














Parent Handbook  
For  
Early Learning Programs at  
The Lynch/van Otterloo YMCA  
2011 - 2012

INFANT/TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK  
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### Statement of Purpose

All programs of the YMCA of the North Shore are designed around the organization's mission statement: "The YMCA of the North Shore is committed to education and the values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Our YMCA provides all children, adults, and families, regardless of income, with opportunities to develop a healthy spirit, mind and body."

### Philosophy

Our curriculum addresses all aspects of child development, offering carefully planned activities to ensure that children achieve their full potential in language, emerging literacy, cognitive and physical skill development. We focus on the emotional and social growth of children, stressing the YMCA's values of caring, honest, respect and responsibility. We offer a wide range of enrichment activities, including swimming and gymnastics, music and movement, and health and nutrition curriculum. The YMCA advocates for all parents in their efforts to be responsible caregivers who seek developmentally appropriate activities, practices and programs for their children.

### Goals

To help children develop:

- Self-confidence
- Interpersonal skills
- Positive values
- Cognitive skills
- Physical skills
- Sense of community
- Healthy habits

### Objectives

1. To provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of self and others, and to develop social skills in a setting of warmth, respect, positive support and responsiveness.
2. To provide a curriculum that encourages children to grow intellectually by experiencing a wide variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials while pursuing their own interests in the context of life in the community.
3. To meet the needs of children and their families by offering safe and affordable programs staffed by competent, responsible caregivers that understand and meet the needs of children.
4. To strengthen the family unit by providing opportunities for families to work and play together, to share values, to improve their economic stability, and to broaden their sense of community with other families.

### Non-Discrimination Policy

The YMCA of the North Shore shall not discriminate in providing service to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, disability, marital status, national origin or sexual orientation. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement.

### Licensing Agency

Our programs are licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education & Care (EEC,) Northeast Regional Office, 360 Merrimack Street, Building 9, 3rd floor Lawrence, MA 01843.

Phone: 978-681-9684; Fax: 978-689-7618. Parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history. The program is mandated to uphold all of the Department's rules and regulations pertaining to Early Education child care licensing. Our programs operate year round. An authorized representative from EEC makes inspection visits before a license to operate is issued. During program operation, the licensor will make scheduled visits to inspect the program for compliance with all regulations. The licensor has the right to make an unscheduled visit at any time and would visit if a report of serious deficiencies is made by any person. A copy of the regulations may be obtained on-line at [www.mass.gov/eec](http://www.mass.gov/eec) or from the center director by request.

### Age categories

Toddler	15 months to 33 months
Transitional Preschool	2.9-2.11 years
Preschool	3 years to kindergarten eligible
Transitional Kindergarten	5 years by December 31st

### **Enrollment Procedure**

In order to ensure that your child gets the best possible care, the YMCA requires a pre-enrollment visit/tour before enrollment in the program. During the tour we will learn about your child, his needs, and your expectations for the program. During this time, all YMCA services and programs are explained. This process helps both the parent and the child become familiar with the environment of the center and learn how care is given. Enrollment decisions are made between the child care director and parent in accordance with the EEC regulations.

Parents are required to complete all paperwork and return it to the center PRIOR to the child's start at the center. A registration fee is charged. The registration fee is not applied toward tuition. Physicals and immunization records are due PRIOR to the child's first day in the program.

Per EEC regulations, all paperwork is valid for ONE YEAR only. It must be completed annually to ensure that the best quality care can be given to your child.

### **Orientation**

Once enrolled, a special time and date will be arranged for your child to visit the classroom to become familiar with the surroundings, the teacher and his/her new classmates. During this visit, both child and parents will participate in classroom activities interacting with both teachers and children. This will help to reduce apprehensions (for child and parents) on the first day of school.

### **Arrival**

Upon arriving at the center each day, the parent/adult must accompany the child to his/her classroom and make sure the child's teacher has acknowledged his/her arrival.

### **Departure**

Children must be picked up by a parent or authorized person by closing time. We will not release to anyone not authorized, in writing, by the parent. Should you need to send a person to pick up who is not on your pick up authorization list, you must send a written note and call the director to report this change. Any person not recognized by the staff will be required to show picture identification before the child is released to him/her. Always touch base with the teacher to make sure she knows you are taking the child.

### **Late Pick Up Policy**

Parents and/or authorized persons must call the YMCA if they will not be able to arrive before the official closing time of their child's center. Each day a parent and/or an authorized person is late picking up a child, a late fee will be assessed. It is not the YMCA's intention to make money from these fees. The money collected will defray the cost incurred by keeping the center open. The late fees are as follows:

- Within the first 10 minutes after the center officially closes, or your child's scheduled time, the fee assessed will be \$15.00.
- an additional \$2.00 per minute will be assessed after the first ten minutes.

### **IF A CHILD HAS NOT BEEN PICKED UP BY 7:00 PM and THE YMCA STAFF HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL AT:**

- Contacting a parent/guardian or a designated authorized emergency person

### **AND**

- Parent/Guardian or authorized person HAS NOT contacted the YMCA to inform staff of late arrival

### **THE YMCA WILL FOLLOW THESE PROCEDURES:**

- Contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child at Risk Hot Line and inform them that we have an abandoned child.
- A YMCA Staff member will stay with child until a DCF social worker takes over the situation.
- The YMCA Staff member will attempt to leave a message for the parent or authorized person as to where to locate their child.

If a parent/guardian is late more than 3 times it may result in suspension and termination from YMCA Early Learning programs.



### **Hours of Operation**

**Our early education program operates throughout the year and is open Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 6:00 PM.**

### **Absences/Messages**

To ensure the safety of your child, please call the YMCA at **781-990-7005** to report all absences for any reason by **8:30am**. You may leave a voice mail for the teacher or the director at any time of day or night.



- There will be \$25.00 service fee on all returned checks. The YMCA reserves the right to ask parents to pay with money orders.
- The first week's payment is due upon enrollment. All payments must be made at least weekly, before services are rendered. Please see us if you run into financial difficulty. Parents who fall behind on their payments will receive an Advanced Termination of Services Notice. Parents will have two weeks to bring their account current the first time payment is late.
- The YMCA reserves the right to send accounts into collections.
- A two-week written notice is required when requesting a schedule change or withdrawing your child from YMCA Early Learning programs.



### **Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event that the Marblehead public schools are closed due to snow, the Early Learning Program will be closed. If the school is delayed, we will be open.

- If the weather situation is extremely hazardous, the YMCA Branch Executive Director will determine whether or not the centers will remain open.
- Should a snow day fall on your child's service day, the parent will be required to pay their regular fee.
- In the event of the YMCA needing to close early, all parents will be contacted using your information provided on your child's forms.

### **Snow Day Public School Delayed Opening**

In the event the public schools announce a one or two hour delay, the YMCA will be open regularly scheduled hours. Should conditions make it necessary to delay the opening of YMCA Early Learning centers beyond 7:30 AM, the front desk will be provided with the information. Please call 781-631-9622 if you are unsure.

### **Center Closure**

If in the event of a declared state of emergency by the Governor of Massachusetts, the YMCA may be closed all day. This information will be available by contacting the YMCA's front desk. or visit the YMCA's website [www.northshoremca.org](http://www.northshoremca.org) to learn more information about weather closures.

### **INFANT/TODDLER ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

The infant/Toddler program goals for learning and growing are designed to meet the specific needs, interests, and developmental level of each child. Infants and toddlers are working on forming trusting relationships with adults and other children. The room is designed to encourage greater independence, develop large and small motor skills, and social interaction between children and caregivers. Teachers will provide supervised opportunities to explore and use materials. All activities and materials are chosen to allow very young children to experience success, providing opportunities to develop a positive self-concept and self-help skills. Because infants and toddlers learn about the world by exploring and manipulating objects, free play is a major part of each day. Health and safety are always a top priority in setting up the environment and activities. Outdoor play or stroller excursions will be a daily part of the Infant/Toddler program. Your child's teacher will let you know the daily schedule in his/her classroom.

### **PRESCHOOL ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

Our preschool curriculum is a developmental school readiness program which includes learning opportunities such as:

- Outdoor play
- Swim time
- Music
- Art
- Story time
- Field trips
- Computers and math
- Science and exploration
- Special events

In each classroom, the staff assesses the range of developmental levels/needs and designs an age appropriate curriculum. Your child's teacher will let you know the daily schedule in his/her classroom.

Healthy practices and independence with self help skills are a strong focus. All children and staff are expected to wash their hands prior to any eating activity. Individual toileting needs will be met whenever necessary. Daily lesson plans are developed to challenge and afford opportunities for success for the full range of developmental abilities. The Early Learning Director approves lesson plans before teachers implement them in the classroom. The YMCA of the North Shore supports the four core values of honesty, caring, respect and responsibility. We model those values for children. Input from parents on what topics or activities are of interest to the child is encouraged.

## **Assessment Plan**

As we work with each child, we want to make sure that we are helping him learn and develop. We gather information on what the child is doing as the days and weeks pass and compare that to research based information on typical developmental steps for children his age. Then, we assess progress and plan our activities for upcoming weeks. We either increase opportunities and enticements to learn and practice these skills or help him reach for new, more challenging goals. We choose to use the *Creative Curriculum*© system to collect our data because it beautifully ties in child progress with curriculum planning. It helps our busy teachers tie planning and assessment together for their classroom and each child.

- Procedure  
Teachers are encouraged to record information about each child's activities and interactions on a daily basis. This information is data entered into the Creative Curriculum.Net© computer system so that the information can be organized by date and correlated to appropriate learning goals established for the child. In this way, the teacher can easily see growth over the year. Teachers compare the growth they see in the child with the developmental continuum for each of 36 goals. This clarifies progress and guides the teacher's plans for next steps. This information is shared with parents in writing twice a year, in January and June for preschoolers and toddlers.
- Confidentiality  
Only teachers and administrators who are involved with a child's assessment and curriculum planning have access to his CC.Net data and are able to read and discuss plans. Teachers will share the report only with parents. Hard copies of reports are kept in child files which are in the office and which are kept locked.
- Family involvement  
Parents are encouraged to discuss progress with the teacher at any time, but especially to reflect on the written progress reports. Together, parents and teachers can plan goals and coordinate efforts between home and school.

## **Birthday and Holiday Celebrations**

On occasions such as birthday celebrations and class parties, parents may donate goodies and/or treats for their child's classroom. Emphasis is placed on healthy alternatives when celebrating these events. Any item provided must be factory sealed with an ingredients list on the package or fresh fruits or vegetables. Homemade items cannot be accepted as we must be sure of ingredients for children with allergies. Donations to consider are: fruit kabobs, pretzels, rice cakes, bagels, popsicles, and hoodies. Please check with your child's teacher prior to any event. Keep in mind that there may be children in your child's group with food allergies or dietary concerns.



## **Toileting Procedures**

### **For Preschoolers:**

Preschool children are brought to the bathroom as a regularly scheduled activity of their program day. In addition, preschoolers are encouraged to voice their needs in this regard and will be immediately brought to the bathroom by a staff member. Children are never forced to go to the bathroom or remain on the toilet. Early Learning staff may gently encourage a child to use the toilet, however, if the child refuses, staff will reassure the child that he/she will be taken to the bathroom at another time as necessary. Children are encouraged to attend to their own toileting needs; however, if a child requires assistance, the staff member will use plastic gloves to assist the child through the toileting process. Children are reminded to wash their hands before returning to the classroom after using the toilet. Toileting accidents are not punished in any way.

### **Diapering and Toileting for Infants and Toddlers**

We view diapering and toileting as an opportunity for caregivers and children to engage in one to one interactions. Infants and Toddler children are changed every two hours or as needed. Children will not remain in soiled or wet diapers. Infants and Toddlers may not wear cloth diapers. We do not have adequate storage for the soiled cloth diapers. Parents are to supply the center with a labeled bag of at least 10 disposable diapers per day. The following guidelines are utilized during diapering:

- Staff member keeps one hand on the child at all times to prevent falling.
- Staff member washes hands before and after.
- Staff member washes the changing mat in bleach solution and covers it with new paper after each use.
- Staff person wears plastic gloves.
- Soiled diapers are placed in a plastic lined, covered container

### **Toilet Training**

When your child is developmentally ready to begin toilet training, the staff will follow the parent's lead to ensure that we are consistent in our expectations. Parents and staff will communicate often, discussing how the child is responding and progressing towards independent toileting. Under no circumstances will your child be pressured or forced into using the toilet. It is helpful if parents supply the child care center with at least two changes of clothing during the toilet training process.

## **PRESCHOOL AND TODDLER SLEEP, REST, AND QUIET ACTIVITY POLICY**

All children enrolled in the full day programs will have a quiet activity such as story time, listening to music, etc. mid-session during the morning and afternoon. An additional extended rest, quiet activity or sleep period will be provided for children in care longer than 4 hours. The length of this period will be appropriate to meet the needs of the children. Children who do not sleep will be provided with quiet activities such as books to read or puzzles to work on their mats.

Each child must have a separate blanket labeled with his/her name. Bedding for each child is stored separately from other children's bedding. The area designated for extended rest will allow for minimal distraction from noise and other disturbances. Quiet, soothing music may be played. After rest, all blankets and bedding will be stored separately in a designated area in the center. Child's beddings is washed weekly at the center.



### **Clothing**

Children at the YMCA are active and involved and will get dirty as they paint, explore and play outside. They should wear clothes that are comfortable, practical and wash easily. Try to send your child in clothing that makes it easy for him/her to dress him/herself. All belongings should be labeled with the child's name. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. In winter, please ensure that your child is dressed properly for cold weather – hat, mittens, warm jacket, snow pants and boots. We will go out unless it is inclement or the temperature/wind chill is below 32 degrees. Please send your child in sneakers; do not send your child in sandals, clogs, or "party shoes" as they present a safety concern for active play.

Please provide an extra set of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and sweatshirt) and mark all items with your child's name. The extra set of clothing should be placed in a clear plastic bag that is marked with the child's name. Parents will be given dirty clothing in a plastic bag for laundering at home. It will be the parent's responsibility to maintain a complete set of extra clothing in the child's backpack. Infants/toddlers should have at least two changes available each day.

Because hoodie drawstrings have been known to get caught in equipment and pose a danger of choking a child, we will cut or remove them. Jewelry such as hoop earrings, bangle bracelets, and chains also pose this danger and we ask that you not have your child wear them to school.



### **Snack and Lunch**

Each child should bring snacks and lunch including drinks from home. Please package separately – snacks and lunch for the child's convenience. Suggestions for healthy lunches are sandwiches which contain protein such as meat, cheese, or tuna fish. Vegetable slices, raisins, fruit and milk will complement a healthy meal. Suggestions for snacks include fruit or a raw vegetables, cheese, or raisins. Please do not send sweets as they are not allowed due to our nutrition guidelines. No soda or glass bottles. Drinking water is available at all times at the center. **Please make sure the lead teacher is notified of any food allergies your child may have, and you have an Individual Health Plan on file.**



### **Drinking Water**

Water that is supplied to children comes from the tap water system at the YMCA. If the center's water supply is impaired for any reason, bottled water will be used. Water is readily available and in a location near program rooms. All children are provided with water upon request throughout the day.

### **Special Dietary Concerns**

Accommodations can be made for children with dietary restrictions due to food allergies or religious concerns. The Early Learning program will follow parental or a physician's instructions, as noted on the Individual Health Care Plan, for preparing and/or feeding of special diets for children. Written notification will be issued to all parents in a classroom if there are any severe allergies that may prohibit certain food items being brought to the classroom.

The director will monitor children with food allergies and/or special diets and adapt the menu to be sure these needs are met. Any parent/guardian who may have questions or concerns about their child's nutritional needs can speak with the Center's Director for ideas and resources that may include:

- Planning healthy family meals
- Meeting the needs for over/underweight children
- Support and ideas for dealing with mealtime problems



## **HEALTHY LUNCH**

Providing preschoolers and toddlers with a healthy lunch that is not the same everyday can be a difficult task. Parents frequently look to prepared snacks, juices, etc. to help them with this time consuming task. It is important to understand that a balanced diet consists of five basic food groups that children should eat from each day.

These are: Milk Group - 2 servings per day, Fruit Group- 2-3 servings per day, Vegetable Group - 2-3 servings per day, Grain Group - 4 servings per day and the Meat/Meat Alternative Group - 2 servings per day.

No soda is permitted in the center. Staff is unable to refrigerate or heat lunches. PLEASE make sure you have an ice pack in your child's lunch box to keep the food at a safe temperature throughout the day.

We suggest including something from each food group such as the following items in your child's snack or lunch:

### **Recommended Healthy Food Choices for Children's Lunches and Snacks**

<u>Sandwich</u>	<u>Beverage</u>	<u>Fruit/Vegetables</u>	<u>Desserts</u>
Cheese	100% Fruit Juice	Orange slices	Crackers
Chicken	Milk	Apple	Yogurt
Bagel/Cream Cheese	Soup	Pear	Muffins
Jam/Jelly		Banana	Jell-O
Lean Cold Cuts		Grapes (cut in ½)	Fruit Snacks
Tuna Fish		Peach	Rice Cakes
Salad		Dried Fruit	Cheese Sticks
		Raisins	
		Carrot Sticks (not rounds)	
		Celery Sticks	



**Glass bottles will not be allowed at the program for safety reasons.**



### **What to bring to Preschool:**

Lunch and snacks with necessary eating utensils and Ice pack

A refillable water bottle

An extra set of clothing in a clear plastic bag

- If your child is toilet training please send in a few extra set of clothes

Bathing suit and towel on swim days

Sneakers for gym, playground time, and gymnastics

Appropriate Outside Clothing – sweatshirt, jacket, snow suits & boots

Pull-ups for toilet training children

Crib sized sheet and blanket for nap time (non-applicable for TK children)

PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL!!!



### **What to bring for Infants and Toddlers:**

Lunch and snacks with necessary eating utensils and Ice pack

- PLEASE do not send in glass baby food jars

Two complete sets of labeled clothing each day

At least 10 diapers per day in a labeled bag OR a package each week.

A Container of Wipes

Topical Ointment if necessary

A sippy cup

Crib sized sheet and blanket for nap time

PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL!!!

### **What NOT to bring to the center**

Children may be asked as a part of their program to share a book or special item that relates to the classroom theme on show and tell activity days. Check with your teacher or on your parent information board for those specific dates. Please label the object and encourage your child to share it with the other children.

**Toys from home** will not be allowed in school. This will decrease the likelihood of arguments due to sharing issues, or the possibility of loss. If a toy is brought to the center, we will ask you to take it home with you at drop off.

The YMCA promotes NON-VIOLENT PLAY AND BEHAVIOR. It is our mission to teach children that problems and arguments can be solved in a peaceful manner. THEREFORE, NO TOY GUNS, WAR TOYS, or AGGRESSIVE FIGURES, ARE ALLOWED AT ANY TIME.

The YMCA staff does its best to return all belongings to the rightful owner. Remember to label everything with your child's name so there is no confusion when other children have the same belonging(s).

If you are missing an item, please let us know. Each center keeps a lost and found box, be sure to check there for missing items.

### **Health Care Policy**

The YMCA of the North Shore has worked with our health care consultant, Dr. Philomena A. Asante to ensure the health and safety of all program participants. A copy of the full policy is available upon request from your director. All emergency telephone numbers will be posted by each telephone.



### **Mild Illness and Sick Child Policy**

YMCA Early Learning directs its sick care policy toward balancing three concerns: children's well-being, parent's needs, and the well being of all the children and staff of the education program.

If an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children or if a child's condition is suspected to be contagious then the child will not be able to attend the program. The following guidelines will assist the parents in determining whether or not to keep their child home.

#### **When a child can't attend the program:**

There are a few illnesses for which children need to be excluded from the program due to the health risk they pose for other children and staff. If the child has had a contagious illness, he/she may return to child care after being evaluated by a physician and considered to pose no serious health risk to him/her or others. Written documentation from the physician is required to return to the program

The time after beginning treatment and returning will vary depending on a specific disease and should be discussed with the education staff.

A child will be excluded from coming to the center when too ill to participate in his/her usual activities, has head lice, and/or has signs or symptoms of infectious disease including:

1. Skin rash
2. Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
3. Conjunctivitis
4. Repeated vomiting
5. Measles, mumps, chicken pox, rubella
6. Persistent cough
7. Diarrhea
8. Pinworms
9. Hepatitis

**In accordance with the Massachusetts Licensing Department, Early Education and Care, if a child has any of the above symptoms or is sent home after becoming ill at the center they must remain home symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to the center.**

The center will notify parents should their child be exposed to a contagious illness, in accordance with the Division of Communicable Disease Control, Department of Public Health.

#### **When Your Child Becomes Ill at the Center**

He/she is made comfortable in a location where she or he is supervised by a familiar caregiver and away from others to reduce their exposure to communicable diseases. The parent/guardian is called and told of the symptoms of illness and will be asked to pick the child up.

#### **When Your Child is Ready to Return (or mildly ill and non-contagious)**

Bring in all prescription and non-prescription drugs with your pediatrician's signature and complete an authorization for medication form. Medication will only be administered in accordance with the medication and drug administration policy.

- Assist staff members in planning your children's day by describing what the "sick schedule" was like: nap times, foods eaten, and type of play or restrictions.
- Plan to allow for a flexible schedule the first day back as your child may need a shorter day.
- Call the staff members frequently to "check in" on your child's status.

- Talk with your child about what their limitations are (no swimming, no running at gym) in order to limit disappointment.



## **Medication and Drug Administration Policy**

Medication will only be administered under the following guidelines

- **Written Consent**

Medication will not be administered to a specified child, prescription or non-prescription, without written consent of both physician **AND** parent/guardian. Please bring the consents and the medicine and hand it to your child's teacher or to the director. Never tuck medicine in your child's backpack or expect him/her to deliver it.

- **Physician's Consent**

The label on a prescription medication container will be accepted as the physician's written order, but a note from the physician is required for all other medications. The label must indicate that the medicine is for the specific child, specify the dosage to be given, the number of times it is to be administered per day, the number of days the medicine is to be taken and it must be dated within the period that the medicine is being administered. Medication will be administered according to the directions on the original container, unless the child's licensed health care practitioner gives alternative written instruction.

- **Parental/Guardian Consent**

A Medication Authorization Form will be provided for the parent/guardian to fill out for the specified child. Each form must be completely filled out, signed and dated. No deviations in the dosages will be permitted unless by authorized written order of the child's physician.

- **Storage and Administration**

Medication is to be handed to a staff member by the parent/guardian upon arrival at the center. All pills will be counted and documented. Both parent/guardian and center staff will sign the medication sheet showing agreement for the number of pills received. Medication must be stored in their original containers and labeled with the child's name, the name of the drug and the directions for its administration and storage. All medications except epi-pens and inhalers are secured out of reach of children and under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security (particularly for class D drugs) and safety. In the event that a medication needs to be refrigerated, it will be kept on a shelf designated for medication or in a staff refrigerator when it exists. In any case, it will be made inaccessible to children. Any unused or outdated medication will be returned to the parent when no longer needed (with the number of pills returned documented and signed by both center staff and parent/guardian.) If return to the parent is not possible or practical the medication will be destroyed and the destruction witnessed and documented.

If pills need to be split, we ask that this be done by the parent before the medication is transferred to program staff. No more than a thirty day supply of medication will be accepted by program staff.

All medications will be administered by staff that have successfully completed the EEC on-line training. Any staff administering medication will be observed administering medication annually by supervisor to ensure he/she is practicing the FIVE RIGHTS: right child, right medication, right dose, right time, and right method with documentation. Staff will maintain a written record of the administration of any prescription or non-prescription medicine to each child which will include the time and date of each administration, the dosage, the name of the staff member administering the medication and the name of the child. The completed record will be made part of the child's file. This does not apply to topical non-prescription medications that are not applied to open wounds, rashes, or broken skin.

### **Staff shall not administer the first dose of any medication to a child except under extraordinary circumstances and with parental consent.**

Full-day programs plan to meet children's medicinal needs as ordered by their physician. For non-prescription medications, a physician may give a standing order listing the medication(s), dosage and criteria for administration. The order is valid for one year from the date it was signed. If possible, parental permission will be obtained before a dosage of non-prescription medication is administered to insure that the child has not just had it at home or that it is otherwise contraindicated. The parent will be notified in writing each time the medication is administered.

### **Topical Medications**

Written parental/guardian consent with criteria for administration will be accepted for topical medications to be applied to unbroken skin. Parents need to send the medication in original container; medication will not be administered in a manner contrary to printed product directions without physician's written consent.

If the use of insect repellent has been recommended by the Department of Public Health due to a concern about insect borne illnesses such as EEE or West Nile Virus, then a product containing DEET should be used. However, such products will not be used on infants less than two months old.

Topical medications, such as petroleum jelly, diaper rash ointments and anti-bacterial ointments, that are applied to wounds, rashes, or broken skin must be stored in the original container, labeled with the child's name, and used only for that child. A physician's order will be required. Application of medication to wounds, rashes or broken skin will be logged in the medication administration record.

Topical medications such as sunscreen, insect repellent, and other ointments which are not applied to open wounds, rashes, or broken skin may be generally administered to children with written permission from parents/guardians.

#### Medication Errors and Emergencies:

A medication error includes any failure to administer medications as prescribed for a child, including failure to administer the medication within appropriate time frames (defined as plus or minus a half hour from specified time), in the correct dosage, in accordance with accepted practice and to the correct student.

When an error occurs, parents/guardians will be notified immediately. Errors will be documented and kept within the child's file and reported to EEC. Errors will also be logged in the center's injury log and reviewed by the Health Care Consultant. In the event of an emergency resulting from a medication that threatens the well being of the child, the medical emergency procedures will be followed.

#### Epi-Pen Policy

The care of children whose existing medical condition necessitates the usage of an epi-pen must follow the Commonwealth's Medication and Drug Administration Policy previously stated. An individual Health Care Plan stating specific existing conditions under which to administer the epi-pen and signed by parent and physician must be provided to the program before the child can attend.

Any programs with a child who may need an epi-pen will post specific directions for when to administer the epi-pen on the allergy and medication list. All staff will be made aware of the need for the epi-pen. In addition, the program will assign a staff member to directly monitor the child's activities. This staff member will be responsible to carry the epi-pen during **all** of the child's activities. In the event of an emergency the designated staff will first administer the epi-pen and then dial 911 to transport the child to the nearest medical facility. If a second staff is present, that staff will dial 911 while the epi-pen is being administered. Even if the child appears out of danger, he/she **must** be transported by ambulance to the nearest medical facility for evaluation.

Parent/guardians will be called after the 911 call has been made and told where to meet their child. An incident report will be completed for the parent to review and sign. The report will be sent to EEC, a copy will be made for the parents, and one copy will be placed in the child's permanent record. Administration of the epi-pen will be included in both the incident log and the medication administration log. A new epi-pen must be provided before the child may return to the program.



#### Dental Health

In order to encourage and instill good oral hygiene habits our curriculum will include the topics of tooth care, tooth brushing procedures, causes of tooth decay, the healthy habits that keep teeth strong and learning about the dentist.

#### Tooth brushing procedures

Any child in the program longer than four hours or who consumes a meal at the center will brush his teeth assisted and/or supervised by a staff person. Tooth brushing will be done with all children who have at least one tooth erupted.

- Each child will be assigned a tooth brush labeled with his name and the date of issue.
- Tooth brushes will be stored in a holder open to the air such that no tooth brush touches another.
- Tooth brushes will be replaced after illness, or if worn, but at least every three months.
- Only educators will take and replace toothbrushes in the storage system.
- Each child will be handed his tooth brush and, if tooth paste is used, a pea size dab of tooth paste.
- Toothpaste will not be dispensed onto a toothbrush from the tube.
- Children will be encouraged to spend two minutes brushing teeth, tongue, and gums.
- When brushing is complete children will be encouraged to rinse the toothbrush and return it to the educator.
- Surfaces in the brushing area will be sanitized after brushing is completed.

## **PLAN FOR EVACUATION AND DRILLS**

### **Site Evacuation**

Emergency plans for evacuation are posted in every activity room. In the event of fire, explosion, or other similar emergency, saving lives is the first priority. When there is an emergency which requires evacuation, the following steps are taken.

1. In the event of an immediate emergency to evacuate: fire, explosion, chemical spill, the staff closest to the alarm will sound the alarm to notify everyone in the building.
2. Staff will lead the children out of the building using the exit routes previously posted in each activity area. Head counts, cross-checked with attendance will be taken to ensure all children are accounted for. Staff will bring first aid kits with them.
3. The Director and/or lead teacher will check for stragglers to make sure everyone is safely out of the building. Emergency information (and cell phones where available) will be carried.

The Director and/or lead teacher will call the fire department after leaving the building. The director will then inform the administrator.

### **Evacuation Drills**

Evacuation drills are to be held every month in our early learning programs and will be documented in a log with time, date, and effectiveness of drill.

All sites will post evacuation routes and procedures from each activity area.

In the event of evacuation the Director and/or Lead Teacher and the teaching staff will walk with children away from the building. Each classroom will have a designated destination.

A notebook with emergency numbers will be taken by the staff. Phone numbers will also be located on the main server at the YMCA. Parents will be notified by the Director and/or Lead Teacher by telephone when appropriate such as if children cannot return to building and must be brought to another location.

## **PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES**

In the event of an emergency that does not warrant immediate evacuation of the site, directors will contact administrators to decide if the site can remain open based upon the following criteria. If the children have to be evacuated, parents will be notified as to the location of their children. Evacuations will follow the evacuation plan.



### **FLOODS**

Procedure: When notification is received from the Civil Defense or other emergency center that certain roads, bridges, or rivers constitute a danger or hazardous condition, it shall be the responsibility of the staff to notify the parent in the event of eminent or actual floor disaster.



### **LOSS OF WATER**

Procedure: In the event of loss of water, potable water will be brought in or if necessary, the program will be closed and parents will be notified.



### **LOSS OF ELECTRICITY**

Procedure: In the event of electrical power loss, the center will remain in operation up to half of the normal operating day if the following conditions exist: generator lighting is available during non-daylight hours or the room temperature does not drop below 65° Fahrenheit. All sites must have a non-electrical phone. A cellular phone may suit this purpose.



### **Medical Emergency Procedures**

In the event of an emergency, the staff will call 911 and/or prepare to transport the child to the nearest hospital, while another staff member will contact the parents. When there is time and if practical, the child's doctor and parents are notified before a child is taken for treatment. Every effort will be made to send a staff person with the child to the medical facility.

If the parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact person listed in the child's records will be contacted. All emergency numbers are posted by telephone and are located within first aid kits.

Emergencies which require transport may include, but are not limited to, excessive pain or bleeding, loss of consciousness, eye or head injury, broken bone, shortness of breath abdominal pain or swelling.

### **Field Trips Emergencies**

The following steps are taken in the event of a field trip:

1. First-aid kits are carried by staff. The kit includes cell phone list of emergency numbers.
2. Emergency information on all children is taken on the trip. No child will be allowed on a trip without parent/guardian authorization. Parent/guardian authorization for ongoing scheduled trips is valid for one year unless withdrawn in writing.
3. All children wear/carry identification that notes the name and phone number of their center.
4. Destination of the trip (with phone number), arrival and departure times and attendance of children on trip is left at the center.
5. Children are assigned to staff members who will monitor their activity at all times through head counts, buddy and attendance checks.
6. When visiting an area staff will conduct a safety check prior to children's involvement. Staff will walk in front of their assigned group to circumvent danger. Children will be monitored when using public restrooms.
7. In the event of an emergency, the child is taken to the closest hospital and the parent/guardian and/or the emergency back-up person is notified. Emergency procedures will be followed. The child's emergency information will accompany them.
8. The aquatics field trip procedures are to be followed when an activity involves water.
9. In the event of vehicle breakdown staff will call the administrator and await instructions for transportation.

### **MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE**

All YMCA staff and bus drivers are trained in lost child procedures. The staff on duty will not release a child to unauthorized people. Any one not known to staff will be required to show identification. That identification will be matched to the names of people to whom the parent will allow us to release the child.

Staff are trained that throughout the day, head counts, buddy checks, and face to name attendance checks must be monitored to ensure each child is safe.

If a child is missing, staff will notify the director.

1. The educator will inform the director where the child was last seen, the name and age of the child, what the child was wearing and any other helpful information.
2. Staff not in ratio will be assigned to report to all egresses to ensure that the missing child does not leave the facility and to search the facility.
3. Lifeguards will immediately begin water search.
4. The Director, while confirming attendance will check the sign-out to determine that the child was not signed out by a parent.
5. If the child is accounted for, all activities will resume. If child is not accounted for (within 30 minutes) parents/guardian will be called to determine if the child was picked up without notifying the staff and the police will be notified using 911.
6. Full cooperation with authorities is expected of all staff members.
7. Staff will not discuss the incident with the media. All inquiries will be referred to the Executive Director.
8. If a swimmer is thought to be lost, the waterfront area will be cleared by the lifeguard doing a two-whistle blow and educators will take attendance while the lifeguards begin a shallow water search.
9. If after attendance, the swimmer is still missing, the lost child drill will be followed.
10. The person reporting the child missing will be interviewed by the program director. The director will evaluate whether negligence is an issue. If it is determined to be the procedures for handling institutional abuse will be followed.

Child registered but not in attendance:

1. Parents are asked to notify the director if their child will be not in attendance.
2. The parent/guardian will be called if a child who is expected fails to come to the program. If parent/guardian is unavailable, another contact number on the registration form will be called.
3. If the child is absent, without notice, the parent will be reminded that it is their responsibility to notify the program of any absences.
4. The staff person who makes the call will document the name, phone number and relationship of the person(s) with whom they spoke.

For children missing from the point of pick up at the end of the day:

1. Double check the attendance.
2. Check with director to see if child was picked up early by parents.
3. If child is not found, begin lost child procedure.

**Transportation Policy – Only used on specific Field Trips with prior written notice and permission from parents**

All vehicles used to transport children must meet state and federal registrations and inspections. The drivers of the vehicles must be appropriately licensed to drive those vehicles.

All YMCA vehicles used to transport children have federally approved safety seats and/or seat belts. Each child is in his/her own safety seat or belt. Two or more children are never in the same belt. In a sudden stop or crash, having two children buckled together can result in serious injuries. Children that are under eight years old and/or 57" must be in a car seat when transported in vans.

The number of children transported will never exceed the number of seats in the vehicle. Neither children nor adults are transported in a cargo area of the vehicle.

Children under 12 years of age will not ride in the front seat if the vehicle is equipped with air bags.

Vehicles are checked prior to each trip. The driver conducts a check to ensure that the vehicle is working well, and there is nothing in the vehicle that could harm the children.

Drivers stay alert to changes in the vehicle while driving. Unusual odors, sounds, or vibrations can be warning signals for breakdown.

Children are never left unaccompanied in a vehicle. No child will be released to persons not designated by the parent in writing. If there is not an authorized person at home, the child will not be released but returned to the center.

Sharp, heavy or potentially dangerous objects will be securely restrained. They can become deadly projectiles in a sudden stop or accident.

Young children are loaded and unloaded only when pulled up to the curb, side of the road, or in a driveway.

Children must remain seated when the vehicle is in operation, and will not put their arms or heads out of the vehicle windows.

All program vehicles are equipped with first aid kits, emergency equipment, including a seat belt cutter, and emergency information for each child riding in the vehicle.

Drivers will be informed of any information that may assist them in transporting a child, including but not limited to any medical or behavioral issues.

Children will not be regularly transported for periods longer than 45 minutes one way (this limit may be relaxed for field trips if appropriate for the age and activity level of the group)

Drivers are responsible for supervising children during loading, transporting and unloading and must communicate with parents/guardians and the director in a proactive manner.

The driver must have a cell phone or other means of making emergency calls available on the vehicle during transport.

The program will notify EEC immediately of any accident involving the transportation of children when such transportation is provided or contracted by the YMCA of the North Shore.

### **Plan for Supervision for Students walking to and from Outdoor Public Playgrounds**

Weather permitting; children may walk to public playgrounds for outdoor activities. Two staff will accompany the children, one will lead the group and one will follow at the end. A cell phone or walkie-talkie will be available to use in case of any emergency.

### **Field Trip Transportation**

Transportation is usually in the form of a school bus or vans when available. Permission slips will inform parents of the trip detail and cost associated. Field trip transportation may include but is not limited to walks, vans, and buses. A cell phone will be available for use in case of any emergency.

### **Vehicle Arrangements in a Breakdown/Emergency Situation**



Should a vehicle fail to operate, or the driver of the vehicle deems the vehicle unsafe to transport children while away from the program site, safe, reliable alternate transportation will be arranged immediately. YMCA employees will ensure the safety of all children while awaiting alternative transportation. The vehicle driver or staff member will use their best judgment and training received as to when to evacuate a vehicle in a breakdown situation. Children will be quickly but safely moved (across road if necessary) to a secure location away from vehicle.

### **Parent/Guardian Rights**

#### **Children's Records**

The center will maintain a written record for each child, which will include:

1. Child Information form
2. First Aid and Medical Authorization and Consent Form
3. Transportation Plan and Authorized Release Form
4. Field Trip Permission Form
5. Release Form

#### **Maintenance of Records**

1. All records must be legible, dated and signed by the individual making the entry. All information must be updated yearly.
2. Any conferences, phone calls, correspondence, notes, etc. relating to a child must be written up and filed under appropriate heading.
3. Records are retained for a period of at least five years after the child has left the program unless the record has been transferred to the parent.

#### **Confidentiality and Distribution of Records**

As noted by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Childcare, 7.05 (19): Information in a child's record is confidential and will not be released without the written consent from the parent/guardian. A parent/guardian may have access to his/her child's files at reasonable times.

The YMCA of the North Shore Early Learning employees are expected to respect the rights of all children and parents we serve. It is the YMCA policy to keep documentation of all events, situations, and or discussions we have with our families. This documentation is confidential and is not to be shared written or orally with anyone.

1. A parent shall, upon request, have access to his child's records at any time.
2. A permanent written log will be maintained in each child's record indicating any persons to whom information has been released.
3. All records, whole or in part, must be signed out dated and entered in log.

#### **Charge for Copies**

The program will not charge parents for copies of their children's records.

#### **Amending the Child's Record and Transfer of Records**

A child's parent has the right to add information, comments, data, or other relevant materials to the child's record. The parent also has the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in that record. Such requests must be made in accordance with the following procedures:

1. A conference with the director is requested to make amendment request known.
2. Within one week after the conference, the parent will receive in writing, a decision and the reasons for the decision. If the decision is in the parent's favor, the record will be changed immediately.
3. Upon written request of the parent(s) the YMCA will transfer the child's record to the parent(s) or any other person the parent identifies when the child no longer is in care.

### **Availability of Information to the Department of Early Education and Care**

The YMCA will make available to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Childcare any information required to be kept and maintained under the previous regulations and any other information reasonably related to these requirements. Authorized employees of the Office shall not remove identifying case material from the program's premises, and shall maintain the confidentiality of the individual's record.

### **Parent/Guardian Visits**

The YMCA's many years of experience with parent-child and family programs has proven that shared experiences between children and parents at a very young age build a foundation for positive relationships and communication in the years to come. Parental involvement in child care programs helps build the bond between parent and child. Parents/legal guardians are welcome in our classrooms at any time, and an appointment is never required. Support such as parent trainings and referral networks are offered and activities that involve total family participation are planned.



### **Parent/Guardian Input**

You are always encouraged to make suggestions about the program. We cannot always implement the suggestions but we would be more than happy to share why we cannot. Each center has a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) which works with management on program plans and policies.

### **Parent Conferences/Reports**

Staff must bring any special problems or significant developments to your attention as soon as they arise. Likewise, please inform the staff of any developments with or surrounding your child so that we can better care for your child. Your child's progress will be monitored and you will receive a report twice per school year. Parent/Teacher conferences are available to discuss these reports. Parents are encouraged to request meetings to discuss any concern or question that may arise.



### **Parent Communication**

In order to best care for your child, on going communication is imperative. In all YMCA early learning programs, parental communication is achieved by an "OPEN DOOR" policy. There is never any attempt to exclude parents from the program; you are welcome at all times that your child is in session, without an appointment.

In addition to daily contact at morning arrival and at pick up each day, parent communication boards are found in central locations at each site. These display recent monthly newsletters, calendars, upcoming field trip announcements and special events. You may find information on parenting skills, health, family fun ideas, and workshops available to parents located here as well. Staff may also make use of other communication aides such as daily sheets, weekly curriculum plans, parent-teacher conferences, and written child assessments. Assessments are done twice per year for preschoolers and toddlers.

Opportunities for parent involvement are numerous. Our child care programs welcome parents to volunteer as classroom aides, chaperone on field trips, to come read a story, share a special interest or craft, share special ethnic or family traditions, eat lunch with your child or just to observe. Speak with your child's teacher or the director to make arrangements. Other opportunities for involvement include helping with fund raising events throughout the year. The list is endless! If you have a special skill or talent, please don't hesitate to ask how you can be of assistance. Parent meetings are held to keep parents informed of center happenings. Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) serve to include parents in decision making about how our centers operate. YMCA early learning programs encourage all parents and guardians to complete a general program evaluation, twice per year, in order for the YMCA to assess the quality and content of our services.

If you have a problem that is not solved by center staff, please contact the Early Education Director. Should you need further assistance, you are welcome to contact the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director of the YMCA branch.

### **Unauthorized Activities**

YMCA programs do not permit children to participate in any activities unrelated to the direct care of the children without the written, informed consent of parent(s) or guardian(s). Unauthorized activities are defined as, but are not limited to fundraising and publicity, including photographs and participation in mass media.

### **Observation, Research, and Experimentation**

All YMCA early learning programs do not conduct research, experimentation, or unusual treatment involving children without written, informed consent of the parent of each child involved in each occurrence. In no case, shall the YMCA allow a child to be harmed during research and experimentation or unusual treatment.

YMCA child care programs do allow at appropriate times, high school/college students to observe children as a part of his/her course requirements. During these observations, there is no interaction between the observer and the child and no identification of the group or individual child occurs. Observation is also used as a tool to assess a child's behavioral/social development in the program and to help staff determine the best teaching approaches for a particular child. Observation for this type of issue is conducted by the YMCA Counselor/Case Worker or Behavior Specialist upon request from the child's teacher. Parents will be informed of the observation and provide consent in writing prior to its occurrence.

No research or experimentation activity is performed in our programs without the informed and written consent of parents.

### **Child Guidance Plan**

Keeping every child safe, happy and engaged is our primary goal. We seek to help children become confident and independent, to learn the give and take of social situations and to be part of a large group. That work starts with making sure each child feels safe and welcome in our environment and feels good about him/her. We work on self help skills and problem solving skills, including peaceful conflict resolution. As within the framework of a family, children in our program are coached to work out difficulties with peers, and to handle frustrations in socially acceptable ways. Educators set the stage as children begin in the program by explaining that he/she works to keep everyone safe. Expectations are made clear that we use words to express anger or act it out in safe ways. It is the role of the care giver to teach these skills and to act as the facilitator in guiding children to cope with angry feelings.

Educators shall define and encourage positive behavior for the children through discussion and demonstration in large and small group settings and with individual children as situations warrant. Educators shall create opportunities for children to practice the desired behaviors, and praise those behaviors whenever they are observed. Children shall be recognized for positive contributions to the group. Behavior which is co-operative and supportive shall be praised and pointed out to the group as a whole.

Our program spaces are arranged to encourage active learning and independence. The daily schedule offers both group and independent activities and time to relax. It is kept consistent so the children know what to expect. Transitions are announced ahead of time. Children shall be offered activities designed according to their interests and which direct their energies into constructive pro-social endeavors. Educators shall be observant and aware of the direction which children's impulses are taking them and redirect or coach the child's handling of disagreements.

When unsafe or harmful behavior is exhibited by a child, the educator will guide the child away from the group if safety warrants. The educator will help the child calm down and will discuss the incident focusing on how the child felt and how he can better handle those feelings in the future. Educators will model calm behavior and problem solving and shall not argue, threaten, or berate the child for his/her behavior.

Parents will be made aware of concerns about behavior by the staff. Specific instances of concern will be documented on an incident report and sent home to parents.

In keeping with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care's regulations, we strictly prohibit:

Spanking or other corporal punishment of children

Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks;

Depriving children of outdoor time, meals, or snacks; force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence;

Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting;

Confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision; and

Excessive time-out. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.

### **When concerns arise**

Sometimes, despite educator interventions, a pattern of behavior is noted which threatens the emotional or physical safety of a child or his classmates. In that case, staff will address the concern with parents and create a proactive plan to help the child.

Addressing the concern must include the following steps.

- Observe child
  - Note circumstances when behavior occurs
    - Who s/he is with
    - Time of day
    - Area in which problem occurs
    - Activity he is involved
- Consider all aspects of child's life

- Changes in the home or at school, dealing with loss, new people joining the family, the absence of a familiar educator, witnessing or being a part of upsetting events, or not having consistent limits and schedules would all potentially impact a child's ability to cope with program space rules and routines.
- Staff and parents shall share observations and knowledge of child at home and at school to gain insight into child's behavior.
- Children are most at ease when staff and parents support each other's rules and limits. Even if school rules are different from the rules at home, parents can reinforce the thought that school rules need to be followed.
- Focusing on a specific behavior, parents and staff will prepare a clear message for the child that includes an action message describing the behavior desired.
- Consequences for not following the expectations are also to be made clear. Rewards for meeting expectations may be considered but be cautious about using material rewards. Rather, focus on ways to create a feeling of pride or accomplishment in the child. Behavioral changes are long lasting when the behavior results in the child feeling good about him.
- Consider whether changes to the environment would be helpful. Accommodations may be changes to the room arrangement, more individual attention for the child, a shorter day or a shorter week. If time is required to make the necessary accommodations, it may be necessary to have the child stay out of the program until the accommodations are in place.
- If staff and/or parents feel that existing resources are inadequate to meet the child's needs, accessing additional support services will be explored including, but not limited to any of the following:
  - mental health agency
  - DCF to request support for family,
  - public schools for evaluation for special education needs
  - Child Care resource and referral agency for information on other placements
  - EEC funding source for information on flex pool funds for children with disabilities or a mental health diagnosis.

### **Dealing with Dangerous Behaviors**

When a child loses control, staff uses what they know about the child's temperament, habits, and the circumstances of the day to help him calm and regain control. The educator must always act in the interest of all the children in the program. If a child behaves in a way that places himself or others in harm's way, the educator may remove the child from the dangerous situation. The educator may only supportively hold a child long enough to remove him from the danger.

If the behavior threatens or causes injury to the child, another child and/or staff person, parents and program staff must discuss whether this is an appropriate placement for the child. Some indicators that continued attendance in the program may be ill advised are:

- The child's behavior is so intense that it is likely the child will be isolated and ostracized by other children if it continues.
- There is a serious possibility of harm to the child, other children, or staff and it has become extremely difficult for this child and or other children to learn and grow in the program.
- The child's behavior consumes much of the staffs' time and energy.

### **Exclusion from the program**

**If, despite every effort of accommodation and individualization for the child, concerns for safety continue, the parents and/or the center director may conclude that this program is not an appropriate setting for the child. In that situation, program staff will help the parents find an alternative placement.**

### **Plan for Prevention of Abuse and Neglect**

All YMCA staff are mandated reporters. Every day in Massachusetts, ninety children are involved in reports of possible child abuse or neglect. Child abuse happens in each of our communities - urban, suburban and rural. It happens in families of all incomes - low income, average and wealthy. The following explains what child abuse/neglect can be, why parents are potential abusers, possible causes of abuse, and who should be contacted.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT:

HAPPENS WHEN PARENTS:

- are under stress
- are isolated
- are without support
- feel that their failures outnumber their successes
- keep frustrations in until they boil over

CAUSES CAN BE TRACED TO:

- economic hard times
- unemployment
- acceptance of violence as a way of dealing with problems

**Child Abuse:** Is the injury to a child for which there is no “reasonable” explanation. Child Abuse includes non-accidental physical injury, sexual molestation, and emotional abuse.

**Child Neglect:** Is the failure or inability to provide a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, emotional stability, supervision or other essential care.

**Mandated Reporter:** All YMCA staff are legally required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to report any suspected situation to the YMCA Executive Director of Child Care Services and the appropriate Local Executives immediately.

All reporting procedures in this policy will be followed. Failure to report a suspected abuse/neglect situation could result not only in a dangerous situation for the child, but also potential termination of employment of the staff person(s).

Reporting Procedures:

When a case of possible abuse/neglect is suspected, regardless of where that abuse/neglect may have taken place, the Executive Director of Child Care Services, the approved staff person to review each incident, or her designee, will complete a review within 24 hours. The Executive Director of Child Care Services will immediately notify the Protective Unit of the Department of Children and Families regarding any suspected child abuse. EEC will be notified immediately whenever a 51A is filed. Program staff will be made aware of the suspected abuse/neglect on a need to know basis only.

In the event the reported incident or suspicion involves an employed staff person or volunteer, these steps will be taken within 24 hours:

- The Program Director and/or the Local Executive will contact the staff member or volunteer concerning suspicions and will suspend that individual from all duties until all allegations have been cleared or substantiated. Suspension of employed staff will be without pay.
- The CEO’s designee is assigned as the approved staff person to review each incident within 24 hours and to immediately notify the Protective Unit of the Department of Children and Families regarding any suspected child abuse. In the case that the staff person is employed in an EEC licensed program, EEC will be contacted immediately following DCF.
- In the case that allegations have been cleared by both DCF and EEC, the employee may return to work in a position that does not allow any direct contact, monitored or unmonitored, with children. The employee will be allowed to return to work in the EEC licensed program only after the investigation has been closed by EEC.
- In the case that allegations are substantiated, the situation will be reviewed with the Local Executive, CFO, CEO, Director of Staff Development and the Executive Director of Child Care Services and the employee may be terminated.
- Staff and volunteers may not contact children or parents involved in an alleged child abuse/neglect incident without permission of the Local Executive.

#### **Substance Abuse Policy**

The YMCA of the North Shore Child Care Programs reserve the right to determine whether or not an authorized person is competent to take a child home or receive a child at home without placing the child at risk. In the rare event that an authorized person arrives under the influence of alcohol or any other illegal substances, either at a YMCA child care facility or at the YMCA van, the following procedures have been established:

**Director/YMCA Van Driver will:**

1. Suggest to the authorized person that another authorized person on the contact list be called.
2. Suggest to the authorized person that a YMCA van or taxi cab be used to transport the family home or to another safe location.

If the authorized person becomes belligerent or aggressive, the director, van driver, or other staff person must consider the possibility of injury to the child, the other children, the staff, and other consumers of YMCA services and by state law will be required to:

1. Call the police at 911.
2. Otherwise prevent the authorized person from taking the child until the police have arrived.
3. Child will be removed from the authorized person’s presence until the police have arrived.

The intent of this policy is not to embarrass, humiliate, or harass authorized persons. Its sole purpose is to protect your child whom you have entrusted to our care. The YMCA of the North Shore Child Care programs reserve the right to deny access to program services to persons who abuse this policy,

All parents/guardians will be required to sign this policy as a part of the registration process. It is also the responsibility of the parent to inform any and all authorized persons, whom may transport their child, of this **STRICT** policy.

### **Children with Special Needs**

#### **Referral Plan**

Child Care employees with direct care positions will have responsibility for observation and documentation of any concerns of a child. These include but are not limited to: educational delays, vision, gross motor, emotional, hearing, economical, physical, speech, behavior, dental, fine motor, or social.

When teaching staff have a concern about a child's developmental progress in any domain: cognitive, social, emotional, fine or large motor, a first step is to present concerns to the center director. Concerns may arise based on screening results, teacher observations, or child and/or parent statements. The teacher(s) and director and other program staff as appropriate will review the teacher's documentation and the child's file and take steps to determine if there are alternative approaches and strategies that should be instituted in the classroom. Should these alternate approaches fail to address the concern, a discussion with parents shall be arranged.

The YMCA of the North Shore will refer parents to appropriate social, mental health, educational, and medical services for their child should the child care staff feel that an assessment for such additional services would benefit the child.

The Child Care Director/Child Care Case Manager will maintain a list of current referral sources in the community for children in need of social services. This list will include the contact person for Chapter 766 and Early Intervention Programs referrals and is available upon request.

#### **REFERRING TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Parents are encouraged to talk to staff about any concerns they may have about their child. Parents are provided with information about typical development. The director or designated staff person may contact a parent if he/she has concern(s) regarding a child. The director, teacher and parent will arrange a time to meet to discuss the concern and review the evidence collected. The parent will be provided with a written report summarizing any observations related to the concern and will be briefed on staff efforts that have been made to accommodate the child's need.

If it is determined at the parent /staff meeting that among the group we do not have the resources to provide the child with the service he needs, parents and staff shall work together to secure services from available community resources.

The director will offer assistance to the child's parent in making a referral. Parents will be encouraged to call for or request in writing an evaluation for their child from appropriate agencies. The director may, if the parent provides written permission, contact an agency to begin the referral process. The parent may also give permission, in writing, for the center staff and service agency to share information on an ongoing basis. The Center Director may write the request letter for the parent to sign.

#### **FOLLOW UP**

The director and parent will work cooperatively to monitor progress in the referral and assessment process, monitoring SPED timelines, calling for results when necessary, and making sure appointments are kept.

If it is determined that the child does not need or is ineligible to receive services, the staff will continue to review the child's progress every three months to determine if another referral is appropriate. A strengths based approach will continue to be used. Parents and teacher will establish goals for the child and a plan to attain them.

A parent has the right to appeal a LEA decision that a child does not need services. A parent also has the right to secure an independent educational evaluation which is done by a qualified professional not employed by the school system. The LEA may pay for some or all of the cost of the Independent Education Evaluation if the family is income eligible.

If it is determined that the child should receive services, the YMCA staff will familiarize themselves with the IEP/IFSP and plan curriculum designed to help the child reach the stated goals.

When a child receives services parents will be encouraged to invite service providers to conferences and other parent/staff meetings so that the service provider can become a part of our team planning next steps for the child. Additionally, YMCA staff will attend meetings if the parent chooses to invite them.

Written records of referrals, including the initial referral meeting, observations, and contacts with service providers will be maintained in the child's file at the center by the teacher or other staff person designated by the director.

#### **MAKING SURE THE CENTER CAN MEET THE CHILD'S NEEDS**

As a child with a special need enrolls in our center, parent and center director will collaborate to make sure the needs of the child can be met in the center environment. In making this determination, the center director may ask the parent for written permission to speak with or obtain written records from the child's service providers such as Early Intervention, LEA, a physician or therapists. Accommodations such as staff training, furniture arrangement, or the creation of an individual health plan may be made. Accommodation plans will be put in writing. If the accommodations a child needs would cause an undue burden the center may need to decline to accept the child. The center will notify the parent in writing of such a decision. The parent will be informed that s/he may request an EEC review of the program's decision. The parents will be provided with a list of other child care options.

#### **TRANSITIONING**

Transitioning into the center will include a tour and an invitation for parent and child to visit the classroom in which the child will enroll. Training will be arranged for staff on medicine administration or other care routines with which they are not familiar. The parent will be asked to provide the center with an individual health care plan signed by the child's physician if the child has medical issues that require special knowledge or care on the part of center staff.

When a child moves from one room to another within the center, the child and the parent will be provided with opportunities to visit the new classroom. Educators from the sending and receiving rooms will confer on the strengths and needs of the child.

Transitioning out of the center to kindergarten or another center will be managed by parent and center staff such that the child is aware of the move and questions about the move are anticipated or answered as they arise. Every effort will be made to make sure the child has a realistic picture of his next school and that he feels comfortable and confident about the move. Center staff will complete a summary of the child's progress and developmental level using Creative Curriculum. At parents' request, staff is available to meet with parent and/or staff from receiving center.

A full list of referral agencies is available upon request.

#### **YMCA Partnership**

The YMCA works hard to establish a partnership between the staff in our programs and each parent/guardian. Your willingness to communicate and share your honest feedback is critical to your child's experience as well as the success of our program to meet community needs. We encourage you to share your thoughts with us at any time. Thank you for choosing the YMCA as the provider for your family's Early Education needs.