



EARLY LEARNING PARENT MANUAL

Mission Statement

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

PARENT NOTIFICATION OF THE LICENSING NOTEBOOK

Child Care Organizations Act, 1973 Public Act 116

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

All child care centers must maintain a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans (CAP). The notebook must include all reports issued and CAPs developed on and after May 27, 2010 until the license is closed.

- This center maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans.
- The notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours.
- Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from at least the past two years are available on the Bureau of Community and Health Systems website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Updated December 2020

Handbook Information

This program handbook contains the policies and procedures of YMCA Child Care Services in outline form. Please take the time to read the Handbook, and keep it in a convenient location for reference. The Handbook is meant to serve as a reference guide. It is not meant to cover every aspect of the child care program or every situation that may arise. Parents should feel free to contact the child care office with questions concerning the contents of the handbook.

Handbook Terms

Throughout the Handbook, the term "Parent" will be used to refer to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child in care. The term "Provider" will be used to refer to the YMCA Child Care Services Department.

Handbook Changes

The Provider reserves the unilateral right to add, delete, modify or amend the policies and procedures described in the handbook at any time. If there is information in this handbook that is not clear please bring to the attention of the Provider and we will work together to make policies more user friendly to families.

Handbook is Property of Program

The Handbook is the exclusive property of the YMCA Child Care services and is intended for the exclusive use of the parents of enrolled children. The Handbook may not be copied or distributed to any third party without the expressive written permission of provider.

Nondiscrimination Policy/Cultural Plan

The Provider will maintain and conduct all practices in relation to enrollment, discipline, and all other terms and benefits of child care services provided in a manner that does not discriminate against any child, parent or family on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or handicap, or economic status.

All children deserve an early childhood education that is responsive to their families, communities, and racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. As a preschool staff, we are committed to respecting each child's culture and diverse needs. All families in our programs have different needs, we will always do our best to fulfill those needs. Family is the root of our program and we involve the family in all aspects of our program and what we do for children.

The YMCA does not discriminate against staffing on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or handicap. All staff will have training opportunities annually to further their knowledge of early childhood practices.

Special Needs Care and Inclusion

Provider will accept and care for special needs children if the child's needs can be reasonably accommodated by the program. Each child's needs will be evaluated individually with a two-week trial period. Our programs are not designed to offer one on one care.

Confidential Information

Each child has a right to confidentiality. All information pertaining to the children in our programs, including all reports, records, and data are confidential and used for internal purposes only. Information pertaining to children enrolled in the program will not be released to third parties without the express written permission of Parent, unless required by statute, court order, or licensing mandate.

Early Learning Philosophy

Our program is designed to help all children grow in spirit, mind and body. This is accomplished through helping children:

- Grow personally
- Build character
- Improve personal and family relationships
- Appreciate diversity
- Become better leaders
- Develop specific skills
- Have fun and enjoy life

Admission Requirements and Registration (we are a PRE-PAID SERVICE)

The Y Early Learning Center accepts children ages 2 years, 9 months to 6 years old. Children must be registered prior to the child attending the program each school year and each summer. We use an online registration process that can be found at our website www.kzooymca.org. At the time of registration, a non-refundable registration fee of \$50 (school year) or \$30 (summer) and all relevant weekly fees are due before a child can attend. This registration fee may not be used to offset other child care fees. Tuition prices vary depending on part time or full time status. After a child is registered online all required paperwork, including immunization records, must be completed and approved by the Provider prior to attendance.

Fee Changes

Provider reserves the right to change the child care fee schedule or other fees at any time.

Required Forms

The forms listed below must be fully completed prior to your child attending the program. Parents are solely responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information contained within these forms. Provider assumes no responsibility for keeping forms updated.

- Child Information Card
- Agreement and Permission Form
- Immunization Record and Health Appraisal signed by a medical professional

Please note these forms need to be completed or updated every school year and summer session a child attends to ensure your child has a placement in our programs.

Bills and Payments

We are a prepaid service and use an automatic payment system. Automatic payment options include: debit or credit cards (VISA or MasterCard) or EFT from a checking or savings account. A payment agreement is required at time of registration. Late payments or returns may result in a \$20.00 late fee. If payments are delinquent, the child care department reserves the right to terminate your child care services.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available through the Child Care Department and are distributed on a first come, first serve basis. To apply please reach out to childcare@kzooymca.org. Proof of income is required.

Child Development and Care Assistance

Parents who receive assistance from Child Development and Care (CDC) are responsible for the remainder of the weekly fee not covered by CDC. Proof of assistance must be available before the start of a program in order to receive reduced rate. Parents/guardians are responsible to pay all child care fees until we receive approval from CDC. Upon our first payment from CDC, the family will receive a credit on their account for any overpayment, which will be applied to upcoming weeks of service.

Hours of Operation

The Y Early Learning Center operates Monday through Friday throughout the school year; subject to the holiday schedule listed below. The Center opens at 7:00am and closes at 6:00pm. No child may arrive before the opening time or stay after closing time. There is a \$1.00 per minute late pick-up charge.

Holidays and Other Closures

All Programs are closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve and Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas Eve and Day, and the day after Christmas

When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the Program reserves the right to close to observe the holiday either the preceding Friday or the following Monday. The Program will provide thirty (30) days advance notice of a closure due to a weekend holiday.

The Program will be closed for one week between the end of the school year and the beginning of summer camp. It will also be closed one week between the end of summer camp and start of the new school year. Families will not be charged for those two closure weeks. We are typically closed for the two weeks of winter break but may offer care if there is a high need.

- During the **school year**, the fixed child care rate will not be adjusted for holiday closures, days that schools are closed, etc. The weekly fee is a set fee for the week.
- During the summer if the 4th of July falls on a weekday, camp rates will be adjusted accordingly.

Absences

The full fixed rate as listed is due regardless of individual absences, including sick days, personal days, funerals, doctor appointments, holidays, etc.

Two, one-week periods of excused absence are allowed during each school year with the proper notice. The two weeks may be used separately or concurrently but the full week must be used, individual days will not be credited. After the two weeks are used, Parent will be responsible for all future payments regardless of attendance.

Business Interruption and Virtual Learning Policy

The child care program may be closed due to weather, loss of electricity, fire damage, communicable disease outbreaks, etc. Parent agrees to arrange alternate emergency child care for these situations. If the closure is less than 5 business days no adjustments will be made to program fees.

In the event of a closure of 5 business days or more, our virtual learning policy will be in effect. Weekly fees will be reduced to 35% of a child's current enrollment level. This may either be in the form of a reduced payment or a credit applied to a future week.

Virtual learning will include the following components:

- Communication maintained with all families through the Bloomz app
- A weekly virtual class meeting (Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, etc.)
- A weekly at-home activity using common household items
- A weekly teacher-led read-a-loud
- Providing resources to help with successful at-home learning time, including learning packets, activity ideas, suggested daily schedules, etc.
- As needed, individual meetings with families

Parent agrees to resume use of the in-person child care program as soon as operations restart.

Business interruption closures do not alter the contractual provision to the required length of notice for the termination of the child care contract.

Termination

Either Parent or Provider may terminate the child care agreement upon two week written notice to the other party. When parent does not provide two weeks written notice, parent is still required to pay for the final two weeks of care, following the notice of termination whether or not the child attends the program. Provider reserves the right to terminate this agreement immediately without notice to parent if: 1) child care fees and/or other fees are not paid when due, 2) the child's continued participation in the program creates a direct threat of harm to the child, other children, or the provider's staff, 3) parent engages in inappropriate parent conduct.

Arrival and Departure Procedure

All children must be brought into the program by a parent (or other authorized person 16 older) and signed in. Children will be released from the program when a parent (or other authorized person 16 or older) notifies the staff of their arrival. All persons picking up a child must be listed on the child information record.

Child Release Policy

As a condition of providing child care services, Parent must supply the name of at least one alternative person to whom provider may release the child to in the event of an emergency. Provider will not release the child to any individual whose name does not appear on the child information record. Before provider releases the child, the staff will require that the individual show photo identification in the form of a valid driver's license or state ID. Should a parent wish to have allow an individual not listed on the child information record to pick the child up, parent must contact the Child Care office prior to that person picking up.

Parent must be aware that the provider and staff are not properly trained to make assessments relating to intoxication or other impairments and therefore assume no responsibility to the competency or condition of any individual appearing to pick-up the child. Provider assumes no responsibility for any injury or harm to the child who has been released to a person on the child information record. Provider and staff respect the family's privacy, however, if questionable child release situations occur; the provider has a duty to maintain its role as the child's advocate. With respect to child custody disputes, until custody has been established by a court order, neither parent may limit the other parent from picking up the child, and the provider will release the child to a known, identified parent. Should a parent not be allowed to pick-up a child, provider must have a court order on file.

Late Pick-up

All parents and guardians are expected to abide by the care schedule set forth by the child care department. In the event that a parent will be late in picking up a child, the parent is required to notify the provider as soon as possible. A late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute, or any portion of a minute, will be assessed for all late pick-ups. The late fee will be added to your account.

If a child remains at program after 6:00pm and parent has not notified the provider that they will be late, provider will attempt to contact persons listed on the child information record to pick up the child. If provider is not able to arrange for an authorized person to pick the child up by 6:30pm, provider will contact the police department for further instructions. The provider can under no circumstances take a child from the program to their residence, or the child's residence.

Private Duty by Employees

Employees of the program are discouraged from accepting offers for private duty (e.g. "babysitting", serving as a "nanny", etc.) for any of the children enrolled in the program. If parents choose to request a YMCA child care staff to participate in private duty then the parent and employee must complete a release form that is available from the Child Care Department.

Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting

A principal endeavor of the YMCA is to provide a healthy atmosphere for the growth and development of children. All YMCA staff will receive training in child abuse awareness, how to respond in the case of a suspicion of child abuse, and sign a code of conduct in New Staff Orientation. They will receive at the least, annual training after this point.

As a licensed child care provider, provider and its employees are required by law as mandated reporters to report any instances of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Provider takes these responsibilities seriously and will file reports as required by law. Any suspected or reported child abuse shall be treated in accordance with applicable law and approved policies. The staff member who suspects abuse will be required to report to CPS, by phone, immediately. Then the staff member will have to follow up with the licensing division within 72 hours. Staff members are also encouraged to notify their direct supervisor.

Communication

We encourage ongoing communication between the staff and parents. Parents should feel free to ask questions about the program or their child's care. Lesson plans, information about group activities, and basic updates will be posted to our parent app, Bloomz. All families will be sent a Bloomz invitation for their child's group after enrollment.

Parent Participation and Volunteers

Parents are welcome at the program any time to observe or spend time with their child. If a parent wishes to volunteer, the parent must follow the YMCA volunteer process and policy. All other volunteers in preschool classroom will also be responsible to follow YMCA volunteer policy. At no time will a volunteer ever be alone with a child enrolled in the preschool program. Volunteers will always be supervised by a YMCA employee.

Parent Behavior Expectations

Provider requires the parents of enrolled children behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect at all times.

While in our program parents are prohibited from the following:

- Physical punishment of their child while in the child care facility
- Addressing a child who is not their own for the purpose of correction or discipline
- Physically engaging a child who is not their own for the purpose of correction or discipline
- Seeking out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior
- Sharing any information considered to be confidential or pressuring employees or other parents for information that is not necessary for them to know.

All behavior concerns should be brought to the attention of the staff or the Provider who will then address the issue with the parent. While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of YMCA programs or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. If a parent feels a situation is not being handled appropriately by staff then they should contact the Child Care Director.

Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the staff and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective guidance procedures for their child.

Typical Daily Schedule

- Drop off and center free play
- AM Meeting Time
- Snack
- Small group time and free play
- Outdoor play/Indoor large muscle play
- Lunch
- Story Time/Mighty Minutes
- Free Play
- Lay Low
- PM Meeting Time
- Small group time and free play
- Snack
- Outdoor play/Indoor large muscle play
- Pick Up

A more detailed schedule is posted in the classroom. The parent friendly schedule is posted on the parent board and a child friendly schedule is located in the meeting area.

Classroom Ratios

There will always be at least 2 staff with the preschool group at any given time of the day. The max number of preschool children in the classroom at any given time will be 16 children.

There will always be at least 2 staff with the prekindergarten groups at any given time of the day. The max number of prekindergarten children in a classroom at any given time will be 20 children.

Emergency Policy

Provider has developed an Emergency Management Plan to be implemented in the event of an emergency situation. The plan has been designed to provide a plan of action in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. If an emergency should occur, provider will follow the instructions of the local authorities. The instructions may be to stay at the facility and shelter-in-place or to evacuate. If we are instructed by authorities to evacuate to specific location, the children will be taken to the location identified by the authorities. We understand that parents and family members will be concerned about the safety of their children and will want to pick them up as soon as possible. If we are sheltering-in-place, we ask that you wait until the authorities issue an all clear before coming to pick-up your children. If we evacuate the facility, children will be released to parents or authorized persons as they arrive. If the authorities designate an evacuation shelter, the location will be disseminated through local radio and television stations. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible/necessary via phone, email or our parent communication app.

Guidance Policy

Provider, in accordance with licensing rules and federal laws, use the guidance approach for handling mistaken behaviors. This approach is designed to help the child’s development in conflict resolution skills, learn from their mistakes, as well as help the children learn democratic life skills. This approach is used in a firm but friendly manner to protect the child’s self-concept and to respect their feelings so they do not come to label themselves as behavioral failures.

We accomplish this by using positive guidance techniques such as:

- Setting clear limits
- Modeling and encouraging expected behaviors
- Redirecting children to more acceptable activities
- Modeling and encouraging the four core values of the YMCA

Staff will use the trainings they have received while working with the children. If a behavior becomes disruptive to the group (i.e. biting, hitting, throwing objects or using "bad" language), the child will be redirected. The staff may also choose to offer some alone time to child away from the group. The child will be allowed to spend as much time needed to gather themselves and will be welcomed back to the group when ready.

If a child's behavior continues to be disruptive, a parent conference will be held to discuss reasonable solutions to the situation. The discussion will include a consideration of any disability that affects the child's behavior and reasonable accommodations to meet the child's needs and improve the disruptive behavior. If a reasonable solution and/or accommodation cannot be reached, the child will be dis-enrolled from the program with a two week notice to allow parents an opportunity to find alternate child care. The child will be dis-enrolled without notice if the child's continued participation creates a direct threat to the safety of the child, other children or the Provider's staff.

Food Policy

Parents are responsible to provide all food for the child in care, unless otherwise noted. The following must be provided for when the child is in care: healthy morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. The YMCA may provide an afternoon snack as part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Our snacks will consist of healthy choices and include at least two different food groups. A fresh fruit and/or vegetables will always be one of the food groups. The other group may include whole grains, dairies, or other healthy alternatives. When snacks are provided by the YMCA, children who have food allergies may still need to provide a daily snack. Please speak with the staff to make these accommodations. Children will not be deprived of a meal or snack if the Parent fails to provide it.

In compliance with licensing regulations, we encourage children to eat their healthy foods first before their treats. We encourage children to develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime. At no time does the Provider/staff force children to eat more that they can handle. We only encourage children in healthy eating. Children are not allowed to drink pop while in the center.

Health Care Service Plan

The center has a health care plan that includes policies and procedures to keep staff and children healthy and safe. All YMCA child care staff are trained in blood borne pathogens, which includes an exposure control plan, proper sanitizing procedures, proper labeling of and disposal of milk and food, obtaining and maintaining of children's immunization and physical records, recognition of signs and symptoms of illness in children, emergency plan for handling minor and major injuries of children,

medication distribution procedures, and training in child abuse and neglect and what it means to be a mandatory reporter. A copy of the full health care plan is available upon request.

When the Child Becomes Sick at the Program

Provider will report any suspected illnesses or other changes observed in the health of a child to the parent. Provider will also notify parent when the child is exposed to a communicable disease while in care. When a child becomes ill at the program, provider and/or staff will comfortably isolate the child in an area where the child can be supervised and will immediately contact parent, who will be required to pick the child up within one hour of notification. Once the program closes for the day, staff will disinfect all areas of the classroom to prevent further spread.

When to Keep a Child Home

Provider requires that the parent keep the child home when he or she is ill for a number of reasons. A sick child may rest more comfortably in their own home. More importantly, keeping a sick child home helps to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses to other children in the program. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, please keep the child home.

- Fever of 100 degrees or more
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Lice
- Pink Eye
- Continuous green mucus

With the exception of lice, children must be free of these symptoms for 24 hours before they can return. If the child has lice, they must be COMPLETELY NIT FREE before they can return to the program.

Parents are asked to notify the program if a child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness. Letters will be sent home to make all families aware that an illness has been going around.

Staff and Volunteers will be asked to not participate in the program when they have any of the symptoms listed above.

Accidents and Incidents

We make all attempts to prevent accidents and incidents from occurring, but when they do the following plans will be in place:

Minor accident, not involving the head: First aid will be applied as needed, accident report will be completed and parent notified at next pick up or drop off.

Accident involving a head injury: First aid will be applied as needed, accident report will be completed and parent notified as soon as possible.

Major accident with or without head injury: First aid will be applied as needed, parent notified as soon as possible, medical personnel contacted if necessary, an accident report will be completed. If accident results in visit to a medical professional, provider will report it to licensing.

Lost Child: All staff immediately notified of the missing child, those staff who are not required to supervise other children will search the facility, if necessary 911 will be called to notify the authorities of the missing child, parent notified as soon as possible.

Inappropriate contact: If inappropriate contact occurs immediate action will be taken to separate the individuals involved. Depending on the severity of the situation, parents will be contacted as well as the proper authorities if warranted.

Medication Policy

Provider will administer necessary medications under the following guidelines recommended by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. The parent must sign a medication permission form for the duration of the need. Prescription drugs must be in the original container with the pharmacy label, physician's name, instructions, dosage, and name and strength of the medication and shall be given in accordance with those instructions. Over the counter medication will be given only if it's in the original container. Provider will maintain a record as to the time and the amount given or applied. The provider will keep the medication out of the reach of children and return any remaining medication to the parent when it is no longer needed. Any medication not returned will be destroyed.

Sunscreen and Bug Spray

The program strives to take the children outdoors for play on a daily basis. The YMCA will provide sunscreen and bug spray but families are welcome to provide their own if they prefer. Annual permission to administer sunscreen and bug spray is part of the registration paperwork.

Pesticide Use Information

The Y Early Learning Center uses Griffin Pest Control Company to take care of any pesticide needs inside and outside of the building and classroom.

Centers are required by The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs to give notice of annual pesticide application; this handbook serves as the annual notification. If there is going to be any type of spraying going on in or out of the building while your children are in our care, provider will inform parents at least 48 hours in advance in two to different forms. One form will be a notice on the door of the center. Possible other ways of communication include but are not limited to: in a parent newsletter, a mass email, a telephone call, or a posting in our parent communication app or on our website.

Personal Items from Home

Provider discourages parent from allowing children to bring personal items from home to the program. When a child does bring personal items from home, provider is not responsible for loss or damage to that item.

Clothing

The program strives to take children outdoors for play on a daily basis. As such, parent must be certain that the child is dressed appropriately according to the weather conditions. Due to the nature of some of the activities the program offers, parents must recognize that children's clothing may occasionally become soiled or damaged. Provider assumes no responsibility for damage to a child's clothing.

Swimming at the YMCA

As part of the Early Learning program children will receive a weekly 30-minute swim lesson (subject to enrollment status). Lessons are conducted by certified swim instructors with support of classroom staff. All licensing regulations related to swimming and ratios will be followed.

Photo Release

Provider may take photos of the children participating in program activities or field trips. The photos may be posted for parents and visitors to enjoy. We may occasionally be filmed for the local news, YMCA video use, for YMCA brochures, and/or the YMCA Facebook page. If a parent wishes that photos not be taken of their child, a written notice must be delivered to the Child Care Department.