



Most updated version will always exist on our website.

Subject: Nondiscrimination in Services

To: Parents

From: Kelsey Krynock, Associate Executive Director

Admissions, the provisions of services and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age or sex. Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provisions of aids and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods. Any individual/client/patient/student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

YMCA of Indiana County
Attention: Kelsey Krynock, Associate Executive Director
60 N. Ben Franklin Rd
Indiana, PA 15701

Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity- Western Regional Office
301 Fifth Avenue
Suite 410, Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA. 15222-1210

US Department of Health and Human Services
Officer for Civil Rights
801 Market Street,
Suite 9300
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3134

Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 223, Health & Welfare Building
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105

PA Human Relations Commission
Pittsburgh Regional Office
301 Fifth Avenue,
Suite 390, Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Welcome Y Families

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Child Care provider. At the Y, we recognize that successful youth development requires a holistic approach focused on achieving social emotional, physical, and cognitive milestones. Our programs place caring, dedicated staff in children's lives to nurture them along their journey to adulthood so that they can become active, thriving, and contributing members of society.

At the Y, strengthening community is our cause. Every day we work side by side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. We believe in strengthening the foundations of community through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

At the Y, we serve hundreds of children, countywide, through Early Childhood Education, Camp, Programs and Volunteerism. We are not only here for the children we serve, but for the parents and guardians who care for them. This handbook is designed with the parent/guardian in mind, placing pertinent information within the first few pages of your reading.

Our Mission

"To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all."

At the Y, strengthening the community is our cause. The Y serves three crucial areas of focus to help individuals, families and communities to learn, grow and thrive.

The Y is **For Youth Development**, because we believe that all youth deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. That's why, through the Y, millions of youth today are cultivating the values, skills and relationships that lead to positive behaviors, better health and educational achievement.

The Y is **For Healthy Living**, improving the nation's health and well-being. The Y brings families closer together, encourages good health and fosters connections through fitness, sports, fun and shared interests. As a result, millions of youth, adults and families are receiving support, guidance and resources needed to achieve greater health and well-being for their spirit, mind and body.

The Y is **For Social Responsibility**, giving back and providing support to our neighbors. The Y has been listening and responding to our communities' most critical needs for 110 years. Whether developing skills or emotional well-being, welcoming and connecting diverse populations or advocating for healthier communities, the Y fosters

the care and respect all people need and deserve. Through the Y, thousands of volunteers, donors, leaders and partners are empowering millions of people, and the communities in which they live, to be healthy, confident, connected and secure.

Our Inclusion Philosophy

Admissions, the provision of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, nation.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aids, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Confidentiality

We respect the privacy of all families and the children we serve, and we ask our families and teachers to do the same. Please respect our children, families and staff by refraining from discussing and/or gossiping about sensitive and confidential information; **this includes any sharing on social media.**

All school records and information concerning a child and his/her family are kept confidential. Any information regarding the child including progress reports, payment information, etc. will only be released upon written consent from the legal parent/guardian or upon legal order.

Partnership with DHS (Department of Human Services)

Our Child Care Center is a licensed provider through the state of Pennsylvania, Department of Human Services (DHS). Families may contact DHS through their website: <http://dhs.pa.gov/>

Partnership with Keystone STARS

The YMCA is a participant in the quality childcare program known in Pennsylvania as Keystone STARS. This program requires additional training and requirements that must be met by the center to qualify for each STAR level. When you choose a center that participates in Keystone STARS, you can be sure that the center and its employees are adhering to stricter guidelines. Participation in this program also means that the center may qualify for some grants designed to further enhance the quality of our program.

Curriculum

We implement the Creative Curriculum for Preschool into our classroom that promotes positive outcomes and supports a high-quality learning environment. The Creative Curriculum is a research based, engaging, hands-on curriculum for children from birth to age 8. Through investigation, exploration, and play, children flourish and develop their skills in the domains of social-emotional, cognitive, physical, language, and literacy. Children learn to become independent, confident, creative, and critical thinkers during discovery and intentional learning experiences daily. Teachers act as facilitators to model and support the children's development through developmentally appropriate practices and individualize learning based on the child's development, strengths, and/or needs. Teachers use the Teaching Strategies Gold Online Assessment Tool to document observations and assess each child's development based on 38 objectives in social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, math, science and technology, the arts, and English language acquisition for dual language learners. The Creative Curriculum correlates and aligns with the State of Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards and Keystone STARS. Teachers are fueled with resources and on-going training which supports them in the planning and managing of the day.

Our center-based classrooms are designed to offer a safe, secure, and stimulating atmosphere that invites creative learning, orderly exploration, and positive socialization. Centers provide an informal atmosphere where children can make choices and friends and learn to solve problems. The centers within the classroom include Art, Writing, Library, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Blocks, Discovery, Sand and Water, and Music. Our lesson planning is intentional and encourages children to consider what they are doing and what they are learning.

Program Objectives

- Ensure a safe environment for children, one that encourages the development of friendships and respect for themselves and others.
- Provide creative programming that utilizes developmentally appropriate activities that children will enjoy.
- Encourage positive self-esteem and develop the child's self-discipline.
- Develop problem solving abilities as well as conflict resolution skills to enable children to have a solid foundation in appropriate responses to life challenges.
- Enhance each child's ability to communicate needs, wants, feelings, and ideas.
- Provide positive guidance via caring and well-trained staff.

Swimming

The preschool class plans to swim every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (subject to change based on staffing). We follow all DHS regulations in regard to swimming. This includes a 1:5 staff to child ratio in the water. There is also a lifeguard designated for the preschool program, who meets all state requirements.

Children are expected to come prepared to swim on swimming days. This includes: swimsuit and towel. They may bring a puddle jumper from home to use in the pool that is US Coast Guard Certified. They may also bring their own goggles and shoes to walk from the pool to the classroom.

Environment and Measurable Outcomes per Classroom

PRESCHOOL: Ages 3-5 Years

This program features a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on best practices, including name and number recognition. The curriculum includes swim and tumbling time. Circle time, center time, music, tabletop and outside play offer a well-rounded day for each child. ***Please note:** It is preferred that all children entering our preschool program be fully potty trained. However, we understand that there may be some delays and not all children are fully potty trained by age 3. Please contact the Assistant Director of Educational Programs to determine if we are able to make the accommodation.

Care and Supervision

Children are cared for and always supervised according to state mandated ratios. Ratios change for nap and swimming. The phrase "supervised at all times" means that each staff person shall be assigned the responsibility of supervising specific children.

Staff Training and Clearances

Our staff cares about each student as an individual, and we strive to build self-esteem through positive values. Their experience, talent, and enthusiasm will provide your child with experiences to enhance their ability to grow in spirit, mind, and body. It is mandatory for our staff to have criminal record checks, child abuse history clearance including NSOR, FBI clearances, health appraisals, and documentation for all the qualifications their position requires for DHS (Department of Human Services) licensing and Keystone STARS.

Suspicion of abuse and/or neglect

Mandated Reporter

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of the YMCA are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of the YMCA are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at the YMCA take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children. As mandated reporters, the staff of the YMCA cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season.
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child.
- Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

CHILD CARE RATIOS (NUMBER OF STAFF TO NUMBER OF CHILDREN)

Preschool: 1:10

Swimming: 1:5

Custody Orders

Parents are never to ask Y staff to submit a statement or serve as a witness during a custody order. When an enrolled child is the subject of a court order (ex. - Custody Order, Restraining Order or Protection from Abuse Order), the Y must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with the Y administration, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The Y cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, the Y suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed.

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, the Y is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of the Y cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. The Y will report any violations of these orders to the court.

Babysitting Policy

The YMCA prohibits staff members from caring for, providing instruction to, or engaging in a social relationship with children (other than family) who participate in YMCA activities. This policy is designed to protect the YMCA's interests and those of its staff members. In instances where this policy cannot be followed, we have a waiver that will need to be approved by the administrative office. Please see the Assistant Director of Educational Programs for a copy of the waiver.

Y Leadership & Hours of Operation

Child Care Leadership

Stephanie Brady, Director of Youth, Family, and Educational Programs,
stephaniebrady@icymca.org

Erin Visnesky, Assistant Director of Educational Programs, erinvisnesky@icymca.org

Y Administration:

Eric Neal, CEO, ericneal@icymca.org

Kelsey Krynock, Associate Executive Director, kelseykrynock@icymca.org

For payment issues or information on Financial Assistance, please direct all correspondence to Assistant Director of Educational Programs, Erin Visnesky at erinvisnesky@icymca.org or 724-463-9622.

For information on ELRC, please contact the Assistant Director of Educational Programs.

Hours of Operation:

Preschool

Monday – Friday

7:30am-5:30pm

Registration and Financial Obligations

Enrollment/Registration Procedures

There is an annual, \$30 registration fee per registration year. This fee is waived for children who are receiving subsidies through ELRC (Early Learning Resource Center) or YMCA Financial Assistance. Children who dis-enroll and re-enroll after a six-month time lapse will have to pay the registration fee again. This fee is due at the time of enrollment. The following registration forms are also required prior to the child's first day of care:

1. Registration Form **
2. Emergency Contact Form **
3. Agreement Form
4. EFT Form, Tax, Parent Handbook and Payment Policy **
5. YMCA of Indiana County Waiver
6. Child Health Form **
7. CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility (Child Care) Form

**Must be updated every six months and/or information changes. Children over the age of two must submit annually.

The child may not begin care until all the above required paperwork is complete, and the child is entered into our registration software. Failure to collaborate with the Y in submitting and updating the above forms may result in termination from the program.

Note: Tuition is considered the responsibility of the parent enrolling the child. It is not the responsibility of the Y to collect split payments from different parents/family members.

Tuition Payment Policy

- All families are required to enroll in electronic draft
- Financial terms and conditions agreement must be signed
- Failure to make timely, routine payments will result in suspension of care and financial assistance when applicable
- Tuition is considered the responsibility of the parent enrolling the child. It is not the responsibility of the Y to collect split payments from different parent/family members

For payment issues or information on Financial Assistance, please direct all correspondence to Assistant Director of Educational Programs, Erin Visnesky at erinvisnesky@icymca.org or 724-463-9622.

Withdrawing Your Child

Requests to terminate services must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the next billing date. Requests must be made in writing and submitted to the Assistant Director of Educational Programs. Termination requests mid-month will not be processed until the end of the following month. For example, if you request in Mid-May to terminate services, you will be billed for the full month of June and may utilize services until the end of June. After one full week of a "no call no show" absence, the Y will terminate care, release the "spot" and cease all billing.

Absences

Please notify us by 9:00AM the morning of care if/when your child will not be attending the center. If your child is out because he/she is ill, please inform the staff as to what the illness is. If necessary, we will post a contagious disease notification, so all families are aware of possible exposure. Notifications of absences can be made to preschool@icymca.org . If you don't notify us before 9 AM that you will be late, your child will be served a cold lunch.

The Y does not credit nor refund for events outside of our control which cause closure of the center (snow, power outage, etc.). Families receiving financial support through ELRC or the YMCA Financial Assistance Program must adhere to consistent, daily attendance - otherwise are at risk of forfeiting subsidy. Furthermore, families receiving support from ELRC, who exceed the current 40 absences July-June (date span of ELRC contract) threshold, will be charged the Y's daily rate.

Lateness and Late Fees

Parents must pick-up their child(ren) prior to the closing time of the center. After the program closes, the Y will charge a \$15 late fee for the first 5 per minutes and then an additional \$1 late fee after that. This will be added to the family's account. Excessive lateness negatively impacts our staff. Continual lateness resulting in a late fee may result in termination from the program.

Vacation and Summer Policy

Our Early Childhood Education Program operates year-round, September - August.

As our standard operating expenses such as staff wage/salary, medical benefits, utility costs, rent, supplies, etc. do not fluctuate, nor can our collection of payments.

Therefore, the Y does not waive nor credit fees for absences, including vacations and illnesses.

We understand rare, life changing occurrences will happen. The Y is here for you. Please speak with your Assistant Director of Educational Programs if you or your family is experiencing an extended illness, family emergency, sudden family change such as job loss, and/or financial hardship.

Financial Assistance

The policy of YMCA of Indiana County is that no individual or family will be denied membership or program participation due to the inability to pay. **Individuals seeking financial assistance for childcare must first be screened for ELRC funding. Details and enrollment information can be found at <https://elrc3.com/>, if you still have questions please contact the Assistant Director of Educational Programs.**

Parents who have been placed on ELRC's waiting list may be assisted by the YMCA's Financial Assistance Program. Financial assistance may be obtained by applying and furnishing proof of need. Financial assistance may be limited by the availability of funds. Financial Assistance can be awarded for up to 25% of the tuition cost. See detailed Financial Assistance Application found on our website: icyma.org

- Financial Assistance will only be considered after ELRC determination as been applied.
- The YMCA's levels of financial assistance may depend on the success of fundraising, special events, etc.
- Applicants may apply directly to the YMCA.
- Financial assistance will not be awarded in the full amount of the program or service fee. Applicants are expected to pay their fair share of membership or program fees.
- The assistance granted is for 6-months; the recipient will then need to reapply.
- It is the recipient's responsibility to re-apply when the grant period has expired. The family is responsible for the full payment once the financial assistance agreement has expired.
- Note: The timeliness of response and approval is based upon the timeliness of submitted required documentation; delay of submission negatively impacts processing time.
- The Y reserves the right to review any financial assistance agreement on a monthly basis.
- The YMCA reserves the right to refuse assistance to any applicant.
- Financial Assistance is jeopardized when fair share payments are not made on time or absences from the program are excessive.

Closure Information (may be subject to change)

Beginning January 1, 2025:

New Year's Eve
New Year's Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day
July 4th
Labor Day
Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day

**Important Note: Calendar subject to change.*

Snow, Severe Weather and Emergency Closings

In times of snow and severe weather, parents are advised to immediately check our website prior to arriving at the center.

- www.icymca.org
- YMCA mobile app
- You will receive an email if preschool is closed due to weather.

Sign In/Sign Out Sheets, etc.

Parents/guardians must sign their child "in" when arriving and "out" when leaving.

- Always be sure that a teacher has acknowledged your child's arrival/departure.
- If another adult is to pick-up your child, please make sure that adult is authorized on your emergency form. This adult will need to present photo identification when picking up your child.
- In the event of a rare change in pick-up due to an emergency, and the pick-up adult is not listed on the emergency form, you must call and alert us so we can complete proper DHS forms. Again, photo identification will be required when picking up your child.

Inclusion Policy

At the YMCA Preschool, we firmly believe that every child and family will be included, welcomed, valued, and supported in all aspects of our program regardless of socio-economic, religious, and/or ethnic backgrounds, abilities, or language. Our goal is for everyone in the program to have a sense of belonging, provide opportunities to participate, and reach their full potential. We believe that every child is an individual who deserves a nurturing and supportive environment in which to learn and grow through developmentally appropriate and hands-on learning opportunities.

Admissions, the provision of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, nation origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Procedures:

Admissions/Waiting List

Children of all abilities are accepted into care at YMCA of Indiana County and families interested in having their child attend the program will be given an equal opportunity for admission. A waiting list may be maintained.

Inclusive Environment

Early childhood educators at YMCA of Indiana County use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children with planning. Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children. Schedules, routines and activities are flexible and early childhood educators will work with therapists, special educators and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals supporting the child.

Collaboration with Other Professionals

Many children with disabilities or other special needs are supported by developmental and educational professionals such as therapists, teachers and others. YMCA of Indiana County welcomes those professionals and works with them to assure the child's success. The service provider is encouraged to provide services in the context of the early childhood classroom environment and the child's teacher and the service provide work collaboratively to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting. YMCA of Indiana County supports the teacher's participation in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies to all verbal and written information about potential, enrolling and previously enrolled children and their families. All staff will be briefed on the need for confidentiality and will be expected to fulfill their obligation to respect the protection of privacy. Written records will be stored in a secure location with access limited to the assistant director of the educational programs and the child's teacher. No information will be released about a child and the parent/legal guardian without written permission of the parent/guardian. This excludes the responsibility held by early childhood educators as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect as outlined in Pennsylvania law or when information is subpoenaed by the court.

Family Centered Practices

YMCA of Indiana County acknowledges and respects the priorities each family has for their child. Families are encouraged and supported to collaborate with staff to ensure that each child has an opportunity for optimum success. Each center communicates with each family daily and has regular meetings to discuss the child's successes and challenges.

Professional Development and Support for Staff

Training and support are provided to ensure that all staff are comfortable, confident and competent to meet the developmental and educational needs of all children. All staff attend training focused on effective inclusion and/or other disability topics whenever possible. Additional support and resources are provided as appropriate.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

The policy of YMCA of Indiana County serves all people regardless of age, sex, race, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English Proficiency) or financial circumstances.

LANGUAGE POLICY

YMCA of Indiana County is committed to serving our diverse population, including families that are English Language Learners (ELL/ESL). Our Y serves a diverse population of languages in our community and our program and we utilize google translate for documents whenever possible to offer the documents in the family's home language.

CARING FOR OUR CHILDREN

- Our facility uses the "Caring for Our Children" performance standards as set by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association
- The goal of the YMCA of Indiana County is to provide health and safety performance standards for all children who are in child care programs.
- Children with chronic medical conditions, including asthma, allergies, diabetes, seizures etc. require written information from the child's doctor so that the child can be properly cared for and staff know when to administer treatment and/or call for 911 if needed.
- Medical information including when and if medication is to be administered.
- Permission from the parent/guardian to administer medication for example an epi-pen, inhaler, Benadryl, etc.
- Training if needed for staff to recognize symptoms and needs.

CURRICULUM STATEMENT/CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- The learning environment provides a balance of individualized, center based, and small and large group activities.
- Teachers move among the children, facilitating their involvement with materials and activities, and encouraging positive social behaviors.
- Our center-based classrooms are designed to offer a safe, secure, and stimulating atmosphere that invites creative learning, orderly exploration and positive socialization. Children can make choices.
- Research has shown that children learn through play which staff facilitates. Our lesson planning is intentional and encourages children to consider what they are doing and what they are learning.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to become involved in their child's education by participating in conferences, completing at-home activities, parent meetings and classroom parties. Volunteer opportunities are available.
- Please see your child's teacher about ways to volunteer and get involved.
- If you are interested in volunteering in your child's classroom or on field trips, you will need to have your clearances on file with the YMCA of Indiana County. We will give you the information on how to obtain the clearances.
- Volunteers are under the guidance of Y staff and never alone with a child.
- Families are invited to participate in our special events, Graduation Activities, and others throughout the year.

Expectations of Parents/Guardians & Behavioral Policy

Communication and daily information

Families and staff need to keep the lines of communication open at all times. For longer, more meaningful conversations regarding an issue, concern or requested support; please call the Assistant Director of Educational Programs to schedule a meeting with the teacher.

Child assessment, observations and communication with parent/guardian

Children will be observed and assessed within 45 days of enrollment. Formal assessments are completed two times a year. Assessments use state and national resources.

Results of the child assessments/observations shall be used for planning curriculum. Some children may need a little extra assistance learning a skill. When a teacher observes that a child may need additional practice, the teacher will make appropriate accommodations with his/her lesson plans.

Assessments and Family Conferences

After assessments are complete, there will be an opportunity to discuss in greater depth through a family/teacher conference. The child's progression in physical, social, emotional and cognitive behaviors will be discussed.

- Conferences will take place at minimum twice per year. Conferences can be completed in person or by phone if the parent is unable to attend.
- If you are unable to meet in person or phone, your child's teacher will ask you to sign a form indicating that you waive the conference. The teacher will provide a copy of the assessment in a sealed envelope. If you have any questions we encourage you to speak with the Assistant Director of Educational Programs.
- Dated conference notices will be kept in each child's file.

Parent Cooperation Policy

At the Y, we consider ourselves to be part of your extended family; caring for most children within our program/s 40+ hours per week.

As a family, we ask all parents to demonstrate the Y core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. **The Y reserves the right to suspend a family from care when the parent/guardian demonstrates the following:**

- Excessive lateness or lack of payment
- Failure to submit important documents for licensing, such as medical forms, emergency contact, etc.
- Aggressive, threatening behavior towards staff and/or another parent/guardian
- Harmful, negative language used towards the Y, the center, staff, etc.
- Lack of parent/guardian cooperation and/or follow-through in addressing physical, emotional and/or behavioral needs of the child

Positive Behavior Modification Policy

If a staff member has observed inappropriate behavior, inappropriate development level of the child, or concerns for the welfare of a child in the classroom, the staff will report this information to the Assistant Director of Educational Programs. The Assistant Director of Educational Programs will conduct observations of the child's interactions with other children and the staff. The Assistant Director of Educational Programs will notify parents and legal guardians of sensitive topic areas. A care plan meeting will be set up with staff, the Assistant Director of Educational Programs, and the parents or guardian. The Teacher and Assistant Director of Educational Programs will inform and assist the parent and/or guardian in making the referral to the appropriate agencies. Administration will help coordinate on-site services during program hours for the benefit of the child.

If aggressive, disruptive, destructive or disrespectful behavior occurs to a staff member or to another child the following disciplinary action will be taken:

The Y reserves the right to immediately suspend, pause and/or terminate care for any family whose child displays the following:

- **Harm to self**
- **Harm to other children including, physical, verbal & emotional harm**
- **Inability to thrive within the standard teacher/classroom ratio**

The Y believes that no parent/guardian should ever be surprised by a request to pause and/or suspend care. When a child demonstrates harm to self, harm to others, or an inability to thrive within the classroom teacher/classroom ratio; communication to parent/guardian is as follows:

1. Incident One: Teacher will verbally share the incident with parent/guardian
2. Incident Two: Teacher will verbally and in writing share the incident with the parent/guardian
3. Incident Three: Teacher will request a Parent/Guardian/Teacher conference; the summary of the conference will be emailed to the parent/guardian within 48-hours. ****If harm to self or others is evident, a pause in services may be part of the behavior modification plan***
4. Further Incidents: Assistant Director of Educational Programs will request a meeting between Parent/Guardian/Teacher and when age appropriate, the child will also be included in the meeting. A behavior modification plan will be designed and agreed upon between the family and the Y. ****If harm to self or others is evident, a pause in services may be part of the behavior modification plan***

Discipline Policy

All families deserve a safe, stable, and enjoyable environment while at the YMCA and disruptive individuals can quickly dismantle the cooperative atmosphere of a class/site. This policy has been adopted with the safety of all of the families in YMCA childcare in mind.

- Children will display the Y core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.
- We follow the guideline: "Keep yourself, to yourself."
- Children will not use their hands and/or feet to express themselves; kind words are encouraged.
- Parent collaboration and support is required when behavior modification is needed.

The YMCA expects that each child will be or will learn to be responsible for his or her behavior, will be respectful towards others and will act in a caring and honest manner. From time to time, all children need help and direction in learning, developing, and maintaining appropriate behavior.

If a child exhibits frequent disruptive and/or aggressive behavior, a family conference will be scheduled. Continued disruptive and/or aggressive behavior may result in temporary suspension or permanent dismissal from the program.

Non-Violence Policy

Our program is a non-violence program. This means that hitting, fighting, verbal threats or violent statements will not be tolerated. Firearms, ammunition and other potentially dangerous items may not be kept or brought on the premises. Weapons of any kind are not allowed at the YMCA. If a child is found to have a weapon, they will be removed from the program immediately. Our policy also means that toy guns, squirt guns, knives or weapons of any kind are not allowed and will be confiscated. Any violation may result in suspension.

Children using violence as a method of reconciling differences or settling disputes will be considered for immediate suspension, possibly expulsion at the discretion of the Director.

We reserve the right to bypass the above behavior steps at any time and remove a child from our care or program activity for reasons of safety. If a parent is called to pick up a child for behavior, the child must be picked up within one hour.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

YMCA of Indiana County will endeavor to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions by:

- Creating a positive climate that focuses on prevention
- Developing clear, appropriate and consistent expectations and consequences that address the disruptive behaviors.
- Ensure fairness, equity and continuous improvement
- Collaborations with Early Intervention, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, Behavioral Health and other services.
- Family engagement- establishing positive relationships with families that are responsive both culturally and linguistically.

Guidelines for Positive Discipline

Our role as educators is to help children develop to their fullest potential and to recognize the many facets of child development. It is important that our discipline policy focuses on guidance, redirection and praise rather than punishment or negative reinforcement. We strive to help children learn self-control, while at the same time developing positive self-esteem.

Discipline must be age appropriate and stated in language that children understand. It is important to have support from families in order to build good character in children.

- We set realistic expectations for children's behavior.
- We provide an environment that will increase the probability children will succeed.
- We give children choices and alternatives to turn destructive situations into constructive situations.
- We validate what the children say and feel; if appropriate.
- We use natural and logical consequences and empower the children to be responsible for their own behavior.
- We teach preschool and older children to use problem solving skills and strategies to resolve conflicts.
- We work out behavior plans with the family when needed.

Illness, Medications and Emergencies

At the Y, we understand the importance of health and wellbeing and strive to reduce the spread of communicable illness through proven best practices. Our health standards are based on the current guidelines and recommendations set forth by the CDC (Center for Disease Control), OCDEL (Office of Child Development and Early Learning), DHS (Department of Human Services), Indiana County Health Department and state guidelines. These standards are fluid and will continue to adapt to new recommendations. They are subject to change.

Illness

Important note: If the child demonstrates any of the physical signs listed below while in our care, parent/guardian will be notified for immediate pick-up. **The parent/guardian has a maximum time frame of one hour to pick up their child; after one hour we will move to contacting the emergency contact in our system.**

Teachers cannot properly care for the sick child without interfering with the care of the other children. If a child exhibits any signs of contagious disease, you will be asked to provide a medical evaluation.

A child may be sent home or may not be admitted into care at the center for the following situations:

- Minimum temperature of 101 degrees orally or 100 from the armpit (this excludes reactions children may be having from immunizations). Note: Children need to be fever free before fever reducing medication for 24 hours prior to returning to care.
- A behavior change making the child unable to participate; for example sluggish, sleepy and/or inconsolable.
- Exceeds 2 or more loose stools; or stools are abnormal for that child.
- Vomiting 2 or more times while at school. May return 24 hours after vomiting has stopped.
- Bronchitis, which is an upper respiratory infection with severe coughing and mucus. May return as per direction of doctor's note.
- Severe cold with fever, coughing, sneezing, and nose drainage. May return when symptoms are gone or with the direction of a doctor's note.
- Whooping Cough. May return as per direction of doctor's note.
- Rashes that have oozing/open wound. May return after the rash has disappeared or as per direction of doctor's note.
- Impetigo. May not return until treated and as per direction of doctor's note.
- Scabies. May not return until treated and as per direction of doctor's note.

- Ringworm. Red circular patches on skin and heads. Must consult physician and may not return for 24 hours and as per direction of doctor's note.
- Chicken Pox. May not return until pox have healed and as per direction of doctor's note.
- Measles. May not return for at least five school days, rash has disappeared, and with direction of doctor's note.
- Mumps. May return after fever and swelling are gone and with the direction of a doctor's note.
- Head lice. A child must be excluded until all lice, lice eggs and egg cases are removed. Our preschool enforces a "no nit" policy. If nits are present upon the child's return to the center, the parent will be called to pick up the child for treatment or follow-up.
- Children receiving antibiotics may return after 24 hours of medication or at the direction of a doctor's note.

The Department of Human Services requires whenever there is an illness that is infectious or contagious that we notify all the families. The American Academy of Pediatrics supplies childcare centers with informative handouts for staff and families. Classroom staff will be responsible for distributing informational handouts to families with children enrolled.

Certain diseases are reportable to the Board of Health and may result in your child not being able to attend child care until cleared by a physician.

Medication Policy

If possible, families should administer medications while the child is in their care. Medication can be given just before drop off, at the time of pick up, and just before bedtime if the medication is 3 times a day. When this is not possible, staff will administer medication under the following conditions:

- All medications, whether prescription or non-prescription, must be followed according to the label. All medications must be logged into the Medical Log located in each room.
- All prescription medications must be current, in the original pharmacy container, and have the child's name, instructions, and physician's name. The instructions must also be placed in the medication log by the parent or guardian.
- Medication must be signed in and out daily, listing the exact amount of medication required for that day. Please send the medication in its original packaging.
- Medications will be kept in a locked medication box/cabinet in the classroom for ease of accessibility.

- The YMCA retains the right to refuse to administer medication if the Director or Assistant Director of Educational Programs feels that there is a conflict. The parent/guardian will be notified.
- Non-prescription medications will not be administered by YMCA personnel longer than five to seven days from the start of the administration or if the instructions state a shorter time. Families need to understand that if the child is still showing symptoms beyond 5-7 days, they need to consult their physician. We will administer medications if accompanied by a note from the doctor if the instructions are contrary to the container instructions.
- If a child is still showing symptoms, it will be suggested that the family take the child to the physician.

If you or your child does not have health care insurance, please contact our office and we will make every attempt to assist you. This information will remain confidential.

Medical Emergency Procedures

- A First Aid kit will be accessible for use by trained staff.
- Medical information will be reviewed and kept accessible for each child.
- **In the case of a minor injury** that occurs while in care, First Aid procedures will be followed. Parent/caregiver may be notified of the incident via phone, especially if the injury involves the head, neck or back.
- Staff will complete an accident report and provide a copy for parent/guardian at pick-up. A copy will also be placed in the child's file.
- Parents may be asked to pick up the child depending on the nature of the injury and the child's reaction to being injured.
- **In the case of a major emergency**, 100% of our attention will be with the child. Y staff will assess the scene, and if necessary, immediately call 9-1-1. Y staff will next notify the parent/guardian. In times of medical transport, if the parent/guardian is not available, a Y staff member will ride with the child and wait at the hospital for parent/guardian arrival.
- Y staff will provide the hospital with the child's medical information as completed in the emergency contact form.

Transportation

All parent/caregiver vehicles must be equipped with appropriate, required car seats. Children will not be released to the parent/caregiver who is not adhering to state and local laws.

Perceived impaired inability to drive

If a **parent/caregiver** appears to be unable to safely assume responsibility for a child, the YMCA will contact an alternate release person as indicated on your child's Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form to arrange for transportation. The Y also reserves the right to call the police. This is for the safety of you and your child.

Outdoor Child Activities

Children are expected to go outside when the forecast temperature/wind chill is above 25 degrees, the forecast temperature/heat index is less than 90 degrees, there is not precipitation falling, and there is no current air quality alert. It is understood that given these parameters there may be portions of some days that do not meet the conditions of weather permitting since forecasts are generally targeted to a point in time in a day.

Children go outside every day, weather permitting, so please dress your child appropriately.

Sunscreen Policy:

We recognize that too much sunlight may increase the risk of getting skin cancer. Children at the YMCA may spend a great deal of time outdoors and thereby exposed to the sun's harmful rays. Since it is our commitment to promote healthy spirits, minds, and bodies, we have made the following policies in this regard:

- Parents or legal guardians will be responsible for providing their children with enough sunscreen (in original sealed with a lid container) to take with them for later day applications.
- One container per child, please label with the child's name.
- Staff will be responsible for ensuring time for thorough follow-up applications after one hour in the water, after two hours of activity in the sun (due to perspiration), and/or any other time as needed.
- The YMCA reserves the right to prohibit anyone to participate in the program at any time for failure to comply with this policy.
- If you do not want your child to have sunscreen you will need to provide a written note to be placed in your child's file.
- If child does not have sunscreen, consent to administer YMCA provided sunscreen must marked on Sunscreen Policy, or we will not be permitted to apply.

Clothing and Footwear

Please label all clothing. The Y is not responsible for lost or missing clothing/footwear. Additionally:

- All children must have an extra set of seasonally appropriate (properly labeled) clothing stored in the child's cubby.
- Please leave a pair of rubber soled shoes (sneakers) in your child's cubby if he/she arrives at the center wearing boots or smooth soled dress shoes.
- Flip flops, open backed footwear, sandals, and "jellies" are dangerous and are not allowed at the center.
- "Water shoes" are recommended for outdoor water play. Sneakers and socks remain the safest footwear for active children in a childcare center.
- Children without appropriate footwear will not be allowed on playground equipment. It is dangerous to walk down steps with open shoes.

Rest Time

Rest time in our full day programs is based on DHS regulations as well as age appropriateness. Labeled blankets and cuddly toys may be sent in but must be taken home every Friday to be cleaned. Quiet music is played in each room.

- Preschoolers have individually labeled cots/mats.
- Cots/mats are disinfected on a regular basis.
- **Note:* To maintain proper ratios, children who do not sleep will relax on cots, reading books for a short rest period.

Toys from Home

Generally, we discourage children from bringing toys from home, except for specific program purposes such as "Show and Tell". Toys from home often cause conflict and we cannot be responsible for their safekeeping. However, you may bring a soft, cuddly toy for rest time. **Hand-held electronic games ARE NOT PERMITTED.** The Y is not responsible for games and cartridges that are stolen or lost.

Nutrition

Breakfast, lunch and snacks are provided by the Y.

- As we serve what you send and cannot force your child to eat in a prescribed order, meals provided from home are to be well balanced and meet good health guidelines.
- Parents are welcome to provide milk or water. 100% fruit juice is acceptable, but a solid fruit/vegetable shall also be included. Milk is the preferred dairy but cheese, yogurt, pudding and cottage cheese is also acceptable (fruit snacks are not considered a fruit).
- Consider serving a rainbow of foods – the more color, the more balanced meal.
- **Note:* Please limit sugar, salt and caffeine (chocolate in all forms), packaged or fast foods.
- **Also note:* Per DHS guidelines we must dispose of food once it has been served.
- Parents are encouraged to bring a water bottle/cup with lid for their child to drink water throughout the day.

Handwashing

All parents, children and staff are to wash hands upon arrival each day. This is an important step in helping to reduce the spread of germs and illness within the center. Teach children the proper way to wash hands by having them sing their ABC's and washing inside, outside, and all around ensuring that the backs of their hands and in between fingers are washed.

Please continue to the next, final page of this handbook for acknowledgement and signature. Once signed and submitted to your Assistant Director of Educational Programs, the signature page will be part of your child's file.

Acknowledgement of Agreement

I understand the importance of maintaining a positive, healthy relationship with the Y. This includes working collaboratively with my child's teacher, Assistant Director of Educational Programs and extended staff.

I understand the importance of meeting my child's payment schedule and that I will be placed on automatic billing. If accounting needs to continually dedicate additional time in securing my payment, I place my child's enrollment at risk.

I understand teachers cannot properly care for my sick child without interfering with the care of the other children. If my child/children demonstrate physical signs of illness, I will be notified for immediate pick-up. I further understand I have a maximum time frame of one hour to pick-up my child; otherwise my emergency contact will be contacted. If my child exhibits any signs of contagious disease, I will be asked to provide a medical evaluation.

I understand that my child's care falls within a classroom setting; set by state ratios. If my child needs greater attention than the ratio can support, or displays harm to self or others, my Assistant Director of Educational Programs will schedule a parent/teacher conference to discuss an action plan of care with me.

I understand that the guidelines of this handbook may change at any time. When they do, I will be alerted by the Director of Educational Programs and the website will always host the most up to date version of this handbook.

Child Printed Name

Parent/Caregiver Printed Name

Parent/Caregiver Signature

Date