 + GST administration fee with a minimum three (3) week processing time.

RELEASE OF A CHILD

YMCA Child Care will only release your child to:

- An authorized person 19+ years (parent and/or guardian).
- A person named on the registration form or emergency card as being authorized to pick up the child.
- A parent or guardian who is recorded on a legal document (e.g. custody agreement).
- A person who is not listed on the emergency card or registration form that arrives to pick up the child (e.g. 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/ guardians, should be prepared to show government-issued, photo identification upon picking up children.

Child will not be released from care when:

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

LATE PICK-UP

Your child(ren) must be picked-up by the program ending/closing time. Our staff have their own schedules and families for which they must be on time. Please ensure you plan ahead to arrive on time.

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

- A fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged.
- 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. Upon arrival, the parent/guardian will be given the Late Pick-Up Form to sign which indicates the exact amount that will be charged to the account for the late pick-up. The extra charges will be applied to the next child care payment; late fees are not covered by any 3rd party group, including Affordable Child Care Benefit or the \$10/day program.

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 at work. If alternate arrangements were made, staff will call alternate's phone number as well as the parents/guardians.
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 of Education and Child Care, Emergency Services, who will come and take your child into care until a parent/ guardian can be located.

FEES

Payment

- Fees are due and payable on the 1st of each month. Your monthly fees can be paid by Pre-Authorized Payment Plan (PAPP), VISA, MasterCard, and American Express, or directly from your bank account. Pre-authorized payment forms may be obtained from Child Care Administration. 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 to maintain your child's space.
- If part of your child care fee is paid through Ministry of Education and Child Care Affordable Child Care Benefit you are responsible to apply for and **keep current** your child care benefit. You are responsible for the full child care fee if you fail to renew your benefit or if your benefit is cancelled.
- Child care fees may be tax deductible. If you require a receipt for income tax purposes, please contact Child Care Administration.

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

Deposit

A non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 is required to secure a space. All deposits will be credited to your first month of child care.

Facilities Enhancement Fee

An annual fee of \$35.00 + GST is due upon registration and subsequently every September.

Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) Fee

If a payment withdrawal is returned to the YMCA BC as NSF you will be issued an NSF notice and a \$20.00 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 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. We will then open this spot to our wait list.

Repayment Agreement

Should it become necessary to close your YMCA child care program for longer than five consecutive business days due to situations beyond our control such as natural disasters, unsafe weather conditions, unsafe building hazards, or any other unforeseen situation, the YMCA will make every effort to provide an alternate location. When it is not possible to secure an alternate location, the YMCA BC will refund your prepaid child care fees in a timely manner. Refunds will not be issued for unforeseen closure of less than five business days.

Withdrawal

If you withdraw your child from our program, you are required to give **written notice by the 1st 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.

Care for children who will enter kindergarten in September of the year they are five years, will automatically end on August 31st of that year. Parents/ guardians requesting care to end prior to August 31st must provide written notice as per our regular withdraw process. Parents/ guardians needing care for children entering kindergarten will need to ensure that they have registered for a school age program when priority registration opens in the spring, or as available. Please note, many kindergarten programs have a gradual entry process. The YMCA will not be able to accommodate the gradual schedules. Your child may attend child care during regular child care hours.

Affordable Child Care Benefit – Ministry of Education and Child Care

The government affordable child care benefit is available to families based on provincial eligibility requirements. Please contact the Ministry office at 1-888-338-6622 or www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/childcarebc-programs/child-care-benefit for more information. You can use the My Family Services website to estimate your fees: myfamilyservices.gov.bc.ca/s/estimator. Parents/guardians who receive the Ministry Affordable Child Care Benefit are responsible for the difference between the benefit and the YMCA Child Care fee.

If you are a new participant and you are awaiting the Affordable Child Care Benefit you will need to pay the minimum parent portions, determined by Child Care Administration. We will wait a maximum of three weeks for your child care benefit 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 benefit current and are responsible for the full fee if their benefit expires. We will refund the benefit portion of the payment once the benefit has resumed and payment has been received from the Ministry.

GRADUAL ENTRY

A gradual entry process is required for each new child. Even though your child may have other group experiences, this is a new group with unfamiliar faces. The gradual entry process allows time for your child to feel comfortable, to start developing friendships, and to become familiar with staff. We recognize that this process can be stressful for parents/guardians; however, by following this process your child will feel more comfortable and secure when you do leave them for a

whole day. If this process is difficult for you to arrange, you can have a friend or family member substitute for you.

Gradual Entry Process (flexible to meet child and parent/guardian needs)

- Day One: Child attends for one hour.
Parent/ guardian remains with child.
- Day Two: Child attends for ninety minutes.
Parent/ guardian can stay as long as child needs them.
- Day Three: Child attends for ½ day (until 12:30pm).
Please provide lunch and snack.
- Day Four: Child attends regular hours.

Moving to the Next Age Group Program

When a child moves from the infant/toddler program to the group 3 to 5 program:

- We will do our best to accommodate all the children enrolled in the program; however, we cannot guarantee transfer from one program to the next. There is the possibility that when a child is ready to transfer to the next program space may not be available.
- Decisions about transfers to the next age grouping will be made in consultation with the families and based on the consideration of the children to keep siblings together. The final decision will be made by the YMCA. It is our priority to keep siblings together.
- If there are two or more children that are the same age, in the same program who require a space in the next age grouping, the enrollment date will be the deciding factor for who will have the space.
- In the event that there is no space for a child in the next age grouping, we will try to accommodate the family (if the family agrees to move) by transferring their child to an alternative YMCA Child Care program providing, there is space available.
- If a situation arises where we have exhausted all options to accommodate the family's needs, and due to the child's age must withdraw from the program, the child will be placed back on the wait list and given priority for the next available space.

HEALTH

Immunization

The Ministry of Health Services (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

If you think your child is ill, please keep them at home. You must not mask symptoms of illness, such as fever, with medication prior to bringing a child to care. Sick children need to have opportunities to rest and recover.

At the centre, if the child develops symptoms such as those listed below, the Coordinator or staff will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact immediately. While the child is awaiting pick-up, they are kept separate from the other children as much as possible. The authorized person must arrive within twenty minutes.

A child should NOT attend care when the child:	A child may return to care when the child:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cannot fully participate in all program components for the day (outdoor active play & field trips) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is able to fully participate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a fever of 100° F (38.0° C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever has remained below 100° F (38° C) for 48 hours without medication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has diarrhea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is symptom free for 48 hours and has had one normal bowel movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is vomiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is symptom-free for 48 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a new or unexplained cough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is symptom-free for 48 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a combination of two or more – diarrhea/ vomiting /fever/persistent cough/etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is symptom-free for 48 hours or longer if directed by Health Authority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has any form of untreated infestation (i.e. scabies, head lice, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has been treated and has no eggs or nits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has conjunctivitis (pink eye) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has seen a doctor and 24 hours after first eye drops have been given
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is infectious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has seen a doctor and 24 hours after first dose of antibiotics, or has been cleared to return by a physician
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has skin infections, new or unexplained rash. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has been examined by a doctor and has received medical

	clearance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires greater care and attention to be provided which compromises the care of the other children in the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is able to manage within the program ratio and the care is not compromised

The YMCA follows all public health orders. Parents/guardians are expected to adhere to all public health orders and recommendations to ensure that our child care programs are as safe as possible.

It is important to note that parents/guardians play a role in preventing the spread of diseases. We ask our parents/guardians to abide by the following rules:

- When a child shows signs of sickness at home, it is the parents/guardians' responsibility to find out what the illness is and to keep the child at home, or make other arrangements if the child's condition is infectious. If a child cannot take part in an activity because of illness, they should not come to the centre that day.
- If a child comes to the centre ill, parents/guardians will be asked to find alternate care for that day.
- If the parents/guardians are unsure of whether or not their child will need a doctor's note, they are asked to contact the centre Coordinator prior to bringing their child to the centre.
- If parents/guardians have concerns about unexpected symptoms or are curious about common childhood illnesses, please follow the BC CDC link: www.bccdc.ca/schools/Documents/EN_Guide_Childhood_Diseases.pdf.

Medication

- If your child is receiving medication for a communicable disease, they 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/guardians 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 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. (e.g. 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 dietary restrictions. Please remember all our centres are nut-free.

Sun Safety

Please apply sunscreen in the morning and ensure that your child has a hat and extra sunscreen at the centre. A broad brimmed hat is recommended. Baseball hats do not shade a child's ears or the back of their neck.

Nap/Rest Time

This is an important routine as children need quiet time to rest and relax. It provides a balance to the day's active program. Children are not required to sleep; however, everyone will be asked to participate in quiet time for 30 minutes. Non-nappers will be directed to quiet activities.

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 them to clean themselves after a bowel movement and will help those children who require assistance.
- Children attending a group 3 – 5 program or Infant and Toddler program who are currently potty training, who are not fully potty-trained, must wear pull-ups, not diapers to assist with their independence.

CLOTHING

Your child needs to come dressed for play. They should wear play clothes which are weather appropriate, comfortable, and easy for them 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:

Infant & Toddlers

- Spare Clothing: TWO complete outfits (socks, undershirt, top and bottom)
- Formula, cereals, prepared lunch and morning snack.
- Bottles, food containers, etc. with your child's name
- Sippy cup for water
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Training underwear
- Inside shoes
- Blanket or sleep sack, favorite soft cuddly toy for sleeping, soother
- Boots and muddy buddies or rain pants

- Swimsuit, towel, sunscreen & hat for summer
- Warm outside winter clothes including snow pants, warm mittens, hat, and boots (a part of each day will be spent outdoors)
- Toothbrush (children will brush their teeth daily)

3-5 Age Group

- Your child should wear play clothes which are weather appropriate, comfortable, and easy for them 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
- Swimsuit, towel, sunscreen & hat for summer
- Toothbrush
- Water bottle or lunch mate drinking container
- Part of each day will be spent outdoors therefore it is important that your child be dressed appropriately for **rain, shine, or cold**. **PLEASE** make sure your child's items are **LABELED**. This way we can ensure that your child's clothes are returned.

FOOD

- The YMCA promotes healthy eating habits and uses the Canada Food Guide as a resource when providing snacks to children.
- Children's lunches should include a re-freezable ice pack as our fridge cannot accommodate lunch kits.
- Please have your child's lunch ready to serve in a microwavable container if it needs to be heated. Staff do not have time to prepare meals.
- A healthy afternoon snack consisting of fruits and vegetables will be provided daily.
- Our curriculum encourages choice as much as possible throughout all aspects of your child's day; this includes all interactions with food as well. Children will be offered multiple occasions to eat lunch and snacks including a YMCA-provided afternoon snack.
- All our programs are **nut-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.

Wildfire and Wildfire Smoke

Wildfire smoke can result in poor air quality and may be harmful to the health of vulnerable populations such as children, older adults, and those with pre-existing medical conditions. The best way to protect ourselves is to reduce exposure.

We are committed to providing the best possible protection to the children and staff by following the guidelines:

- Keeping up to date with the **air quality rating**. Keep in mind that wind change can affect the air quality quickly.
- Managers and Coordinators will visit the www.gov.bc.ca/air-quality-advisories for the most accurate air quality data daily.
- **If Low 1-3:** Children will engage in outdoor activities as usual. When temperatures and air quality are favorable, children should spend as much time in their outside classrooms as possible.
- **If moderate 4-6:** Children will engage in outdoor activities with caution. Staff will use their judgement to assess the air quality and either decrease the physical activity of the children, or limit the time spent outside.
- **If High 7-10+:** Children will remain indoors, and Coordinators and Managers will plan to ensure children are provided other opportunities for gross motor development and active play. Staff will monitor the air quality again in the afternoon to see if the risk has dropped and time outdoors is an option.

In the event of **heavy forest fire smoke**, we take precautions by:

- Keeping windows and doors closed as much as possible.
- Turn on the air purifiers in each of the rooms in the centres.

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/ guardians 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.

The 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 their behavior.
- Ensure staff use 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 of Education and Child Care 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/ GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

We welcome and encourage parent/ guardian 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, considering 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 (e.g. 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-up the child 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 Child Care Coordinator, in 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 interest 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 Child Care Administration, in consultation with the Director, 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/ guardians and staff. 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.

The Coordinator of the program is responsible for ensuring that YMCA and child care standards are followed and that parent/ guardian issues and concerns are addressed. Contact the Coordinator if you feel that your concerns are not being addressed/resolved or if your concern involves the Coordinator, please contact the Manager for your region.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The YMCA 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.

YMCA Philanthropy

As an independent charity, the YMCA relies on the generosity of people in our community. By donating to the YMCA, you are supporting a charity that has trusted relationships with corporations, government, the general public and other not-for-profit organizations, as well as the local physical presence to deliver lasting personal and social change.

COMMITMENT TO PRIVACY

The YMCA 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
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Thank you for taking the time to read our Parent/Guardian Handbook. Please use it as a reference during your child's stay at our program. Parent/Guardian handbooks are updated periodically, for the most up-to-date version, please always refer to the website.