

YMCA Children's Educational Services



Child Care Parent Handbook

CHATHAM-KENT

June 2024





with adults. YMCA educators build a foundation of trust with children by being available, sensitive, responsive, and caring.

YMCA educators create an inclusive and respectful environment to foster 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 your child's care, growth and development YMCA educators interact and communicate with families on a daily basis sharing observations, documentations, and reflections.

3) Encouraging children to interact, communicate, & self-regulate:

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 our attention on something or someone.

"The better a child can stay calmly focused and alert, the better he integrates the diverse information coming from his different senses, assimilates it and sequences his thoughts and actions." (Shanker 2012)

"Caring consistent relationships with adults provide external supports that serve as the basis for developing self-regulation." (Gillespie & Seibel 2006)

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

- ✓ Educators provide small group experiences that allow for more individualized adult attention

DISCOVER

To find something unexpectedly.

OBSERVATION

The informal or formal perception of an individual or group of people, or the perceptions gained from looking at an environment or object.

DOCUMENTATION

The process of observation, data collection, careful analysis and reflection resulting in displays that are an integral part of a play curriculum.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

The capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning.

STRATEGY

A plan or method of achieving a goal.



- ✓ 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

4) Fostering exploration, play & inquiry:

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

As families and educators, we watch children explore their world through their senses, repetition of tasks, imitation, asking questions, and 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
- ✓ Architects of the playscape
- ✓ Keen observers
- ✓ Planners
- ✓ Reporters

ROLE-MODELLING

Demonstrating appropriate behaviour that can be seen by the children so that they can observe and internalize what they see; showing how a particular role is conducted.

SCAFFOLD

The role of the adult (or more mature child) in providing a mental bridge to support a child's learning.

PRO-SOCIAL SKILLS

Learned behaviour that demonstrates empathy, esteem, honour and consideration to another person.

CURIOSITY

Mental interest that leads to behaviours of discovery and learning.

INQUIRY

The act of asking questions in order to gather information.



- ✓ Collaborators
- ✓ Reflective Practitioners
- ✓ Co-learners

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. 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.

5) Providing child-initiated & adult-supported experiences:

Children and families are warmly greeted 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 activities that support the observed interests of the children and naturally invite them into play. 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.

You may overhear a small group of children in the dramatic play centre dressed in costumes acting out a scene of being "mama, papa, 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.

CHILD DIRECTED PLAY

Spontaneous activity initiated by the child that is allowed to take the course decided upon by the child; may involve careful adult planning.

PLAY PARTNER (SHIP)

One or more individuals playing together with a shared interest; in the case of adult-child play partnership, the adult allows the child to take the lead.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Sustained pretend play in which the child acts out a role using movement and props.

CHILD CENTERED EDUCATION

A philosophy of child care and education that emphasizes the importance of the child's need to direct his own activity, to make play choices spontaneously, and to learn at a self- determined level.



7) Incorporating indoor, outdoor, active, rest & quiet activities:

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 observing bugs in the outdoor classroom, while the other small group may prefer to stay indoors and build a tall tower.

Periods of active and quiet play are interwoven throughout the day both indoors and outdoors. Children are supported to be competent, capable explorers in an enriched, unstructured playspace.

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 to a minimum, so children get to play more.

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.

8) Fostering engagement & communication with families:

At the YMCA we understand that a parent is the most important person in a child's life. YMCA educators play a supporting role while families go to work and school.



Prohibited practices that infringe on the physical and emotional wellbeing of a child in our care include:

- The use of corporal punishment on a child.
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller, or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting themselves 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 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 policies and procedures.
- Using 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 their self-respect, dignity or self-worth.
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, or bedding; or
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Weemarkable™ – YMCA Child Care Mobile App

Weemarkable™ is designed and developed by the YMCA with input from YMCA families, just like you, as well as YMCA educators. It is a communication tool to enhance the face-to-face (not replace) YMCA family and educator relationships. Through Weemarkable™ we are pleased to provide you with daily updates on your child, their development, photos, menus, messaging and more. In addition, you will have the ability to add followers such as grandparents or other extended family members. Your director will provide you with information at time of registration.

Nurturing Healthy Development and Well Being

Nutrition

Most child care centres have their own dietary planner or are catered by a reputable company who prepares nutritious, home-cooked snacks and lunches for the children. Our dietary planners/caterers have food safety certificates, and all kitchens are inspected regularly by the local Health Department. A nutritious lunch, based on Canada's Food Guide, is made from whole



- Food must be stored appropriately (ie. cupboard, refrigerated)
- Food must be peanut free
- All site-specific allergies must be considered
- All food provided must be healthy and nutritious choices to ensure that each child receives the nutrients they need for a fun active day. The Canada's Food Guide website is a great resource for suggestions of healthy snacks and lunches for children.

Illness

All programs shall ensure that a daily health observation is made of each child before the child begins to associate with other children in order to detect possible symptoms of ill health.

Staff will greet each child and parent/guardian daily and discuss any matter pertaining to the child's health. A receiving staff member, who notices any of the symptoms of ill health listed below when a child arrives, will gather details from the parents/guardians and discuss together if the child should stay at the program. Information gathered will be recorded on the "Child Care Attendance and Daily Health Check" form provided in each room. Children with diagnosed communicable diseases will be excluded as required and directed by the health unit. Treat each case individually and according to the doctor's note.

If your child is not able to attend due to illness, please advise the director of the illness and expected return date. This information will help our educators identify symptoms in other children with whom your child has come in contact.

If a child appears to be ill, the child may be separated from the other children, and the educator will notify the director and parents and/or guardians immediately.

In accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act, you will be required to pick up your child as soon as possible to protect the interest of the sick child as well as the other children and educators in the program.

Parents and/or guardians are strongly encouraged to keep ill children at home to prevent the spread of illness. Children must be free from symptoms before returning to the centre.

Communicable Diseases

Children suspected of having a communicable disease, such as mumps or measles, should not be in the centre. Parents/guardians of children who develop symptoms during the day will be asked to pick up the child from the centre immediately. Children can return to the centre only with confirmation that they are no longer contagious.

Immunizations

The Medical Officer of Health requires every child attending a licensed child care facility to have



Before any medication can be administered the following must be in place:

- Parents/guardians are required to complete and sign the "Medication Administration Form".
- Drugs or medications must be administered from their original containers or as supplied by a pharmacist. The container or package containing the drugs or medications is clearly labelled with the child's name, the name of the drug or medication, the dosage of the drug or medication, the date of purchase and expiration, if applicable, and instructions for storage and administration.
- Staff must check that the parent/guardian's written instructions match any instructions printed on the original container and that the medication is not expired. Confirming that the two sets of instructions match will prevent any confusion as to which instructions should be followed and so that the medication is administered correctly.
- Non-prescription medication will not be administered unless a doctor has given clear written authorization. The doctor's authorization note will be retained in the child's file.

Doctor's Note Requirements for Non-Prescription Medication:

- All doctor's notes are updated every 12 months.
- The doctor's note must contain the following information:
 - Name of Child
 - Name of Medication
 - Dosage amount
 - Time/Duration
 - Reason for medication

At no time, can a doctor or parent/guardian override a prescription label.

Blanket Notes For Over-the-Counter Products

Due to the frequency and their longer-term daily usage, sunscreen, diaper creams, moisturizing skin lotion, insect repellent, lip balms and hand sanitizers, a blanket authorization form must be completed by the parent/guardian to approve administration as long as they are non-prescription, and/or they are not for acute (symptomatic) treatment, whether they have a drug administration number (DIN) or not.

Licensees must ensure that these over-the-counter products are labelled with the child's name, stored in accordance with the instructions for storage on the label, and administered in accordance with the instructions on the label and the parent/guardian's authorization. Over-the-counter products must be in the original container or package.



"Did you know 3 in 10 children in our Y programs are there because of the YMCA Community Starts Here Campaign?"

Contact Us!

Please check out our website www.ymcaswo.ca or follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/YMCACES> and on Twitter @YMCAofSWO.

You can contact us via email at childcare@ymcaswo.ca or call 519-907-5500 X1072.