



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®**  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**LEARN, GROW  
THRIVE.**

**CAPITAL DISTRICT YMCA  
Early Childcare Parent Handbook**



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# MISSION & GOALS

## CAPITAL DISTRICT YMCA

At the Y, we nurture the potential in every child; we work to help improve the health and well being of our members; and we give back to our community by actively supporting our neighbors.

Our childcare programs provide quality care in a safe and supportive environment which fosters the physical, emotional, and social growth of children, while supporting and strengthening families.

This handbook provides information about our childcare services. When updates to our handbook occur, parents and guardians will be notified.

Capital District YMCA childcare programs are licensed/registered by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

## MISSION

The Mission of the Capital District YMCA is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

## PROGRAM GOALS & PHILOSOPHY

In addition to activities and routines, our teachers place high importance on planning, evaluating children, individualizing activities, creating an appropriate learning environment, guiding behavior, health and safety.

Our programs have goals and objectives for our teachers, children and families. Goals for teachers include building responsive relationships, planning a developmentally appropriate program, promoting children's development, maintaining professional standards and advocating in support of children and families.

Goals for our children include self-concept development, emotional development, social development, language development, physical development and cognitive development.

## NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Children of any race, color, national and ethnic origin enjoy all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to YMCA members. The Y does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin, age, gender or disability in the administration of childcare policies.

For children with special-needs, factors that affect enrollment consideration include, but are not limited to how well a child's individual needs will be met by our curriculum, group size, teacher-child ratio and staff expertise.

The parent or guardian who completes and signs our registration documents is the only person authorized to make changes, deletions, and/or additions to the YMCA Childcare Registration Form. The parent/guardian who enrolls a child is responsible for all changes related to your child's participation. This includes families that receive assistance through third party agencies such as DSS or an employer. Please inform our staff of any changes.

## STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

The Y welcomes children with individual needs into our program when reasonable accommodations can be made. All children have multiple opportunities to learn, develop, and form positive relationships while in our care. During enrollment, please identify any health concerns or individual needs your child may have so we can determine together what accommodations your child may need to be successful. To best respond to your child's needs, completion of an individual care plan and a meeting with the Center Director will be needed prior to participating in a program. We work collaboratively with families of children with special needs who receive specialized services and we partner with agencies and school districts to meet the needs of individual children. All of the Capital District YMCA Early Learning Centers are licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and run in accordance with their regulations. These regulations can be found on the OCFS website: [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us)

## ABOUT THE Y

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence to deliver lasting personal and social change.

## PROGRAM PRACTICES

### PROGRAM HOURS

Capital District YMCA Early Learning Centers are open Monday thru Friday 7am—6pm.

### HOLIDAYS

During school holidays, all branches of the Capital District YMCA offer vacation programs. Please register your child at the branch you will use during school holiday. The cost of our vacation programs isn't included in the cost of care. Space is limited and open to all Y Members and Non Members. To ensure your child can attend, please register early.

- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day\*
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day\*
- Memorial Day

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, it's observed on the preceding Friday. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, it's observed on the following Monday.

\*Columbus Day and Martin Luther King Day are used as training days for our staff.





The minimum education and experience qualifications for staff are as follows:

418-1.13(f)

418-1.13(f)

	Administrator Credential		field of work
<b>Group Teacher for preschoolers</b>	Associate's degree in Early Childhood, Child Development or related field	AND	No additional experience necessary
	OR		
	Child Development Associate credential or other Office- recognized credential specific to the preschool developmental period.	AND	One year experience related to caring for children
	OR		
	9 college credits in Early Childhood, Child Development or a related field, with a plan of study leading to a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Development Associate credential; or</li> <li>• Associate's Degree in Early Childhood, Child Development or a related field.</li> </ul>	AND	Two years' experience related to caring for children
<b>Group Teacher for infants/toddlers</b>	Associate's degree in Early Childhood, Child Development or related field	AND	One year experience related to caring for infants and toddlers
	OR		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant and Toddler Child Care and Education credential; or</li> <li>• Infant Toddler Child Development Associate credential; or</li> <li>• other Office-recognized credential specific to the infant/toddler developmental period</li> </ul>	AND	Two years' experience related to caring for children.
	OR		
	Child Development Associate credential	AND	Two years of experience caring for children, one on which must be related to caring for infants or toddlers

	OR		
	9 college credits in Early Childhood, Child Development or a related field, with a plan of study leading to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant and Toddler Child Care and Education credential; or</li> <li>• Infant Toddler Child Development Associate credential; or</li> <li>• other Office-recognized credential specific to the infant/toddler developmental period; or</li> <li>• Associate's Degree in Early Childhood, Child Development or a related field;</li> </ul>	AND	Two years' experience related to caring for children, one of which must be related to working with infants or toddlers
<b>Group Teacher for school-age children</b>	Associate's degree in Child Development, Elementary Education, Physical Education, Recreation or a related field	AND	No additional experience required
	OR		
	School-age Child care credential or other Office-recognized credential specific to the school-age developmental period.	AND	One year experience working with children less than 13 years of age.
	OR		
	High School Diploma or its equivalent	AND	Two years direct experience working with children less than 13 years of age.
<b>Assistant teacher (all age groups)</b>	High School diploma or its equivalent	OR	One year experience working with children less than 13 years of age

(g) Minimum education and experience qualifications:

(1) To be qualified as a director, a person must possess either:

# PROGRAM CURRICULUM

## INFANT & TODDLER CARE

Infants are 6 weeks to 18 months.  
The staff-to-child ratio is 1 to 4 with a maximum group size of 8.  
Toddlers are 18 months to 36 months.  
The staff-to-child ratio is 1 to 5 with a maximum group size of 12 children.

Creative Curriculum is a scientifically based program that combines the latest research and freshest ideas in a forward-thinking approach to learning. We use the Creative Curriculum to inspire teachers and help them create high-quality learning environments that honor creativity and respect the role teachers play in making learning exciting and relevant.

Our Early Learning Centers use Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers, a developmentally appropriate program which contains three interwoven elements: age appropriateness, individualized appropriateness and cultural/social appropriateness. All our infant & toddler programs focus on developing a strong relationship between children, their families and our teachers.

Our teaching happens through activities, play and routines.

In our Infant and Toddler programs, the routines are an essential component to building positive relationships with each child. These routines include hellos and good byes, diapering and toileting, eating and mealtimes, nap times and getting dressed.

Activities in our infant and toddler programs include: playing with toys, dabbling in art, imitating and pretending, enjoying stories and books, tasting and preparing food, exploring sand and water, having fun with music and movement and going outdoors.

## PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

For 3 year olds, the staff-to-child ratio is 1 to 7 with the maximum group size of 18.  
For 4 year olds, the staff-to-child ratio is 1 to 8 with a maximum group size of 21.  
For mixed age groups (3-5 years old) ratios are based on the majority age of the children in the room.

Our child-centered care allows teachers to provide meaningful experiences for children as they learn, grow and develop. Our early learning programs focus on children's learning and guidelines for teaching and working with families as outlined in the Creative Curriculum.

Our programs use the Creative Curriculum as a blueprint for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate activities. Grounded in research and theory, the Creative Curriculum for pre-schoolers is based on five components:

- How and what children develop and learn
- The learning environment
- The teacher's role
- The family's role

The Creative Curriculum classroom contains interest areas for learning with 11 different areas: Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand and Water, Music and Movement, Cooking, Computers, Outdoors/Nature.

## PROGRAM CURRICULUM QUALITY

The YMCA believes that children learn best through hands-on experiences. Classrooms are arranged in activity centers to provide children with a variety of developmentally appropriate choices. Teacher-initiated enrichment activities such as art, science, cooking, story time, music and games are also offered. Group time for sharing, discussing values and teaching social skills is also held daily. Outdoor play, meals and snacks, and rest time round out the day. We encourage respect for cultural and ethnic diversity.

## The Y's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards for Early Childhood and Afterschool Programs.

### Early Childhood Program

### Afterschool Programs

Program for Parent and Child Care Providers

- Implement an educational program for parents and childcare providers with physical activity and nutritional information relevant to the health of their children

- Implement an educational program for parents and childcare providers with physical activity and nutritional information relevant to the health of their children.

Physical Activity

- Provide opportunities for light, moderate, and vigorous physical activity for children for at least 15 minutes per hour.
- Daily play takes place outdoors whenever possible.

**For infants:**

- Provide daily opportunities for infants to move freely under adult supervision to explore their indoor and outdoor environment and optimize adult-infant interactions.
- Provide daily "tummy time" (time in the prone position) for infants less than 6 months of age.

- Ensure that children engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day (for full-day programs), including a mix of moderate and vigorous physical activities that promote bone and muscle strengthening.
- Daily play takes place outdoors whenever possible.

Food

- Serve fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- Eat meals family-style when possible.
- No fried foods.

- Serve fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- Serve all meals family style.
- No fried foods.

Beverages

- Offer water at the table during every meal and have water accessible at all times.
- Serve beverages that do not have added sugars.
- For children two or older, serve low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk, or 100% fruit juice (no more than one 4-6 oz. serving per day.)

- Offer water at the table during every meal and have water accessible at all times.
- Serve beverages that do not have added sugars.
- Serve healthier beverages, including water, low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk, or 100% fruit juice (no more than one 6-8 oz. serving per day)

Infant Feeding

- Adults who work with infants and their families support exclusive breast feeding for six months and continuation of breast feeding in conjunction with complementary foods for 1 year or more.



## **CONTINUITY OF CARE**

We believe that forming secure attachments to care givers is the foundation for healthy development. Helping children form bonds with caregivers and feel comfortable in their environments encourages confidence and safe exploration. Knowing that staff are attentive and responsive to their needs has a lasting positive impact on the children in our programs.

## **TRANSITIONS**

At the Capital District YMCA, we recognize how important new beginnings are in your child's life. Our teachers and staff work to make transitions from one program to another as your child ages as seamless as possible for your child and family.

### **FROM HOME TO CHILDCARE**

Our staff realize that enrolling your child in a center can be a difficult time for everyone as you adjust to a new routine and new people. During the transition from home to childcare, you will receive information about the program and a daily schedule. In addition, we encourage you to meet with our teachers and tour our classrooms to meet some of the children in the class. Constant communication is key to creating a safe and nurturing environment for your child. This communication is best when it flows from childcare to home and from home to childcare. This helps ensure that we're all on the same page and going in the same direction.

### **WHILE AT CHILDCARE**

As children grow and develop, they need new challenges and social interactions with other children in their peer group. Children will make a transition to the next classroom based on chronological age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. Because each child is unique, there is no specific formula. Each classroom adjusts to fit the developmental characteristics of the children enrolled.

During the transition period, current and future teachers meet to make sure your child is gently integrated into her/his new classroom through a series of visits.

We continue to support your entire family during these changes. You are encouraged to discuss the communication methods that work best for you, to ensure ongoing dialogue.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Weather permitting, children (including infants) spend 15 minutes to 2 hours each day in outdoor play. It's important for children to have freedom of movement, so we request that children be dressed accordingly. As we encourage children to explore, there may be times when your child becomes messy or rumpled. For this reason, we ask parents to provide one complete change of clothing that can remain at childcare.

## **TRANSITION OUT OF THE PROGRAM**

When it comes time to transition your child out of the program, we support transition by talking about endings as well as new beginnings, and hosting shared rituals to help children process whenever possible. We provide parents with pertinent developmental information, as well as copies of medical records if desired.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

We take parent-approved field trips. You will be notified regarding a trip, including the cost and how your child will be transported. Children can participate in a field trip once we receive your written permission. For neighborhood walking trips, you'll be asked to sign a permission slip when you enroll your child in our care.

## **HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STANDARDS**

In all of our programs, we follow healthy eating and physical activity standards as part of the Y's nationwide commitment to combat childhood obesity and ensure that all who participate in YMCA programs live healthier and balanced lives.

These standards, illustrate the Y's commitment to being one of the healthiest providers of early childhood education and afterschool programming in the nation.

These standards have been expanded and revised to align with the commitment made by

First Lady Michelle Obama and the Partnership for a Healthier America. These standards include parallel Early Childhood Education HEPA Standards.

## **MEALS & SNACKS**

### **NUTRITION GUIDELINES**

At our Early Learning Centers, we provide your child with nutritious snacks and meals, and establish good eating habits that encourage healthy development and promote life-long well-being. Our staff work with you to exchange information regarding family eating patterns, introducing new foods, food intolerances and preferences, special dietary requirements for your child and feeding requirements for your infant, toddler, or child with special needs.

Your child receives a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack each day. Meal patterns, components, and serving sizes follow guidelines set by the Child & Adult care Food program (CACFP) of the US Department of Agriculture which are approved by a nutritionist.

Parents, if you prefer to provide your child with food from home, you need to provide a note explaining what foods your child may have, with regard to personal preferences and food allergies. The foods provided need to be healthy choices per CACFP guidelines. Please note that some Y programs are peanut-free based on the current allergies of children in those locations.

### **INFANTS**

Your infant will be fed according to his/her schedule. As he/she grows and starts eating solid foods, and eating needs change, eating times will be adjusted to fit with the group schedule. During lunch, infants not yet eating table food will be served cereals and jarred food.

As your infant becomes more adept at eating and using fingers for eating, we'll help her/him learn to use infant utensils. As your infant starts eating cereals, jarred foods, and table foods, we'll look to you for guidance regarding what

your child can eat. We recommend that your infant try new foods at home first, after which you can add the new food to the classroom list.

At the stage where she/he eats table food, if your toddler has a food allergy or food intolerance, please let us know immediately and provide a doctor's note explaining what foods cannot be given to your child so we know when food we're serving for a meal cannot be given to your child. If your child has an allergy or an intolerance, please provide an appropriate food substitute for your child.

### **BREAST FEEDING**

You're welcome to breast feed your infant while at the center. We support breast-feeding mothers by making a comfortable, quiet corner for you to be with your baby while feeding and to help minimize interruptions. In addition, we welcome bottles of breast milk and encourage you to drop by for feedings.

### **BOTTLES**

Bottle-fed babies receive the same personalized attention as breast-fed babies. All babies are held for bottle feeding. The feeding schedule is individualized to accommodate your child's needs. We feed infants when they're hungry.

Parents of bottle-fed babies need to provide labeled bottles with nipples and lids each day. If you're breast feeding your child, breast milk needs to be dated and labeled with your child's name. Fresh breast milk can be stored for 24 hours in our refrigerator or up to two weeks in the freezer. Milk exceeding this time frame will be discarded. Only breast milk, formula or water can be placed in your child's bottle. Bottles will not be served containing cereal or any other products. Juice can be served from a sippy cup. To avoid "hot spots" in the formula or breast milk, bottles are warmed up by a bottle warmer. If your child is breast fed and you forget to provide breast milk, we'll call you immediately.

Any formula or breast milk that is provided but not completely consumed will be discarded after one hour.

## **OLDER INFANTS AND TODDLERS**

Children 12 months and older are served lunches and snacks to eat and whole milk to drink. Older infants sit in chairs with trays or at a small table with chairs. Toddlers sit at tables to eat their meals. Children in the toddler room use sippy cups or regular cups and use utensils. Our goal is to work cooperatively with you regarding your child's routine.

Food is never used as punishment or reward. Your child is encouraged but not forced to eat his/her food. Sufficient time is provided for your child to eat.

## **CHOKER FOODS**

To help ensure the safety of your child, we prohibit some foods in our early childhood programs. These foods are potential choking hazards for small children: popcorn, grapes, raisins, gummy bears, fruit snacks that are "gummy" in texture (sticky, chewy, slimy), hot dogs.

## **CLASSROOM BIRTHDAYS**

We look forward to opportunities to celebrate with your child. If your family celebrates a special holiday please share information with our teachers for inclusion in our curriculum. Classroom celebrations, including birthdays, make use of healthy snacks and food options and can be celebrated in ways besides sugary treats, like handing out jump ropes, or having a dance party. Given the possibility of having several birthdays per classroom each month, it is important for us to help children set limits. Our programs serve foods and beverages in amounts and types that promote lifelong health and help prevent chronic disease. These include minimally processed foods made with whole grains and heart-healthy fats or oils and without added sugar or trans fats. When your child celebrates a birthday in our program please help us to ensure a healthy, sustainable celebration for all.

## **NAPS**

Infants nap when dictated by their individual schedules. Toddlers and pre—school children take a daily nap after lunch, as necessary. Please provide a blanket and fitted crib sheet for your child's nap time in order to make this time as relaxing as possible. Please label these items with your child's name. Items will be sent home on Fridays for laundering. If desired, you may also choose to send one small pillow or stuffed animal with your child for comfort. We offer quiet rest time for all children as directed by Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) regulations. Children are provided with adequate sleep, and are not woken up from a nap or forced to remain awake when they are tired. Depending on the needs of the classroom, children who choose not to nap will be offered peaceful activities.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

Please encourage your child to leave valuable personal items at home. We are not responsible for items lost, broken, stolen or ruined.

## **APPROPRIATE DRESS**

We believe in engaging in physical activity each day, and will try to spend time outdoors so long as the weather permits. Please dress your child to be engaged in learning and active play.

Children should always have an extra set of clothing including shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. If your child is being toilet-trained please bring two extra sets of clothing. Make sure to provide weather-appropriate items. During the winter bring a warm jacket, hat, scarf, mittens or gloves, a snowsuit or snow pants and boots. During the summer you may want to bring a hat to protect your child from the sun. Please label clothing with your child's name. Shoes should be close-toed and provide adequate protection for the feet during outdoor play.

## **PAYMENT INFORMATION**

The Capital District YMCA's scholarship program provides funds to help individuals and families who cannot otherwise afford our programs and services. Eligibility is based on income level, family size, and funds available. Financial aid applications are available in our childcare office or at the front desk at any of our locations.

## **YMCA CHILDCARE REGISTRATION FORMS**

To be considered for childcare, a registration form needs to be completed for each child. Parents/guardians also need to sign our Parent Handbook Verification forms, verifying that you received and understand the Parent Handbook. These forms need to be returned to childcare center staff or branch staff prior to your child's first day of attendance. We are not able to care for your child until we receive your complete emergency information.

Each registration needs to be approved before your child enters our care. 48-hour notice for registration is required before your child's first day of care. We need this time to ensure that all emergency and other information is on site at the location where we will care for your child.

When you register your child, the Center Director will provide you with a written policy statement showing primary and secondary Emergency evacuation sites.

## **PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

Parents and guardians are responsible for submitting payment Monday of the week of service. Weekly childcare rates are not reduced for weeks containing scheduled holidays, or closures due to weather. Parents and guardians are responsible for payment when your child does not attend on a scheduled day. We reserve the right to request that payments be made with cash or money order.

Enjoy convenience and safety when you choose to have payments automatically transferred from your bank or credit union account, or applied

to your credit card. Online accounts are also available for those who prefer to pay online. If your account becomes past due, your child will not be able to return until payments are made.

## **VACATION ALLOWANCE**

Those enrolled in our full-time programs qualify for one free week, or "vacation week" per year. You will not be charged for a vacation week when you let us know one month in advance and vacation is taken as a Monday-Friday block.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES**

Please notify our staff immediately of any changes to your address, phone or medical information.

The parent/guardian/responsible adult who completes and signs the registration form is the only one authorized to make changes/deletions/additions to the form. The parent or guardian who enrolls a child is responsible for all charges related to the child's care, including co-pays and registration fees. This includes families that receive assistance through third party agencies such as the Department of Social Services (DSS) or an employer.

## **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS) PAYMENTS AND THIRD PARTY BILLING**

Third-party eligibility and billing arrangements need to be confirmed before we may provide care. An approval is needed at the time of registration. Please allow two weeks for this process. Co-payments and/or additional payments — after third party payments — are due monthly or weekly as noted on page 2.

For billing questions, please contact:

Capital District YMCA  
Billing Services  
465 New Karner Road  
Albany, NY 12205

Phone: 518.869.3500 x 9960  
Fax: 518.869.9082



## **WITHDRAWAL FROM A PROGRAM**

If you must leave our care, we ask that you give us two-weeks written notice.

When the health, welfare, and safety of other children and staff are at risk, the YMCA reserves the right to terminate childcare services immediately.

Possible reasons for termination of our services:

- Harassment, violent behavior or threat of such behavior against a staff person or other individual by a parent or guardian or persons associated with the child, such as a family member, family friend, etc.
- Being late to pick up your child after childcare closes
- Extended absenteeism
- Non—payment, late payment, or non-sufficient funds (NSF) of fees
- Emergency names and phone numbers are incorrect
- Failure to adhere to sign-in and sign-out policies
- Behavior is continually disruptive or dangerous to others and/or self
- Behavior is destructive to property and/or there is a refusal to replace said property
- Any single incident that is deemed by the Childcare Director as dangerous, harmful or disruptive.

## **LATE PICK UPS**

Please be considerate of your child at pick up time. Our Centers close at 6pm. Even a short delay can seem endless to a child who is waiting.

For your child's safety, we will not release your child to someone who does not have clear permission to pick up your child.

If someone other than you will pick up your child, that person will need to be on file on the authorized pick up list, and that person will need to provide ID in order to pick up your child.

Parents or guardians (or designees) are expected to contact our childcare staff if they're going to be late. Failure to pick up children at closing time will result in a fee of \$1 per minute. Continual lateness will lead to removal of the child from our care.

In the event childcare staff do not receive prior notice from the parent or guardian, the following procedure will be followed:

- YMCA staff will call the parent or guardian for instructions.
- If contact cannot be made, YMCA staff will call the emergency numbers in the child's file.
- After one hour past official closing time with no contact with the child's parent or guardian, or any emergency contacts, a call will be placed to Child Protective Services (CPS) to report an abandoned child. Staff will then follow instructions provided by CPS.

## **INTOXICATION / DRUGS**

Should staff believe any parent/guardian/responsible adult is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the staff member can require that alternate transportation be arranged, including calling a taxicab to take you and your child home. Should you refuse alternate transportation, staff are obligated to report the situation to the police and the New York State Child Abuse Hotline.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### **PARENT ORIENTATION**

A parent is welcome to visit the center, ask staff for any clarification of policy, request a conference, or call the Early Learning Director at any time.

### **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

A strong relationship between parents and teachers forms the foundation for each child's positive experiences at childcare. You are encouraged to talk openly with teachers, to help establish this relationship. Continuity between home and YMCA childcare is essential to providing a meaningful experience for your child. Please tell us about any changes or special activities at home. The more familiar we are with your family, the more understanding, supportive and helpful we can be. Family conferences are formally offered twice a year, and can be requested at any time.

### **FAMILY NIGHTS**

Family Events are offered at YMCA branches and at all our Early Childhood Education centers. These are fun activities for the whole family and a great way to get to know other families in the program and the community. Please join us as often as possible.

### **ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN**

All age groups are assessed formally and informally to ensure that our teachers plan curriculum goals and activities to support individualized learning. Our teachers observe, record and document children's development, participation and learning throughout the year. Assessments are ongoing, systematic and gathered from natural play activities and realistic settings that reflect children's actual performance. Our center uses a variety of methods such as observations, checklists, and rating scales to collect information. Assessment results are used to benefit children by informing sound decisions about children, teaching, and program improvement. When assessments identify concerns, appropriate follow up, referral or other intervention is used. Formal

assessments are done twice a year.

All assessments are kept in the child's portfolio, which follows the child from class to class to show the progress in cognitive, language, physical social and emotional areas of development that are consistent with our program curriculum and philosophy. Families participate in the assessment process with regular communication, partnership and involvement.

Once formal assessments are completed, teachers schedule parent conferences to share information regarding children's progress.

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent-Teacher conferences are a means of giving parents an overview of their child's developmental progress during the preceding months. We take this time to answer any questions or concerns parents may have regarding their child's time in the program. These conferences also enable parents and teachers to work closely to meet each child's specific needs. Parents and teachers are free to request conferences anytime they feel there is a need.

### **PARENT COMMITTEES**

We encourage parents to join our parent committees. These groups help provide support, insight and targeted feedback about our programs. Parent committees also help coordinate fundraising for our Annual Campaign and other projects. Please ask the Early Childhood Director at your location for more information about how to get involved.

### **OPEN DOOR POLICY FOR PARENTS**

We have an open door policy that encourages any parent or guardian to visit your child or observe the operation of our program during program hours. Parents or guardians have unlimited access to the program and your child at any time while your child is in our care.

## **VISITING THE PROGRAM**

All individuals who are observers of a program, inspectors of a program, guest speakers, or volunteers are considered visitors. All visitors are required to sign in and out using the Visitor Log, noting the purpose of the visit. Picture ID is required for each visitor, and our staff will initial each entry to indicate that all requirements have been met. Our staff have the authority to ask a visitor to leave when staff feel that the presence of the visitor has a negative impact on the program or a child in the program.

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Because our childcare programs play an active role in our communities, we form partnerships with many community organizations and individuals. As a result, we create environments where children grow physically, emotionally and mentally.

## **BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE**

### **CHILD GUIDANCE**

Capital District YMCA Early Learning programs are committed to helping children succeed. It is the intent of the YMCA behavior policy to reflect our four character development values: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Our goal is to promote and maintain a positive atmosphere within each Early Learning Center. A child's misbehavior may prevent staff from fulfilling this goal. Our staff use positive guidance and modeling to teach young children to behave in responsible ways.

Our staff can be observed:

- Setting expectations relative to your child's level of development.
- Encouraging cooperation, helping, negotiating and problem solving.
- Clarifying guidelines so your child understands them.
- Creating a positive environment to enhance and encourage your child.
- Modeling appropriate behavior.
- Encouraging your child's efforts to help build confidence.
- Using logical and natural consequences as motivators.

## **YOUTH BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Children who have reached the age of 3 years of age need to be able to follow rules. We expect parents to work with our staff to encourage appropriate behavior.

Children 3 years and older are responsible for:

- Following the direction of child care employees.
- Respecting each other, our staff, the facility and the property of others.
- Staying in designated program areas.
- Remaining with a member of our staff at all times.
- Keeping hands, feet, and other objects to themselves.
- Using acceptable language.
- Controlling their anger so that their actions do not harm others.

All childcare staff are responsible for:

- Respecting all children.
- The well-being of all children.
- Ensuring that children are safe by following program guidelines.
- Providing an environment that is healthy.
- Ensuring that all children have a fun and enjoyable atmosphere.
- Treating all children equally.

### **POSITIVE GUIDANCE**

Behavior management is accomplished through a positive approach that respects the child as an individual. Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of the behavior management of children. When children receive positive feedback and interaction from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Our staff address normal day-to-day behavior by guiding children to resolve their own conflicts.

Children of any age who cannot be kept safe or who endanger the safety of others may be removed from the program.

# HEALTH & SAFETY

## ILLNESS GUIDELINES

You will be notified as soon as possible if a child develops symptoms of an illness. Our staff will remove that child from class and notify the director if any child in care exhibits the illnesses or symptoms noted below. Please refer to the appendix for more information.

With most illnesses, children have either already exposed others before becoming obviously ill (i.e., colds) or are not contagious one day after beginning treatment (i.e., strep throat). The waiting period required after the onset of treatment varies with the disease. Please see page 19 for more information.

If a doctor places your child on an antibiotic, your child shouldn't attend our care until she/he has been on medication for at least 24 hours and is fever free without over-the-counter medication.

If your child seems really sick without obvious symptoms, please keep her/him home. In this case, your child may be unusually pale, irritable, tired or uninterested in usual activities and eating. If your child becomes inconsolable while in our care and requires one adult to be with him/her, we will contact you so that you may bring your child home.

Staff may also call you to pick up your child if we feel your child isn't able to participate in school activities (unable to keep up with daily routines, be outside with the rest of the group, unable to participate in activities without the constant attention of an adult) or your child displays:

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Severe coughing or problems breathing
- Unusual behavior for your child such as refraining from play, confusion, inconsolable crying, not eating or drinking
- The need for a great deal of prolonged one on one attention

Please refer to the guidelines on page 19 regarding routine questions about symptoms and the implications for group care. If you're not sure what symptoms might indicate, please call your child's health professional for an appointment and/or more accurate information. It's crucial to know whether other children in our care are at risk for infection so we can take the necessary measures to inform parents of potential changes in their child's overall health status.

## IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT

Staff assist children who experience a minor injury or illness, such as a bump, bruise, sting or upset stomach, noting details on the child's health log, daily sheet and/or Bump & Bruise report. You'll be informed of any first aid given to your child. If symptoms persist, you'll be asked to pick up your child as explained on page 19.

All accidents/incidents are written up on Bump & Bruise reports which are given to parents at the end of the day. A copy of the report is placed in the child's folder.

If a child falls in the classroom or on the playground and may be seriously hurt, she/he will not be moved. An adult will stay with the child and keep her/him still while sending someone immediately for medical assistance. You will be notified if a child suffers an accident while in our care. All head injuries are reported to you immediately as well as bites that break the skin.

## BACK-UP CARE PLANS

While there are benefits in the long run (children in groups develop more resistance to infections and illnesses) you need to know and expect that children in childcare settings are prone to illness through exposure to colds, the flu and the contagious diseases of other children. It's important to plan for the unexpected, especially when your child is young, so you're ready to keep your child at home or take your child home when she/he gets sick. Please plan for back-up care in the event your child needs to be sent home due to illness or is mildly ill but unable to participate in the active daily routine of childcare.



## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Please call or visit our center for information regarding emergency closings. We also provide notifications through the School Closing Network.

## **ADMINISTERING MEDICATION**

Before a childcare site can dispense medication the Office of Children and Family Services requires:

- A written health plan be completed and approved by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.
- A staff person be designated to dispense medications who is 18 or older, possesses a current First Aid & CPR certification, and has completed Medication Administration Training.

We administer medication only when a current (updated within the last 6 months) written Medication Consent form is on file at the location where we care for your child, signed by the parent or guardian and the licensed medical professional issuing the prescription. Forms are available at each Early Learning Center.

Our staff may only dispense prescribed medication in the original container that bears the original label displaying legible information, including:

- Child's full name
- Authorized prescriber's name
- Pharmacy name and telephone number
- Date the prescription was filled
- Name of the medication
- Dosage
- How often to give the medication
- Date the medication is discontinued
- Length of time, in days, the medication is to be given
- Method of administration
- Over the counter topical ointments may be administered when provided with written instructions.

## **MEDICAL LOG**

We will keep a written record of any medication, including:

- The name of the child
- Time and date of each administration
- Dose
- The staff member administering the medication

All medication will be stored under proper conditions for sanitation, security and safety. All unused medication will be returned to you. We will notify you immediately if we are unable to safely store/refrigerate a medication.

## **EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION**

In the event of a major emergency such as a broken bone, puncture wound, etc. your child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest medical facility. It's the responsibility of the parent/ guardian/responsible adult to pay medical bills. The Y holds no insurance for program participants. Please ensure that your child's insurance carrier and policy number are listed with her/his medical information.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

- We use a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure when hiring our staff.
- We take any allegation or suspicion of child abuse seriously.
- Our staff understand their legal obligation to report suspected abuse.
- Policies, procedures and training follow strict standards, and quality guidelines are in place — including a staff and volunteer Code of Conduct.
- We advocate positive guidance and discipline with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, prevention and the development of self-discipline.
- Our staff and volunteers are sensitive to each individual's need for personal space. We encourage appropriate touch, but prohibit inappropriate touch.

- Our staff communicate frequently with parents and guardians regarding day to day activities and we encourage you to report or question any behavior or event your child may share that appears out of the ordinary.
- Our staff try to identify stressed parents/guardians/responsible adults and offer support and referrals for help.
- Our staff are trained on how to discuss sensitive issue with children.

## **STAFF RELATIONSHIPS**

Our staff are not alone with a child in any location where staff cannot be observed by other staff.

Corporal punishment is prohibited regardless of parental permission or the age of your child.

Our childcare staff are forbidden from humiliating or subjecting a child to abusive or profane language.

## **OUTSIDE ANY Y PROGRAM**

Staff are not allowed to be alone with any children they meet in any Y program beyond a Y program setting. This includes any form of communication (phone calls, emails, instant messages, text messages, etc.).

Baby-sitting, sleep overs and inviting a staff to a child's home are prohibited unless one of the following conditions exists:

The staff person and the child's family have a relationship that pre-dates employment by the staff or volunteer work at the Y.

The staff person and the child's family have a relationship that pre—dates the child's enrollment in the YMCA program.

The staff person and the child or the child's family are related.

We recognize that children may ask staff to attend her/his sporting event, dance recital, birthday party, etc. This is permitted so long as

it's a public event and the child and staff person are not alone. Under no circumstances may our staff transport any child in her/his personal vehicle.

## **MANDATED REPORTERS**

Our childcare staff are mandated by New York State Law to report incidents of possible neglect or abuse — including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse — to the Child Abuse Hotline and to cooperate in any investigation for such possible neglect or abuse.

Our staff do not have discretion in this matter, but must make such referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe a child might have been harmed by someone, including a family member, non-family member or staff, and we may be subject to criminal penalties if we fail to report the possibility of such harm. In grievous cases, we may also refer the matter directly to the police.

## **YOUR CHILD'S FILE**

Per NYS law, no child may attend a childcare program without proper medical records on file. Medical information completed by your child's doctor is required at the time of registration and must be kept current. The following records need to be part of your child's file:

- Enrollment/Registration form
- Written Medical Consent forms
- Health Records
- Immunization records
- Signed Parent Handbook receipt form

## **PHOTOGRAPHING CHILDREN**

Y staff photograph and/or videotape children to post photos on bulletin boards and in cubbies and to help us promote our programs. If you do not wish for you child to be photographed, please let us know.

# CAPITAL DISTRICT YMCA ILLNESS GUIDELINES

<b>Illness/Infection Symptoms</b>	<b>Should child staff stay home?</b>	<b>When can child/staff come back?</b>
Chicken Pox	YES	When all the blisters/pox have scabbed over
Cold	No (without fever) Yes (with fever)	Refer to fever
Coxsackie (hand, mouth, and foot disease)	NO	
Diarrhea (two or more stools or over and above what is normal for child)	YES	Diarrhea is resolved or we receive a Doctor's note indicating that diarrhea is the side effect of your child's medication
Ear Infection	No (with doctor's diagnosis)	
Fever of unknown origin (100 degrees F oral or 101 rectal or higher) and some behavioral signs of illness	YES	Free of fever for 24 hours and fever reducing medications have not been given in the past 8 hours or on prescribed medication for 24 hours.
Fifth Disease	No (without fever) Yes (with fever)	Refer to fever
Giardia	YES	When diarrhea subsides or doctor approves re-admission
Hib disease		Well and proof of non-carriage or cleared by physician.
Hepatitis A		One week after illness started and fever is resolved.
Aids (or HIV infection)		Until child's health, neurological development, behavior, and immune status is deemed appropriate (on a case by case basis) by qualified persons, including the child's physician chosen by the child's parent or guardian and the director.
Impetigo	YES	When treatment has begun
Lice	YES	When he/she is nit free
Meningococcal		Well and proof of non-carriage (Neisseria meningitis)
Pink Eye	YES	24 hours after treatment has begun
Undiagnosed generalized rash		Well or cleared by child's physician as non-contagious
Ring Worm	No (Keep area covered)	
Roseola	YES (with fever)	See fever
Rota virus	YES	24 hours after treatment has begun and fever free
Thrush	No (Should seek treatment)	
Strep Throat		24 hours after treatment has begun
Scabies		Children can return the day after treatment is complete

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

465 New Karner Road, Albany  
518.869.3500  
www.CDYMCA.org

### BRANCH LOCATIONS

#### Albany

616 North Pearl Street  
Albany, NY • 518.463.9622

#### Bethlehem

900 Delaware Avenue  
Delmar, NY • 518.439.4394

#### Camp Chingachgook

1872 Pilot Knob Road  
Kattskill Bay, NY • 518.656.9462

#### Glenville

127 Droms Road  
Glenville, NY • 518.399.8118

#### Greenbush

20 Community Way  
E. Greenbush, NY • 518.477.2570

#### Guilderland

250 Winding Brook Drive  
Guilderland, NY • 518.456.3634

#### Schenectady

433 State Street  
Schenectady, NY • 518.881.0117

#### Southern Saratoga

1 Wall Street  
Clifton Park, NY • 518.371.2139

#### Troy Family

2500 21st Street  
Troy, NY • 518.272.5900

#### Greene County YMCA

35 Route 81, Hope Plaza  
West Coxsackie NY 12192  
518.731.7529

#### Mont Pleasant Commons

Senior Apartments  
1502 Chrysler Avenue  
Schenectady, NY 12303  
518.382.1848

#### Schenectady Residence

433 State Street  
Schenectady NY 12305  
518.881.0117



### Early Childcare Programs

Hannaford Early Childhood Center (Albany)  
Kidz Lodge at Southern Saratoga YMCA  
Thelma P. Lally Learning Center (Scotia)  
Good Shepard Lutheran Church (Glenville)

### School-Age Childcare Programs

#### Albany City School District

Arbor Hill Elementary  
Delaware Community Elementary  
Eagle Point Elementary  
Giffen Memorial Elementary  
North Albany Academy  
Philip J. Schuyler Achievement Academy  
Pine Hills Elementary  
New Scotland Elementary  
Sheridan Preparatory Academy  
Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology

#### Berne Knox Westerlo School District

Berne Knox Elementary

#### Bethlehem School District

Bethlehem YMCA\*

#### Burnt Hills–Ballston Lake

Charlton Heights Elementary\*  
Pashley Elementary  
Stevens Elementary

#### Coxsackie–Athens School District

Coxsackie Elementary\*  
EJ Arthur\*

#### East Greenbush School District

Greenbush YMCA

#### Guilderland Central Schools

Guilderland YMCA  
Guilderland Elementary  
Pinebush Elementary  
Westmere Elementary

#### Menands Union Free School\*

#### Mohonasen Central Schools

Bradt Elementary\*

#### North Colonie K-Care

#### Schalmont School District

Jefferson Elementary\*

#### Schenectady City School District

Howe Elementary  
Paige Elementary  
Pleasant Valley Elementary  
Schenectady High School  
Woodlawn Elementary

#### Scotia–Glenville School District

Glendaal Elementary\*  
Glen Wordan Elementary\*  
Lincoln Elementary\*  
Sacandaga Elementary\*

#### Rensselaer School District

Van Rensselaer Elementary

#### Shenendehowa Central Schools

Arongen-Skatekon Elementary  
Chango Elementary\*  
Okte Elementary  
Orenda/ Karigon  
Skano – Tesago Elementary

#### Enlarged City School District of Troy

School 12, 14, 16, and 18  
Carrol Hill

#### Wynantskill School District

Gardner Dickinson School

\* These locations have Before School programs