

**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
FAMILY HANDBOOK
2024-2025**



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

YMCA Children's Center 2024-2025 Family Handbook



**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
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2024-2025**

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Mission Statement

The Regional Y is a community service organization committed to building healthy lives through programs that strengthen the spirit, mind & body for all.

Philosophy

The YMCA Children's Center's vision or goal is to provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating educational environment for young children.

A high quality childcare program is one that meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of every child involved in the program. Each day of a child's life should be viewed as leading toward the growth and development of a healthy, intelligent and contributing member of society.

Non Discrimination Clause

We strive to serve all regardless of financial status, physical limitations, race, religion or ethnicity. We strive to be inclusive of all.



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Hours of Operation/Ages Served

Our hours are 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

The YMCA Children's Center is licensed to serve children ages 3 years – 12 years. Please check with the program director or administrative assistant for space availability.

2024-25 CALENDAR

The YMCA Children's Center will be closed on the following days in 2024/2025:

Labor Day-Monday 9/2/2024
Thanksgiving and the Day After- Thursday 11/28/2024 and Friday 11/29/2024
Christmas Eve & Christmas Day - Tuesday 12/24/2024 and Wednesday 12/25/2024
New Years Eve-Tuesday 12/31/2024 Close at 3:00
New Years Day- Wednesday 1/1/2025
Memorial Day- Monday 5/26/2025
Independence Day- Friday 7/4/2025

The Part Time Preschool calendar is given to families at the beginning of the program.

The YMCA Children's Center will close for one week for renovations at the end of August. The tentative dates are listed below. This calendar is subject to change based on the public school's scheduled opening for the Fall 2025 program.

2025 Tentative Facility Maintenance Shutdown

| | | |
|------------------------|--|---|
| YMCA Children's Center | **August 18-22, 2025 **see note below | **Opening for the Fall Program on August 25, 2025 and for Part-Time Preschool on August 27, 2025 |
|------------------------|--|---|

****These dates are subject to change based on the 2025-2026 public school calendars**

Part Time School Readiness Please Note: Families who partake in the Part Time School Readiness Program please refer to the calendar you received at the commencement of the program. Please stop by the office or see your classroom teacher if you are in need of an additional calendar.

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**Early Care and Education Curriculum
Preschool**

As parents, you have high expectations about the care and education of your children. So too, do we. The Regional YMCA Children's Center is accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. We adhere to the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and we commit to provide care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children's development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively. Achieving NAEYC accreditation requires that we provide the best educational opportunities for your children by meeting the following NAEYC standards:

- Promote **positive relationships** for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth
- Implement a **curriculum** that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical and social
- Use **developmentally, culturally and linguistically** appropriate and **effective teaching** approaches
- Provide **ongoing assessments** of a child's learning and development and communicate the child's progress to the family
- Promote the **nutrition and health** of children and protect children and staff from illness and injury
- Employ and support a **professional teaching staff** that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, ongoing professional development, and commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests
- Purchase non-toxic toys, art supplies and equipment
- Provide a **safe and healthy physical environment**

Children are naturally curious, and in most cases eager to learn and try new things. Consequently, teachers rely on a host of curriculums in early childhood education to provide a well-rounded and comprehensive program. We enrich that enthusiasm for learning by exposing children to a wide variety of developmentally appropriate activities in literacy, math, science, music, the visual arts, and health and wellness.

While acquiring knowledge and skills in these areas is important, children must also develop a strong social-emotional capacity. They must learn to understand their feelings and those of others; be able to cooperate with their peers as well as adults; to resolve conflicts successfully and to regulate their own behavior. These are significant challenges for little ones. Our teachers spend as much attention on the social emotional development of children as they do on planning activities. Our Preschool Threes-Fives will spend 2-3 years with the same teaching staff. This ensures consistency in caregiving which is critical for children's social emotional health.

Not everything is teacher directed. A lot of what goes on in a quality early childhood program is PLAY. It is the primary way children birth-to-five learn. Play gives children opportunities to understand the larger world, to interact with others in social ways, to express and control their emotions, and practice newly acquired skills. Through play, children develop their imagination and creativity, express and represent their ideas,

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Early care and Education Curriculum continued:

thoughts and feelings and gain a sense of confidence. Such child-initiated play under the watchful eyes of their teachers is an essential component to the healthy development of all children.

We choose to follow the Creative Curriculum as it mirrors our philosophy that children learn best by doing. The CT Early Learning and Development Standards are used as a framework with the Creative Curriculum. Teachers use the Standards for planning learning experiences, observing and documenting child progress, and implementing teaching strategies.

Our dedication to providing high quality early care and education is supported by national research. Studies demonstrate that children who possess well developed cognitive and social emotional skills by the time they enter kindergarten are more likely to be successful in school.

Head Teachers meet weekly with their assistants to develop learning experiences, discuss curriculum and children's developmental progress. We look at and plan for all areas of development.

The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan a daily, flexible schedule with a balance of indoor and outdoor, specifically with opportunity for outdoor moderate and vigorous activities, large group and small group, teacher-directed and child-directed are all designed to accomplish the goals of the curriculum and give children a successful start in school.

School-Age Program Curriculum

Studies show that children who attend high quality afterschool programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, grades and conduct in school compared to their peers who are not in programs. They also have more learning opportunities, academic or enrichment activities and spend less time watching television. This research tells us that there are many benefits to be gained from a child attending a high-quality childcare program.

Afterschool programs also play an important role in promoting healthy lifestyles for youth. Research shows kids who move more aren't just healthier, they also tend to do better academically, behave better in class and miss fewer days of school. Physical fitness activities after school not only promote health but also impart knowledge and skills to help youth establish lifelong healthy habits. Each day at the Y, both indoors and outdoors students are provided opportunities for light, moderate and vigorous activity as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities for at least 60 minutes per day for a full day program or at least 30 minutes per day for a half day program. Examples include dancing, relay races, basketball, jump rope, hopscotch, jogging, walking, kick ball and playing on playground equipment. During the spring, summer and fall children will have opportunities to participate in our multi-bed outdoor garden.

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We are committed to quality and the many issues surrounding School-Age Childcare. We are constantly striving to increase the high standard of care we provide, as evidenced by our continual growth and program development.

Our curriculum is based on developmentally appropriate practice guidelines and the National Afterschool Association Standards. We also use the Kidz Lit and Kidz Math curriculum created by the Developmental Studies Center. Both curriculums were designed for Afterschool Programs and are aligned with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and Math (NCOM) Standards. The Kidz Lit curriculum consists of 180 books and guides to help children develop a love of reading while enhancing critical thinking skills, comprehension and vocabulary. The Kidz Math curriculum uses cooperative games and literacy based activities to promote mathematical understanding and social development.

Afterschool activities include a flexible schedule with a balance of indoor and outdoor, large group and small group and teacher directed and child directed. Some of the activities include: Afterschool clubs, cooking, drama, art, literacy, woodworking, computers, teambuilding, nutrition, fitness sports, science, asset building, homework assistance and service learning.

Summer Club

Grassy Plain Summer Club offers a summer filled with enrichment, fun and excitement! Kids make friends, have fun, get active and discover who they are and what they can achieve. Campers can sign up for one week or all weeks, either way your child will have an opportunity to build new friendships and memories that will last a lifetime! Our program offers a wide range of opportunities to nurture children's interests and keep their literacy and math skills fresh all summer. Campers are also provided opportunities for light, moderate and vigorous activities as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities for at least 60 minutes each day. Our daily schedule is flexible and campers will enjoy activities such as gardening and nutrition, special events and field trips, outdoor games and sports, teambuilding, cookouts and crafts. Our theme weeks offer activities such as a jello eating contest, dress like a movie star and twin day in addition to educational hands-on programs to reinforce Science, Math, Engineering, Art and Technology.

By providing opportunities for learning as those examples mentioned above, along with our Kidz Lit and Kidz Math curriculum, and assisting your child with their summer math packet and summer reading lists, the Y is committed to addressing the issue of summer learning loss.

Children's Assessment Plan

The Children's Center has a comprehensive approach to assessing children's development. Our teachers and staff are trained on how to use the assessments we administer, the assessment procedures and how to interpret the results of such assessments. These trainings are frequently offered through School Readiness and the Office of Early Childhood. In addition, our Education Consultant meets individually with new Head Teachers to train them on the assessment process and tools used. Head Teachers are responsible for training their assistant teachers in the assessment process. Special care and planning is

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put into assessing children who are dual language learners and many different strategies are used such as bilingual staff and visual supports. In addition, the assessments are tailored to children's developmental characteristics and modifications are made when necessary. A few examples include using adaptive materials, modeling, seeking input from families and observing more often with more intentionality to capture subtle information.

Preschool children enrolled in the center receive ongoing assessment of their development, both formally and informally, three times annually, followed by a parent conference. We use the CT DOTS, the Connecticut Documentation and Observation for Teaching System developed by the CT Office of Early Childhood. This assessment describes and shows the developmental progress and learning of children. Formal assessment includes checklists, medical and health information, and structured observations which take place in the child's normal classroom environment in their typical classroom group, with staff they interact with daily. We do not enforce any time constraints during these evaluations. Informal assessment includes conversations with parents, other childcare staff, and more informal observations of children throughout the course of their daily routines. We look carefully at their social-emotional development over time, and consider family culture and characteristics, which play a major role in how a little one approaches the world. Staff is sure to work with families about the assessment methods used and seek advice from families as to what will best meet their child's needs. We are happy to share more information about the assessment framework used and we encourage families to ask questions at the first formal conference. Whether a child is assessed formally or informally, assessments look at a child's cognitive skills, language, social-emotional development, health and physical development, self-help skills and overall behavior.

Families receive their child's written assessment before their conference with their child's teacher. Families are also asked to fill out a questionnaire before their child's conference, which helps their child's teacher gain important insight from their parent's perspective. Translators are welcome at the conference or your child's teacher can provide translation if asked. These assessments follow our children as they move through our program and go with the parents as their children head off to kindergarten. Our goal is to provide a thorough documentation of a child's development.

The preschool program also administers the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, which is distributed to families within the first three months their child is in the program and at regular increments throughout their stay at the Center. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is a screening tool that will provide a quick check of a child's development. The information supplied will help reveal the child's strengths, uncover any areas of concern, and determine if there are community resources or services that may be useful for the child or family.

The purpose for assessment goes beyond just determining if a child has reached certain milestones. We rely on assessments to determine a child's particular interests, their strengths, and areas of need. We use it to inform planning for improvements in our program and curriculum, and adjustments in the daily classroom schedule, as well as teaching practices when necessary.

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If during our assessment process, or from results that require further assessment from the administration of the Ages and Stages survey, we have concerns about a child's development, the head teacher discusses her concerns with the Director and with the parents. With the written approval of the parents, we either make a referral to the appropriate intervention agency or assist parents in making the referral themselves as is required in some agencies.

We work very closely with intervention agencies, incorporating suggestions into our classrooms wherever possible, and participate in Individualized Education Plan's. If there is sufficient evidence that a child's development is seriously delayed and a parent refuses any assistance, the director will file a report to the Department of children and Families for neglect.

Children's files and family records are kept in strict confidentiality and locked when the program is not in session. The child's parent or legal guardian must sign a release before any information is shared. Children's individual screening results and assessment information is used to help plan for your child's individual educational plan and to help program staff improve ongoing program planning and curriculum development.

Program Assessment and Effectiveness

Once a year, families and staff are asked to partake in a program assessment. The assessment is tallied, and results are distributed to both families and staff. It is a time to reflect on what we are doing well and as a group a time to develop a plan for program enhancement and improvement for the following year.

Family Assistance

The YMCA Children's Center staff has the ability to refer families who may need assistance accessing adult education programs, job training and public library services. We also have access to agencies that can help your family with your child's health care needs. If your family is in need of health insurance or health care please let us know. We can help you connect with community resources available including well child visits, immunizations, dental care and nutritional screenings. When possible we also provide on site vision screenings yearly for our preschool children, and we can direct you to agencies for hearing and dental screenings if asked.

Transitioning from Preschool to Kindergarten

Beginning Kindergarten is an exciting time for the entire family. We are here to help you every step of the way. One way to begin to prepare for Kindergarten is to be sure to take advantage of the three preschool conferences we offer throughout the year. It is a great time to learn about your child's progress and to help forge a meaningful relationship with your child's teacher. These skills will be so important when your child begins kindergarten. Currently you have the opportunity to see your child's teacher at least once and sometimes

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twice a day depending on your pick up and drop off schedule, leaving time for daily check-ins. Once your child is in Kindergarten sometimes conferences are the only time you have your child's teacher's undivided attention.

During your child's conference your child's teacher will share with you your child's portfolio. Their portfolio will be added to throughout the year and will be given to you at the end of your child's preschool career. It is always a good idea to check with your child's Kindergarten teacher to see if he or she would like to look over the portfolio.

As the preschool year progresses teachers will read books about Kindergarten. You and your child will be invited by the public school to visit and perhaps your child will attend a screening and be evaluated. Some local schools ask you to have one of our teachers to fill out a questionnaire about your child, which we will happily do as long as we have your permission via a signature on the form itself.

At times throughout the year your child's preschool teacher will attend workshops in the area side by side with local Kindergarten teachers and our preschool teachers visit local Kindergarten classrooms to keep abreast of what is being taught and what is expected from upon entering Kindergarten.

If at any time you have questions about Kindergarten registration, what school district you live in or just want to talk to alleviate some anxieties you may have just let us know, we are here to help!

Here at the YMCA we invite you to come visit and observe our Before and After-school program located on the second floor. Our program offers a balanced recreational, educational curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on Literacy and enrichment activities like Math and Science to support the school day in addition to plenty of time for traditional Kindergarten activities such as outdoor time, blocks, sand and water table activities and dramatic play. We have an open door policy and invite families to visit anytime, share in our celebrations and special events or participate in field trips. Families are also encouraged to share their time through storytelling, cultural exchanges, sharing a special talent or assist in fundraising efforts.

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Schedule of Vaccines

Children's physicals must be current and on the correct form. The immunization schedule is listed below:

ADIP RECOMMENDED SCHEDULE OF VACCINATIONS FOR ALL CHILDREN

| Age | Immunization |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Birth to 2 months | 1st Hepatitis B |
| 1-4 months | 2 nd Hepatitis B – at least 1 month after Hep B #1 |
| 2 months | 1st DTP/HIB/Polio - PCV |
| 4 months | 2nd DTP/HIB + Polio - PCV |
| 6 months | 3rd DTP/HIB - PCV |
| 6-18 months | 3rd Hepatitis/Polio |
| 6-59 months | Influenza. Annual dose needed between Aug. 1 – Dec. 31 st of preceding year. All children 6-59 months who have not received vaccine previously need 2 doses of vaccine the first influenza season |
| 12-15 months | MMR - PCV (1 dose after 1st birthday) |
| 12-18 months | 4th DTP/HIB – (1 dose after 1st birthday) |
| 12-18 months | Varivax (children born after 12/31/96) |
| 12-23 months | One dose of Hep A |
| 24 months & older | Two doses of Hep A 6 months apart |
| Before starting school 4-6 years | 5th DTP/4th Polio MMR #2 |
| 11-12 years | Varivax Hep B, MMR #2 (second dose required for entry into grade 7) |
| 11-16 years | Td (tetanus, diphtheria) |

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Schedule of Vaccines Continued:

The Connecticut State physical examination form must accompany updated immunizations. This is a licensing regulation and children must be current in their immunizations in order to attend the program. **Yearly physicals are required until kindergarten.**

Existing law exempts children from school immunization requirements if they have a medical exemption. Pursuant to Section 7 of Public Act 21-6, a Medical Exemption Certificate should be used by healthcare providers submitting a medical exemption for a child or student attending a CT child care program, elementary, middle, high school, or higher education. Medical exemptions must be a part of the child's immunization history. For further information, contact Immunization Program at 860-509-7929.

If a vaccine preventable disease outbreak, to which any under immunized child is susceptible to, occurs at the program, that child will have to remain home until a public health official determines the outbreak danger has ended.

Children aged 6-59 months attending a child daycare center are required to receive at least one dose of influenza vaccine between August 1 and December 31. Children who have not received the flu shot may not attend the Center during Flu season.

The State of Connecticut mandates that physicals are required upon entering Kindergarten and again upon entering 7th grade. The Regional YMCA of Western Connecticut requests copies of physicals if you choose to take your child in between the State mandated schedule.

Any child who has a disability or special health care need, listed by a health care provider on their physical, needs a Plan of Care developed by the child's healthcare provider and parent/guardian. Such plan shall include appropriate care of the child to prevent and respond to a medical or other emergency.

If your child's physical expires the state allows a 30 day grace period to obtain a new physical and submit the form to the office. If the forms are not submitted in 30 days, your child will not be allowed to attend the program and you, the parent/guardian, will still be responsible for the child's weekly tuition.

Health Policy

One of the primary goals of the program is to help to provide for the safety and well-being of each and every child. As a result, the YMCA Children's Center has a comprehensive health policy to address emergencies or illnesses. In addition to staff trained in CPR and First Aid there is a pediatrician on call, as well as, a registered nurse consultant who visits the Centers weekly.

Please remember, the most important factor in considering whether your child is well enough to attend the Children's Center is to think about whether your child is able to participate in all daily activities. **We ask that you conduct a health assessment each day before leaving home. Parents must keep children home if they are sick or have a fever of 100 degrees or greater.**

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For the following reasons, a child may need to be excluded from the program (for 24 hours or longer):

- ❖ Runny nose that produces a thick, persistent discharge.
- ❖ Deep congestion in the chest; labored breathing (i.e.: wheezing not alleviated by medication).
- ❖ Frequent loose bowels or bowel movements that cannot be contained in a diaper or clothing.
- ❖ Temperature of 100 degrees or greater. A child must be fever free without antipyretics (Tylenol/Motrin) for 24 hours prior to returning to the Center unless illness recovery is otherwise specified such as Respiratory Viral Disease (see table). Staff will take a child's temperature whenever they have concerns about the child's health.
- ❖ Eyes that are pink, sore or crusty with a discharge.
- ❖ Rashes of an undiagnosed nature.
- ❖ Vomiting – must be symptom free for 24 hours.
- ❖ Head lice, (Children must be treated and nit free to return) pin worms (children must be treated to return)
- ❖ Sore throat and/or headache
- ❖ **Children or staff who have bloody diarrhea must be reported to the Department of Public Health within 24 hours.**

The Center reserves the right to temporarily deny any child admittance to the Center for reasons of obvious illness or to request early departure should symptoms becomes apparent during the course of the day. This is to ensure the continued good health of everyone at the Center.

When a child becomes ill during the day, we will isolate the child where he/she may rest quietly. Families will be contacted immediately to arrange for the child to go home. If families cannot be reached or are unable/refuse to pick up their child, the emergency contacts will be called. It is expected that students who are ill will be picked up within 30 minutes. Children diagnosed as having a contagious disease must remain at home until all danger of contagion has passed. (see table). Notices will be posted to alert families when there is an illness in the program listing signs and symptoms.

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Please refer to chart below that offers additional guidelines:

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|--|--|
| Chicken Pox or Rash resulting from immunization | Nine days after onset of rash. Blisters must be crusted, dry and flaky. *NOTE FROM PHYSICIAN |
| Strep Throat | On prescription medication for 24 hours. *NOTE FROM PHYSICIAN |
| Vomiting | Symptom free for 24 hours; able to eat and drink normally. |
| Diarrhea (Children with an occurrence of bloody diarrhea must be reported to the DPH within 24 hours) | Normal bowel movement. |
| Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) | On prescription medication for 24 hours. *NOTE FROM PHYSICIAN |
| Fever | Fever-free for 24 hours without an antipyretic. |
| H1N1 or other communicable disease outbreak | Fever free for 24 hours without an antipyretic and symptoms improving for at least 24 hours |
| Covid-19 | School age: If fever free for 24 hours without an antipyretic and symptoms improving for at least 24 hours, may return to program with the additional precaution of masking for the next 5 days. (If proof of a negative test is provided masking for the 5 additional days is not necessary) Preschool: Can return when fever free for 24 hours without an antipyretic and symptoms improving for at least 24 hours PLUS an additional 5 days at home OR when fever free for 24 hours, symptoms improving for at least 24 hours AND proof of a negative Covid test. (must be home a minimum of 5 days not returning before day 6) |
| Thrush | On prescription medication for 24 hours. No visible sores. |
| Head Lice | After treatment with medicated shampoo and all nits are removed. CHILD MUST BE NIT FREE |
| Fifth's Disease | *NOTE FROM PHYSICIAN STATING CHILD CAN RETURN TO DAYCARE. |
| Common Cold | Clear mucus. |
| Coxsackie | *A NOTE FROM A PHYSICIAN IS REQUIRED STATING THE CHILD IS NO LONGER CONTAGIOUS AND MAY RETURN TO THE PROGRAM. |
| | |

***Rashes of undetermined nature-child will be readmitted to the program only with a note from the doctor indicating diagnosis of the skin condition. The note must clearly state that the child is not contagious.**

*Notices will be posted to alert families when there is an illness in the program listing signs and symptoms. If there is an under-immunized child in a classroom and a vaccine-preventable disease (with exception of the flu) occurs in the program, the parent will be advised to keep the child home until danger of contacting the illness has passed.

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***A note from the physician must clearly state the diagnosis and that the child is not contagious.**

Handwashing Procedure

Please reinforce regular handwashing at home with your child. While your child is with us at the Children's Center, we will be adhering to guidance offered by the Office of Early Childhood. Regular handwashing by staff and children with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done:

1. Before coming in contact with any child
2. Before and after eating
3. After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing
4. After using the restroom
5. Before handling food
6. After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
7. After using shared equipment like toys, computer keyboards or a mouse

If soap and water are not available, alcohol based hand sanitizer shall be used. Use of alcohol based hand sanitizer should always be supervised by adults.

Covering Sneezes and Coughs

Children are going to have sneezes and coughs from time to time that will require them to know the best way they should take care of them. This habit needs to be taught just like brushing your teeth. Take the time to remind your child to use tissues for sneezes, throw the tissue away and then wash their hands. Coughing can also be covered using a tissue or by using the corner of your elbow and then handwashing. Children's Center staff will also be reinforcing this healthy habit while they are in our care.

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Medication Policy

In order for your child to take an oral medication at the Center, whether it is a prescription or over-the-counter medication, it is a state licensing regulation that an Administration of Medication form be filled out by both the child's physician and the child's parent. These forms are routinely available in doctor's offices or may be obtained from the Children's Centers' office. Please keep this policy in mind when taking your child to the physician. Per licensing regulations, only a staff person trained in the Administration of Medications will administer the prescribed medication and document on the form when the medication was administered.

- ❖ All non-prescription medication must be labeled with the child's name and dosage.
- ❖ All medications must be in an original container with the original prescription label and a safety cap, if appropriate.
- ❖ Measuring spoons for dispensing medicine must be provided by the parent and labeled with the child's name.
- ❖ Parents should hand medication directly to a staff person for storage upon arrival at the Center. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND THE MEDICINE IN WITH THE CHILD'S BELONGINGS OR PUT IT IN THE CHILD'S LUNCHBOX.**

Prescription Medications dispensed with an authorization form signed by the prescribing doctor and parent include: oral medications, topical medications, inhalant medications and injectable medications in a premeasured, commercially prepared syringe (EpiPen Jr. ®)

Refrigerated medicine is kept in a locked box in the refrigerator and non-refrigerated medicine is kept in a locked box in the office. Any medication labeled as a controlled substance is kept under double lock. Emergency Epi-pens will be kept in child's classroom in an unlocked box on a high shelf for quick accessibility.

It is extremely important if your child uses an inhaler or an Epi-pen that it remains at the YMCA. In case of an emergency, this will ensure the medication is always on site.

The first dosage of any medication, including over-the-counter products (e.g. Tylenol, diaper medication, Anbesol, suntan lotion, cough medicine) must be given at home. Parents may apply insect repellent at home if they wish.

It has been our experience that young children may oftentimes develop a rapidly elevating fever while in our care. If your child does develop a fever you will be called to pick your child up from the Center. It is highly recommended that your child have a fever reducing medication and physician order on hand at the Center for us to administer to help keep your child comfortable until you or an alternate pick up arrives at the Center. All bottles and boxes must be properly labeled and in their original container.

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Insect Repellents

If public health authorities recommend the use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET will be allowed. Parents/Guardians must fill out the Authorization for the Administration of Insect Repellent by Daycare Personnel form, which may be obtained in the office. Staff may apply insect repellent no more than once a day. The repellent must be in a lotion or non-aerosol application method. Insect repellent should be labeled and given to staff with the authorization form (repellent may not be kept with your child's belongings).

Non-Prescription Topical Medication and Sunscreen Policy

In the event your child may need a non-prescription topical medication, written permission by the parent/guardian must be given. Medications may include non-prescription medicated powders, teething medication and sunscreen products. Parents must supply the topical medication in the original container labeled with the child's name along with written permission, and the first application must be applied at home. When skin protection is needed, the sunscreen or sunblock with UVB or UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher must be provided. For Preschool children, NAEYC Accreditation requires that PABA free sunscreen protectants be used. Please be sure the sunscreen is given to a teacher and not stored in your child's backpack.

Allergies/Chronic Disease

1. When a child enters the program with any kind of special disability or healthcare need such as an allergy or chronic disease, as noted by the Dr. on the physical, the head teacher/nurse follows up the health information packet with a telephone call or personal conversation with the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian is required to contact their physician and request that a statement be sent/faxed to the Center, describing the extent of the allergy or chronic disease, extent of precautions necessary, and procedure following an allergic reaction (given genetic tendencies, please inform us of any family allergies or disease complications). This will allow us to better plan in case of emergency. All critical information will be on a form and an order of specific actions to be taken as per the doctor and parents including emergency numbers. If it is determined by the parent and doctor that there is no need for a Plan of Care and/or no medication to be kept at the Y, you will be required to fill out a Plan of Care waiver stating it is not necessary while at daycare. This waiver must be signed by both the doctor and the parent.
2. Staff will be trained in the administration of pre-measured injectable medications as needed.
3. Given the severity of the allergy, when possible, the allergen may be banned from the population; in such a case, a letter will be issued to the families explaining the situation without sharing the child with the allergen's name.
4. Children with life-threatening allergies to insect bites or medication, and those with chronic disease, are identified and their names are posted in the office and

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classroom for immediate verification. Parents must supply the Center with a Plan of Care and medications before the child begins the program. Staff will need to sign off that they have reviewed and understand the individual child's Plan of Care. This is a state regulation.

Medical Emergency Policy

After determining the nature of the illness or injury, the following steps will be followed by our staff:

1. First Aid will be given and appropriate First Aid measures will be followed based on the nature of the emergency. Staffs will be/are trained in CPR/First Aid and Bloodborne Pathogens.
2. Any scrape or cut will be washed with soap and water only. Antiseptic cream, alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide is strictly prohibited.
3. A parent or guardian will be contacted and advised for each injury/incident that involves their child.
4. An accident report will be completed for any injury and be signed by the teacher who witnessed the accident, director or administrative assistant and parents. If a parent refuses to sign the report, a note will be made indicating such and the director should be notified. A copy will be given to the parent and the original will be placed in the nurse's box.
5. In the case of a severe emergency, we are authorized by parent signatures to secure appropriate medical attention, from the child's physician, our consulting pediatrician or dentist. Treatment may need to be provided by EMTs. Should a child's injury necessitate a call to 911 the following should occur:
 - a. The director should immediately be summoned. If a director is not on the premises, a head teacher should be summoned. The administrative assistant calls 911 and director if not present.
 - b. The director/head teacher keeps the child safe and calm and administers any necessary first aid or CPR. The director/head teacher directs a person to call the child's family. The director/head teacher directs a person to get the child's file for the EMTs to use to gather medical and personal information.
 - c. The director/head teacher rides with the child to the hospital and stays with the child until a family member arrives.
 - d. Another classroom will send an extra staff to that classroom if necessary in order to maintain the appropriate ratio. If necessary a substitute will be called.
 - e. The accident report is filled out detailing the accident and the hospital visit. If the accident was caused by an unsafe condition, a report must be made and the problem fixed immediately.

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Arrival Time

While sensitive to the individual needs of children and families, our programs must operate to fully meet the requirements of the Office of Early Childhood, the State Department of Education and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Children learn best and are more comfortable when they follow an established routine. Therefore, each classroom has a well-defined and consistent schedule. It is expected that children enrolled in the program arrive in their classrooms by 9:00 AM each day. When children arrive late in the morning, they miss out on many learning opportunities, making it much more difficult for them to enter into play with others.

We realize that once in a while there may be extenuating circumstances that make it necessary to arrive past 9:00 A.M. for example a doctor or dentist appointment. On those occasions, please be sure to let us know and ensure that your child has had his/her breakfast before arriving to the Center.

Parent Conduct

The Regional YMCA Children's Centers strive to instill four character values through our daily experiences and activities with children – Caring, Respect, Honesty and Responsibility. Children learn by example, therefore it is important to remember that as adults we all have a responsibility to be appropriate role models at all times. Children are also keen observers and watch and imitate the behaviors they see in adults regardless of where they are. In an effort to promote a safe, healthy and positive environment for children and families, the following parent guidelines have been established. **Any of the actions listed below may result in immediate termination of services and/or restriction from entering our building and grounds.**

- ❖ Approaching someone else's child to discipline, threaten or discuss an incident that may have occurred between that child and your child is strictly prohibited. If you have a concern, please bring it to the attention of the child's teacher and he/she will handle it in the appropriate manner.
- ❖ Please speak to YMCA staff and other YMCA families respectfully and in a calm manner at all times. If you have a complaint or concern, we expect that you conduct yourself appropriately and respectfully and give YMCA staff a chance to look into the matter and respond to your concern in a timely fashion.
- ❖ Blatant or repeated disregard for YMCA policies will result in termination of childcare services
- ❖ At no time shall a parent, guardian or adult caretaker:
 - Strike or physically harm or abuse a staff member or anyone on the premises
 - Verbally threaten, harass or intimidate a staff member or anyone on the premises
 - Speak to or treat a staff member or anyone in a manner which is disrespectful or demeaning
 - Be verbally disruptive in the classroom or anywhere on property
 - Sexually harass a staff member, or anyone on the premises
 - Refuse to participate in staff/director requested meetings
 - Refuse to go through proper grievance procedures for allegations or complaints about staff or program

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Family Involvement

The relationship between families and caregivers is a vital part of your child's happiness and ease of transition between home and center. Please talk openly with your child's teacher about any concern, questions, or observations. Our staff strives to communicate with you about every aspect of your child's day, whether it is lunch or a bump or a lost tooth. The same communication from you will provide the information we need to provide the best care for your child.

*We have an open door policy, which means that parents are welcome to drop by anytime they wish. However, we recognize that as busy working parents, this is not always an option for you. Throughout the year, though, teachers have many special events in the classroom, holiday celebrations, special guests, etc. We welcome parents to participate. Children are always so proud to show off their parents. If you wish to offer a special activity in your child's classroom, that too can be accommodated. We ask that you coordinate it with your child's teacher ahead of time to avoid any disruption in the daily schedule.

- ❖ Preschool family/teacher conferences for children will be held three times a year and more frequently at the discretion of the teacher or family. School-age family/teacher conferences will be held as needed.
- ❖ Developmental milestones for toddlers and preschoolers are recorded three times a year and kept on file by the classroom teacher to assist them in the proper planning for each child's developmental needs.
- ❖ The YMCA Children's Center maintains a cooperative relationship with the surrounding school systems. This enables us to make referrals to special programs and to have developmental assessments made available to the families of preschoolers. Referrals will be discussed with families and can only be made with parental consent.
- ❖ A family enrolling a child for the first time is welcomed to spend extra time with their child to make the adjustment comfortable.
- ❖ We welcome any and all family involvement in the program and always encourage families to share any ideas or concerns they may have.
- ❖ A yearly Family Orientation will be held for all age groups. Families are encouraged to volunteer their time through storytelling, cultural exchanges, sharing a special talent, fundraising, helping at parties etc. Your child's teacher will post opportunities regularly.
- ❖ We welcome participation from our families in many special events held throughout the year. These include Family Nights, workshops and other social events. Families will be made aware of opportunities for parenting and education and support activities through flyers, bulletin boards, emails and Facebook. If there is an issue or topic you are particularly interested in please see your program director for further information.

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Family Involvement Continued:

- ❖ Families are encouraged to utilize and partake in our many literacy activities that take place throughout the year. Teachers offer family engaging literacy activities to include guest reader days, library trips, adding a family page to numerous classroom book projects and sharing culturally diverse experiences that you may celebrate in your family with your child's class. Be on the lookout for flyers that are sent out announcing activities, plays and sing-alongs which may be taking place in our community. Also be sure to utilize our lending library, which includes both books and take home family literacy packs.
- ❖ Preschool parents are welcome to join our Preschool Parent Group any time during the year. The intention of the group is to have parents get involved in decision-making, program planning and improvements, special event planning and community involvement. Meetings take place here, at the YMCA Children's Center. Dinner and babysitting are provided at no cost. Please see the preschool director for meeting time and information.

School Readiness Program

The YMCA Children's Center currently has funding through the Connecticut State Department of Education through a School Readiness Grant. The program is available for all families who reside in Danbury and have a child between the ages of three and five who have not yet attended Kindergarten. The Grant has specific guidelines that are strictly adhered to and include the use of the current OEC School Readiness sliding fee scale based on family size and income.

Families who fall into certain income percentages will also be asked to access the Care 4 Kids Program, this is voluntary. All Readiness families are required to submit current federal tax forms to include their W-2's, their child's birth certificate and social security number, a utility bill to prove they are a resident of Danbury and other forms provided by the Center. The child's tuition is reviewed with the family and they are given a tuition calculation form, which the family signs. The tuition is re-determined every eight months after updated documentation is collected, a mandatory submission to remain in the program. The program has both full time and part time options with requirements for each program. Please check with the office for further details. This is a wonderful opportunity for families to afford a quality preschool experience for their child.

**** Families who enroll in the School Readiness Program – Children must attend school on a regular basis, 5 days per week, 7 hours per day, 50 weeks per year for full time and 5 days per week, 2.5 hours per day for a minimum of 180 days per year for the part-time. A child may not be absent more than 10 consecutive days for non-health reasons. *If the child is absent for more than 10 consecutive days they will be dis-enrolled. A child who does not attend on a regular consistent basis, for non-health reasons will be dis-enrolled. If your child is dis-enrolled from the program during the course of the school year, space will not be held for the Fall program and your deposit will be forfeited.***

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Inclusion

The Regional YMCA Children's Center is an ADA compliant organization and believes that inclusion is a beneficial approach to providing educational opportunities to those with and without disabilities. The Center will make reasonable accommodations to support access and participation to all children in our program to the greatest extent possible within budgetary, regulatory or building restrictions that would prohibit making modifications or accommodations to the program.

If it is determined that the Center can put reasonable accommodations in place to meet the individual needs of the child, the following will apply:

- Parents will supply all pertinent information regarding the developmental history, evaluation, diagnosis, IEP'S, goals and needs of the child prior to being enrolled.
- Support service professionals will have full access and cooperation to provide services on-site during regular business hours.
- Permission from parents to staff to communicate with outside providers such as teachers, pediatricians, specialists, therapists, school psychologist etc. must be given in written form.
- New information should be shared regularly.
- For children with special health care needs: Parents, Health Care Provider and Center will work together to develop an individual plan of care. Such a plan will include appropriate care of the child to prevent and respond to a medical or other emergency. The plan shall include health care and service providers, diagnostic information, modifications and accommodations to be provided by the program, provision and use of special equipment, actions to be taken in response to specific behaviors or symptoms, a schedule of support services and emergency procedures.
- The YMCA Children's Center reserves the right to re-examine the effectiveness of the program for the child at any time. If after modifying programming, it is determined that the Center is unable to meet the child's individual needs, the Center will recommend new arrangements for the child. In such cases, families will be given two weeks to find alternate care unless the child is in immediate danger to himself or others.

Confidentiality

In the best interest of the Center and families served, we do not provide information about children or families. All inquiries are referred to the Director of the Center. Contents of each child's health and safety file is confidential but will be immediately available upon request to the child's parents or legal guardians, to administrators and educators, and to regulatory authorities such as the Office of Early Childhood if requested. Under no circumstances will anyone not affiliated with the Center observe a child, or will any information about a child be released without parental consent or court order.

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Confidentiality Policy Continued:

In accordance with **NAEYC** guidelines, "We shall maintain confidentiality and shall respect the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure or confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, it is permissible to share confidential information with agencies, as well as individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest." We will not provide information regarding other families in our program including phone numbers and addresses.

Personal Belongings

All personal items belonging to your child must be labeled for identification.

Please take your child's belongings home daily. All cubbies must be completely emptied each Friday for weekends. Parents should refrain from sending personal belongings in plastic bags; they pose a danger to children.

Toys, digital devices, cell phones etc., are not allowed in the Center unless specified by the teacher. While it is exciting to show friends a new or favorite toy, it is also very hard for a young child to have to share the toy with others.

Toys that represent violence are not permitted. We are not responsible for any lost or damaged items.

Toileting

Rooms for three-and-four-year-olds are not equipped with state regulated diaper-changing facilities. Nevertheless, toilet learning is as individual as learning to walk and should be a positive experience for a child. If your child is not fully toilet trained upon beginning one of the preschool rooms please alert the classroom teacher so a plan that involves both the family and classroom staff can be put in place.

Our staff is trained to recognize the cues that demonstrate a child's readiness for toilet training. When it is decided that your child is ready, we need to work together in the following ways to minimize frustration and maximize success:

- ❖ Have your child wear loose-fitting clothing he or she can manage independently, such as elastic waist pants that are easy to pull up and down. Do not dress your child in overalls or T-shirts with snaps between the legs. Dresses are also not a good idea because the child cannot see to pull down pants.
- ❖ It is best that you supply regular, thin, cotton underpants or training pants. That way, the child is more aware when she or he has had an accident. For the same reason, we don't put children back into diapers at naptime. (A reliable indication

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Toileting Continued:

that your child is physically ready for toilet training is if he/she sleeps through naptime with a dry diaper.)

- ❖ Please bring a bag with at least three to five pairs of extra clothes, including socks, every day! **Label all clothing with the child's name.**
- ❖ Have your child start wearing underwear at home the weekend before the process is started at the Center. A child learns quickly with that consistency. Please communicate often with how toileting practices are progressing at home. By all means, continue the program at home, having the child wear underwear rather than diapers.
- ❖ At the Center, the child will be told, "We are going to the bathroom now" every 30 to 45 minutes the first few weeks as necessary.
- ❖ Unfortunately, because of health regulations, teachers cannot wash out soiled clothes. We will put them in a plastic bag, out of reach of the children, for you to take home and wash.
- ❖ Encourage your child and continue the process at home. Our experience is that positive reinforcement works best and success comes in small steps.

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Meals and Snack Time Guidelines

The Regional YMCA of Western CT believes that everyone has the desire to be well and that well-being is best cultivated by providing supportive relationships and environments. In response to a call by Former First Lady Michelle Obama and the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), the Y has committed to adopting new standards for nutrition and physical activity for the more than 700,000 kids in our early childhood and afterschool programs across the country. At Grassy Plain Children's Center, we provide a welcoming, safe and supportive environment for children and families to become healthier and stay well in spirit, mind, and body. We serve one meal for children here all day, (lunch sent from home) and two snacks sent from home (one if in Part Time Program or Afterschool) Both parents and staff play a role as partners to making mealtimes, cooking projects and snacks nutritious. These steps include a commitment to ensure:

- Children's lunches include fruit or vegetables every day. Please see suggestions to pack.
- Their two snacks sent from home includes a grain or protein option
- Their meal/snacks sent in do not include trans fats, fried foods and sugared sweetened beverages
- water and low-fat milk are served with your child's meal/snack instead of sugar sweetened beverages
- snack foods sent from home that contain added sugar is limited in accordance with HEPA Guidelines

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Breakfast

Although breakfast is not served at our Center, you may wish to bring a nutritious breakfast for your child prior to 9:00 a.m. Please help him/her get settled at a table with his/her food before departing. The following breakfast items are guidelines for you to use.

| <i>List of Acceptable Breakfast Foods</i> | <i>Unacceptable Breakfast Foods</i> |
|--|--|
| Fresh, dried or canned fruits including no sugar added, natural applesauce | Beverages with caffeine such as coffee, soda, sweet tea |
| Low Sugar, Whole Grain Cereal and Milk | Sugar containing bakery products such as donuts, munchkins, fried dough, cookies, pastries, cake and muffins |
| Egg and/or Cheese Sandwich | Sugar Sweetened Cereals containing more than 10 grams of sugar per serving |
| Cream Cheese and Jelly sandwich | Pop Tarts |
| Yogurt (Add Cheerios for crunch) | Gatorade or Sports Drinks |
| Whole Wheat Mini bagels or rice cakes | Sugar Sweetened beverages, juices and Pro-Biotic drinks and vials |
| Whole Wheat Tortillas with filling | Fruit snacks and fruit leather roll ups, or other fruit chews or synthetic fruit |
| English Muffin | Fried Foods |
| Cheese sticks – Polly-o or Baby Bell | |
| Lean meats, i.e. turkey rolled up | |
| Oatmeal | |
| Whole wheat toaster waffles | |
| Whole Wheat Raisin Bread, Strawberry Banana Bread | |
| Mini Quiche or frittata in muffin pans | |
| Whole grain muffins | |

Lunch and Snack

Two snacks daily and Lunch will be sent in from home each day. We will provide milk or water. Reminder we are a nut free program.

Lunchtime is an important part of a child's day. It is not only a time to teach and reinforce good nutritional habits and role modeling healthy eating behaviors, but also an opportunity for a child to develop self-help skills. All health organizations are encouraging

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children to consume more fruits and vegetables. Lunch time is a great time to send in these foods for your child. If other children in the classroom are eating fruits and vegetables even picky eaters will eventually give healthy foods a try if they see their friends eating them

At Meals and Snack Time:

- 1% milk is served to children
- Clean sanitary water is offered to children on a daily basis, available and accessible at all times.
- Sugar sweetened beverages are never served to children. 100% fruit juice, if sent from home, is served and limited to no more than 4 oz. per child on a daily basis.
- Children with allergies to a specific food are documented and posted in each room as well as the office for protection from the said food item.
- No child is left unattended during meal times.
- We ask parents to cut food into pieces no larger than ½ inch squares for preschool children, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capabilities.

Important: All food which is brought from home should be delivered in sealed containers. If commercially prepared, it should be packaged and sealed, in a lunch box with the child's name on it. Glass containers should NOT be sent in your child's lunchbox. Containers should be easy to open to enable a child to be self-sufficient at lunchtime. Please do not send fried foods or foods high in saturated and trans-fats and sugar, including sugar sweetened beverages.

Homemade meals should be cooked through at home; staff will reheat on a paper plate using the microwave. What else is lunch? You can think beyond the sandwich. Consider dinner leftovers, or whole wheat pasta mixed with tuna and/or vegetables, or wraps with rice, beans, cheese, meat, and veggies of all kinds.

Preschool children are not offered the foods listed below:

- Hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds (please slice lengthwise twice than cut in individual pieces)
- Whole grapes (grapes must be seedless cut into small pieces)
- Popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, chunks of raw carrots
- Meat larger than what can be swallowed whole is not served (please cut in small pieces).

Snack time and meal time should be a pleasant experience for children. Staff will sit with children while they eat and model appropriate conversation and manners. Food will not be forced on children nor shall children be rewarded or punished for the amount of food they eat. Food will never be withheld from a child under any circumstances. Clean, sanitary water will be offered and available to children throughout the day.

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Birthday Parties and Celebrations

Children enjoy treating their friends to a special snack for birthdays and other special occasions. Food that comes from home for sharing must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared foods in factory-sealed containers, the ingredient label is required (NAEYC). Keeping in mind the health and welfare of the children, we ask that only healthy alternatives be offered for birthdays, holidays or special occasions at the Y. Ideas such as whole grain mini muffins, whole fruit bars, whole fruit, even stickers or a book or puzzle for the classroom in honor of your child is appreciated.

Please be sure to discuss specific plans with your child's teacher in advance of the celebration.

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10 Tips to Make Celebrations Fun, Healthy and Active

Eating healthy and being physically active can be a fun part of parties and events. Great gatherings are easy to have when tasty, healthy foods from all the food groups are offered in a fun, active environment. Above all, focus on enjoying friends and family.

1 Make healthy habits part of your celebrations

Although food and beverages are a part of many events, they do not have to be the center of the occasion. Focus on activities that get people moving and allow people to enjoy each other's company.

2 Make foods look festive

Add a few eye-catching vegetables to a favorite dish or a new recipe. Add a sprinkle of herbs or spices to make the dish pop. Cut foods into interesting shapes.

3 Offer thirst quenchers that please

Make fun ice cubes from 100% juice or add slices of fruit to make water more exciting.

4 Savor the flavor

Take time to pay attention to the taste of each bite of food. Make small, healthy changes to your recipes or try dishes from another culture to liven things up.

5 Let MyPlate be your guide

Offer whole-grain crackers, serve a spicy bean dip and a veggie tray, make fruit kabobs, layer yogurt and fruit to create a sweet parfait. Use whole-grain pasta or brown rice and veggies to make a savory, healthy salad.

6 Make physical activity part of every event

Being physically active makes everyone feel good. Dancing, moving, and playing active games add fun to any gathering.

7 Try out some healthier recipes

Find ways to cut back on added sugars, salt, and saturated fat as you prepare your favorite recipes. Try out some of the recipes on [WhatsCooking.fns.usda.gov](https://www.ams.usda.gov/whatscooking).

8 Keep it simple

Have others participate by contributing a healthy prepared dish, helping with the cleanup, or keeping the kids active.

9 Shop smart to eat smart

Save money by offering foods that fit your budget. Buy in-season produce when it costs less and tastes better. Plan in advance and buy foods on sale.

10 Be a cheerleader for healthy habits

It's never too early for adults to set an example. Keep in mind that children follow what the adults around them do—even at parties.

DG TipSheet No. 20 June 2012 Revised October 2016 Go to [ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov) for more information. Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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MyPlate MyWinsChoose MyPlate

Use MyPlate to build your healthy eating style and maintain it for a lifetime. Choose foods and beverages from each MyPlate food group. Make sure your choices are limited in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars. Start with small changes to make healthier choices you can enjoy.

1 Find your healthy eating style

Creating a healthy style means regularly eating a variety of foods to get the nutrients and calories you need. MyPlate's tips help you create your own healthy eating solutions—"MyWins."

2 Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Eating colorful fruits and vegetables is important because they provide vitamins and minerals and most are low in calories.

3 Focus on whole fruits

Choose whole fruits—fresh, frozen, dried, or canned in 100% juice. Enjoy fruit with meals, as snacks, or as a dessert.

4 Vary your veggies

Try adding fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables to salads, sides, and main dishes. Choose a variety of colorful vegetables prepared in healthful ways: steamed, sauteed, roasted, or raw.

5 Make half your grains whole grains

Look for whole grains listed first or second on the ingredients list—try oatmeal, popcorn, whole-grain bread, and brown rice. Limit grain-based desserts and snacks, such as cakes, cookies, and pastries.

6 Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt

Choose low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, and soy beverages (soymilk) to cut back on saturated fat. Replace sour cream, cream, and regular cheese with low-fat yogurt, milk, and cheese.

7 Vary your protein routine

Mix up your protein foods to include seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs, and lean meats and poultry. Try main dishes made with beans or seafood like tuna salad or bean chili.

8 Drink and eat beverages and food with less sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars

Use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list to limit items high in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars. Choose vegetable oils instead of butter, and oil-based sauces and dips instead of ones with butter, cream, or cheese.

9 Drink water instead of sugary drinks

Water is calorie-free. Non-diet soda, energy or sports drinks, and other sugar-sweetened drinks contain a lot of calories from added sugars and have few nutrients.

10 Everything you eat and drink matters

The right mix of foods can help you be healthier now and into the future. Turn small changes into your "MyPlate, MyWins."

Go to [ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov) for more information.

DG TipSheet No. 1 June 2011 Revised October 2016

United States Department of AgricultureCenter for Nutrition Policy and PromotionUSDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.Dairy Fruits Grains Limit Protein Vegetables

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The YMCA's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards for Early Learning and Afterschool Programs

| Standard | Early Learning | Out-of-School-Time |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Parent Engagement | Engage parents/care givers using informational materials and/or activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity a minimum of once a quarter (four times per year). | Engage parents/care givers using informational materials and/or activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity a minimum of once a quarter while in session (three times per year). |
| Physical Activity | <p>Provide opportunities for moderate and vigorous physical activity, outdoors when weather permits, for at least 60 minutes per day while children are in care for a full-day program and 30 minutes for half-day day program (morning and afternoon programs are each considered half-day programs). This time can be broken down into smaller increments. Include a mixture of moderate and vigorous activity (that increase heart rate and make you breathe hard), as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities.</p> <p>Active play will take place outdoors whenever possible.</p> <p>For infants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide daily opportunities for infants to move freely under adult supervision to explore their indoor and outdoor environments; • Engage with infants on the ground each day to optimize adult-infant interactions; • Provide daily “tummy time” (time in the prone position) for infants less than six months of age. <p>Y staff will model active living related to physical activity by participating in physical activities with the children.</p> | <p>Provide opportunities for moderate and vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day while children are in care for a full-day program and 30 minutes for half-day day program (morning and afternoon programs are each considered half-day programs). This time can be broken down into smaller increments. Include a mixture of moderate and vigorous activity (that increase heart rate and make you breathe hard), as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities.</p> <p>Active play will take place outdoors whenever possible.</p> <p>Y staff will model active living related to physical activity by participating in physical activities with the children.</p> |
| Screen Time | Eliminate screen time (television, cell phone or digital device) for children under two years old. For children over two, screen time (television, movies, cell phone, video games, computer or other digital device) is limited to less than 30 minutes per day for children in half day programs or less than one hour per day for those in full day programs. When screen time is offered, it must not include marketing of unhealthy foods. | Screen time (television, movies, cell phone, video games, computer or other digital device) is limited to less than 30 minutes per day for children in half day programs or less than one hour per day for those in full day programs. When screen time is offered, it must not include marketing of unhealthy foods. |

YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025

| Standard | Early Learning | Out-of-School-Time |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Food | <p>Children serve themselves (“family style”) all food and beverages from common bowls and pitchers with limited help. Staff sit with children during snack and meals time.</p> <p>Provide fruits or vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried or canned in its own juice) at every meal and snack.</p> <p>Do not provide any fried foods or foods which contain trans-fat (listed as partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list). Fried foods include items like potato and corn chips in addition to foods that are pre-fried and reheated (e.g., pre-fried French fries that are then baked, chicken patties/tenders/nuggets, tater tots, etc.).</p> <p>When providing grains, all grain foods are whole grains, determined by the first word listed in the ingredient listed contains the word “whole” (e.g., whole wheat, whole oats, whole-grain flour, whole brown rice).</p> <p>Provide foods free of sugar as one of the first three ingredients (e.g., sugar, invert sugar, brown sugar, words ending in “ose,” syrups such as high fructose corn syrup, honey, etc.) or no more than 8 grams of added sugar per serving.</p> <p>Y staff will model healthy eating behaviors at all times. This includes consuming the same foods and beverages as children during meal and snack times (if possible), and avoiding consumption of foods or beverages during program time that are inconsistent with the HEPA standards.</p> | <p>Children serve themselves (“family style”) all food and beverages from common bowls and pitchers with limited help. Staff sit with children during snack and meals time.</p> <p>Provide fruits or vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried or canned in its own juice) at every meal and snack.</p> <p>Do not provide any fried foods or foods which contain trans-fat (listed as partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list). Fried foods include items like potato and corn chips in addition to foods that are pre-fried and reheated (e.g., pre- fried French fries that are then baked, chicken patties/tenders/nuggets, tater tots, etc.).</p> <p>When providing grains, all grain foods are whole grains, determined by the first word listed in the ingredient listed contains the word “whole” (e.g., whole wheat, whole oats, whole-grain flour, whole brown rice).</p> <p>Provide foods free of sugar as one of the first three ingredients (e.g., sugar, invert sugar, brown sugar, words ending in “ose,” syrups such as high fructose corn syrup, honey, etc.) or no more than 8 grams of added sugar per serving.</p> <p>Y staff will model healthy eating behaviors at all times. This includes consuming the same foods and beverages as children during meal and snack times (if possible), and avoiding consumption of foods or beverages during program time that are inconsistent with the HEPA standards.</p> |
| Beverages | <p>Water is accessible and available to children at all times, including at the table during snack and meal times.</p> <p>Provide only water and unflavored low (1%) or nonfat milk (for children two or older) family style.</p> | <p>Water is accessible and available to children at all times, including at the table during snack and meal times.</p> <p>Provide only water and unflavored low (1%) or nonfat milk (for children two or older) family style.</p> |
| Infant Feeding | <p>Adults who work with infants and their families should promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continuation of breastfeeding in conjunction with complementary foods for 1 year or more.</p> | |

These standards, when implemented fully through the Y, will be the basis on which the Y’s commitment to being one of the largest and healthiest providers of early care and education and afterschool programming in the nation is recognized.

**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
FAMILY HANDBOOK
2024-2025**

Physical Activity and Time Spent Outdoors

The YMCA Children's Center provides children with daily opportunities for moderate and vigorous physical activity, outdoors weather permitting, for at least 30 minutes per day for half day programs and 60 minutes per day for full day programs. Weather permitting, as much time will be spent outdoors as possible. Please make sure your child comes to school with weather appropriate gear every day.

Children in our preschool and School Readiness programs, in addition to playground time on age appropriate equipment, we have designated time in the classroom for free play. We offer gross motor programming and encourage children to move through music and dance. Ask your child's teacher for detailed information on the scheduling of physical activity and free play time.

In our After-School program, students spend time daily indoors/outdoors in moderate to vigorous play that increases heart rate, requires harder breathing and promotes bone and muscle strengthening. Examples include: dancing, relay races, basketball, jump rope, hopscotch, jogging, walking and playing on playground equipment.

During the Spring, Summer and Fall children at our Center will have opportunities to participate in our multi-bed outdoor garden. Garden activities change with the seasons from ground preparations, planting, weeding and harvesting.

Rest Time

As kids grow and develop, naps give their bodies and minds time to rest and recharge. A rest period is offered daily in preschool and usually by the time the children finish lunch and settle down on their cot, ends up being on average about 90 minutes. Teachers play soft music to create a restful environment and children are encouraged to sleep or rest quietly. Quiet activities are available for children who do not sleep or do not sleep for a long time.

1. Preschool children will have a regularly scheduled rest period after lunch each day as required by the CT Office of Early Childhood.
2. Families must supply a crib sheet, blanket and small pillow for naptime. A non-plastic zipped bag for storage is also required. Please be sure your child's bedding, a crib sheet and small blanket, fit easily in the bag. Please be sure the bedding is labeled with your child's name. This practice needs to be followed to keep bedding sanitary and is a regulation of the CT Office of Early Childhood.
3. Bedding is taken home each weekend to be washed.
4. A soft toy from home may be brought in as well. These articles must be contained in a non-plastic zipped bag or backpack and taken home weekly for washing.

YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025

Quiet and Homework Time

For school-age children, the program provides opportunity for rest when their energy is temporarily spent. Places to rest are easy to find and comfortable furniture is available to relax on. Opportunities for homework are provided. Families should communicate with the staff over any homework concerns.

Digital Devices and Screen Time

Our Preschool and After-School programs encourage children to be social and to work on relationship building. Relationship building cannot be done by permitting children to use electronics and digital devices such as video games, tablets, ear phones, cell phones. We ask that these remain off and put away during all of our program time together.

For preschoolers, screen time including computer and all digital device usage is limited to less than 30 minutes per day for part-time classrooms and to less than one hour per day for full day programs. All computer and digital device use is for curriculum related instruction and a timer should be used to monitor usage. Preschool children are not permitted a television in the classroom.

School-Age children in Before and After-school programs have limited access to computer and digital device use totaling 30 minutes per day during the half day program and 60 minutes per day during the full day program such as days off from school or Summer Club. Digital device use, including school tablets are limited to homework or programs that actively engage students in educational learning or physical activity.

Dress

Preschool children should wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing that is suitable for play (indoors and out). Elastic waists and clothing with simple openings help children build confidence in their self-help skills. This is particularly important for those children being toilet trained.

For playground time:

For safety sake, rubber-soled shoes on the playground are a must. No sandals please. The children are also outdoors during winter months so *snow pants, gloves, hat and boots are essential*. Helmets provided from home are mandatory for sledding.

Summer:

Please send in a bathing suit, towel and water-shoes daily during the summer for impromptu sprinkler time!

YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025

Field Trip Policy

The purpose of taking children on a field trip is to extend their classroom curriculum and educational interests. Parents may be asked to chaperone; however, siblings may not attend these field trips, as the parent will be a supervisor of an assigned group.

Parents must sign a permission slip for their child to join a field trip. Verbal communication is not acceptable. Head teachers and staff will provide details of the trip.

Children are transported by YMCA buses and sometimes contracted school buses to and from their destinations. A field trip information sheet and safety checklist is provided to the teachers prior to their departure. Copies of necessary information are provided to the office, which includes roster of children participating, and directions to their destination.

Attendance Procedures

Families must sign children in and out on attendance sheets located in each classroom documenting the time and name of person picking up. This verifies your child's attendance and helps to account for all children.

If your child is going to be absent for the day or any part thereof, please notify the administrative assistant in the office.

Release of Children

Children may only be released to persons authorized on the emergency form. Staff has copies of this form on hand for quick reference. Please submit additional emergency contacts to help cover the days when unforeseen circumstances arise. Extra forms are available in the office or in the kiosk outside the main office with room for changes or additions to emergency information. Please note that emergency contacts should be **no longer than 30-minute drive to The YMCA Children's Center.**

In order for us to allow an unauthorized person to pick up your child, we will need written permission. A fax or email will be permitted; **phone calls will not!**

Authorized persons should bring in a valid picture ID with them when picking the child up.

If a person is restricted from access to a child, state licensing regulations require that we have on file a current copy of the court order documenting that restriction. Any restricted persons should be identified to staff. Pictures are helpful.

The YMCA does not recommend, condone or take responsibility for any private baby-sitting arrangements made with staff.

**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
FAMILY HANDBOOK
2024-2025**

Intoxicated Adult

Parents or persons authorized to pick children up from the YMCA Children Centers are not allowed to enter the building if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If a parent or authorized persons picking up children from the YMCA Children's Centers behavior indicates or there is suspicion that the person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the police will be called.

As mandated reporters, we are bound by law to call the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF) and make a report.

Every attempt will be made to contact an emergency contact to pick up the children.

Closing Hour Policy

Hours are 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Families must pick up their child and their belongings and be out of the building by 5:30 p.m. We recommend arriving 15 minutes early to allow time to gather your child's belongings and exit the building.

Exiting the building after closing time, will result in a late fee of \$50 per 15 minutes or any part thereof.

ALL late fees charged to families are to be handled by the accounting department. DO NOT OFFER a "cash tip" to the staff; they are not permitted to accept it. Late fees will be reflected on your child care account.

Continued disregard of the YMCA closing policy will result in termination of services.

Policy after closure

At closing time, if the parents/guardians have not contacted the Children's Center, staff will attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If unable to reach the parents/guardians staff will call the child's emergency contacts to pick up the child.

If no one can be reached, staff will notify the program director. The local police will be called to pick up the child and take him/her to the police station. A note informing the parents of the child's whereabouts will be left where the parents can see it.

The Department of Children and Family Services may be notified.

YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025

Parking Lot Safety Guidelines

We understand that drop off and pick up times are often rushed, but for the sake of every child at the Children's Centers, we must all abide by a few rules:

- ♦ As you pull into our parking lot, please stop at the stop sign and wait there until all children have left the parking lot, either to enter the building or the playground.
- ♦ As you exit the driveway, please be sure to stop at the stop sign and look for any pedestrians who may be walking on the sidewalk, before exiting out onto traffic.
- ♦ Please remember to bring your younger children into the building with you. **KNOWINGLY LEAVING CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF TWELVE ALONE IN A PLACE OF PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION OR IN A MOTOR VEHICLE IS UNSAFE AND AGAINST THE LAW!**
- ♦ REMEMBER TO TURN OFF YOUR CAR AND TAKE YOUR KEYS WITH YOU! PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE VEHICLES IDLING UNATTENDED IN THE PARKING LOT.
- ♦ **Please remember the law requires that all children should use either a car seat, booster seat or a seat belt, as their age and/or weight/height requires.**
- ♦ **DO NOT** use the **FIRE LANE** or in front of the playground gate as a parking space. This is not only unsafe, but against the law. Only vehicles with the proper handicapped permits may park in the marked handicapped space.
- ♦ We are aware that finding a parking space can sometimes be a challenge, especially at pick up and drop off times. We realize that everyone is on a schedule and this can be frustrating; however, it is expected that you remain patient, calm and courteous to other YMCA families and staff.
- ♦ We also ask that you exercise extreme caution when pulling in and out of the parking lot, observing all stop signs, speed bumps, crosswalks and barriers. Be cognizant that there may be children and families walking to their car as you back up or pull away.
- ♦ If you have a concern or would like to report a parking lot incident, please see your Center director.

BUILDING SAFETY GUIDELINES

Please help us to ensure the building is secure at all times:

- ♦ Please do not share the building access code with anyone.
- ♦ If you do not recognize a person as you are entering the building, avoid letting them in the building without accessing the code themselves.
- ♦ Please alert us or call 9-1-1 immediately if necessary, if you see or hear something that may compromise the safety of our children, families or staff
- ♦ Please direct visitors to the main office for assistance.

YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025

Connecticut Child Passenger Safety Law Requirements

Effective 10/1/2017

Child's age (years)

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 0-29 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30-39 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 40-49 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 50-59 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 60-69 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 70-79 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 80-89 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 90-99 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 100-109 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 110-119 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 120+ | | | | | | | | | | | |

Child's weight (pounds)

| 0-29 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 30-39 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 40-49 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 50-59 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 60-69 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 70-79 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 80-89 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 90-99 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 100-109 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 110-119 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 120+ | | | | | | | | | | | |

- Rear-facing
- Rear-facing or forward-facing w/harness
- Rear-facing, forward-facing w/harness, or booster seat
- Forward-facing w/harness
- Forward-facing w/harness or booster seat
- Booster seat
- Seat belt only, forward-facing w/harness or booster seat
- Seat belt only or booster seat
- Seat belt only
- No appropriate seat available for this age/weight combination

© The Car Seat Nerd

Important: These are legal minimums ONLY! Always follow best practices. Consult a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician to learn what type of seat is safest for your child.
Updated 7/13/17 (v2)

**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
FAMILY HANDBOOK
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WEATHER EMERGENCY POLICY

In order to give more time for staff and families to arrive safely in the event of inclement weather, the Center will open as follows:

Should the Bethel Public Schools report a delayed opening or closure, the Center will open at 8:30 a.m. Schools usually announce their closures and delays on local radio stations or the district website so please check the status of Bethel Schools to determine if they are delayed or closed so you know whether we will be opening at 8:30. There may be times in severe weather cases, where the Children's Center will open later than 8:30 or close entirely. Please check the Regional YMCA Children's Center Facebook page for updates and changes to our operating schedule. If the weather event is significant enough to warrant a YMCA closure, it will be posted on our Facebook page and an email will be sent.

Should weather problems occur during the course of the day, we may institute an early closing. As best as we can that decision will be made by noontime with the approval of the YMCA President. Parents will be notified via a personal phone call, email and a Facebook Post. Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff will remain until all children are picked up.

In the event of other serious weather emergencies, staff and children will remain indoors away from windows and doors. First Aid Staff will be on hand to administer first aid as needed, until emergency personnel can arrive. Parents will be notified after the immediate danger has passed.

In the event we need to vacate the facility, we will use the YMCA buses, and if needed, the First Student Bus Company will be called to assist with transportation to the Bethel Municipal Center at 1 School Street, Bethel. All parents will be notified as to the situation and given directions.

One or more of the following will be used to announce the weather closings:

Weather Emergency Closing
YMCA Email Blast
Website: Regionallymca.org
Phone: Call 203-744-4890 – Listen to Automated Message
Regional Y Facebook Pages

Part-Time School Readiness Participants only:

When Bethel Public Schools are closed for inclement weather, the Grassy Plain Part Time School Readiness Program will not open. Should the Bethel Public Schools report a delayed opening; part time will begin at its usual time.

YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025

Conflict Resolution

We hold the relationship between our staff and families in the highest regard and regular two way communication is key when maintaining positive relationships. At times differences may arise and through our model of communication, "Listen First", staff utilize tools and techniques to ensure our families feel heard and an understanding is reached. Examples include: Active listening, repeating back what they hear to ensure clear understanding, asking open ended questions with an empathetic attitude, offering feedback on the situation to clarify or clear up misunderstandings and the development of an action plan going forward. If the issue can't be resolved through this process, the director will take over the situation and work with the family to reach a resolution.

COMMUNICATION

Should a problem arise that cannot best be handled directly by your Head Teacher; the following people should be contacted for assistance in the order in which they are listed. Likewise compliments may also be directed this way.

YMCA Children's Center Staff

Michele Burbage-Halberg
Preschool/Branch Director
203.744.4890 x116
mburbage@regionalymca.org

Debbie D'Ostilio
School-Age/ Summer Club
203.744.4890 x109
ddostilio@regionalymca.org

Gail Null
Regional YMCA of Western CT. /VP of Operations
203.775.4444 x 119
gnull@regionalymca.org

Laura Vasile
Bethel Health Department Director
203.748.4536

CT OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD/ DIVISION OF LICENSING
1.800.282.6063 OR 1.860.500.4450

**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
FAMILY HANDBOOK
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Fire /Emergency/Evacuation Policy

In the event of an emergency evacuation:

The YMCA Children's Center has a fire and security system. In the event of a fire or the need to evacuate the building, the fire department will be notified immediately. Staff will alert everyone by using the pull stations. Children will line up at the classroom door and a headcount will be taken. If time allows in the cold weather, teacher will take children's coats. Staff and children will exit their classrooms by following the exit procedures posted in each room and proceed to either the playground or grassy area in front of the building as directed. Staff will assist any children with a disability or chronic condition to ensure they can exit quickly and safely.

Classroom staff will take the clipboards and the emergency cell phone with them and a headcount will be taken.

Staff will check each room and bathroom to ensure that all children have been evacuated.

Office staff will assist in the evacuation effort.

In extenuating circumstances or in the event of a prolonged evacuation YMCA buses will transport children and staff to the Bethel Municipal Center located at 1 School Street, Bethel. The First Student Bus Company will be called to assist in transportation as needed.

Emergency Closing

YMCA Email Blast

Phone: Call 203-744-4890 – Listen to Automated Message

Regional Y Facebook Pages

All parents will be notified via phone as to the situation and given directions to the Bethel Municipal Center located at 1 School Street, Bethel.

If further evacuation information is needed, parents can call the Greenknoll YMCA at 203-775-4444, the YMCA Corporate Office at 203-740-3432, the YMCA Children's Center emergency cell phone at 203-994-3067 or First Student Bus Co. at 203-748-8091.

YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025

School Age Transportation

The YMCA Children's Center offers YMCA bus transportation services to some Danbury schools in the morning and at the end of the day. PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR AVAILABILITY BEFORE ENROLLING YOUR CHILD.

Children attending Bethel Public schools are transported by the public school bus system to and from our facilities.

For the YMCA bus transportation program to run effectively and safely, it is your responsibility to:

1. Have your child here before the designated time for departure to his/her school.
2. Call if your child will not need YMCA bus transportation on a particular day. Repeated failure to call may result in termination of transportation services. When a child is not at his/her designated school for pickup and we have not been contacted it poses a safety issue if staff have to determine the child's whereabouts. The bus may well be late in arriving at their next pickup destination.

Children's Center Staff

Regional YMCA Children's Centers strive to recruit and retain qualified professionals who are committed to creating a nurturing environment for your children. All of our staff attends a yearly quota of training hours, as required by the Office of Early Childhood. Research indicates that teachers who continue their education through field related workshops and college courses raise program quality. The Regional Y supports staff as they further their education by both providing and giving access to learning experiences.

The educational backgrounds of our staff include Masters, Bachelors, and Associate Degrees, Child Development Associate Certifications, and enrolled students in a variety of Early Childhood programs.

Additional Resources

Our programs make use of outside resources whenever possible:

- ♦ Our childcare program has professionals contracted for consultations in the following areas: Public Health, Pediatric Medicine, Pediatric Dental Care and Social Services.
- ♦ Field trips are an integral part of our curriculum. A comprehensive field trip policy is included in all staff training and is available for your review.

**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
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TUITION/FEE INFORMATION

**TUITION IS DUE WEEKLY REGARDLESS OF A CHILD'S
ATTENDANCE AND FACILITY CLOSINGS**

1. It is understood that tuition will be charged according to the number of hours (days for School-Age children) for which the families have contracted. The Preschool program is a yearly tuition, split into 52 weekly payments. Families are responsible for tuition as described once the child is registered, regardless of facility closures or absences due to vacation, illness and expulsion due to lack of payment or behavior.
2. Tuition is charged on a weekly basis the Friday **PRECEDING** your child's attendance. Accounts will be set on auto pay at registration. We do not accept checks/cash.
3. **All accounts must be kept at a zero balance or childcare services will be suspended.** If services are suspended you will be financially responsible for your child's tuition during the time your child is asked not to attend (this includes suspension of services for expired physicals, immunizations and flu vaccine and behavior issues where applicable). Your account will need to be at a zero balance in order for childcare services to resume. Mastercard, Visa, American Express and Discover credit card payments are accepted.
4. There will be a 10% discount on tuition for additional siblings (based on the lower fee). **This does not apply to scholarship, Care 4 Kids or School Readiness recipients.**

The YMCA Children's Center is closed for only a few holiday observances and occasional inclement weather. These days are factored into the tuition yearly; the weekly rates are constant. The YMCA is also closed for a week long facility maintenance shutdown in August. Families are not charged for this week.

5. In order for us to change your child's schedule we ask that you first verify the availability of space with the Administrative Assistant or Director and put it in writing.
6. TEMPORARY schedule changes are subject to space availability (which MUST be confirmed with the office, not the child's classroom teacher) and will be billed after the fact.
7. **PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL READINESS NOTICE: If you withdraw your child for the summer or you withdraw your child during the course of the year, space will not be held for the upcoming Fall program.**

**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
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8. **For families enrolled in the School Readiness Program:** Children must attend school on a regular basis, 5 days per week, 7 hours per day, 50 weeks per year for full-time and 5 days per week, 2.5 hours per day for a minimum of 180 days per year for part-time. A child may not be absent more than 10 consecutive days for non-health reasons. If the child is absent more than 10 consecutive days they will be dis-enrolled. A child who does not attend on a regular consistent basis, for non-health reasons will be dis-enrolled. If your child is dis-enrolled from the program during the course of the school year, space will not be held for the upcoming Fall program and your deposit will be forfeited.
9. **For families whose tuition is based on an hourly rate:** Dropping off your child earlier than or picking up your child after the contracted hours will be calculated at \$10 per half-hour or any part thereof.

After closing, any child not picked up will be charged a late fee of \$50 per 15 minutes.

Please note: Repeated instances of not picking up your child by closing time. will result in termination of services.

10. All scholarship funds are awarded prior to the start of Summer and Fall programs and again in January. Scholarship funds are not guaranteed and may be subject to change at any time. Please contact the director of your child's program for more information.
11. Changes in fees, policies, procedures and/or programs may be instituted any time the organization feels warranted.

FEES DUE UPON ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Fee: A yearly non-refundable enrollment fee of \$40 is due at the time of registration.

Deposit: A *one-time deposit is due for all children at the time of enrollment. When a two-week, written notice of withdrawal is given, the deposit will be applied against your childcare balance. Anyone who does not follow this policy will forfeit their deposit.

Deposit:

School Age: \$300
Full Time Preschool: \$300
Full Time School Readiness: \$125
Part Time School Readiness: \$90
Part Time Preschool \$180

*****Please note: If you withdraw your child before his/her first day at the center, the deposit is non-refundable.**

**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
FAMILY HANDBOOK
2024-2025**

PROVISIONAL ENROLLMENT

The first 30 days will be regarded as a trial period, in which case either party may terminate the contract. It is expected that the Center will be notified via phone call and/or in writing that the child will no longer attend the program. After the provisional enrollment period expires a two-week written notice is required as stated in the withdrawal policy below.

TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

Families may terminate this contract by giving a two-week, written notification of withdrawal. Without this written notice, the deposit will be forfeited unless it is within the first 30 days. Earlier notice of withdrawal, if known, would be greatly appreciated.

The Center reserves the right to re-evaluate any child's/family's continued participation in the program when there are needs which cannot best be met by the Center or may be detrimental to the health or progress of the other children/families. The Center may request withdrawal. In this case, any legal cost incurred from the dismissal of a child from the program would be the responsibility of the family.

Unless the child is an immediate danger to himself or others, a two-week, written notice of withdrawal will be given, should the Center request the withdrawal of the child. (Please refer to the Family Handbook, Discipline, Abuse and Neglect section.)

If you have any questions regarding these policies, please contact the Director of the program that your child attends.

**YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER
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2024 – 2025 Nursery School/Preschool Rates

FULL TIME WEEKLY RATES

| | |
|-----------|-------|
| Preschool | \$262 |
|-----------|-------|

Families will register for a FULL YEAR program (August 2024 through August 2025). Any child that withdraws from the program will no longer have a space held for the following school year.

Tuition is a yearly rate, charged on a weekly basis and is **due in advance**. Payments will be automatically charged on the Friday PRECEDING your child's attendance.

PART TIME RATES

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Preschool (Late August– mid June) | \$90 a week |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|

School Readiness Tuition is figured on family size and gross income in accordance with the State Department of Education Sliding Fee Scale. The School Readiness grant is offered to Danbury Residents first, in accordance with School Readiness regulation and tuition is re-evaluated twice a year. Full Time School Readiness is a year round program, Part Time School Readiness runs on a school calendar from late late Aug. – June. Both programs require children to attend five days per week.

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2024-2025 School-Age Rates

SCHOOL AGE WEEKLY RATES:

| | Bethel Students | Danbury Students: includes cost of transportation |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--|
| ○ Before School Only | \$108 | \$115 |
| ○ After School Only | \$151 | \$158 |
| ○ Before and After School | \$179 | \$186 |

**SCHOOL AGE DAILY RATES:
(Two day/week minimum pending space)**

| | Bethel Students | Danbury Students- includes transportation | # days | Total tuition | PLEASE CIRCLE DAYS ATTENDING |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--|---------------|----------------------|--|
| ○ Before School Only | \$27/day | \$27/day | | | Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday |
| ○ After School Only | \$42/day | \$44/day | | | Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday |
| ○ Before and After School | \$52/day | \$54/day | | | Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday |

- 1. All Weekly rates are flat rates. If you choose not to come your full weekly tuition is still due. For Before School participants, days off due to the weather, one day school holidays and two hour delays are included in the tuition. For Afterschool participants, early dismissals, one day school holidays and days off from school due to weather are included in the tuition rate.**
- 2. Daily rates are flat rates and include one day school holidays, days off from school due to weather, two hour delays for Before School only participants and early dismissals only if it occurs on the days you are registered for. Days may not be switched.**
- 3. There are only a certain number of slots in each classroom allocated for Part Time. Part Time slots will be granted on a first come-first served basis.**
- 4. Tuition may be different for Spring and Winter break depending on the school calendar. If you chose not to come these weeks, your regular weekly tuition is still due.**
- 5. Tuition is a yearly rate, charged on a weekly basis and will be due regardless of facility closings and absences due to vacations or illness.**

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**Regional YMCA Children's Centers
Discipline policy**

It is a challenge in today's world to raise children with strong social emotional skills. The day-to-day stresses of family life coupled with life altering situations such as divorce, economic challenges, and family relocations make the task daunting. The good news is that a strong partnership between the Regional YMCA Children's Centers and parents can play a pivotal role in children's healthy social emotional development and educational outcomes. Both our preschool and school age childcare programs have established developmentally appropriate guidelines and expectations for classroom behavior. The goal of this policy, is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures such as seclusion. Research has proven that the more consistently home and school can align with such guidelines the more successful children will be in their social-emotional development. For preschoolers, this is crucial to a successful transition to kindergarten.

Appropriate behavior is encouraged through the follow practices:

A. Prevention

A well-designed classroom, rich with developmentally appropriate equipment and supplies helps to prevent frustration and hazards. Our classrooms offer opportunities for privacy, independence, and small group activities with constant adult supervision. The daily routine is structured to provide ample time for play, and a broad range of stimulating and enriching activities, thus creating a sense of security for children. Careful planning by teachers minimizes wait time during transitions, which are usually filled with games and music to keep little ones engaged.

B. Positive Redirection

The use of "time out" at any age is no longer viewed as effective or appropriate in helping children learn to manage their behavior. The basic procedure is guidance and redirection, in essence channeling inappropriate behavior to acceptable alternatives. Developmentally appropriate guidance as opposed to punishment shows respect for children, helping them to learn self-regulation and better understand how to make good choices. In our programs, teachers:

- Value mistakes as learning opportunities;
- Listen to children when they talk about their feelings and frustrations;
- Guide children to resolve conflicts peaceably, and model the behaviors and language children need to solve problems on their own;
- Patiently and consistently remind children of the rules and reasons for such rules at every opportunity.

When children are surrounded by consistent guidance and redirection at school and at home, they are more likely to build a strong foundation in their emotional development, equipping them to successfully meet future challenges both in and out of school.

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Discipline Policy Continued:

C. Removal/Exclusion

On occasion, such guidance and redirection is not enough to help a child gain greater control of his/her behavior. At this point, when conflict occurs, teachers will remove a child from an activity area for a specified period of time, while under constant supervision. They will then talk quietly with a child, telling them what they need to do differently to change their behavior, and then give a child the choice to change their behavior and rejoin the group, or play alone for a while. This process helps a child to regain their composure, and feel a sense of control over their choices. In severe instances, where safety of children or staff is in jeopardy, parents will be called to remove their child for the remainder of the day.

D. When Serious Disciplinary Problems Persist

If a child continues to exhibit significant challenging behaviors, a conference will be scheduled in order to assess the function of the behavior and reach a solution that is beneficial for the child, our center and the family. With help from the family and professionals, when necessary, a plan will be developed to include positive behavior support strategies to support the child in the classroom and modifications to the environment will be made if necessary. Examples may include creating a predictable schedule to include picture charts, responding to child consistently and acknowledging appropriate behavior. The plan may include a provision that outside help be sought for a child/family in order for the child to continue in the program. A parent may be asked to keep their child home until the problem is resolved. While the goal is to avoid suspension or expulsion of childcare services, there are times when it is possible that a child may be terminated from our program if his/her behavior or emotional needs requires constant one-to-one attention or interferes with the safety and learning of other children. If this is the case, assistance in finding appropriate placement will be given to families upon request. This is only considered when the steps have been followed, interventions tried, all efforts have been exhausted and it is deemed to be in the best interest of the child. Lack of parental cooperation with our efforts to resolve such differences, refusal to attend a parent conference, or accept the need to refer to outside services can be grounds for termination from our Center.

Definitions:

Atypical development shall be defined as that which does not meet established norms for children of the same age group in any of the domains of development including physical, language, motor, self-help, cognitive, and social/emotional. Challenging behaviors shall be defined as aggression such as biting, hitting, pushing, kicking or other potentially dangerous acts toward other children or staff. Also, foul language, inability to follow rules and comply with directives, escaping from the classroom, outbursts and tantrums, disruption of classroom activities or any act which endangers the health and safety of self or others or damages property. The step-by-step process for accessing, referring, and accommodating children with atypical development and/or challenging behaviors is as follows:

1. Teachers will bring concerns about a child's development immediately to the attention of the director who will document these concerns and place them in the child's confidential file. Parents will be notified when any behavior of the child is in question. At the director's discretion, an education, health, or social service consultant who has contracted with the program can be contacted for the purpose of advice on

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Discipline Policy Continued:

assessing, referring, managing and/or accommodating the behavior/development of concern. Positive behavior strategies will be developed and implemented along with modifications to the classroom environment if necessary. In many cases, such informal guidance is enough to handle those concerns satisfactorily. Parents will be informed regarding how these issues will be addressed at the center before there are any modifications to the child's program and to share the recommendations of any consultant contacted.

2. In the event that the child's development remains of concern, the behavior is not improved, or the child becomes a danger to himself or others, the parent will be informed by the director. At this time, it will be the responsibility of the parent to seek evaluation services through one of the following choices:

- Health care specialist (if a physical issue) of the parent's choice.
- Clinical child psychologist or therapist of parent's choice.
- Early childhood education consultant or other consultant that contracts with the childcare program.
- Public school early intervention programs.
- Connecticut's Birth to Three System (for children under 3).

Any fees related to such evaluations shall be the sole responsibility of the family unless otherwise agreed upon in advance by the childcare program. Parents will be required to submit evidence of contact/appointment with such services within one week of the referral or the child's attendance will be suspended until the evidence of contact has been made. The program agrees to cooperate with consultants and professionals in allowing them to make assessments of the child on-site. No information about the child will be provided to these individuals without parent's signed consent.

3. The parent agrees to provide the results and recommendations of assessments to the center for the purpose of program planning for the child. This information may be presented in writing or in a personal meeting between the parent, center staff, and outside agency or professional. The cost of such planning meetings will be the responsibility of the parent unless otherwise agreed upon. The center agrees to follow professional recommendations regarding the accommodation and support of the child's development to the greatest extent possible within budgetary, regulatory, or building restrictions that would prohibit making modifications or accommodations to the program. Support service professionals, therapists, and special educators will have full access and cooperation to provide services on-site during regular business hours. Program transitions will be facilitated by the center in cooperation with other service/education agencies.

4. A re-evaluation of the success of any recommendations will take place at a time set by the director, generally 7 to 30 days from implementation of any recommendations. At that time, a determination will be made whether to continue successful programming, modify programming for another 7 to 30 days, or recommend an alternative placement for the child. Assistance in finding appropriate placement will be given to families upon request. In such cases, parents will have 2 weeks to make new arrangements unless the child is a danger to himself or others; in which case, dismissal from the program shall be immediate.

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5. The method and schedule for continual monitoring of the child's growth and development will be determined by the director and will be dependent on the effectiveness of the program for the child. Parents have the right to access any information regarding their child's program and/or development and will be immediately informed should any issues of concern occur. Parents have the right to make on-site visits at any time the program is in session.

This Regional YMCA policy complies with all federal and state civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin, sex, disability, and on the basis of age.

Abuse and Neglect Policy

The Regional YMCA Board of Directors adopted the following policy regarding abuse and neglect consistent with State of Connecticut's mandates. All Regional Y staff are mandated reporters, and undergo training in the procedure of recognizing and reporting abuse and neglect. Licensing requires that we communicate the policy and procedures through the Family Handbook. Should you have any questions about this policy, please feel free to speak with your Center Director.

It is the Regional Y's policy that at all times when children are at the YMCA (1) they shall be treated with caring and respect; (2) they shall be supervised by professional and properly trained staff who know that abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment or treatment of any child shall not be tolerated by the Regional YMCA; (3) that children shall receive appropriate positive guidance, redirection and limit-setting from the staff during all portions of their time spent at the YMCA; (4) that programs of the Regional YMCA will operate in accordance with the regulations issued by the State of Connecticut's Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Children and Families (DCF); and (5) that all staff shall be free from discrimination or retaliation for making required reports of abuse or neglect should it ever occur at the Regional YMCA. At the same time, staff shall also be advised that knowingly making a false report of abuse or neglect is also a violation of the law. The following statements constitute the Regional YMCA's plans and procedures for carrying these policies into effect:

I. Definitions

Wherever appearing in this policy statement, the terms "Abuse" and "Neglect" shall have the meaning given those terms by the State of Connecticut for application to activity regulated by the DCF in Public Act No. 97-319 as quoted below:

"Abuse: Means that a child (A) has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him other than by accidental means, or (B) has injuries which are at variance with the history given of them, or (C) is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

Neglect: Means a child who (A) has been abandoned or (B) is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally or morally or (C) is being permitted to live under conditions,

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Abuse and Neglect Policy Continued:

circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being, or (D) has been abused."

II. Governmental and Other Reporting

If any staff, supervisor and/or Director suspect or believe that actual abuse or neglect is occurring, or has already occurred, the situation will be reported to the DCF at 1-800-842-2288, as all child care staff are mandated reporters in the State of Connecticut. Such reporting shall consist of the following steps to be taken in accordance with C.G.S. Sections 17a-101a through 17a-101d:

Oral reporting within twelve (12) hours of suspecting or believing that a child has been abused or neglected by telephone or in person (a) to the DCF or a law enforcement agency; and (b) to the Director of the Center.

These oral reports are then to be followed up with a written report to the DCF within forty-eight (48) hours of making the oral report.

The term "Reports" required for informing the DCF of abuse or neglect is defined in the DCF's regulations (Section 17a-101(e) -2(c)) as follows:

"(R)eports alleging that a person under the age of eighteen (18) has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him by a person responsible for such child's or youth's health, welfare or care, or by a person given access to such child by such responsible person, other than by accidental means or has injuries which are at variance with the history given of them, or is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, or cruel punishment, or has been abandoned or is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally, or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being".

The Center maintains a confidential file of all reports made to DCF.

III. The Staff's Freedom from Discrimination or Retaliation

All staff shall be informed in their training that, in accordance with C.G.S. Section 17a-101(e) they may not be discharged, or in any manner discriminated or retaliated against, because they have in good faith made a report of abuse or neglect, or later testify in any proceeding involving abuse or neglect. At the same time, staff shall also be advised that knowingly making a false report of abuse or neglect is also a violation of the law.

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Abuse and Neglect Policy Continued:

IV. Investigation, Resolution and Follow-up

In the event it is alleged that abuse and/or neglect has occurred or is occurring at the Center, all staff shall cooperate with the Director in completing all notifications required by law and by this Policy statement. Staff shall also work with the Director to ensure that all appropriate cooperation is given to outside agencies who may be conducting investigations, e.g. DCF, DPH and police.

For the protection of the children, any staff member who is accused of abuse or neglect will be put on probation and removed from the Center until the allegations are fully investigated and resolved.

Once an investigation is complete and the facts fully understood, staff shall work with the Director to develop and implement any and all appropriate preventive, protective and remedial measures and plans, including (if warranted) a review and revision of staff screening, and other relevant procedures at the Center, and this Policy statement.

A. Preventive Actions to be taken by Center Staff/Management

The following internal disciplinary procedures shall be followed at the Center in response to observed inappropriate behavior:

1. Spotting Inappropriate Behavior: Staff shall be trained and instructed to spot any inappropriate behavior by other staff in the course in interacting with children enrolled at the Center, and to note such on a Teacher Incident Report ("TIR") form, a copy of which is attached to and made a part of this policy. A copy of a TIR must be provided to the staff member's supervisor immediately following the observed incident. If the supervisor is not also the Director of the Center, a copy must also be provided to the Director on that date.
2. Remedial Action: Depending on the nature of the inappropriate behavior noted by staff, the Director may place the staff member in question on probation; or remove the staff member from the Center until the issue is resolved; or provide additional training of counseling; or suspend or discharge the staff member; or a combination of these measures. All employment at the Center is on an at-will basis and may be terminated by the Director for any or no reason. Hence, the Director may act forthwith to terminate employment if needed to prevent or arrest possible Abuse or Neglect.

B. Medical Care

To the extent it becomes apparent to staff that a child is in need of immediate medical care, the Center staff shall contact the Center's medical consultant(s) and/or call 911 for emergency attention if necessary.

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Abuse and Neglect Policy Continued:

V. Conclusion

The foregoing Policy statement is designed to be, first and foremost, for the protection and care of the children enrolled at the Center. However, it should also be understood that the policies, plans and procedures contained in this statement are designed to both empower and protect the Center, its staff, supervisors and the Director by fostering compliance with law, clarity and fairness in decision making, professionalism and uniformity of understanding. This is especially important where an organization must be highly coordinated and organized, while being comprehensively regulated by government, as is the case with a licensed Child Day Care Center such as ours.

The Center reserves the right to revise or replace this Policy statement, or any portion of it, but will circulate copies of all revisions or replacements to all staff as soon as it is implemented. Any such revisions or replacement Policy statements shall be consistent with applicable law and regulation.

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| Type of Child Abuse/ Neglect | Physical Indicators | Behavioral Indicators | Type of Child Abuse/ Neglect | Physical Indicators | Behavioral Indicators |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Physical Abuse | <p><i>Unexplained bruises and welts:</i> ...On face, lips, mouth ...On Torso, back, buttocks, thighs ...In various stages of healing ...Clustered, forming regular patterns ...Reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle) ...On several different surface areas ...Regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation ...Human bite marks ...Bald spots</p> <p><i>Unexplained burns:</i> ...Cigar, cigarette burns, especially soles, palms, back or buttocks ...Immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like, doughnut-shaped on buttocks or genitals) ...Patterned like electric burner, iron, etc.</p> <p>...Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso</p> <p><i>Unexplained fractures:</i> ...To skull, nose, facial structure ...In various stages of healing ...Multiple or spiral fractures</p> <p><i>Unexplained lacerations or abrasions:</i> ...To mouth, lips, gums, eyes ...To external genitalia</p> | <p>Wary of adult contacts</p> <p>Apprehensive when other children cry</p> <p>Behavioral extremes: ...Aggressiveness or withdrawal ...Overly compliant</p> <p>Afraid to go home</p> <p>Reports injury by parents</p> <p>Exhibits anxiety about normal activities (i.e.: napping)</p> <p>Complains of soreness and moves awkwardly</p> <p>Destructive to self and others</p> <p>Early to school or stays late as if afraid to go home</p> <p>Accident prone</p> <p>Wears clothing that covers body when not appropriate Chronic runaway (especially adolescents)</p> <p>Cannot tolerate physical contact or touch</p> | Sexual Abuse | <p>Difficulty in walking or sitting</p> <p>Torn, stained or bloody underclothing</p> <p>Pain or itching in genital area</p> <p>Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas</p> <p>Venereal disease</p> | <p>Unwilling to participate in certain physical activities</p> <p>Sudden drop in school performance</p> <p>Withdrawal, fantasy or unusually infantile behavior</p> <p>Crying with no provocation</p> <p>Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual</p> <p>Anorexia (especially adolescents) sexual behavior or knowledge</p> <p>Sexually provocative</p> <p>Poor peer relationships</p> <p>Reports sexual assault by caretaker</p> <p>Fear of or seductiveness toward males</p> <p>Suicide attempts (especially adolescents)</p> <p>Chronic runaway</p> <p>Early pregnancies</p> |

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Physical and Behavioral Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect – Clues to Look For

| Type of Child Abuse/ Neglect | Physical Indicators | Behavioral Indicators | Type of Child Abuse/ Neglect | Physical Indicators | Behavioral Indicators |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Physical Neglect | <p>Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress</p> <p>Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or long periods</p> <p>Unattended physical problems or medical needs</p> <p>Abandonment</p> <p>Lice</p> <p>Distended stomach, emaciated</p> | <p>Begging, stealing food</p> <p>Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep</p> <p>States there is no caretaker at home</p> <p>Frequent school absence or tardiness</p> <p>Destructive, pugnacious</p> <p>School dropout (adolescents)</p> <p>Early emancipation from family (adolescents)</p> | <i>Emotional Maltreatment</i> | <p>Speech disorders</p> <p>Lags in physical development</p> <p>Failure to thrive (especially in infants)</p> <p>Asthma, severe allergies or ulcers</p> <p>Substance abuse</p> | <p>Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking etc.)</p> <p>Conduct disorders (anti-social, destructive, etc.)</p> <p>Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)</p> <p><i>Behavioral extremes:</i> ...Compliant, passive ...Aggressive, demanding</p> <p><i>Overly adaptive behavior:</i> ...Inappropriately adult ...Inappropriately infantile</p> <p>Developmental lags (mental, emotional)</p> <p>Delinquent behavior (especially adolescents)</p> |

*From Cynthia Crosson Tower, *Child Abuse and Neglect: A Teacher's Handbook for Detection Reporting and Classroom Management*, pp. 82-83. Copyright 1984 by the National Education Association of the United States. Reproduced with permission.

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