

YMCA Child Care Parent Handbook

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Welcome to YMCA Child Care

Putting Children First

Choosing a child care provider is a big decision. You want your child to feel at home, learn, grow and have fun in an environment that is welcoming, safe and stimulating. And most of all you want caring and supportive Early Childhood Educators who understand what makes your child special and who have your child's well-being at heart.

It is our primary responsibility to provide your child with the best possible care to help them develop and reach their potential.

You have a responsibility as well. Your child needs lots of rest, a good breakfast and adequate clothing for his/her day's activities. He/she needs to know that you are confident in us so that they likewise will have confidence.

To further each child's personal development, it is our goal:

- To support and strengthen the family unit
- To help children develop to their fullest potential
- To care for children in a safe, positive and caring environment

We want to work together with you to exchange information about your child's language, culture, interests and abilities so that the sum of a child's education experience is greater than either parents or educators alone could provide.

Thank you for choosing YMCA Child Care.

CHARITABLE MISSION

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford is a charitable organization helping people achieve personal growth in spirit, mind and body through participation and service to the community.

VISION

Creating healthy communities in which individuals and families have opportunities to reach their full potential.

CORE VALUES

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford believes that four values are particularly important in the development of good character: Belonging, Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

We hope the information in this handbook answers your questions. If you need further assistance or wish to speak to a member of our YMCA educator team, please refer to the contact information at the end of this handbook.

Respectful Environment

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford is dedicated to the physical, mental and social development of people. It is committed to providing a friendly, safe and respectful environment that does not tolerate abusive behaviour and reinforces socially responsible behaviour.

This means that educators, volunteers, program participants, and others using YMCA programs are expected to treat others, including children and vulnerable adults, with courtesy and respect.

The YMCA is a shared experience for everyone to enjoy. The YMCA's core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and belonging are the basis of our interactions with our members and families.

We believe:

- People are responsible for their actions
- We respect each other and the environment
- Honesty will be the basis for all relationships and interactions
- We will care for ourselves and those around us.
- Fostering healthy inclusive communities
- Adults will act as positive role models

Our educator and volunteer teams have the responsibility to interact with our community in a positive, professional manner. Our educator and volunteer teams also have the right to work in an environment that is safe and respectful. The YMCA will not tolerate any verbal or physical abuse directed toward an educator. This conduct may result in being asked to leave the site or program and possible suspension of service.

Participation within the YMCA community will be based on an expectation that all will be treated with dignity and respect. The YMCA values excellence in the delivery of quality child care services guided by shared responsibility and embraces diversity and belonging.

Licensing

YMCA Child Care Centres are licensed by the Ministry of Education and adhere to standards established in the Child Care Early Years Act to ensure that all programs provide a safe, healthy and stimulating environment with quality care for the children they serve.

For more information visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf

Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC)

The Government of Canada has identified child care as a national priority to enhance early learning and childhood development, support workforce participation and contribute to economic recovery. Funding under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC) will be used to build and leverage the success of Ontario's existing early learning and child care system by increasing quality, accessibility, affordability and inclusivity in early learning and child care for children ages 0-5 years.

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford has opted-in to the Canada-Wide Early Learning & Child Care (CWELCC).

Base fees are mandatory fees charged to all parents that are required for a child to attend a YMCA Child Care program. Non-base fees include additional charges such as registration/late fees and bank service charges; and therefore, these will not be subject to further reductions under CWELCC. Actively registered families will see their base child care fees reduced by 25% on November 1, 2022, and then additionally reduced by another 25% January 1st, 2023. The chart below provides a summary of the new rates that will come into effect as part of Phase 1 of this multi-phased, multi-year program.

YMCA Hamilton Rates

Age Group	Program	Base Rate Pre-CWELCC (March 31, 2022)	Base Rate 25% Reduction (Effective April 1, 2022)	Base Rate 50% Reduction (Effective January 1, 2023)
Infant	Full Day	\$75.00	\$56.25	\$35.44
Toddler	Full Day	\$64.60	\$48.45	\$30.52
Preschool	Full Day	\$54.30	\$40.73	\$25.66
Kindergarten (JK/SK)	Before School	\$11.65	\$11.65	\$11.65
	After School	\$18.85	\$14.14	\$12.00
	Before and After School	\$26.70	\$20.03	\$12.62
	Full Day	\$46.00	\$34.50	\$21.74

YMCA Burlington Rates

Age Group	Program	Base Rate Pre-CWELCC (March 31, 2022)	Base Rate 25% Reduction (Effective April 1, 2022)	Base Rate 50% Reduction (Effective January 1, 2023)
Infant	Full Day	\$75.00	\$56.25	\$35.44
Toddler	Full Day	\$64.60	\$48.45	\$30.52
Preschool	Full Day	\$54.30	\$40.73	\$25.66
Kindergarten (JK/SK)	Before School	\$15.55	\$12.00	\$12.00
	After School	\$22.15	\$16.61	\$12.00
	Before and After School	\$29.85	\$22.39	\$14.10
	Full Day	\$46.00	\$34.50	\$21.74

YMCA Brantford Rates

Age Group	Program	Base Rate Pre-CWELCC (March 31, 2022)	Base Rate 25% Reduction (Effective April 1, 2022)	Base Rate 50% Reduction (Effective January 1, 2023)
Infant	Full Day	\$60.00	\$45.00	\$28.35
Toddler	Full Day	\$48.00	\$36.00	\$22.68
Preschool	Full Day	\$46.00	\$34.50	\$21.74
Kindergarten (JK/SK)	Before School	\$11.20	\$11.20	\$11.20
	After School	\$11.20	\$11.20	\$11.20
	Before and After School	\$18.00	\$13.50	\$12.00
	Full Day	\$40.50	\$30.38	\$19.14

For more information on CWELCC, visit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/canada-ontario-early-years-and-child-care-agreement>

Purchase of Service

The YMCA has purchase of service agreements with the City of Hamilton, Region of Halton, and City of Brantford for those families in need.

Fees

Fees are payable on a monthly basis by Visa, MasterCard or pre-authorized bank withdrawal. Declined payments will be subject to a \$25 service charge for each transaction. Parents with accounts past due may be asked to leave the program unless acceptable payment arrangements are made. Accounts more than 30 days past due may result in termination of care.

Payment is required for absenteeism, sick days, vacation days, centre closures due to inclement weather, emergency closures (i.e. job action/strike) and for statutory holidays. A \$25.00 registration fee is due at the time of registration and is non refundable and non tax deductible.

The YMCA reserves the right to manage enrollment due to extended absenteeism. In situations where a child has been absent for a prolonged period of time, and capacity is limited, parents may be asked to withdraw from the program. Parents wishing to re-register will be placed on the waiting list until a space becomes available. Admission and discharge of children is at the discretion of the YMCA.

Late Fee Policy

It is the expectation that all children are picked up from the YMCA Child Care programs by the centre's closing time. Where a parent is unable to pick up prior to closing, it is the parent's responsibility to contact an emergency contact to arrange for alternate pick up. The parent must advise this person that they will be asked to show photo ID to staff and to contact the centre educator to advise of the change in routine. When a parent is en route to pick up the child, but will arrive after the closing time, the parent should inform the staff of the circumstances and expected arrival time. If a child is picked up past the time of the centre closure, a late fee of \$20 per half hour or part thereof per child will be charged to the parent's account. The centre cell phone will be used as the official time.

Late parents will be asked to sign the Late Fee Form. Arriving late to the YMCA Program three times or more may result in the removal from the YMCA Program.

Ages and Groupings

Early Learning Child Care

Early Learning Child Care Centres are licensed programs that provide care for children from infant to 5 years of age. Our programs operate out of a variety of locations such as YMCAs, schools, senior centres, churches and stand alone facilities. Our child care educators are trained, qualified educators who deliver programs that support children’s growth and development in programs that are safe and stimulating.

School Age Child Care

School Age Child Care is a licensed child care program for children 3.8 to 12 year of age. The program is based out of the school the child attends, thereby providing them with a seamless day in one location. Every program is staffed by YMCA trained educators, selected for their educational background and aptitude for working with children. The end result is a safe, nurturing environment to begin and end their day at school.

Number of Educators Required

Age of Children in Group	Ratio of Educators to Children	Maximum Number of Children in a Group
Infants Under 18 months of age	3 to 10	10
Toddlers 18 months up to but under 30 months	1 to 5	15
Preschoolers 30 months up to but under 6 years	1 to 8	16
Kindergarten 44 months up to but under 68 months	1 to 13	26
Primary/Junior School Age 68 months up to but under 13 years	1 to 15	30
Junior School Age 9 years up to but under 13 years	1 to 20	20

Ratios During Times of Arrival, Departure and Rest Period

Except where the children enrolled are under 18 months of age, during the periods of arrival and departure of children and during the rest period, the ratio of educators to children may be reduced to less than that set out in the chart, as the case may be, if the observed ratio is not less than 2/3 of the required ratio.

YMCA of Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford

Program Statement

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford understands that family life affects every aspect of a person's development and that the early years are of primary importance. YMCA Child Care programs strive to deliver stimulating learning experiences in a safe environment that enhances children's social, intellectual, physical, and emotional development. This enhancement happens throughout a child's daily routine which encompasses a balance of indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time.

As educators working with young children, we believe that every child is competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. The YMCA is committed to creating rich learning environments for children to reach their full potential in alignment with four foundational conditions that are outlined in the Ministry of Education's, "How Does Learning Happen?" Moreover, we are committed to promoting the development, care and academic success for each child in a co-operative relationship with the child's family, and the community.

Our Curriculum

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford has a well established, research based approach to early learning. Our YMCA curriculum, YMCA Playing to Learn and A Place to Connect, aligns in philosophy, standards and recommendations with the provincial framework. At the YMCA we understand that children learn best through play. Play by definition is enjoyable, spontaneous, active, and undertaken without external goals and sanctions. Play can take many forms, be prompted by the environment, initiated by play partners (educators) or most often and most valuably, emanate from the child. This means children are self-learners and do not require an adult to choose what or how they should learn. When a child's natural activity of play is supported by caring and responsive professionals in positive, developmentally appropriate learning environments, we believe, a child will flourish. Play and development are intertwined: neither precedes the other. The child's innate competence, capacity, curiosity and potential will be maximized.

Each child has the ability to reach their full human potential through play. Our intention is to provide the best possible environment that allows the best possible play for all children in our care. We endeavour to meet the play needs of all children and must do whatever possible to support the natural urge to play.

Goal: Promoting health, safety, nutrition and well-being

YMCA Approach

The YMCA provides a vital service to families ensuring that children are in a safe, nurturing environment that fosters independence and well being. We believe that a healthy lifestyle begins at an early age and implement comprehensive, research-based approaches to support children in becoming physically active, learning about healthy food choices.

Some of the procedures in place at the YMCA include:

- Menu Planning following the Canada Food Guide
- Meals/snacks are served family-style and identified on posted daily schedules
- Provide opportunity for indoor and outdoor active play
- Provide safe supervision of children
- Implement Child Protection procedures and training
- Adhering to sanitation and disinfection procedures
- Communicate by posting any communicable diseases and prevention strategies
- Following posted established emergency procedures
- Educators will have Standard First Aid and CPR level C training

Goal: Supporting positive and responsive interactions among children, parents, and educators

YMCA Approach

At the YMCA we understand that young children flourish in all areas of development when they are in positive and responsive relationships with adults. YMCA educators build a foundation of trust with children by being available, sensitive, responsive, and caring. We know that each child is an individual of great human worth and potential.

YMCA educators create an inclusive and respectful environment that fosters positive, equitable, and collaborative relationships. When children feel safe, secure, valued and a contributing member of their world they are able to explore, discover, try new things, grow, learn and develop.

To support every child's care, growth and development, YMCA educators interact and communicate with parents on a daily basis sharing observations, documentations, and reflections about their child's day.

Goal: Encouraging children to interact, communicate and self-regulate

YMCA Approach

The YMCA believes that it is the role of the adult in a child's life to support them to learn how to interact effectively with the world around them including other children, adults, and the environment.

Generally self-regulation involves gaining a degree of control over one's bodily functions and impulses, managing one's emotions, changing one's behaviours and maintaining focus or attention on something or someone.

Some of the approaches implemented by YMCA educators to set the stage for positive interactions and enhance social engagement among children include:

- Educators provide small group experiences that allow for more individualized adult attention
- Educators role model inclusive, respectful, and collaborative interactions with children and other adults
- Educators ensure the learning environment is flexible so they can respond in the moment and build on or scaffold the children's interests
- Educators ensure toys, equipment, and materials are plentiful and available to children at all times
- Children are given freedom to make choices
- By engaging as a play partner with children, educators are able to demonstrate pro-social skills including promoting discussion, problem solving when conflict arises, and understanding how their actions affect others
- Educators attend trainings that address self-regulation and resilience

Goal: Fostering exploration, play and inquiry

YMCA Approach

Children are born with a natural sense of curiosity and wonder. They play naturally.

As parents and educators, we observe children explore their world through their senses, repetition of tasks, imitation, asking questions, pretending. But what are children really doing? Children are putting together all the pieces of how the world works through exploration, play and inquiry.

YMCA educators understand the importance of play. They foster, expand and scaffold this natural talent called play by being:

- Active participants engaged co-learners
- Architects of the playscape
- Keen observers, being in the moment - recording accounts of children's play
- Planners
- Reporters
- Collaborators
- Reflective practitioners

Observing a day-in-the-life of a YMCA child care program, you will note that the majority of activities are directed by the children. Children decide where, when, what and how they wish to play, while educators ensure that the daily schedule reflects large blocks of time to support the children's play. Their decisions are based on their interests and curiosity. The educator responds by adapting the environment by adding new toys, materials and equipment, posing questions, and being a play partner. This sets the stage for further play, inquiry, discovery and learning. The educator's role is to support play so that learning and development flourishes.

Goal: Providing child-initiated and adult-supported experiences

YMCA Approach

Children and parents are greeted warmly upon arrival and after a brief check-in to share news from the evening before, the children get down to the serious business of playing.

The room is set up with a variety of intentionally planned activities that support the observed interests of the children. The children might join some friends at the creative art table to work collaboratively on a collage, or they might work on a Lego structure they safely stored on the counter to complete the next day.

There are no expectations imposed by the educator or curriculum on where children play, or whom they play with, or how long they play at one activity. That is for the child to choose based on their interests.

Example: You may overhear a small group of children in the dramatic play centre dressed in costumes acting out a scene of being “family members and baby at the doctor”. The educator has been assigned the role of “doctor” by the children and takes this opportunity to ask the children questions that expand their understanding of what happens at a check-up.

An educator supports the children’s interest by adding books about doctors and hospitals to the dramatic play centre hoping to build on the children’s interest and spark more questions and play – resulting in more learning.

Goal: Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans

YMCA Approach

YMCA Child Care programs are located in a variety of facilities including schools, community centres, and YMCA owned buildings.

At the YMCA we understand that the parent is the child's first teacher, the YMCA educator is the second teacher and the learning environment is the child's third teacher.

The YMCA's unique approach to planning and creating learning environments supports children's play so that early learning and healthy development is maximized.

YMCA learning centres are designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the children.

We have created home-like environments that include calm colours, soft furnishings, items from nature like plants and pets, family photographs, and accessories that are intended to make children feel comfortable and safe.

YMCA educators understand that children learn holistically not in one area of development at a time. We understand that riding a tricycle involves gross motor and fine motor skills but the play children engage in while riding a tricycle involves many more - communication skills, social skills, etc.

Therefore you may find books, paper and crayons in the block area because children are using these items to figure out how to build a bridge from one shelf to another. Or you may find play dough in the dramatic play area where children are making pizza. And on a beautiful day you may see indoor furniture move outdoors to take advantage of the weather.

YMCA structures the learning and play environment, which includes making adjustments and modifications when appropriate, so that children of all abilities are able to participate together in a variety of activities. The YMCA believes that by providing a learning and play environment encompassing a range of materials and activities for diverse needs, all children can successfully engage in programming, be challenged and feel a sense of belonging.

Goal: Incorporating indoor, outdoor, active, rest and quiet activities

YMCA Approach

YMCA educators design a daily schedule that meets the needs of the children and provides for a balance of activities throughout the day.

Consideration for the care requirements, age, developmental level, energy level, and interests of the children are included.

Generous blocks of time for children to explore, play, and inquire are included both indoors and outdoors.

The daily schedule is not rigid but operating in small groups is mandated. One small group of children may be on a walk in the community, while the other small group may prefer to stay indoors and bake cookies.

Periods of active and quiet play are interwoven throughout the day both indoors and outdoors.

At the YMCA we don't let the weather stop us from having fun in nature. The children love to bundle up in warm dry clothes and head out to jump in puddles or make snowballs. In very poor weather active play takes place indoors so that children get the physical activity their bodies require.

YMCA educators are trained to keep transitions from activity to activity minimal in order to provide the opportunity for the children to explore and play in a seamless manner.

However, young children thrive on regular schedules and feel secure when they can predict what will occur throughout the day therefore snacks and meal times are consistent as is the rest period in the afternoon for young children.

Goal: Fostering engagement and communication with parents

YMCA Approach

At the YMCA we understand that a parent is the most important person in a child's life. YMCA educators play a supporting role when the parent is not able to be there during the day.

YMCA educators and parents communicate on a daily basis about children's activities, health and well being. YMCA educators keep a record of each infant, toddler, and preschool age child's learning and development through daily journals/daily logs, written documentation that is available.

Getting to know family members is critical as an educator and including family members in program helps a child to feel a greater sense of belonging.

Other strategies to engage parents and gain input include:

- Documentations that describe play and its connection to learning
- Parent/educator interviews
- Celebrations and centre events
- Parent surveys
- Displays of children's artwork, sculptures, and creations
- Photographs of children at play (with written consent)
- Confirm with families/parents about preferred method of communication

Goal: Involving community partners

YMCA Approach

While our range of community partners varies by geographical area, our largest community partner is the education system. Many of our centres are located in schools. Open communication, which creates supportive relationships with principals, faculty and staff is essential to support the four foundations of belonging, engagement, expression and well-being that children need to experience daily.

The YMCA works closely with local community agencies and partners in order to support the children and families in our programs. We view the community as a valuable resource and our staff plan learning opportunities to engage the community in our programs.

The YMCA values the dynamics of the families within our communities.

The YMCA actively seeks out opportunities to share our knowledge and to learn from others in the community through networking opportunities, community planning tables and conferences.

Goal: Supporting educators' continuous professional learning

YMCA Approach

The YMCA is committed to the ongoing professional development of all our educators, what the educator learns informs practice and the benefit is passed onto the children.

YMCA educators attend a series of YMCA curriculum training sessions throughout their career with the YMCA. The YMCA provides opportunities for educators to attend external learning events, conferences, learning institutes in addition to keep legislated training requirements like Standard First Aid and Infant and Child CPR level C up to date.

On a day-to-day basis the child care centre supervisor is responsible for the leadership, mentorship, coaching and development of educators. Based on the learning needs of the educators the supervisor may meet with educators to suggest strategies, conduct learning huddles to focus on a particular area of YMCA curriculum with the entire team, conduct regular staff meetings to reflect and plan, invite speakers from other YMCA departments or community agencies to attend the centre, or provide materials including links, articles, and various readings to supplement educators' professional learning.

Goal: Pedagogical documentation

YMCA Approach

YMCA educators participate in a continuous cycle of observation as part of their role as a reflective professional. While educators use their observations for various components of supporting a child's play, a written account of a child's learning may be available and would encompass: a rich detailed description of the play experience, an explanation of how the play experience links to the individual child's learning and a quote that confirms an academic acknowledgement of the child/children's learning.

- Documenting play and its significance
- Determining the children's interests
- Planning activities that support the interests
- Discussion/collaborating with team members
- Reflection that informs the planning of activities and the learning environment

Links are made between theories, research, YMCA curriculum, the YMCA Program Statement, provincial government pedagogy, Continuum of Development and children's interests to inform the planning decisions YMCA educators make.

You will see the cycle of continuous observation reflected in the toys, materials, equipment provided in the play areas, the furniture arrangement, the creative work of children, and the planned activities that the children are engaging in. Photographs and written descriptions of activities may be used to support the conversations.

This process of continuous program assessment is called reflective practice. As educators engage with children daily through interactions and direct/indirect observation they are evaluating the effectiveness of the learning environment to build on children's interests. Weekly educators reviewing their planning and engage in reflective dialogue with their team/supervisor- sometimes community partners to ensure they are supporting children's learning and development. Through this type of reflective practice/ observations opportunities to scaffold and extend the children's zone of proximal development occurs as discussions about activities that were effective or ineffective occur.

Child Safety and Protection Policy

The YMCA is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people in its care. It recognizes its responsibility to promote safe practices and to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation. Our Child Care educators are trained in the identification and reporting of suspected abuse, as outlined in the Child and Family Services Act. The Child and Family Services Act requires that everyone who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of protection, shall immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to the Child Protection Agency. Further action will then be determined the Child Protection Agency.

YMCA Approach to Inclusion

The YMCA is experienced in providing inclusive programming for children with special needs, working closely with parents, YMCA educators/staff; school network and linking with community partners who support children with special needs to ensure the child's individual needs are met.

YMCA educators also receive consultation/training with either the YMCA Inclusion Services team or community inclusion teams. They provide environmental and developmental tools and resources to ensure optimum success for all children in the YMCA Before and After Care Programs and Preschool Child Care Programs, inclusive of physical, social and learning environment challenges.

It is essential that all pertinent information specific to the child's unique needs be made available to the educators at the time of registration inquiry. Once the inquiry takes place, a conversation will occur with YMCA educators/staff; and the child's parents to ensure that upon entry to a YMCA program, the appropriate support and resources are in place to ensure optimum success for the child. A review of the child's plan will occur annually or upon request of the parties involved. On occasion, despite our child care staff's efforts, there may be a situation where our program cannot reasonably meet the unique needs of a child. If this is determined, we will arrive at a decision in consultation with the child's family and link them with local agencies that can best support the child's needs.

Prohibited Practices

Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach to managing unwanted behaviour.

Any practice based on harmful disciplinary methods that affect the emotional or physical well being of children are not permitted in any YMCA child care programs.

These prohibited practices include the following:

- Corporal punishment of the child;
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- Locking the exits, of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policy and procedures;
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding;
- Leaving children unsupervised; or
- Any form of abuse - physical, sexual, emotional and/or neglect
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making them eat or drink against their will

Monitoring Procedures

The YMCA recognizes that how adults interact with children impacts their overall learning, developmental health and well being. The following measures will be implemented to ensure that educators understand and are following through with supporting positive interactions between children, families and educators.

All educators are expected to comply with the YMCA's stated policy and procedures, and the association's Child Care Program Statement. Annually, educators will receive

training on the Association's policies and procedures, including Child Care Protection and Prohibited Practices. They will acknowledge that they have reviewed and understand these policies and procedures by completing a Policy and Procedure Checklist that is dated annually, includes the educator's signature and the signature of their immediate supervisor.

Health and Illness

All children must be immunized or provide a notarized letter of exemption prior to attending the Child Care program. All medical information and immunization records must be kept up to date.

Educators will observe the children as they enter the program and before they interact with other children in order to detect any symptoms of ill health, this is part of a daily health check. If symptoms of ill health are observed, the educator will ask that the child be taken home and not return to the program for a minimum of 24 hours, dependent upon the child's symptoms and local Public Health guidelines. The parent or guardian may be asked to provide the centre with a doctor's note clarifying the child's health.

In addition to looking for and documenting symptoms of ill health such as fever, rash or gastrointestinal symptoms, if educators are aware of any sudden or gradual changes to a child's behavior, sleeping or eating patterns or signs that a child has lost some previously acquired skill they will contact the parent/guardian to inform them.

Parents are to keep their children at home if they display any one of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Diarrhea – twice in one day (once in one day if during an outbreak)
- Vomiting
- Undiagnosed rash/skin condition
- Communicable disease
- Obviously infected discharge
- Lethargy and irritability and are not able to participate in program
- Persistent pain
- Cough (frequent bouts – 3 to 5 times/ hour, especially if choking or vomiting)
- Head lice, eggs (nits) seen

Children with diagnosed communicable diseases will be excluded according to Health Department recommendations.

Children should not return to the program until they are ready to participate in all aspects of the program, including outdoor activities.

Medication and Non-Prescription Skin Products

Educators will administer only prescription medication or patent medicine that contain a Drug Identification Number with written confirmation by the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians will be required to fill out the Administration of Drugs and Medications Permission Form giving authorization to the Supervisor or designate to administer the drug or medication. This form will include a schedule for administering the medication and dosage. Medications must be in their original container as supplied by a pharmacist or the original package and that the container or package is clearly labeled with the child's name, date of purchase and expiration, the dosage of the drug or medication, name of drug, instructions for storage and administration of the drug.

All products (excluding asthma inhalers and epi-pens) containing Drug Identification Numbers (DIN) require an Administration of Drugs and Medications Permission Form, including vitamins, Tylenol, and lactaid.

Non-prescription (over-the-counter) skin products such as sunscreen, moisturizing skin lotion, lip balm, insect repellent, diapering creams and hand sanitizer can be administered in the program only when the parent/guardian provides written authorization using the Authorization for Non-Prescription Skin Products form. Parents/guardians can complete a single authorization form for multiple non-prescription skin products. All products must be provided to YMCA educators on site in the original packaging, labelled with the child's full name and the name of the product.

Anaphylaxis and Restricted Foods

Anaphylaxis is a severe systemic allergic reaction which can be fatal, resulting in circulatory collapse or shock. The allergy may be related to food, insect stings, medicine, latex, exercise etc. Exposure to even a minimal amount of a substance that a child is allergic to can trigger an anaphylactic reaction. To reduce the risk of anaphylactic shock, foods containing nuts/peanuts are not permitted at the child care centres. You will be notified in writing with any updated restrictions and information pertaining to triggers within our program. This policy is to help support the needs of a child with a severe allergy and provide some information on anaphylaxis and awareness to parents, educators, students and visitors to YMCA Child Care Programs.

The YMCA will communicate with families in the program of anaphylactic allergies and will request that the causative agents are not brought into the program – i.e. food, snacks, Educator's gifts etc... However due to a variety of reasons, including religious observance, severe allergies or intolerances, parents may choose to supply food and or drink for their child. Where a child requires special foods and is bringing meals or snack from home, the parent will be required to provide instructions on the Individual Support Plan (ISP). YMCA Supervisors will review with parents:

- Food or drink supplied by a parent will be in a container labelled with the child's name
- Food or drink that requires refrigeration or to be kept frozen is kept in the fridge or freezer at temperature directed by the local medical officer of health

- No food or drink will show visible signs of spoilage or mold (changes to the odor, discoloration or curding)
- No food or drink will be beyond its expiry date
- Educator will use proper food handling techniques in accordance with the direction of the local medical officer of health
- Snacks will provide nutritional value as well as refreshment; these foods will be easy for the child to handle and not be detrimental to dental health
- All meals, snacks and beverages must meet the recommendations set out in the Health Canada documents “Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide” or “Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants”

An Individual Anaphylaxis Plan indicating the type of anaphylactic allergy will be placed in the enrollment file/binder and all YMCA educators, placement students or volunteers will sign off they have read and understand the plan. The YMCA will post a list of known allergies or food restrictions of the enrolled children in each play room/play area, the food prep area, serving/eating area, other spaces where caution and awareness is required.

The YMCA will work with the child’s parent(s) or guardian(s) and/or physician to develop an individual plan for their child. The Anaphylaxis Individual Emergency Plan will be used to capture all relevant information including emergency procedures in the event of exposure to allergens. Any medication to be administered must be prescribed by a doctor and be current.

The parent will sign the Anaphylaxis Individual Emergency Plan to show that they consent to the method by which the educator is trained to administer emergency medication and identify how training was provided i.e. YMCA training, supervisor to educator, parent, doctor, etc. Parent will give consent for a child to self-carry on the Administration of Medication form.

Concussion Policy

The YMCA of Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants in YMCA programs.

Despite the best efforts of YMCA educators, participating in recreational activities can result in injuries, including concussions. A concussion can have long-term complications if it is not dealt with properly.

To ensure the safety of all participants in YMCA programs, this Concussion Policy was developed to:

- Provide a clear understanding of concussion related injuries;
- Provide a clear procedure for dealing with concussion related injuries when adults and children participating in a YMCA program are injured during the course of an activity;

- Reduce the risk of long-term complications related to concussions by requiring parents of individuals under the age of 18, who suffer a concussion to have their medical doctor and parent/guardian sign a form clearing the participant to return to physical activity as part of the participant’s Return to Physical Activity (R2P) Plan; and
- Reduce the potential long-term complications of concussion related injuries to adult participants of YMCA programs.
- The information contained in this Concussion Policy is intended to supplement existing emergency procedures at the YMCA of Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford including first aid procedures.

Serious Occurrence

The safety and well-being of the children in our child care programs is of the highest priority. We work diligently to provide a safe, creative and nurturing environment for each child. In spite of the best precautions, serious occurrences can sometimes take place. Licensed child care programs are required to report serious occurrences to the Ministry of Education. To support increased transparency and access to information, a “Serious Occurrence Notification Form” will be posted at the centre in a visible area for 10 days. The Serious Occurrence Posting will give parents information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken and the outcomes, while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. Longer-term actions taken by the operator will also be included to help prevent similar incidents in the future, where applicable.

Emergency Management

The safety and protection of children at the YMCA is of paramount importance. To ensure the wellbeing of children in our care, the YMCA has developed a detailed emergency management plan which provides critical response instructions for YMCA educators in the event of an emergency in our child care centre. Our Emergency Management Plan includes:

- The roles and responsibilities of YMCA staff in the event of an emergency
- Clear instructions on key action steps required in the event of an emergency
- Expectations regarding communication with parents
- Expectations on required emergency contacts to local response agencies
- Instructions on the documentation and post-emergency action steps for educators following resolution of an emergency

In the event of an emergency, parents will be called and a notification will be placed on the main entrance of the centre. A statement will also be pushed out through YMCA social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter), ymcahbb.ca and digital applications (Weemarkable and YMCAHBB app).

YMCA Educators receive annual emergency management training on these critical emergency management procedures.

Smoke Free Policy

In accordance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, no person shall smoke or hold lit tobacco and medical cannabis, or use electronic cigarettes (i.e. vaping) in or around the child care centre whether or not children are present. This includes playground, school property and surrounding area.

Head Lice

If head lice are detected while your child is attending our program, we ask that you pick them up immediately. A child with head lice will be allowed to return to the program when they are nit free.

Hours of Operation

Hamilton Early Learning Child Care Centres:
Open 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

Hamilton School Age Child Care Centres:
Open 7:30 am - 6:00 pm

Burlington Early Learning Child Care Centres:
Open 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

Burlington School Age Child Care Centres:
Open 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

Brantford Early Learning Child Care Centres:
Open 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

Brantford School Age Child Care Centres:
Open 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

All programs are closed on:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Thanksgiving Day
- Boxing Day
- Family Day
- Victoria Day
- Labour Day
- Christmas Day

All School Age Child Care programs are also closed on Easter Monday and Preschool Child Care programs running out of elementary schools may be closed on Easter Monday.

Fees are required during holiday closures. All Child Care programs will close early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

PA Days and Holidays Break

The YMCA will provide full day care on professional activity days and school break programs at select locations in Brantford, Hamilton and Burlington. A separate registration will take place for these programs. The YMCA offers Summer Day Camp during the months of July and August. Please visit our website ymcahbb.ca for more information.

Excursions

Throughout the year, trips may be made to places of interest that add an educational benefit to the children. A notice will be posted in advance of the excursion informing you of the destination, time and date.

What is a Typical Day?

Before and After Care (School Age Child Care)

Before School

The morning component allows the children to ease into their day including:

- Board games, arts and crafts
- Outdoor play (at least 15 minutes prior to school bell)
- Low organizational games
- A nutritious snack is served every morning

After School (End of school day until 6:00 pm)

Programming strives to create a balance between structured activities and free play including:

- Active play, dramatic play
- Board games, arts and crafts
- Outdoor play (minimum of half an hour)
- A quiet area is available for children to read books or complete homework (homework is optional)
- A nutritious snack is served each afternoon

Early Learning Child Care

Early Learning child care centres incorporate scheduled and unscheduled opportunities and activities in the program each day. While each centre's schedule may differ, they will include:

- daily opportunities for creative, sensory, fine and gross motor, dramatic play and science experiences
- activities including games and exploration;
- nutritional morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack
- outdoor play of a least one hour two times each day
- rest/quiet time

Child care educators ensure the daily program is reflective of the children's interests and developmental needs and allows for personal growth, development and learning.

Introducing Your Child to the Early Learning Program

Parents/guardians can help prepare their child for Child Care by outlining to them the types of activities that they will be involved in throughout the day. Special emphasis should be placed on the fact that you will be leaving, but will return. Parents are encouraged to bring their child for up to 3 play visits during the two weeks prior to the admission date. This gives the child an opportunity to become familiar with the centre and to make new acquaintances before the first day of care. The parent must remain in the centre during these visits until the child's registration form is completed, forwarded to administration and filed at the centre. During the initial period of adjustment, tears are a very natural occurrence. Educators will use their specialized skills in helping children overcome this difficult time. Settling your child into an activity before leaving can also be helpful. Parents can call the centre during the day to see how their child is doing and documentation describing your child's day will be available at pick up time.

Parents are encouraged to call ahead to set up an appointment for an initial visit at the child care centre. During this visit you will receive several registration forms. It is necessary for you to fully complete these forms and return them, along with a copy of your child's immunization record and the Method of Payment Form before your child's first day. Your child will have the opportunity to participate in scheduled play visits prior to their first day.

- Once children on the priority list have been placed, other children on the waiting list will be prioritized based on program room availability, and spaces will be offered to families based on the centre's ability to meet the needs of each child in care.

Offering an Available Space

- Families of children on the waiting list will be contacted and asked if they are interested in the space. If they cannot be reached on the first attempt, contact will be attempted again on the next business day;
- A family has 5 business days after initial contact has been made to confirm their acceptance of the child care space; if they cannot be reached, or do not return our call within 5 business days of the initial contact, the next person on the list will be contacted;
- Where a family has not responded within the given timeframe or if the space is declined, the child will be removed from the waiting list.

Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality

- The waiting list will be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the children and families on the list and therefore, only the child's position on the waiting list will be provided to families when obtaining information regarding the waiting list;
- Names of other children or families and/or their placement on the waiting list will not be shared with other individuals.

Withdrawal and Schedule Changes

Two weeks written notice is required for withdrawal or for a change of schedule. Two weeks' fees will still be charged if notice is not given prior to withdrawal. Preschool parents withdrawing their children during the summer months and wishing to re-register for the fall will be placed on the waiting list and must re-register when a space becomes available. Admission and discharge of children is at the discretion of the YMCA.

The YMCA allows two scheduled changes to a child's registered days within the school year. Any additional changes are subject to an administrative fee.

Tax Receipts

The YMCA issues official tax receipts to families on February 28th of each fiscal year. The YMCA will issue child care tax receipts in accordance with CRA regulations.

YMCA Guidelines for Child Care Program Closures

Severe Weather Conditions

In cases of severe weather conditions, many schools adjust their school hours and close earlier than the regular dismissal time. Schools generally close before the school day begins in the morning.

When school boards announce closures:

- YMCA programs operating out of those schools will also be closed (no refunds will be issued for these days).
- In cases of severe weather conditions, parents are asked to listen to local radio/TV announcements, check YMCA website, YMCA app and social media for information on school closures.

If the school has not been closed:

- If schools remain open and severe weather conditions progress throughout the day, YMCA educators will call parents to encourage early pick up. A message will also be placed on the Child Care Centre's voice mail advising of closures.

In the event the school building is being closed:

- If the school building is closed during YMCA program time due to an emergency, the educators and children will move to the emergency evacuation location. Parents will be notified and asked to pick-up their child immediately.

In the case of an emergency centre closure, which is outside the control of the YMCA, parents will be responsible for fees, not exceeding 2 (two) consecutive days. This includes emergency closures such as inclement weather closures, centres without heat/hydro, job action/strike. This means that should a centre need to close for up to 2 (two) days, parents will be expected to pay for care.

Our full day child care centres not located in schools will also follow the above policies.

Safe Arrival & Dismissal Policy

The intent of this policy and the procedures within is to support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care at YMCA Child Care Centre's.

The YMCA will ensure that any child receiving care is only released to the child's parent/guardian, or to an individual that the parent/guardian has provided authorization to release the child to. Children will not be released to anyone who is under 16 years of age. Designated persons picking up a child may be requested to show photo identification. The centre will not release any children from care without supervision.

Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, educators must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out in the following [Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy](#).

Parental Access Policy

1. The YMCA shall grant parents access to their children while the children are enrolled in our programs.
2. Access by non-custodial parents, even if name is omitted from registration form, shall be permitted unless a court order or a separation agreement prohibits such access. (Note: There must be proof that the person is the non custodial parent)
3. The onus shall be on the custodial parent to provide the YMCA with a certified copy of the court order or separation agreement in the event that he or she wishes to deny access to the non-custodial parent.

If Your Child Will Be Away

The YMCA educator needs to know where your child is every day to ensure your child is safe. If your child is registered but cannot attend the program on their scheduled day, please notify the centre via program's communication app, email, and/or contact the program at the phone number provided during registration. Parents are asked to keep the centre supervisor updated with current emergency information i.e. new cell phone number, change of address.

Payment is required for absenteeism. The YMCA reserves the right to manage enrollment due to extended absenteeism. In situations where a child has been absent for a prolonged period of time, and capacity is limited, parents may be asked to withdraw from the program. Parents wishing to re-register will be placed on the waiting list until a space becomes available. Admission and discharge of children is at the discretion of the YMCA.

Impaired Parents / Guardians

YMCA educators have been directed to follow specific procedures should a parent/guardian who is impaired arrive to pick up their child. Educators will request the parent to take a cab or to contact an alternate person who can be responsible for driving them home. If this is not observed by the parent, the Police and the Child Protection Agency may be called.

Volunteers and Students in the Program

Throughout the year you may see students doing field placements as well as volunteers in the centre. Field placements and volunteering give an opportunity to learn through experience. It allows volunteers and students to learn and apply basic principles and techniques for guiding and nurturing young children. While on a placement, students and volunteers will never have unsupervised access to the children in the centre and they are not counted in our staff/child ratios. Students and volunteers undergo a vulnerable sector criminal record check and are oriented into the program before beginning their placements.

Your Privacy – Information Collection, Use & Disclosure

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford is committed to and respects your privacy. We recognize that when you choose to provide us with any information about yourself or your company, you trust us to act in a responsible manner. That's why we have put this policy in place to protect your personal information. The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act refers specifically to personal information. Your information is used only for the purpose for which it was given to us. It will not be shared, sold or loaned to anyone or any business. Any information that you give will be compliant to the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act of 2000. For more information, please see our website www.ymcahbb.ca

YMCA-Program-to-Program Information Exchange

For the safety and wellbeing of children in our care, the YMCA will share information with other YMCA program areas as children transition or enroll in new YMCA programs.

Parent Issues & Concerns Policy and Procedures

Intent

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford is committed to service excellence in the delivery of YMCA programs, services and supporting our charitable mandate. It is recognized that from time to time there may be concerns/complaints and parent issues that may arise. The YMCA recognizes that parents/guardians have the right to raise such complaints/ concerns and/or parental issues, and that they need mechanisms to do so. This policy is intended to create a transparent and timely method of responding to public complaints. The YMCA recognizes that when a person has a complaint about the YMCA, the way in which his/her complaint is handled is critical to the person's ongoing relationship with our organization.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in YMCA child care centres and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing within our program. As identified in the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford's program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and educators, and foster the engagement of an ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Educators are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction. Complaints are defined as but not limited to an expression of dissatisfaction with regard to a service/program (e.g. program-related, educator-related, and operational).

Procedure

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians will be taken seriously by the YMCA and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties as quickly as possible. Complaints/concerns are encouraged to be discussed with the educator who is most connected to the concern/situation, either in person, by phone or by email. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

If the complaint is not resolved or if the parent/guardian is uncomfortable discussing the issue with the relevant educator, the parent/guardian can inform the supervisor, manager or General Manager for the program. This process can be used to resolve many inquiries or matters of simple error that can be corrected to your satisfaction.

Process

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford is committed to handling concerns/complaints/parental issues promptly, consistently and fairly. Complainants will be treated with respect and kept informed of the status of the complaint. The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford child care department will respond to all complaints within 2 business days of receiving the complaint. The initial response to a concern/complaint/parental issue will be to confirm the complaint has been received and to indicate expectations for how long the investigation will take if it can be reasonably assessed at that point. The YMCAHBB aims to resolve all concerns/complaints and parental issues within 10 business days of receiving them. If this timeframe cannot be met, parent/guardians will be informed of the reasons and given a revised timeframe. Upon completion of the investigation, parents/guardians will be provided with clear reasons for the decisions relating to the complaint.

Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, educator, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party. If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or educator feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or Manager.

Escalation of Issues or Concerns

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Manager/General Manager. Please refer to Page 28 for office phone numbers and emails.

If you have been unable to resolve your concern through the informal process described above, a formal complaint may be made in writing to: Complaints c/o Vice President, Communications YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford 79 James St South, Hamilton, ON L8P 2Z1 or via email to feedback.hbb@ymcahbb.ca.

Please provide your contact information, as the YMCA will not respond to anonymous complaints. If you are unable to register the complaint in this manner due to a disability, you may contact the YMCA to request accommodation, which will be provided appropriate to your needs and circumstances.

For more information, view our full [Parent Issues and Concerns Policy](#)

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/CASLocations.aspx>

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act.

For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

YMCA Strong Kids Campaign

The YMCA is a leading Canadian charity. The YMCA Strong Kids Campaign is focused on raising much needed financial support for children, teens and families who are unable to afford the full cost of participation in a YMCA program or activity. The YMCA Strong Kids Campaign helps one person at a time or one family at a time. That might mean providing the funds to help a child attend day camp for the first time; help a struggling teen find employment; enable a child to participate in a recreation or fitness activity; enable a struggling family to use a child care facility; or help youth gain the confidence and skills to avoid addiction, violence, and isolation.

School Age programs educate and fundraise annually for the YMCA Strong Kids Campaign. Each YMCA offers unique programs to serve the needs of their community; each community has children, teens, and families that need your help. We encourage you to invest in a child today. Every kid deserves a chance.

Financial Assistance

As a charitable organization, the YMCA strives to serve all segments of the community, including those with limited financial means. Donors to the YMCA make this possible. If financial circumstances are limiting your ability to participate, assistance may be provided. Please contact us for more information. All inquiries will be held in strict confidence.

Accessibility

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford strives to provide safe and accessible services for all members, participants, volunteers, and staff. To this end, the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford is committed to ensuring that all persons with disabilities are treated equally with respect to the delivery of YMCA programs and services. The YMCA has developed accessibility policies which are designed to inform and educate members, staff and volunteers that the YMCA is dedicated to adhering to the requirements of the Accessibility for all Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, O.Reg. 429/07 and is committed to providing accessible services to all members.



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