



Shine On



**Northern and Interior BC  
YMCA Early Years Handbook:  
3-5 Care/Infant & Toddler**

## **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 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 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.

Disclaimer: YMCA BC reserves the right to make amendments to the terms and conditions stated in this family handbook and will provide notifications when changes occur.

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

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

We are located in six communities, at 16 locations throughout Northern BC. We are the largest provider of licensed child care in our region, care for children from three months to twelve years of age.

Our child care staff are qualified caregivers who believe in the Y core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and inclusivity – 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 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 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.

### **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 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 building 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 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. 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, our centre 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 4 staff professional development days per year, released October 1<sup>st</sup> for the upcoming year.
- Short term summer closures at select locations.
- Information about program closures dates per location is shared with families in the Fall.

### **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:**

- You may not drop your child 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.
- 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 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/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 (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 requiring copies of documentations for personal or court use will be charged a minimum \$75 + GST administration fee and allow for a minimum three (3) 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, e.g. 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. (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 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 (e.g. 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**

We expect that all children are picked up on time, respecting our staff's work

schedules and personal commitments. Late pick-ups may result in a fee of \$1.00 per child/per minute and, in repeated cases, could result in suspension or withdrawal from the program. Families will be asked to review and sign a late pick-up form for each instance and is a condition of continued enrollment.

### **FAILURE TO PICK UP**

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 for Children and Family Development, Emergency Services, who will come and take your child into care until a parent or guardian can be located.

## **PROGRAM FEES & FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **Child Care Fees**

Monthly child care fees are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month and must be paid in full and on time through pre-authorized payment (Visa, MasterCard, or direct debit). Cash and cheque payments are not accepted. This applies to all YMCA Child Care enrollments, including those receiving third-party funding. Monthly fees cannot be deferred, and families are responsible for the full cost, regardless of external funding arrangements.

YMCA Child Care fees are pro-rated based on the total number of care days in the year, providing families with a consistent and predictable monthly payment. Monthly fees must be paid in full and on time to ensure there are no disruptions to your child care services.

Refunds will not be provided for any days missed due to illness, vacation or any other personal reasons. Families are required to pay the full monthly fee in order to maintain their child care space.

Services may be withdrawn for lack of payment or ongoing late payment.

### **Deposit and Enhancement Fee**

A non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 and a \$35.00 + GST facilities enhancement fee will automatically be collected from your pre-authorized payment method at the time of registration. All deposits will be credited to the first month of care.

Enhancement fees are not collected at \$10-a-Day child care programs.

### **Declined Payments**

If funds are unavailable at the time of billing, YMCA BC will apply a non-refundable \$20 declined payment charge to the account for any failed transactions that are declined, returned or cannot be processed for any reasons including;

- Non-sufficient funds (NSF)
- Declined pre-authorized payments
- Incorrect or outdated banking information
- Expired credit cards
- Compromised or stolen credit cards

Child care payments for the current month including any declined payment fees must be made or scheduled within 5 business days of the original billing date. If outstanding balances remain unpaid or in repeat cases of declined and late payments, child care services may be withdrawn. YMCA BC will not pay back any charges billed to you by your own financial institution as a result of a failed payment or NSF.

We understand that unexpected challenges can arise, and we encourage families to contact our child care administration team for support. Families who wish to pay their outstanding balances by credit card, may log into their YMCA BC child care account to pay online, declined payment charges still apply.

### **Affordable Child Care Benefit**

The Provincial Governments' Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) is available based on Provincial eligibility requirements. Parents/Guardians are responsible for keeping their funding up to date and will be billed for the full cost of child care, without notice if their ACCB benefit expires. YMCA BC is not responsible for sending reminders regarding ACCB renewal.

For more information, contact 1-888-338-6622 or visit [gov.bc.ca/childcare](http://gov.bc.ca/childcare).

### **YMCA Financial Assistance**

We want to make sure that all children have an opportunity to benefit from a YMCA child care program, so we offer YMCA financial assistance to assist families in affording care. For more information, please contact us by email.

### **Repayment Agreement**

Should it become necessary to close your YMCA child care program for longer than five 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**

A minimum of one month's written notice is required to withdraw your child from the program and must be received by the first of the month prior to the month you wish to withdraw your child. An additional month's fee will be charged if the required notice is not given.

The withdrawal policy applies to all parent/guardians even if the child is scheduled to start at a later date; or if the child is not accepted into the elementary school in which the program serves. Once the child is registered, the parent/guardian is fully responsible for all child care costs.

Please note that withdrawals for September must be received by June 30th. If you wish to withdraw your child from care, please contact us.

### **Tax Receipts**

An official Tax Child Care Income Tax receipt will be issued to the paying party by email on or before February 28 of each year, reflecting all fees paid for the previous calendar year.

### **Drop In**

For licensed child care locations that offer drop-in, families can request care by contacting our child care administration team.

Program staff on site are not able to arrange drop-in sessions.

Requests for drop-in must be made a minimum of 3 business days in advance of the dates in which you are requesting care. Drop-in cannot be guaranteed, and availability is based on several factors such as capacity and staffing.

Payment for each drop-in booking is due in full at the time of your request. Once paid and confirmed, drop-in care is non-refundable regardless of attendance, or should you wish to cancel. Drop-in payments are non-transferable to other dates.

### **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 but 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 needs)**

Day One: Child attends for one hour.

Parent remains with child.

Day Two: Child attends for ninety minutes.  
(Parent 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**

The following explains how a child moves from the infant/toddler program to the group 3 to 5 program and school age 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.
- Decision about transfers to the next age group, will be made in consultation with the families, however, the final decision will be made by the YMCA.
- If there are two or more children that are the same age, in the same program, who require a space in the next age group, the date of birth and the enrolment date will be the deciding factor for who will be given the space.
- In the event that there is no space for a child in the next group, we will try to accommodate the family at another YMCA child care location, if space is available.
- If a situation arises where we have exhausted all options to accommodate, the child will be withdrawn from the program, and placed back on the waitlist and given priority for the next available space.
- Child care services from Early Learning to Before and After School Care are not automatically transferred. Children who are eligible to start kindergarten in the fall, will be withdrawn from their early years program on August 31.
- Families needing before and after school care must join the waitlist for this age group, even if the program operates at the same physical location.

## **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 Policy and Procedure

**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 Educator will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact immediately. While the child is awaiting pick up, he/she is 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"> <li>• cannot fully participate in all program components for the day (outdoor active play, field trips)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is able to fully participate</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has a fever of 100 degrees(38.0 C)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fever has remained below 100 degrees (38 C) for 48 hours without medication</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has diarrhea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• symptom free for 48 hours and has had one normal bowel movement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vomiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• symptom free for 48 hours</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new or unexplained cough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symptom free for 48 hours</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of two or more – diarrhea/ vomiting /fever/persistent cough/etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symptom free for 48 hours or longer if directed by Health Authority</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has any form of untreated infestation (i.e. scabies, head lice, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has been treated and has no eggs or nits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conjunctivitis (pink eye)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has seen a doctor and 24 hours after first eye drops have been given</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is infectious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has seen a doctor and 24 hours after first dose of antibiotics or has been cleared to return by a physician</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has skin infections, new or unexplained rash.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has been examined by a doctor and has received medical clearance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires greater care and attention to be provided which compromises the care of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when the child is able to manage within the program ratio and the care is not compromised.</li> </ul>

other children in the program.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The YMCA follows all public health orders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are expected to adhere to all public health orders and recommendations to ensure that our child care programs are as safe as possible.</li> </ul>

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’ 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 community care link below.

[quick-guide-to-common-childhood-diseases.pdf \(northernhealth.ca\)](https://www.northernhealth.ca/quick-guide-to-common-childhood-diseases.pdf)

**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. (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 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.

## **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 but everyone will be asked to participate in quiet time for thirty 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 him/her 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 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 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:**

### **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, favorite soft cuddly toy for sleeping, soother
- Boots and muddy buddies or rain pants
- Swim suit, towel, sun screen & 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 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
- Swim suit, towel, sun screen & 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 appropriate 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 Y provided afternoon snack.
- 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.

#### **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 at the YMCA by following the guidelines:

Keeping up to date with the **Air quality rating** is vital when planning your day. Keep in mind that wind change can effect the air quality quickly. Managers and Coordinators will visit the [www.gov.bc.ca/air-quality-advisories](http://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.
- **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 should 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**, take precautions by:

- Keep 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 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.

### **WITHDRAWAL 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 Child Care 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**

**f) Non-Payment of Fees and/or Ongoing Late Payments**

**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. 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 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 child care coordinator for your region.

**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 9341 x 2129.

### **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 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.

## **GOT QUESTIONS?**

Please contact us regionally at:

[north.childcare@bc.ymca.ca](mailto:north.childcare@bc.ymca.ca): for all licensed child care program in the North: **Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. James, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Smithers, Tumbler Ridge and Vanderhoof**

[interior.childcare@bc.ymca.ca](mailto:interior.childcare@bc.ymca.ca): for all licensed child care programs in the Interior: **Kamloops and Princeton**