



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Child Care Parent Handbook

YMCA of Cass
and Clay Counties



About YMCA Child Care

You want the very best for your child – and so do we!

We believe the strongest partnership in a child's life is that between the child's parents and the school their child attends. The goal that we strive to achieve is for our staff to team with parents to make this experience an excellent one for your entire family. We are committed to providing the highest quality of care to your child and your family.

We have an Open-Door Policy and want your involvement. We encourage you to get involved in the community, visit or volunteer in your child's classroom, chaperone field trips, and always be an advocate for your child.

YMCA Child Care is a place for children to explore, learn, and grow, and to feel safe, cared for, and celebrated. We encourage positive relationships between the children, child care staff, and parents to ensure a high-quality experience. In every program and every classroom, we address the specific needs of children based not only on age but also on individual pace of development. We believe the values and skills learned early on are vital building blocks for quality of life and future success.

With so many demands on today's families, parents need all the support they can get. That's why child care at the YMCA is about more than looking after kids. It's about nurturing their development by providing a safe place to learn foundational skills, develop healthy, trusting relationships and build self-reliance. This is all accomplished through our values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. At the YMCA, we believe the values and skills learned early on are vital building blocks for quality of life and future success. That's why our Early Learning, Preschool, and School Age programs are staffed with people who understand the cognitive, physical, and social development of kids, the need children have to feel connected and supported in trying new things and the caring and reinforcement parents and families need to help each other.

In YMCA Child Care, babies develop trust and security, preschoolers experience early literacy and learn about their world and school-age kids make friends and learn new skills. Most importantly, children learn how to be their best selves. That makes for confident kids today, and contributing and engaged adults tomorrow.

Connect with the YMCA

We love having you and your family as part of our YMCA community! Stay connected with the YMCA through our website, social media, and more!

ymcacassclay.org | [@ymcacassclay](https://www.instagram.com/ymcacassclay) | [#ymcacassclay](https://www.facebook.com/ymcacassclay)



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YMCA Philosophy & Values



YMCA Philosophy and Values

Mission

The YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties is a not-for-profit community service organization dedicated to enhancing the spirit, mind, and body of all persons through quality leadership, programs, services and, facilities.

Goals & Philosophy

YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties Early & School Age Learning Center Programs are dedicated to enhancing the spirit, mind, and body of all persons in a positive Christian environment through quality programs, services, and facilities. Upon that foundation, children, families, and staff in our learning programs are considered to be the three components of our programs. Our integrated curriculum, consistent administrative policies, health and safety standards, and positive guidance are built upon these statements.

What you can expect from the YMCA:

- Your child will be treated fairly and with respect.
- We continually train our staff using the most current research in Child Development and Early Education.
- Our employees are trained and provide quality care and a safe environment.
- We will inform you of behavior concerns and work with you to create a plan to support your child.
- We will do all that we can to provide a safe and happy experience for you and your family.

What we ask of families:

- When in our programs, you follow our core values: honesty, respect, responsibility, caring, and health.
- Your commitment to your child's learning experiences at the YMCA.
- That you are a champion, along with us, in your child's development.
- Your help in developing a consistent plan to work through behavioral concerns.

The following actions are not permitted by or at the discretion of the YMCA staff:

- Corporal punishment or emotional abuse
- Punishment for lapses in toilet habits
- Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as punishment for unacceptable behavior
- Use of physical restraints other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
- Use of mechanical restraints



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Our Credentials



Our Credentials

Our Quality Staff

Quality, **continuity**, and **longevity** of staff are priorities in a quality child care program. Picking our staff based on experience, competence, and education is a priority to ensure that we have the most highly qualified staff available to care for your children.

Learning Program Directors, Coordinators, and Teachers have a two- to four-year degree in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education or related field, or a Child Development Associate credential and practical experience working with young children. Learning Center Leaders receive on-the-job training and gain experience in youth development and working with families. Staff are provided with annual trainings to ensure they are educated on best practices when working with youth. During our trainings and monthly staff meetings, some things we focus on are behavior guidance, child development, and curriculum.

Licensing

All of our programs are licensed by the state of North Dakota and certified in the state of Minnesota. This includes following all state requirements:

- Staff to child ratios
 - o 6 weeks - 2 years 1:4
 - o 2-3 years 1:5
 - o 3-4 years 1:7
 - o 4-5 years 1:10
 - o 5-6 years 1:12
 - o 6-12 years 1:14
- Completion of Basic Childcare Training
- All staff must have a background check and be fingerprinted
- All staff must be certified in CPR and First Aid
- Monthly emergency drills and evacuation plans
- Ongoing annual professional development of staff

Bright and Early

YMCA Early Learning Centers have partnered with ND Bright and Early. This is an agency that provides observations, training, coaches, and ongoing staff development as part of its Quality Rating System. Learning Centers work to complete 4 Quality Rating Steps to reach 4 Star status. Step one is completing and maintaining licensing standards. Step Two focuses on quality learning environments, using the Environment Rating Scale tools (ITERS and ECERS). Step Three is learning about Creative Curriculum Teaching Strategies. Step Four focuses on quality interactions between teacher and child, using the CLASS tool. As each step is completed, Learning Centers work with a coach to meet all Professional Development requirements.

21st Century School-Age Programs

Offering the very best quality programming has always been, and always will be, a goal of our program. To do this, we must assess a modest fee. All fees assessed are put directly back into our programs. The YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties will never turn a child away based on their ability to pay at the 21st century locations.



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Enrollment



Enrollment

Enrollment at YMCA is open to children from 6 weeks – Pre-K and School-Age. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability, and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy, or disability.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application, signed fee agreement, registration fee, first two weeks tuition, copy of child's birth certificate, and a copy of your child's immunization record.

Hours of Operation

Our programs are open Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 6:00 p.m. YMCA Learning Center programs will be closed on the following six holidays and two staff professional development days per year. These days are New Year's Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. If one of these holidays falls on a weekend, we will close either the Friday before or Monday after, whichever is the closer day to the holiday. For Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, the YMCA is open limited hours and the Learning Centers will close early. These hours are subject to change according to the facility hours of operation. Families will be charged regular rates for all holidays listed above.

Early Learning Enrollment Process

Before any student starts, teachers will give families a welcome packet of classroom or site-specific information. The packets will include a family questionnaire to learn about your child's interests, your family's approaches to learning, your child's developmental needs, and your concerns and goals for your child. The teachers will incorporate this information into ongoing classroom planning.

Schedules

We offer full day care with options for full-time and part-time schedules. Full-time is considered five days a week, while part-time is fewer than five days. We do not offer part-time care for infants and toddlers. Full-time and part-time rates are daily rates, as we do not bill hourly. Please work with your Site Director or Coordinator for part-time options. We do not allow flex schedules, all days must be set and be the same each week.

If you bring your child in on a day that you are not scheduled, an additional charge will be assessed for that day. If you give no notice, there may not be room for your child and we might not be able to accommodate your request. If this is the case, you may not be able to leave your child at the program. Please see your child's Director or Coordinator if an additional day is needed. Any extra days will be charged on your next bill.

You cannot swap days of care if you are part-time and we do not offer half-day rates. Your child can attend anytime between 6:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. for Early Learning care. School-age can attend before and after school on school days (opening at 6:30 a.m. before school, and closing at 6:00 p.m. after school) and full days on in the summer.

If you plan to change your schedule, you must give us a four-week notice emailed to childcare@ymcacassclay.org. This will alert your Director/Coordinator, enrollment, and billing. You will be billed for your previous schedule until the change goes into effect. If we are able to accommodate a schedule change in under four weeks, the change must begin at the start of a billing

period and we will notify you of an accurate start date. We cannot guarantee that you will be able to change to the schedule you wish, and you may need to be on a waiting list for the scheduled days you are requesting. A day cannot be banked or made up if your child misses their scheduled day.

Waiting List

YMCA keeps preschool and school-age waiting lists, divided by age and program. **We do not keep a waiting list for Infants or Toddlers.** Applications will be filed in each age category according to the date the application form and fee are received. Once enrolled, the application fee applies to the child's registration fee.

The following waiting list policies apply to all families:

1. The first time a family declines a spot (or fails to call back) the waiting list date will be changed to the date of decline.
2. The second time a family declines (or fails to call back) the child will be removed from the waiting list. Any family wishing to get back on the waiting list must submit a new application and fee.

If Your Child Will Be Gone for the Day

If your child will not be attending, please be sure to contact the program. For Early Learning please contact us by 10:00 a.m. For School Age please contact us by 12:00 p.m. Leave a message at your child's site. Please understand that we may not have time to call you back to confirm your message. If your child is not logged in for the day, we will call parents if we did not know they were going to be absent. In the School-Age Learning Center Programs, if the YMCA must call to locate your child because we were not notified of an absence, you will be charged a Finder's Fee of \$10.00 per occurrence, per family. If your child does not attend one of their scheduled days, you are still charged for that day.

School Drop Off and Pick Up Policy

The YMCA Programs will adhere to the policies of the school your child attends. When the children are dropped off at school by the YMCA bus, they must go directly into the building. The drivers will watch them go in unless the school requires that they stand outside until the time they are allowed to go into the building.

For afternoon pick up, the bus staff will meet children upon dismissal and take roll of each child. If any children are not accounted for, the driver will radio back to the program. Staff onsite will then contact the emergency contacts listed in the child's file. Parents will then need to pick their child up from their school.

Buses will wait five minutes after school dismissal; then the bus will be permitted to leave.

If a child is left at the school, the family or guardian will be responsible for picking up and transporting the child. If a guardian fails to notify the program their child attends that the child will not be riding the bus, they will be subject to a Finder's Fee.

YMCA Activities Cancellation Due to Weather

The decision will be made by 7:00 am if we will not be transporting for Y and non-Y activities or school routes. Bus transportation will not be provided when the outside temperature/heat index is 95 degrees or above. Bus transportation will not be provided when the outside temperature/wind

chill is -15 degrees or below. Other conditions that result in NO transportation include road closures, city-wide emergency status, or travel advisories are established by city/state officials. Please see Inclement Weather policy.

Emergency Closing, Pandemic, and Inclement Weather

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified of the closing by messaging on our website, e-mail, and parent engagement app.

Should the YMCA Learning Center need to close in the middle of the day, the staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick-up arrangements can be made.

If West Fargo schools close, the following program(s) will be closed: Kindergarten Readiness at Schlossman

If school is closed early or late starts:

We do not transport to school if a late start or pick up from school if there is an early release due to weather. Parents transport their children to schools in these situations. Kindergarten Readiness (at Schlossman) will not be held.

Inclement Weather Closing Locations:

When schools are closed for inclement weather, school-based YMCA programs are not able to operate in the schools due to district policy. However, they will be able to report to the following locations.

Emergency closing site assignments

<u>Schlossman</u>	<u>Fercho</u>	<u>Calvary</u>	<u>South ELC</u>	<u>West Fargo ELC</u>
701-356-1451 4243 19 th Ave SW Fargo Fargo	701-364 4132 400 1 st Ave S. Fargo Fargo	701-281-4960 4575 45 th St S Fargo	701-551-5181 4225 38 th St S Fargo	701-356-0341 109 3 rd St E West Fargo
Schlossman	Fercho	Calvary	South ELC	ECDC
Aurora	Dorothy Dodds	Deer Creek	Oak Grove	
Brooks Harbor	Ellen Hopkins	Horace		
Eastwood	HMR	Independence		
LE Berger	Jefferson	Legacy		
Freedom	Madison	Osgood		
Harwood	McKinley			
South Elementary	Robert Asp			
Westside	S.G. Reinertsen			
Willow Park				

Pandemic Emergency Response

In the event of a pandemic, The YMCA Learning Center will follow guidelines and directions implemented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Federal and Local Governments, and the ND Department of Human Services.

To ensure the safety of children, families, and staff, the school will monitor the situation and consider the guidance and suggestions from the authorities on the situation. Decisions made by the center will consider the safety of children, families, and staff.

Decisions may include:

- Closure of the center
 - Length of closure to be determined by the Executive Director, The Board of Directors, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Federal and Local Governments, and the ND Department of Human Services.
- Adjusted hours of service
- Daily health checks of children and staff
- Limited entry into the building
- Limited access to the property
- Limitations on what the children may bring into the center, such as:
 - Blankets
 - Stuffed animals
 - Pillows

The YMCA Learning Center will communicate these plans through a variety of methods such as mass emails and parent engagement app.

Tuition Policy during a School Closure

Should the YMCA Learning Center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures of less than 15 school days. All decisions are at the discretion of the administration and the Board of Directors. Please remember tuition is not determined by attendance but by enrollment status. All enrollment is maintained during a closure period as long as all commitments to the program are fulfilled.

Signing In and Out Each Day

We require all parents to sign their child in and out each day, either using our electronic tablets or your personal mobile device. Please do not drop your child off at a program without signing them in yourself. We ask that you walk them in to ensure safety. We are unable to send children out upon parent requests due to safety and ratio requirements. Other individuals that are on your child's authorized pick-up list will be set up their own codes and will need to use those to sign your child in or out. Our school age staff will log in all children at the school sites when they arrive from school. If your school age child is not logged in for the day, we will call parents if we did not know they were going to be absent. Please log your child out to avoid a late pick-up fee and for accuracy of the child's attendance.

Enrollment Trial Period

The first 30 days of your child's enrollment will be considered as a "trial period." If we feel things are not "working out," we reserve the right to give notice for removal from the program. The parents/guardian also has the right to withdraw during this time. If, after the probationary period, or at any time, we feel that we cannot meet the needs of the child, we may give notice to end care for your child.

Emergency Contact & Authorized Pick Up People

At enrollment, parents will be required to include any and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick up their child from the program. In an emergency, the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached, staff will call the emergency contact and one authorized pick-up person. State regulations require each family to have at least one emergency contact (other than a parent) and one authorized pick-up person.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the list. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements will result in dismissal from the program.

Parents do not need to be listed as an emergency contact or authorized pick-up person. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick up their child.

The YMCA reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the Admission Information form for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the Admission Information Form of the policies/procedures contained herein.

If an authorized pick-up person is appearing to be impaired by drugs and/or alcohol, the staff of the YMCA Learning Centers will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the YMCA Learning Center staff to deny a custodial parent access to their child, even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, YMCA staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible while contacting the other parent or emergency contact, the local police, and Child Protective Services.

Transitioning to a New Classroom

Transitions to new classrooms is an exciting time. Transitions happen throughout the year and are based on space, developmental readiness, and age. We recognize that every child is unique, that is why our teachers and staff are dedicated to supporting the needs of children and families during this time of change. Transitions are set up to help children succeed, therefore, we give time for children to experience their new room, develop a relationship with their new teachers and acclimate to the new schedule and routines. Regarding our youngest learners, accreditation recommends that infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds remain with the same teaching staff for nine months or longer. We will communicate with you on the transition plan for your child. Our goal is to make transitions as smooth as possible for all involved.

Transferring YMCA Child Care Programs

If your child would like to transfer to another YMCA child care location, you will not have to pay another enrollment fee, provided that it is a direct transfer with no break in care. Your name will be placed at the top of the waiting list at the "new" YMCA Child care location should you need to transfer sites if that program is currently full. You are not guaranteed a spot, however, as openings are based on availability. A four-week notice is required to transfer, and your child's tuition needs to be paid in full at your "old" site before you can move to your "new" site. If an early transfer is needed, and if we can accommodate, the transfer must begin at the start of a new billing period. Your Director or Coordinator will notify you of an accurate transfer date.

Withdrawal from Program

We require a 4-week notice to withdraw from our programs. Please contact our Enrollment Coordinator at childcare@ymcacassclay.org to process your withdrawal. This will notify your Director/Coordinator, enrollment, and billing of this change.

Right to Refuse Admission

The Child Development Center reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or

without cause. Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to

1. Lack of staff to maintain appropriate Staff to Child Ratios as determined by State Licensing Regulations.
2. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
3. Staff deems the child too ill to attend.
4. Domestic Situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff, or other children enrolled at the Learning Center if the child were to be present at the center.
5. Parent's failure to maintain accurate, up-to-date records.
6. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.
7. Parents' failure to follow the tuition policy as outlined in this handbook.
8. Parents will not be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

Pick up Authorizations

Anyone picking up your child must be authorized to do so. If someone other than yourself is picking up, you must inform the YMCA and the designated pick-up person must provide photo identification. If a parent is not allowed to pick up a child, we will need a court order stating this. If any person under the age of 18 will be picking up your child, you will need to sign a release form authorizing that pick-up. Please be aware that you are responsible for your child when you, or any other authorized pick-up, signs them out for the day.

Parent's Right to Immediate Access

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at YMCA, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) The YMCA Learning Center must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for a more liberal interpretation of the order.

Any parents wishing to visit the school on non-court appointed days are asked to schedule appointments with the center's Director and are allowed in the school only at the discretion of the Center Director. An employee of The YMCA Learning Center will accompany **the parent** at all times, throughout the program.

In the absence of a court order on file with YMCA Learning Center, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The YMCA Learning Center cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, The YMCA Learning Center suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. The YMCA Learning Center staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

The YMCA Learning Center will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon the property. Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations,

YMCA Learning Center cannot have a child at the program when the child's parent is prohibited access. The YMCA Learning Center will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

Photo Release/Information Forms

You will be asked to sign a photo release form before we use your child's picture for external public relations and internal postings (see registration form). You will also be asked for additional authorizations when outside entities conduct photo shoots, surveys, and projects. We are not able to release information about your child to any unauthorized person. We can only accept authorization from the legal guardian to release information.

Clothing

Comfortable and washable clothing that will enable the children to participate freely in all activities without undue concern for spills, spots, and rips is recommended. Please mark all clothing and personal articles permanently with your child's name. Occasionally check the lost and found for misplaced items, we are not responsible for lost or stolen items. Sturdy, well-fitting tennis shoes or non-skid shoes are essential for active play. Socks are required so the children can play in the gym. When skirts are worn, we ask that your child wear pants or shorts underneath. Please be sure to check your welcome email for any additional items needed.

Toys, Blankets, and Rest Time Items

Please leave toys at home, unless it is a specific share day. The YMCA Learning Center Programs do not assume responsibility for personal toys. On share days please refrain from allowing your child to bring any type of toy weapon, electronic toys of any sort, or action figures to the program.

Blankets/rest time items are only allowed for Early Learning children. We ask that the items brought fit within the container provided. Rest time items include crib size sheet, blanket, travel-size pillow, and a small stuffed animal. These items will need to be taken home and laundered weekly. Please note that not all locations participate in share day. Please contact your Site Director or Coordinator for more information about your child's site.

Immunization Policy

All Early Learning children and School-Age children are required to be up-to-date with their immunizations and guardians are expected to provide their child's immunization record. According to North Dakota's Century Code, child care programs cannot refuse to provide care to unimmunized children who are otherwise eligible if the parents or guardians present North Dakota SFN form 16038 for immunization exemption. If a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs at the program, it is recommended for unimmunized children to be excluded for the duration of the possible exposure.



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Tuition & Fees



Tuition and Fees

Tuition

Tuition is due every two weeks and is due the first day of the billing cycle. Full tuition will be charged for each tuition period, including the six major holidays, two staff professional development days, pandemic days, storm days, early closing days, non-school days, or any other days that the program is closed. There is no tuition credit or refund given for vacations, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or closings due to emergency situations, pandemics, inclement weather, or acts of God.

For your convenience, we use Tuition Express for payments. You will sign up using the form in your enrollment packet. You must provide an email address to receive your statement. You have three options for payment:

- Automatic withdrawal from your bank account on tuition payment dates. (Preferred)
- Pay online using your bank account. Push the payment from your account prior to the due date.
- Credit Card payment (online) manually. (A maintenance fee will be applied for each billing per child).

Families that choose option two or three listed above will be required to go to option 1 if payments are not being made in a timely manner. Our rates are reviewed each year and subject to change in order to meet financial requirements for quality child care. As your child grows and transitions from infant to toddler to preschool, you will see a rate change when your child has transitioned to a classroom approved for the older rate. If no openings are available to move your child to the next classroom, their tuition will remain at the rate associated with their current classroom until an opening becomes available. To find our most current payment calendar click [here](#).

Late Payment Charges

A .87% penalty (subject to change) will be charged for tuition payments not paid within five days of the due date. Failure to pay by the deadline may result in termination of care.

NSF Checks

There will be a \$15.00 charge on all checks or ACH payments returned for non-sufficient funds. Returned checks will automatically be re-deposited once. ACH payments will be redeposited with the next billing cycle. If the payment does not clear after being presented a second time, an immediate cash payment will be required to continue to receive services. If your check payment is returned, you will need to use another form of payment for all future payments, such as money order or credit card (processing fees for credit/debit cards will apply) for the next three months.

Payment made by a Third Party

Upon enrollment in a YMCA program, it is to be understood that all child care fees, tuition, and expenses are the responsibility of the guardian(s) enrolling in the program. All families enrolled in the program are subject to the same policies, including policies related to the payment of fees (i.e. two-week payment, late payment penalties, and withdrawal from the program, etc.).

In the event that a third party (i.e. Social Services, Child Care Assistance program, employer-sponsored flexible benefit account, non-custodial parent or extended family member, etc.) is assisting with all or part of the fees due, the agreement is between the guardian enrolling the child and the third party only. YMCA Child Care Services enters into the child care and payment

agreement with the enrolling guardian(s) only. Under no circumstances will any family be permitted to attend the child care program without payment of tuition.

Child Care Scholarship Program

Our Scholarship Program is sponsored by the United Way, the YMCA Annual Campaign, and grant resources. The YMCA childcare scholarship is a secondary source of financial assistance and families must apply to their local county agency first for county childcare assistance. The scholarship awards are based on income, enrollment, family size, and availability of funds. An initial application must be submitted to determine eligibility for the program and resubmitted annually by December. Families who receive Child Care Assistance may have their scholarship reduced or removed once the Child Care Assistance payment has been received. If the family is receiving a childcare scholarship granted from the YMCA, if any portion of a refund is of those funds, that amount will not be refunded to the family.

Find our scholarship application [here](#).

Late Pick-up Policy

If you are picking up your child from the program and you are running late, please call to let the staff know. If you arrive after 6:00 p.m., whether you have called or not, you will be charged \$1.00 per minute, per child past our 6:00 p.m. closing time. Late fee charges will be added to your next tuition statement. If your child has not been picked up by 6:30 p.m., and if we are not able to reach a guardian or emergency contact after 30 minutes, the police will be called for further assistance in locating an authorized pick-up person.

Flexible Benefit Programs

We will make every effort to accommodate your needs when involved with the flexible benefit plan. We can provide billing statements in custom time increments for the purpose of flexible spending benefits for childcare. Families must provide their benefits flex form to confirm accurate rates and provider signatures. Please see your program's Director to complete this benefit process.

School Age Rate Structure

Families are charged their regular, scheduled rates for any day their child does not attend. This includes non-school days in which school is not in session and days during the summer. If non-school day care is needed, guardians are required to pre-register and pay an extra fee for the full day care. Sign-up is required to assure that your child may attend and we will have the appropriate staffing needed to care for the children. The deadline for non-school day care registration or cancellation of registration will be two weeks prior to the non-school day, OR two weeks prior to the start of an extended break. **Once the two-week deadline has passed, care will not be guaranteed and cancellation of full day care cannot be made. If your child is signed up for the non-school day, you will be charged for a full day whether your child attends the program or not. If you do not sign up for non-school days and show up, you may not have a spot for your child, and you will be charged an extra fee (see current rate sheet).** Children who are not registered for the non-school day, may attend their regularly scheduled after school hours at no additional cost. However, if your child attends the program for any additional hours on non-school days, full-day fees will apply. Please note that we may not have space for your child, due to ratio requirements. If you were not registered for full day care, you may be turned away. However, if we have the space, you will be provided the additional care and charged an extra fee.



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Curriculum & Activities



Curriculum and Activities

Our Curriculum

A planned curriculum provides a dependable sequence of learning opportunities for children. Some components of each day's schedule include learning activities such as music, stories, self-directed play, excursions, and academic games. These activities promote learning in science, math, art, and literacy. Daily routines provide security in the predictable schedule and new activities keep interests high.

Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers

Who is Creative Curriculum for? The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos is a comprehensive curriculum that focuses on building relationships and providing responsive care.

What Will They Be Doing? The curriculum focuses on creating a responsive environment for the children where they will be physically and emotionally stimulated with materials, sounds, and experiences, and also have space to relax and learn from those around them. We carefully plan daily routines and experiences, focusing on personal growth and development, making sure they are individualized to each child. Children will participate in: Creative Art, Large and Fine Motor Activities, Language and Talking Activities, Music and Movement, Social, Emotional and Cognitive Activities. The child's personal care is also individualized to their own needs. Classroom materials and toys are rotated each week to go along with the weekly exploration topic. New items are placed in the learning programs to enhance the environment, keeping it relevant, fresh and fun for the children.

Creative Curriculum for Preschool Children

What is Creative Curriculum? The Creative Curriculum for the Preschool Children is a comprehensive curriculum that focuses on building relationships, the learning environment, how children learn, and how teachers and families can work together to strengthen the child's growth and development to ensure school readiness.

What makes Creative Curriculum so effective?

The Creative Curriculum balances both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests. The Creative Curriculum is one of the country's leading research-based preschool curricula that applies the latest theory and research on best practices in teaching, learning, and content stands developed by states and professional organizations. The Creative Curriculum clearly defines the teacher's vital role in connecting content, teaching, and learning for preschool children. Children will participate in large and fine motor activities, creative art, and sensory, social, emotional, and cognitive activities each day. We consider the outdoor environment as an extension of the classroom, where children have the opportunity to continue their learning outdoors at least twice a day, when possible.

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are developed around a weekly exploration topic, based on the children's interests, not just a topic out of a box. Activities are developed around specific goals and objectives that your child's class is working on. Research proves that children learn best when the topic is relevant and interesting to the group. Lesson plans are available in print for families and are posted in the classroom, along with a monthly calendar of classroom events. This is a great extension to the child's learning and helps you and your child make the important connection between home and school.

Other Creative Curriculum Resources

Another aspect of the Creative Curriculum focuses on positively guiding children's behavior. Building relationships with families is a very important part of a successful infant and toddler program. Families are welcome to join the children any time during the day, no appointment needed! Guardians have several opportunities throughout the day to visit with our trained staff regarding their child.

Seeds Curriculum

SEEDS is a Relationship-Based Framework that Supports Early Development. The quality of the interactions young children experience with the adults in their lives has an indelible impact on them and their developing brain architecture, laying the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health. Research shows that high-quality early interactions and positive relationships with the adults closest to them help children develop strong social-emotional skills, increasing their likelihood of success in school and in life.

The SEEDS of Learning is based on years of research about child development, brain development, and how trusting adult-child interactions help children learn.

For all children, our goal is to teach and enforce the following life

skills. Following instructions: Look at the person, say, "okay," and do it right away.

Getting the teacher's attention: Look at the teacher and wait for a response followed by using a pleasant voice.

Listening: Look at the person, remain quiet, and listen, nod your head or say "okay."

Staying on task: Look at the task, think about what you need to do, focus all of your attention on the task, ignore distractions, work until you are told to stop.

Reporting to the teacher: Look at the teacher and stay calm, ask the teacher if he/she has time to talk to you alone, tell what you have to say and/or heard, answer the teacher's questions truthfully.

Disagreeing appropriately: Look at the person, use a calm voice and tell why you feel differently, give a reason, and listen to the other person.

Talking with others/appropriate voice tone: Look at the person, use a pleasant voice, listen when others talk, match your voice to the setting.

Accepting "no" or a consequence: Look at the person, listen, say, "okay," and stay cool. If you disagree, ask later.

Sportsmanship: Appropriately request to be a part of an activity, cooperate with others in the group, take turns and play by the rules of the game, use a pleasant voice when talking to others, and remember to accept losing or winning appropriately.

School Age Curriculum

The YMCA School Age Learning Program programs offer a variety of activities specifically planned by the Y directors and coordinators to fit the interests of the children in our programs. Each YMCA program works together to fulfill seven common areas to make your child's day a fun and engaging experience.

With our **DAILY GREETING**, your child will feel welcomed into the program and be ready to start the fun activities. Your child also gets to go **OUTSIDE** each day (weather permitting) to breathe the fresh air and play with their friends. The YMCA offers **HEALTHY MEALS** each day that fit in the YMCA HEPA standards that are sweet- and treat-free. The children will also get to work on their large motor skills inside, as well when we go to the **GYM** and play instructor-led games along with child-selected activities. **GENIUS HOUR** is dedicated to letting your child choose which activities they would like to do and giving them time to create their masterpieces. The **EXPLORE ZONE** time of the day is when we infuse our academic enrichments weekly. These activities include STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics), literacy, and physical activity. **HUDDLE TIME** will round out the week by creating a sense of belonging and help the child gain self-control skills and build relationships through fun group games and challenges.



Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a planned part of each day, weather permitting. We do not go outside if the heat index is over 95-degrees or the temp or wind chill is below zero. For infant children, we do not go outside if the head index is over 95-degrees or the wind chill is below 20 degrees and for School Age children, it is -15 degrees wind chill, due to school policies. Children are supervised at all times. For staffing reasons, all children must go outside if they are in attendance for the day. We will not keep

your child inside due to illness or threat of illness, or if they did not bring proper clothes for outside play. If they are well enough to come to the program, they are well enough to go outside. We will use extra clothing when we do go outside if your child needs it to be comfortable.

When it is warm, we will take water with us outside and on walks. We may take children for walks to destinations that are no farther than one mile from the program, depending on the age of the children. Sunscreen and bug spray will be provided by YMCA. If your child has or shows signs of skin sensitivity, the YMCA will ask families to provide their own sunscreen and/or bug spray.

The YMCA Supports Positive Behaviors

At the YMCA, we believe the most useful means of supporting children in making good decisions is to reinforce and encourage positive behaviors. We always want to have a reliable and easy-to-understand system to recognize when kids are "doing the right thing". We do this by re-enforcing the YMCA's core values of Caring, Respect, and Honesty as well as other positive reinforcement activities.

When children display challenging behaviors, we know that there are many reasons why a child acts out. It is important to address these challenging behaviors with empathy and fairness, while also remembering that no two children or situations are the same. At the YMCA we have four core rules: **1. Take care of yourself 2. Take care of others 3. Take care of this place 4. Stay with your group.**

When staff are presented with a repeated challenging behavior there are steps that we follow to help reinforce our rules. The first step is a Think Sheet: Take 5. (typically, only used with the older preschool and school age children). This is used when a child shows a repeated challenging behavior and they have not done anything to purposefully harm themselves, others, or property. When this happens, the child works with staff to calm down and complete the form. Once they are ready, they are able to rejoin the group.

If a child has recurring behaviors, the Site Director or Coordinator will fill out a Behavior Documentation form. This is to keep a running documentation of behavior to determine if certain things are triggering this behavior. If the behavior continues we then set up a meeting with the parents or guardians to create a plan and we document that plan on our Behavior Action form. This is to try and help the child thrive in our program.

If a child has physically caused harm to another child, YMCA staff, or destroying a classroom or materials in the classroom, the child will be sent home or suspended for the day until a parent meeting can be held to formalize a plan to help with the observed behaviors.

The more severe behaviors may warrant a multiple-day suspension. This is left up to the discretion of the YMCA Directors.

Suspensions are necessary as it gives time to form a plan or revise a behavior plan as the safety of all children and staff is of the utmost importance.

Please remember that our programs may not be for everyone, but that we will take all steps to work as a team to help each child. The YMCA does not provide one-on-one care for children, and our staff are not trained in specific behavioral interventions. If a child receives one-on-one care while in school, please keep in mind that our group size is 14 children to one staff after school.

General Behavior and Guidelines for Vehicle Safety

All children who ride a YMCA bus will be asked to be very responsible for their behavior while being transported. The safety of all children is of utmost importance. All children must get on the bus under their own power to be transported to our sites.

All children are expected to use seatbelts (when available) and sit in their seats on the bus. We do not transport infants and toddlers in our YMCA vehicles. Appropriate behavior includes proper voice levels, being seated and facing forward, and not causing distractions to the bus driver. If the child does not follow the rules for riding in our vehicles, we will follow our behavior policies and reserve the right to refuse transportation on any of our vehicles.

Field Trips

Field trips and outings are an integral part of our program activities. Families will be given advance notice of upcoming field trips (Except for walks to the library, parks, and other destinations within one mile). Parents and guardians are welcome to join us on field trips, although you may need to arrange for your own transportation. Talk to your child's teacher/Coordinator or program staff if you are interested.

YMCA Swimming Lessons and Swimming Field Trips

Swimming, and learning how to swim, is a life skill. We provide swimming opportunities in two ways.

Swimming lessons are offered at our Fercho YMCA Aquatic Program, and transportation for specific lesson times is provided. Swimming lessons are provided through the YMCA during the school year in our Early Learning Programs. During the summer, swim camps are scheduled for all age groups. These run on a two-week session, and your site will be assigned to a specific camp. If you would like your child to attend at another time, you will have to provide your own transportation. For both the school year Early Learning Programs, and School Age Summer Explorers, you will be asked to register and pay according to the session instructions.

If your child attends the Fercho Early Learning or School Age programs, please see your Site Director for other opportunities and times.

Swimming Field Trips are planned for our school age programs throughout the summer. We use the local public swimming pools, and you will receive a field trip calendar ahead of time as to the location and dates. Certified lifeguards are always on duty at those locations. Please be sure to always provide your child with a swimsuit and towel on those days. At the beginning of each summer, we participate in the community-wide Water Safety Day. This is a time where your child will be swim tested for the summer. We use this information, as well as the information you provide on your registration form, to determine your child's swimming abilities. Children will be given a wristband with a corresponding level indicator before each field trip. This helps our staff, as well as pool staff, know where that child can participate while at the pool. If you miss the scheduled water safety day, you will be given other opportunities to bring your child in to be tested or your child will automatically be given a red band.

Other YMCA Program Opportunities

Our YMCA Youth Development department, and other partners, will offer various experiences throughout the year; such as, but not limited to, Sports of All Sorts, Basketball Club, Cooking Club, etc. You will be notified ahead of time, and given the opportunity to register when they are available to your child. All payments for these activities will be billed to your Tuition Express account.

Rest Time

Rest time is regularly scheduled each afternoon for all preschool-age children. Each child may bring the approved items as stated in the *Toys, Blankets, and Rest Time Items Policy*. A cot will be provided for each child. We do not require the children to sleep, but they should stay on their cots and lay quietly for 30 minutes. We require guardians to sign an authorization form so that staff of the YMCA may rub the child's back to ease them into a nap (See the registration form). After approximately 30-45 minutes, children who are finished resting may do quiet activities until rest time is over. Infant nap time is handled on an individual basis according to their schedule.

Infant Sleeping Policy

All infants under the age of twelve months will be placed flat on their backs for sleep in a safety-approved crib or playpen. If guardians request that their infant is placed in an alternative sleep position or another device/equipment for sleep, a written order from a health care provider is required stating the medical reason and the time frame to follow the order, as well as written permission. This includes swings, car seats, high chairs, or other equipment not certified for infant sleep. Programs have the right to refuse care if they do not feel comfortable following the request.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends keeping soft objects and loose bedding (including blankets) out of the crib/playpen to reduce the risk of SIDS, suffocation, entrapment, and strangulation for infants under the age of 12 months. The AAP recommends the use of pacifiers for sleep. Studies have reported a protective effect of pacifiers on the incidence of SIDS. The pacifier is not recommended to be attached to the infant's clothing or to a stuffed animal/toy. The pacifier should be checked for tears before use. In addition, no hooded clothing or bibs are allowed at nap time. With written parental permission, the provider may use a parent provided sleep sack and pacifier for your child. These items will not pose a suffocation risk to the infant in the crib while the infant is sleeping or preparing for sleep.

Sleep sacks and swaddle sleep sacks with arm panels can be used until infant shows signs of rolling over or reaches 2 months of age. Once 2 months of age, sleeveless sleep sacks should be used.

Pets

Some sites may have small pets or fish in their classrooms or programs. You will be notified if your child's site has a pet. Please inform your child's caregiver if your child is allergic to any pet in particular. Children may not bring their own pets for a visit unless they can show their pet has the proper vaccinations and there are no allergies in the classroom. Please contact the site Director/Coordinator for more information.



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Parent/Guardian Information



Parent/Guardian Information

Connecting with Families

Quality child care includes an open line of communication between the family and the program. Families will have access to program phone numbers and Director/ Coordinator contact information. In addition, listed below are other ways our programs will share information with you:

- A monthly newsletter and/or calendar describing program activities and events, announcements, items of interest, and other general happenings will be sent out. Please be sure to check with your child's teacher or school-age coordinator on other reminders and announcements so you are always in the know.
- A parent engagement app will be provided. This is a place to see regular updates, photos, and videos of your child's daily experiences. We will also use this as another messaging tool to communicate pertinent information to you. Be sure to sign up for this app at enrollment time. Your Site Director/ Coordinator can help you with this at any time.
- Advisory Committee may be an opportunity for you to play an active role in your child's program. If this is something you are interested in please contact your Site Director (early learning).
- ProCare is a tool we use to post messages at the time of signing in/out and to send out emails to families. Please be sure to read these carefully, as this is also how your billing statement is sent to you. Be sure to check your junk mail if you feel you are not receiving these.
- Monday Memos are sent out weekly in our School Age programs. These include information about weekly happenings and reminders.
- Daily Boards are used in our Early Learning programs. Check these at pick-up time to see what your child has been up to each day.

Families Are Welcome at Any Time!

Families are welcome visitors to our programs at all times. We hope that parents/guardians will attend family functions, help with classroom projects or attend field trips with us. We also encourage you to help with swimming or schedule lunch with your child occasionally. Just give us a call to enable us to prepare for your lunchtime visit.

Another important way to contribute is to be a room parent. Room parents play a huge role in coordinating classroom events. Room parents typically coordinate teacher appreciation efforts for birthdays, holidays, and end-of-year celebrations. Many rooms also plan lunch for the teachers once a month. They also help teachers coordinate pizza day sides, holiday celebrations, and any special projects. Room parents can also encourage other parents to get involved by recruiting help or helping the teacher plan for parent story reading, helping plan for pet care, and making sure the teacher has help with special projects the children are working on.

Conferences

Conferences or parent meetings may be called at the request of the program staff or the guardians. Parent/teacher conferences will be offered two times per year in the Early Childhood Program to go over your child's progress. Although our staff would love to visit with you daily, it may not always be possible as they may be gone for the day or working with other children. If you have a specific question or concern, please contact your child's teacher or Site Director/Coordinator.

Grievance Procedure for Guardians

If you have a grievance concerning something regarding our program, you should refer to the following procedure. If you do not feel that you have reached satisfaction, then you must continue through the process stopping when you feel you have satisfaction on the matter. The final decision lies with the President of the YMCA.

1. Site Coordinator, Teacher, or Room Leader of your child, as appropriate.
2. Site Directors or School Age Directors
3. Learning Center Program Director
4. VP of Learning Center Programs
5. Write a letter of Grievance that will be reviewed by the Learning Center Committee

It is unacceptable for guardians to discipline another child in the program if that child has done something inappropriate. Please refer the matter to the staff in charge of the child at that time.

Please note that our YMCA Learning Centers work with multiple licensors. The contact information for the licensors is available upon request.

Toileting

We encourage children to use the toilet by themselves. We would like all children to be completely potty trained and independent prior to transitioning to a preschool room. As a best practice, we do not allow cloth diapers in our programs. Diapers and/or Pull-ups are not allowed outside of the toddler room.

Breastfeeding Policy

The YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties Early Learning Programs are committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers. We will provide the opportunity and location to breastfeed your child throughout the day and hold off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive.

Formula and solid foods will not be provided unless the mother has requested. Babies will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped. Breastfeeding mothers may store their expressed milk in the program refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with the infant's name and date. The program will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Programs for Disease Control in ensuring that breast milk is properly handled to avoid waste.



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Health & Safety Information



Health and Safety Information

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA)

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) teaches children how to make healthy food choices, and to enjoy physical activity, contributing to their social and physical development. Our YMCA has committed to meeting these nationally recognized standards. For more information about the HEPA standard, and to learn more visit www.ymca.net/hepa.

Physical Activity: We provide a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity in our half-day programs and 60 minutes of physical activity in our full-day programs. Activity is a blend of moderate and vigorous levels of physical play and will take place both indoors and out. This will also include age-appropriate physical movement for infants. Y staff will model active living related to physical activity by being fully engaged with the children.

Screen Time: Screen time in our programs is very limited. When screen time is used, it is to enhance our educational lessons. There is no screen time for Infant and Toddler and 3-year-old age groups.

Food: Meal and snack times are presented in a family-style manner intended to make meal time a pleasant social experience that is positive and enjoyable. Children are offered all of the foods on our menu and are encouraged, but not required, to try them. Our nutrition program includes educational activities that promote proper nutrition and meet the ND Department of Health and USDA requirements. Menus are posted on the Parent Information board. Y staff will model healthy eating behaviors at all times. This includes consuming the same foods and beverages as children during program times.

We provide all meals for **breakfast, lunch, and snack.** (We do not provide breakfast at schools that offer a breakfast program.) If your child has special dietary needs or food allergies, please contact your Site Director/Coordinator. We will work to accommodate your request(s) by providing a food modification form that must be signed by a physician or accepting a doctor's order. We encourage children to eat the foods provided and try new foods. Our menu includes whole grains, fruits, and fresh vegetables. We avoid fruit juices and all other sugary beverages by serving skim milk, or one percent milk and water at every meal. For this reason, we do not allow parents to bring food for their child. We do encourage your child to try new foods. Infants are fed according to their needs and schedules. We will provide Parent's Choice formula and baby foods. If parents/guardians wish to provide their own formula, it must be in a new, sealed, and labeled container.

We ask that the children do not bring gum, candy, treats, or food to the program. The YMCA is a sweet-free, treat-free, and nut-free facility. If your child would like to share a birthday or special occasion treat, they must be store-bought and meet our Sweet Free, Treat Free, and Nut Free Policy. Please inform the staff of what you are bringing, and please keep in mind that we like to have the children learn good nutrition habits when you are choosing your treat.

Grace at Meals

As a Christian-based organization, songs or grace are said every day before we eat lunch. These songs may have an occasional reference to a deity. Please share your ideas for new graces with us as we try to develop a spirit of thankfulness in the children for the bounty that is available to them.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) [found online](#) at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- 1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
 - (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
 - (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov
- This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Biting

Children sometimes bite other children. Although not all children bite, biting is considered a normal stage in a child's development. Children may bite for a variety of reasons, rarely with the intent to hurt another child.

Karen Miller, author of *Things to Do with Toddlers and Twos*, suggests that children may bite for any of the following reasons:

- **Teething:** Toddlers are often cutting teeth and it hurts. Chewing on something relieves the itch and stops the pain for a moment.
- **Sensory Exploration:** Toddlers are very good at using all of their senses to learn about the world. The "oral mode," an important style of learning for infants, continues into toddlerhood. They bite everything, not just their playmates.
- **Cause and Effect:** Toddlers are eager explorers. They are constantly studying cause and effect. Biting produces a predictable response. Often, the response is dramatic: there is a lot of noise and attention from adults.
- **Self-Assertion:** This is probably the most common reason young children bite. It is a way to express frustration when they do not yet have the language skills to do so.

Our teachers act to reduce the number of biting incidents by providing access to teething toys, sensory exploration activities, opportunities to explore cause and effect, and offering toddlers options and alternatives to reduce frustrations.

When a child receives a bite, that child is immediately comforted, the bite is washed with soap, and a Band-Aid is applied if the skin is broken. The teacher will tell the child who bit, "It is not okay to bite. Biting hurts very much." If possible, the teacher will try to encourage the child who received the bite to

express his/her feelings. "It hurts," or "Don't bite me," are statements that teachers will model for the child to repeat. The teacher will then redirect the child to another area of the classroom.

Consistent with the CDC confidentiality policy, parents are not told the name of the child who bit their child. Parents of the child who bit are informed and work together with the teachers to help to prevent further incidents of biting. We recognize how upset parents may be when they learn their child received a bite; however, we also recognize that biting is a normal component of child development. Despite our many concerted efforts to prevent biting incidents, they are bound to occur. Our program does not exclude children because of biting alone.

Please feel free to ask the staff any questions about young children biting. Parents should understand and take comfort in knowing that biting is a normal stage in the course of a child's development and, like all stages, he/she will quickly outgrow it.

For more information on biting, we suggest reading the book *Things to Do with Toddlers and Twos* by Karen Miller.

Water Safety Policy

Per licensing in the state of North Dakota, each child must have a water activity permission slip on file for the current year. Children enrolled at YMCA child care programs may participate in the following types of water activities depending on children's ages: wading pool; public swimming pool; splash pad; sprinkler; water table; lake or manmade beach. Child-to-staff ratios will be maintained at all times during water activities. Children will be kept in sight at all times and staff will not be involved in any other activity other than direct supervision of children during these times. Children in diapers are required to wear diapers designed for swimming/water activities. Children with diarrhea or open sores will not be allowed to participate in water activities.

Medications

Prescribed medications brought to the program must be in the original container and be current and labeled with your child's full name. No substitute containers will be allowed. A medication release form must be filled out completely and signed by a guardian before a medication is given. Instructions on the form must match the instructions on the container exactly. Please ask your teacher for assistance. A note from a doctor outlining the purposes of the medication, recommended dosage and the length of time that it is to be given must accompany all non-prescription medications. If a medication needs to be cut for dosage purposes, the parents must do so. Medication will be placed out of the reach of children.

Cough syrup, acetaminophen, or other over-the-counter medications will not be administered at the program without a doctor's note. (Talk to your director about over-the-counter drugs for teething, immunizations, or runny noses.) We will not allow cough drops because they pose a choking hazard.

Child Sickness Policy

Our goal is to provide a full day of activities for your child. If your child is not feeling well, they may take longer to feel better and they may have a very unpleasant day at the program. We ask that you keep your child home until they are well enough to participate in all activities, including gym, outdoor play, and swimming. Our health policies will not be superseded by a doctor's authorization for attendance. A child may not be contagious and yet not be well enough to attend a full day of care. If a child is sick at school, they may not attend afterschool care. Children with any of the following symptoms will not be permitted to attend the program, as these symptoms can compromise the health and safety of other children:

- Fever of 101°F or greater until the temperature is normal for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Uncontrolled, persistent coughing; wheezing; difficulty breathing.
- Chicken pox until no new pox are developing and all pox are crusted over and dry (typically six days).
- Impetigo until treated for 24 hours or unless covered
- Vomiting of two or more episodes until 24 hours have passed from the last episode and the child can keep food down. One episode if other symptoms are present or if the child has recently had a head injury.
- Strep throat until the child has been on medication for 24 hours.
- Rash or unusual skin conditions until a physician documents that the child is not contagious.
- Evidence of lice or nits until all nits and lice have been removed and the home and clothing have been cleaned. Must be Nit Free before returning to the program.
- Diarrhea if it is not contained in the diaper (unless child is teething); or if it causes accidents for toilet-trained children; or if bowel movement frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal for the child; until the child has a normal stool or 24 hours have passed since the last episode.

If a doctor diagnoses an infection and places your child on prescription medication, your child may not be brought back to the program until he/she has taken the medication for at least 24 hours (ear and urinary tract infections excluded depending on the child's condition). In order to return to programming, your child must be able to participate in all program activities. Our policy is that if the child is well enough to be at the program they are well enough to go outside and participate in all activities.

If your child becomes ill while at the program, we will call you immediately. If you cannot be reached or an hour has passed, we will call the emergency person indicated on your child's authorization form. We will try to keep your child as comfortable as possible until you arrive. We will notify you if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease such as chicken pox, pink eye, or strep throat. We will post this information in a pertinent area in the program. Please notify the program if your child contracts any of these illnesses so that we can notify other families in the program.

Children with Severe Allergies

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the "Severe Allergies" form which is in the registration link/paperwork, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child's physician and parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and must be updated every twelve months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergy.

Peanut/Nut Free Programs

Due to the extreme nature of some allergic reactions to peanuts/nuts and products containing peanuts and/or nuts in some children, The YMCA Learning Centers are peanut/nut-free facilities. The teacher will also notify you of any other allergies in the classroom. Per our Confidentiality Policy, only the allergen will be identified, not the child.

When families are bringing food into the program, for special occasions, it is important to remember to read the label of every food item you send. Many foods which we do not think of as containing peanuts or nuts have in fact been made in the same factories as peanut/nut-containing foods and are therefore considered to be contaminated. When reading the label, look at not only the ingredients listed but also for statements such as, "may contain traces of peanuts."

Handwashing Standards

To help control the spread of germs and disease we follow these standards.

Hands are washed:

- Upon arrival to the classroom
- Before and after all meals
- Dispensing of medication
- Before food preparation (including bottles)
- Setting tables
- After Toileting
- After sneezing, coughing, or wiping runny noses
- After diapering
- Coming in from outside or playing in gym
- Before and after using sensory table

Sanitizing/Disinfecting

All toys are washed at a minimum each week or when dirty. Infant/ Toddler toys are sanitized after being mouthed. Toilets, sinks, and bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected daily. Tables are sanitized before and after each meal. Blankets and sleep toys are sent home each week for cleaning. Cots are disinfected each day and between uses. Floors are swept and vacuumed daily.

Child Abuse and Neglect Procedures

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. ALL EMPLOYEES of The YMCA are considered mandated reporters, under this law. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting line at 1-833-958-3500. The employees of the YMCA are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at YMCA Learning Center take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff YMCA Learning Center cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

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

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

If a Learning Center staff member is accused of abuse and/or neglect by a parent or co-worker, such

an accusation will be reported to the Director and a determination will be made as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse and/or neglect. If there is reasonable cause, a report must be made to Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Line at 1-833-958-3500.

YMCA Learning Center will cooperate with any DHS investigation. In addition, the accused staff member will be informed of the allegations and be given an opportunity to respond to those allegations. Staff person "accused" will be removed from ratio until investigation is completed. Termination of employment after a child abuse allegation and investigation is at the discretion of the YMCA. The following is regarding mandated reporters and reporting abuse, as stated in our Staff Handbook:

- Staff will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others at all times while in the presence of children, parents, and staff. (This includes kisses and long hugs.)
- Staff will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, culture.
- No pet names, such as honey, sweetie, cutie, etc.
- Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.
- Staff will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
 - Under no circumstances should a YMCA employee release a child to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with the YMCA).
 - Staff are required to read and sign all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and attend trainings on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor.

First Aid procedures/Accident procedures

All staff are certified in First Aid and CPR. We will provide basic first aid for your child if it is necessary. We will not remove splinters, wood ticks, etc. We will apply ice, clean the injured area as best as possible and apply a Band-Aid if necessary. We are not able to put any creams, gels, or any type of antibiotic ointments on the injury, due to possible skin allergies and adverse reactions.

A form authorizing emergency medical care for your child is signed at the time of enrollment. In case of an emergency, you will be called. If our program staff is not able to reach you, we will attempt to notify the emergency contact(s) indicated on your child's authorized form. If we feel the child needs medical attention and we are unable to reach the family or emergency contacts, we will call EMS to transport them for further medical attention.

Fire/Emergency Drills

The YMCA Learning Center conducts monthly fire, tornado, emergency/evacuation, and lockdown drills. Parents, staff, and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency/lockdown drill or real fire/emergency/lockdown situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the school. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the school. Parents may wait with the child's class in the designated safe zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency/lockdown situation, the Director or designated staff member will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. At this time, any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. When parents arrive to pick up their child, we ask that you wait until the director or designee has accounted for all staff and children and has given the staff permission to release children. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone

of the situation. Children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

General Information



General Information

Building Access and Security

At the YMCA, we have many locations between our main sites and school-based programs. Each site has its own access and security procedures. Some of our locations have a secure access and families have to use fobs to enter. Each family at these sites will be given two fobs. Replacement fobs are available for a fee. Please see your Site Director or Coordinator for building access and security policies.

Parent Board/ Parent Mailboxes

In each program and/or classroom a parent board is displayed. Our parent boards are a wealth of information about our programs, safety information, upcoming events, and highlights from your program/classroom. In Early Learning, parent mailboxes should be checked regularly for important news and information.

Social Media

For privacy purposes, we ask that you not post pictures of children from our programs on your social media platforms. These pictures may be taken innocently at school and program events, but not all families provide photo release consent. Note that the YMCA does not condone posting pictures of children without written permission from a parent.

Staff Babysitting Policy

As a client of the YMCA, you are notified that the YMCA supervises its employees and programs within the confines of the facilities under the policies of the YMCA and the programs approved and managed by the YMCA. The employees of the YMCA are not supervised by the YMCA during their off-duty hours and are not acting within the scope of their employment. If you would like an employee to babysit for you, please ask for a Babysitting Authorization Form at your site. After completing the form, you may give it to the Site Director/Coordinator.

Birthdays and Celebrations

We like to make each child feel special on his or her birthday and you are welcome to bring healthy snacks for your child's birthday. We follow the YMCA's HEPA standards; please see that policy for more information. Birthday celebrations and other special events can be celebrated with the following options: Stickers, veggies, low-fat yogurt, fat-free pudding cups, sugar-free Jell-O, pencils, mini Playdough, book, string cheese, etc. For health and sanitary reasons, we require that all treats be store-bought.

Since children have a difficult time when they are not invited to parties, we ask that you either invite everyone in the class or discuss options with your Site Director/Coordinator.

Christmas, Kwanzaa, winter celebrations, events of the world (such as the Olympics), Hanukkah, Halloween, July 4th, Valentine's Day, and Thanksgiving are times when we often have program parties. Parents and guardians are encouraged to help us celebrate these days and any other times that are important to your family. We are always looking for other cultural and ethnic celebrations that we could include in our program. Please share your customs and traditions with your teachers/leaders.

Parking

When parking at the YMCA, please turn your vehicle off. For safety reasons, we highly discourage leaving your vehicle idling. Parking can be an issue at certain times at our locations. To ensure the safety of the children, please drive with extreme caution in our lots. Each site has specific drop-off and pick-up areas. Ask your Site Director/Coordinator for further information.

Lost and Found

The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items. We make every effort to help teach your child responsibility to keep all of their belongings in order. At our main locations, we will have a lost and found location for any items that are found. At our school-based locations, any found items will be placed in the school's lost and found. Items not claimed within a reasonable amount of time will be donated.

Incident/Accident Report

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be placed in the child's classroom folder. If you wish to have an in-depth discussion or meeting with your teacher regarding an Incident/Accident Report, we ask that you schedule a specific time frame with your teacher.

Liability Insurance

Our programs are covered under liability insurance in case of a major accident or incident involving your child. Your insurance would be required to cover injuries for your child, as the YMCA coverage is secondary. Your insurance coverage would include the calling of 911 and other emergency room care needed for your child.

Release of Information

If you would like information to be released to another person, ask your Director for a Release of Information authorization form. This is appropriate for courts, schools, counselors, or agencies. We will require the same information if a request is made to us for any information.

Smoking Policy

The YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties prohibits smoking at YMCA facilities and on YMCA grounds. In addition, staff are prohibited from smoking during work hours.

Gun Policy

The YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties prohibits carrying concealed weapons and firearms of any kind at YMCA facilities and on YMCA grounds.

Sex Offenders

Sex offenders are not allowed into the Early and School Age Learning Program regardless if they are a guardian or relative.

Social Media

This social media policy applies to parents, employees, students, and The Board of Directors of YMCA Learning Center.

This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram)
- Blogs
- Discussion forums
- Collaborative online spaces
- Media Sharing services (i.e. YouTube)
- Micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter)

As part of our duty to safeguard children, it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families and employees. We, therefore, require that:

No photographs taken within the YMCA or at YMCA special events and outings with the children, are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child.

Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. (This excludes those photographs taken by staff for the children's online learning journal, which are sometimes used for display in the setting, for use on The Child Development Center website, and in other advertising material if parental permission is given).

No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding YMCA children, staff, or administrators (except appropriate use for marketing fundraising events), or that could be construed to have any impact on The YMCA Learning Centers reputation or offend any member of staff or parent using the school.

If a parent names the YMCA Learning Center on any social media platform, they must do so in a way that is not detrimental or derogatory to the school.

Parents are not permitted to set up private or public social media (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) accounts/groups related to the YMCA Learning Center without expressed written consent from the Executive Director.

Violation of Social Media Policy

Any parent found to be in violation of the above or by posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality, bring the YMCA Learning Center into disrepute, or that are deemed to be detrimental to the YMCA Learning Center, its employees, or other children could result in immediate dismissal from the school.

Parent Code of Conduct

The YMCA Learning Center always requires the parents of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of YMCA Learning Centers is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of The YMCA Learning Center but is the responsibility of every parent or adult who enters the center.

Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. **Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on YMCA property thereafter.**

Swearing/Cursing

No parent or guardian is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on school property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or guardian feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

Threatening of Employees, Children of Other Parents or Adults Associated with The YMCA Learning Center

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society, The YMCA Learning Center cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the YMCA will not assume the risk of a second chance. **PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.**

Physical/Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Other Children at The YMCA Learning Center

While YMCA Learning Centers do not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the childcare facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving inappropriately or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or Director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or Director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Center Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our agency have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

Confrontational Interactions with Employees, other Parents or Associates of The YMCA Learning Center

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of The YMCA Learning Center or the parents of other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled calmly and respectfully. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

Policy for Handling Parent Concerns

If a parent has a concern, they should first discuss it with the Lead Teacher of the child's class or the Coordinator of your child's afterschool program. If the Lead Teacher/Coordinator and parent cannot resolve the concern together and to the satisfaction of both, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Directors. A three-way conference may be arranged at this time. If a resolution is not reached, the matter will then be brought to the attention of the Executive Director and/or the Learning Center Child Care Committee for their consideration.