



# LEARN, GROW & THRIVE

**CAPITAL DISTRICT YMCA**  
After School Childcare  
Parent Handbook



# Table of Contents

## **Mission & Goals ..... p. 4**

Mission Statement  
Goals & Purpose  
Non-Discrimination Policy  
Inclusion of Children with Individual Needs

## **Registration Information ..... p.5 – 6**

Financial Assistance & Sliding Cost Scale  
Payment Schedule  
Automatic Payments  
Insufficient Funds  
Custodial Issues/Disputes  
Department of Social Services (DSS) Payments  
Change Request  
Late Pick-Ups

## **Program Practices ..... p.7 – 9**

Program Hours/Days  
Program Charges  
Program Schedule  
Curriculum  
Homework/Quiet Time  
Arrivals and Departures  
Vacation Programs  
Half Days  
Inclement Weather  
Snow Days

## **Supervision ..... p.9 – 13**

Staff Ratio  
Staff Orientation  
Supervision Policy For High Risk Activities  
Child Guidance and Discipline  
Behavioral Policy  
Parent Conduct Policy  
Termination Policy  
Parent Grievance Policy  
Complaint Policy

## **Parent Involvement ..... p.13**

Parent/Family Orientation

## **Communication and Support ..... p.13 – 14**

Program Involvement  
Parent and Family Conferences  
Community Partnerships/Relationships

## **Table of Contents (Con't)**

### **Health & Safety ..... p.14 – 18**

Sickness Policy  
Intoxication/Drugs  
Emergency Conditions  
Emergency and Accident Procedures  
First Aid Procedures and Handling Injuries  
Transporting Children  
Administering Medications  
Field Trips  
Sick/III Children  
Communicable Diseases  
Fire Drills  
Outdoor Weather Safety  
Hand Washing  
Nutrition  
Label Personal Items  
Appropriate Dress  
Photographing Children  
Screen Time Policy

### **Child Abuse and Maltreatment ..... p.18 – 19**

Prevention Strategies  
Staff Relationships Regarding Any Y Program  
Staff Relationships Outside Any Y Program  
Mandated Reporters  
Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

### **Staff Training Days**

Columbus Day  
Martin Luther King Day

# 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 that fosters the physical, emotional, and social growth of children, while supporting and strengthening families.

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

You may request a new handbook at any time.

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

- Help children develop a healthy self-esteem.
- Allow children to learn through discovery and play.
- Offer developmentally appropriate activities that help children develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially.
- Help children develop social and living skills in the community.

## 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, national and ethnic origin, age, gender or disability in the administration of childcare policies and programs.

## Inclusion of Children with Individual Needs

For special-needs children, factors that effect 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.

# Registration Information

Registration for our School Age programs can be processed online through our website, [www.cdymca.org/childcare-locations/](http://www.cdymca.org/childcare-locations/).

## Financial Assistance

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 branch locations.

**Childcare payments are charged monthly, and are not reduced for scheduled holidays or closures due to weather.**

**You are responsible for payment when your child does not attend on a day she/he is scheduled to attend.**

## Payment Schedule

- Parents/guardians/responsible adults are responsible for submitting payment for the month by the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.
- Should payment not be received by the 15<sup>th</sup>, your child will be removed from program.
- Each site offers YMCA member rates and non-member rates. Non-member rates will automatically be applied to your account if there is a lapse in your child's YMCA membership.

## Custodial Issues/Disputes

- A child may be removed from our care when parents/guardians/responsible adults are unable to resolve issues. Capital District YMCA staff are prohibited from any involvement in custodial disputes between parents/guardians/responsible adults. Parents/guardians/responsible adults are responsible for resolving any custodial issues involving childcare. Staff follow court orders to the best of our ability when official documents and court orders are submitted.
- A request for copies of a child's (attendance, payment history, etc.) can be given to the parent/guardian/responsible adult who registers the child for care. All other requests require a court order.

## **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 letter is required at the time of registration. (Please allow two weeks for this process.) If applicable, co-payments and/or additional payments are due monthly or weekly.

For DSS or third-party 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

## **Change Request**

- Childcare staff are to be notified immediately of any changes regarding the information provided on the Childcare Registration Form, such as changes in address, phone, and medical information.
- The parent or guardian who completes and signs our registration document(s) is the only person authorized to make changes, deletions, and/or additions to the YMCA Childcare Registration Form. The parent/guardian/responsible adult who enrolls a child is responsible for all changes related to that child's participation, including co-pays and registration charges. This includes families that receive assistance through third party agencies such as DSS or an employer. It is your responsibility to inform our staff of any changes.

## **Late Pick Ups**

- Parents/guardians/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 a child from the program.**
- In the event childcare staff do not receive prior notice from the parent/guardian/designee, the following procedure will be followed:
  1. YMCA staff will call the parent/guardian/designee for instructions.
  2. If contact cannot be made, YMCA staff will call the emergency numbers in the child's file.
  3. 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) and the local police department, to report an abandoned child. Staff will follow instructions provided by CPS.

# Program Practices

## Program Hours/Days

Our programs run from school dismissal, Monday through Friday when school is in session. Hours can vary.

## Program Charges

Please check with the Branch that you are registering your child through for the Afterschool Program monthly charge.

**The parent/guardian/responsible adult who registers your child for care is legally responsible for any/all childcare payments.**

## Program Schedule

Our school-age childcare curriculum may vary from site to site. The following components are offered in each program in varying degrees. Generally, activities listed take place in one of these contexts:

- Small group and individual activities
- Enrichment Time
- Large Group Activities
- Indoors and Outdoors

## Curriculum

- **Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards (HEPA)**

Our programs serve foods and beverages in amounts and types that promote life-long 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; fruits and vegetables; and beverages made without added sugars.

- **School Age Environmental Rating Scale**

This scale is designed to assess before and after school group care programs for school-age children, 5 to 12 years of age. The total scale consists of 49 items, including 6 supplementary items for programs enrolling children with disabilities.

- **SPARK** is a research-based organization that disseminates evidence-based Physical Education, After School, Early Childhood, and Coordinated School Health programs to teachers and recreation leaders serving Pre-K through 12th grade students.

### **Homework/Quiet Time**

Homework time is offered daily at each of our sites. Homework arrangements need to be made between the parent and child. Y staff will remind your child about homework time, but staff can only encourage your child to complete her/his homework. It is the child's responsibility to stay on task and complete homework on time.

### **Arrivals and Departures**

Each morning and evening, parents/guardians/responsible adults are required to walk their child into the school/program area and complete the attendance roster by signing their full name. Parents/guardians/responsible adults, and those listed on the pickup authorization and/or emergency contact list are the only individuals allowed to sign a child out. All persons who are authorized to pick up children must be at least 16 years of age and will be asked for photo identification until such a time that the staff become familiar with their identity.

*Court orders affecting enrolled children:* Employees are not able to keep a custodial parent from picking up their child unless there is legal documentation on file with the Y. Families who have legal documentation regarding their children should attach the documentation to their child's record at the time of registration. Should a court order take effect following enrollment, the legal documentation should be submitted to the Y as soon as it becomes available.

### **Vacation Programs**

During school holidays, all branches of the Capital District YMCA offer vacation programs. Please register your child at the branch you will be using during a school holiday. The cost for our vacation programs is not included in cost for care. Space is limited and open to all Y members and non-members. To ensure a space for your child please register early. **To provide a Vacation Club program, we need at least 15 children to be enrolled.**

### **Half Days**

Please check with the Childcare Director regarding the availability of care when school is dismissed early.

### **Inclement Weather**

We do not offer care when school is closed due to inclement weather. For programs that include before-school care, please review the procedure with our childcare staff.

When school is dismissed early due to worsening weather conditions, we do not provide after-school care. Your child will be sent home on the bus. Please have arrangements for your child in place for these situations.



## **Snow Days**

When school in your school district is closed due to inclement weather, the Y you use may offer a snow day program. Registration for this program is online. The cost for this program is not included in the cost for childcare. To ensure your child can attend, please register early.

## **Supervision**

### **Staff Ratio**

Children are always with competent direct supervision. We provide staffing levels that meet the following staff-to-child ratios:

Age of Children	# Staff to # of Children
Through 9 years	1 to 10
10-12 years	1 to 15

### **Supervision Policy For High Risk Activities**

During high risk activities such as woodworking, take-a-part center, etc., group sizes and ratios will be decreased.

### **Staff Orientation**

Staff are required to successfully complete 15 hours of training within the first 6 months of employment. Within two years of employment, each staff member completes 30 hours of training. Childcare staff attend a variety of trainings as determined by NYS OCFS regulations.

### **Child Guidance and Discipline**

The Y wants all children to be successful in our programs. It is our goal for each child to have a safe and enjoyable time while in our care. To achieve this goal, reasonable limits for behavior must be established by having disciplinary procedures and rules in place. Children are expected to adhere to established rules. We expect parents to work with our program staff to encourage more appropriate behavior. In addition to our expectations and rules, all persons on school property are to adhere to each school district's Code of Conduct.

Children are responsible for:

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

Childcare staff are responsible for:

- Respecting all children.
- Ensuring that children are safe by following program guidelines.
- Establishing rules and practicing them on a daily basis.
- 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 managing children's behavior. When children receive positive feedback and interaction from adults and others, they develop good self-awareness, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline.

Y staff will address normal day-to-day behavior by guiding children to resolve their own conflicts. The following techniques will be used to influence children's behavior: positive role modeling, setting limits, re-direction, and positive behavior alternatives

Depending on the frequency and/or severity of a child's negative behavior, a meeting will be held with the parent(s), Site Director and the Childcare Director. With parental assistance, a plan will be devised to help us work with the child. The Y reserves the right to suspend or terminate a child from the program if behavior does not improve or is severe enough. Any child who inflicts physical harm on other children or Y staff may be immediately dismissed from the program.

### **Behavioral Policy**

At the Capital District YMCA, our childcare programs are designed to build the capacity for students to succeed. Each school-age childcare program follows the guidelines outlined here. The purpose of our Behavioral Policy is to reflect our four core values of **caring, honesty, respect** and **responsibility**. At the Y, our goal is to promote and maintain a positive atmosphere within each school-age childcare program. A child's misbehavior may prevent our staff from fulfilling this goal. A child exhibiting disruptive behavior will be guided using the following guidelines. Please note that children's misbehavior is categorized in two main types: Minor and Major.

### **Minor Incidents**

Minor incidents are minor day-to-day infractions that occur and will be dealt with on the spot by our staff. Examples include:

- Misuse of YMCA equipment
- Disruptive outbursts
- Spontaneous slip of questionable words

- Playground disagreements and squabbles
- Rough Housing

When these types of incidents occur, we focus on problem-solving and helping the child make better decisions in the future. Our staff use positive working strategies to help a child realize that negative behavior is ultimately non-productive.

Each child should enjoy activities planned with the understanding that she/he is responsible for her/his actions. With prior knowledge of our basic rules for safety and behavior, we help each child learn to exercise self-discipline with our guidance. If, however, a child exhibits repeated behavioral problems, you will be notified and encouraged to be actively involved in the process of guiding your child's behavior.

### **Major Incidents**

Major incidents endanger the physical and mental safety of the child, other children and/or staff. Though most of the following misbehaviors are not evident in YMCA programs, it's important to be aware of them. Major incidents include, but are not limited to:

- Minor incidents that become repetitive or chronic
- Bullying
- Theft
- Lying
- Leaving supervised area without permission
- Throwing stones, or other projectiles
- Abusive language
- Verbal threats
- Direct disobedience of and/or defiance of our staff
- Violation of any school's Code of Conduct

A child exhibiting any of these behaviors will be separated from the group, a Behavioral Report will be completed, and a conference with the parent/guardian/responsible adult will occur. The child will be required to complete a behavior contract and submit it to our staff before returning to the program. Failure to comply with the contract will result in suspension from the program for a period of time or expulsion from our program.

For the safety and well-being of children in our care, we cannot care for children who display chronically disruptive behavior. Chronically disruptive behavior is defined as verbal or physical activities which may include, but are not limited to:

- Behavior that requires constant attention from staff
- Behavior that inflicts physical or emotional abuse on other children or self
- Behavior that abuses staff and/or ignores or disobeys rules

In response to any activities that involve fighting, assault, vandalism, using illegal substances, or any other endangering behavior, our Site Director or Childcare

Director will immediately remove the child from the program and contact you. Expulsion from the program will follow.

### **Parent Conduct Policy**

Any misconduct by a parent/guardian/responsible adult toward Y staff and/or program participants may result in termination of your child from our program. This behavior includes, but is not limited to, threats, harassment, swearing, and violations regarding picking up your child.

### **Termination Policy**

All Capital District YMCA childcare programs require that parents or guardians give two-week written notice when they wish to terminate their child's participation in any program. Parents or guardians who fail to do so will still be liable for payments.

The Capital District YMCA reserves the right to terminate childcare services with two-week written notice to families. 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 a child from services include:

- 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
- Nonpayment, 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 that is continually disruptive or dangerous to others and/or self
- Behavior that is destructive to property and/or a refusal to replace said property
- Any single incident that is deemed by the Childcare Director as dangerous, harmful or disruptive.

### **Parent Grievance Policy**

If you have a grievance and/or complaint, please:

- Immediately request an appropriate time to discuss it with the Childcare Director who supervises your child's program.
- If not resolved, discuss your concern with the Executive Director of Childcare who supervises the Childcare Director.
- If still not resolved, discuss your concern with the Capital District Senior Vice President in charge of Childcare.

## **Complaint Policy**

Complaints that are not adequately addressed at the site level may be referred to the Childcare Director. The YMCA will investigate any complaint in which the health, safety, or welfare of a child could be in danger. The following actions will be taken:

- The YMCA will provide a phone call about the results of any investigation, both to the Y staff person who is the subject of the complaint and to the person who is submitting the grievance.
- If the complaint is unsubstantiated, it will be so deemed and no further action will be taken.
- If the complaint is substantiated, it will be documented in the School Age Care employee's file. The following additional actions will be taken at the discretion of the Childcare Director. The Childcare Director will require the employee to submit and comply with a written plan of correction, or the YMCA will file criminal charges and/or pursue civil remedies.

## **Parent Involvement**

### **Parent/Family Orientation**

All families who enroll in a Y childcare program will have the opportunity to attend an orientation.

## **Communication and Support**

### **Program Involvement**

YMCA After School Programs have an open door policy. Parents are invited and encouraged to visit the site locations at any time. We ask that you are respectful of the children's routines and programmed activities, as well as the staff's need to be with the children. We encourage you to schedule time with the site director to discuss your child's progress and address any other concerns. Newsletters are provided regularly, providing you with detailed information on the events and activities at your program.

Any person who visits the school age program needs to sign in on the visitor log form, state the date and reason for the visit, and sign out when departing.

### **Parent/Family Conferences**

Parent communication is one of the most important aspects of childcare. Staff communicate with parents each day to let them know how their child is doing. Parents can be an asset if staff are having problems with child/children. They can give insights in resolving behavior problems. Conferences are done as needed.

## **Community Partnerships/Relationships**

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.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Sickness Policy**

Children who become ill may be removed from care. You may be contacted and asked to pick up your child with little notice. Your child may return to our care after she/he is symptom free and medication free for 24 hours, or you have a doctor's note that your child may return to care.

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

Staff may also call parents if they feel a child is not able to participate in school activities (i.e., unable to keep up with daily routines, unable to be outside with the rest of the group, unable to participate in activities without the constant attention of an adult) and/or because of the following:

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Severe coughing or problem breathing
- Unusual behavior, characterized by no playing, confusion, inconsolable crying, not eating or drinking
- Demanding a great deal of prolonged one-on-one attention and time

### **Communicable Diseases**

A child suspected of having a communicable disease will be isolated from other children. Parents will be notified when a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, with information about the illness, including its symptoms. Please keep your child home when she/he has:

- A temperature of 101 or higher
- Cold (fever, frequent sneezing, runny nose)
- Coxsackie (hand, foot, and mouth) disease
- Fifth disease (with fever)
- Giardia
- Hib disease
- Hepatitis A
- Meningococcal disease
- Untreated ringworm
- Roseola (with fever)
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Impetigo

- Diarrhea (frequently and not associated with diet changes or antibiotic use)
- Vomiting
- Head lice (no nit policy)
- A contagious disease (i.e., roseola, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, mumps, rubella, croup, etc.)
- Tuberculosis (until cleared by a health official)
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), which may return after 5 days of antibiotic therapy
- Undiagnosed skin rashes (with fever, behavioral changes)

### **Intoxication and 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 taxi to take you and your child home. Should you refuse alternate transportation, staff are obligated to report the situation to the police and New York State Child Abuse Hotline.

### **Emergency Evacuation Drills/Shelter in Place**

Each afterschool site has a well-defined plan for fire evacuation and shelter in place. Drills are conducted monthly. Should an emergency arise at the site; families will be notified.

### **Emergency Closing Procedures:**

Due to a severe act of nature or other unforeseeable emergency, the YMCA after school program may need to close. Unforeseeable circumstances include:

- Loss of power affecting lights and heat/air.
- Earthquake/blizzard/tornado/hurricane
- No lights after dark (during the winter)
- Fire
- No heat
- Concern for children's safety
- Water main break

### **Emergency and Accident Procedures**

Staff will 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 form in addition to completing a Bump and Bruise form. You will be informed of any first aid given to you child. If symptoms persist, you will be asked to pick up your child.

### **First Aid Procedures and Handling Injuries**

Staff complete a daily health check of each child. At this time, a decision is made whether the child's condition suggests that he/she is well or ill.

Any children who show signs of serious illness are separated from the children in an area where all children can be supervised and parent/guardian/responsible adult is notified.

### **Transporting Children**

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. A staff member will travel with your child and will bring your child's enrollment file and medical information.

### **Administering Medications**

Before a childcare site can dispense medication, New York 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. The staff person must be 18 or older, possess a current First Aid/CPR certification, and complete Medication Administration Training (MAT).

We administer medication only when a current (updated within 6 months for children 4 and younger; updated every 12 months for children 5 to 12 years old) written Medication Consent form is on file at the location where we care for your child, signed by the parent/guardian/responsible adult and the licensed medical professional issuing the prescription.

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

Please check with the Childcare Director to confirm that there is approval to dispense medication at the Y location where your child is receiving care. This includes emergency medications as well as individual health care plans for each child. All proper documentation can be obtained by the Site Director.



### **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

### **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 a signed permission slip. For neighborhood walking trips, you'll be asked to sign a permission slip when you enroll your child in our care.

### **Outdoor Weather Safety**

All children are expected to go outside every day (weather permitting). Outside play gives your child an opportunity to run off excess energy generated during their regular school day.

YMCA staff will monitor the local weather broadcast during the day to determine whether or not children should go outside.

Staff will use their own discretion on days when there may be:

- Rain
- Snow
- Frigid temperatures
- Excessive heat

### **Appropriate Dress**

Children should wear comfortable play clothes each day. We try to spend some time outdoors each day. Our staff follow weather guidelines regarding outdoor recess. Please prepare your child to be outdoors during the winter by sending her/him in warm clothing with a hat, gloves and/or mittens and boots as weather dictates.

### **Hand Washing**

Children and staff need to wash their hands with soap and warm running water as needed. Staff and children will wash their hands whenever hands are contaminated with bodily fluids and will always wash in the following circumstances:

- Upon arriving at site
- After using the toilet
- Before and after caring for a ill child
- Before any food service activity

- Before setting the table
- Before and after eating
- After handling pets or animals

### **Nutrition**

The Y provides daily nutritional snacks for children in our childcare programs. The goal of snack time is to help your child gain independence and learn acceptable table manners. A monthly snack menu will be posted in the parent area. For programs offered during school holidays and/or vacations, please provide a bag lunch, snacks and water bottle for your child

### **Label Personal Items**

Please label any item your child brings to childcare with her/his full name in permanent ink. Please encourage your child to leave valuables (cell phones, toys, iPods, trading cards, video games, etc.) at home. The Y is not responsible for items lost, broken, stolen, or ruined. All cell phones are turned off and stored during program hours.

### **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. Consent is given at the time of registration.

### **Screen Time Policy**

The YMCA believes that good programming does not include TV shows and movies. Documentary videos maybe used in support of curriculum with advance approval of the Childcare Director. Computer "screen time" will also be limited, unless it supports educational enrichment.

## **Child Abuse and Maltreatment**

### **Prevention Strategies**

- Use of a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure to screen out staff not suited for working with children.
- We take any allegation or suspicion of child abuse seriously.
- Staff understand their legal obligation to report suspected abuse.
- Policies, procedures, and training — including a staff Code of Conduct — are available related to discipline, supervision and staff/child interaction.
- Advocate positive guidance and discipline with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, prevention and the development of self-discipline.
- Our staff communicate frequently with parents 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.

- You are encouraged to visit, unannounced, any program in which your child participates.
- Staff try to identify stressed parents/guardian/responsible adults and offer support and referrals for help.

### **Staff Relationships Regarding Any Y Program**

- No staff member may be alone with a child in any area or location where she/he cannot be observed by other staff.
- Y childcare standards state that corporal punishment is prohibited regardless of parental permission or the age of the child.
- Our childcare staff are forbidden from humiliating or subjecting a child to abusive or profane language.

### **Staff Relationships 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 forms of communication (phone calls, e-mails, instant messages, text messages, etc.)

Baby-sitting, sleep-overs and inviting 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 of staff 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 child's family are related.

We recognize that children may ask a staff member to attend her/his sporting event, dance recital, etc. This is permitted so long as it is a public event and the child and staff person are not alone. Under no circumstance may our staff transport any child in her/his personal vehicle.

### **Mandated Reporters**

Y 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.

Y staff do not have discretion in this matter, but must make 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 extreme cases, we may also refer the matter directly to the police.

## Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

In the event of an accusation of suspicion of child abuse, our staff will take prompt and immediate actions as follows:

1. Our employee will notify the Childcare Director or her/his designee that there is cause to make a Hot Line Call. This requirement does not give the person in charge the power to prohibit a report from being made nor does it relieve the original source of concern from ensuring that a report is made. The person in charge or her/his designee will notify Child & Protective Services (CPS) immediately at any time of day or week by calling the hotline: **The New York State Central Register of Child Maltreatment: 800.342.3720**
2. Make the report.
3. At this point, the person in charge or the designee will ask the CPS worker to determine if circumstances as describe warrant a report.
4. The person in charge or the designee immediately implements the directions given by the CPS worker.
  - a. If a CPS report is not recommended by the CPS worker, this fact, plus any other advice or direction given should be noted in an incident report and the appropriate staff notified to ensure compliance. The Executive Director of Childcare should promptly receive a copy of this report.
  - b. If a CPS report is warranted in the opinion of the CPS worker, it is to be immediately reported. The incident report is to be completed and promptly forwarded to the Executive Director of Childcare.

When a CPS report is deemed necessary, within 48 hours after such oral report, form OCFS 2221A (Report of suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment) shall be completed and mailed to: the **Child Protective Services** office responsible for that branch/childcare location.

If you wish to obtain a copy of NYS Office of Children and Family Services regulations, please visit [www.nys.ocfs.gov](http://www.nys.ocfs.gov).

Please call the Child Care Complaint Line, 800.732.5207, should you have any concerns about a childcare staff person or program.

To contact DSS for your county, please call:

Albany	518.477.7300
Greene	518.719.3700
Rensselaer	518.270.3935
Saratoga	518.884.4140
Schenectady	518.388.4740