



Program Statement & Parent Handbook

Charitable Registration #: 0205153491

Our Charitable Mission

The YMCA is a charity dedicated to providing opportunities for personal growth in spirit, mind and body and service to others

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Welcome TO YMCA CHILD CARE SERVICES Where Learning is Child's play!

In choosing YMCA Child Care for your child, you have chosen one of the finest Child Care services available anywhere. The YMCA is a leading agency for licensed child care in Canada. We hope this handbook answers your questions and gives you information necessary to feel comfortable and confident in placing your child in our care.

Each of the programs offered are licensed through the Ministry of Education.

Every family has special reasons for needing a Child Care program and many of these are personal. We share your need for confidentiality. You have entrusted us with your child for many hours of care. We are very aware of our responsibility to provide the best care possible to help your child develop in a positive manner.

You have a responsibility as well. Your child needs lots of rest, a good breakfast and adequate clothing for their day's activities. They need to know that you are confident in us so that they likewise will have confidence. We also need your partnership in maintaining safe, healthy and respectful environments for all children and adults to participate in.

During the year there will be times when parents/guardians and educators can get together to discuss each child. On a daily basis during the drop off or pick up times, this can be done provided the room safety is not in jeopardy and away from your child. It is not recommended to have communication around any concerns when any child is within hearing range. Optional methods include but are not limited to: telephone, through notes, emails or at parent/guardian meetings. We ask that parents/guardians work together with the Child Care educators to exchange information about the child's language, culture, interests and abilities so that the sum of a child's education experience is greater than either parents/guardians or child care educators alone could provide.

YMCA Core Values

Inclusiveness, Caring, Honesty, Health, Responsibility, Respect

In support of our mission and core values, YMCA Child Care believes in creating environments which:

- Are safe and clean; inviting and nurturing
- Encourage discovery, wonder and exploration
- Develop personal growth
- Develop self esteem, confidence and interdependence
- Encourage support of our Core Values
- Help us to understand the world around us
- Involve children in philanthropic activities and helping others



YMCA Program Statement

Our program statement describes how our programs support and foster early learning. It will outline our view of the child, our philosophy and pedagogy as well as the goals and approaches used to ensure healthy child development.

It will also outline how we evaluate our programs to maintain quality and how we support the professionals who work with the children.

The YMCA Program Statement is reviewed annually to ensure it is aligned with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement.

Our View of the Child

Every child is special in the eyes of their parents and those who love them. The children are also special to us. As educators of young children we know that each child is an individual of great human worth and potential. Every child is different in their looks, their growth patterns, their genetic make-up, their previous experience, the way they think and in every aspect of what makes them human beings. We appreciate each child's uniqueness and view the child's growth and development occurring in a holistic manner.

At the YMCA we understand that children learn through play. Play by definition is enjoyable, spontaneous, active, and undertaken without external goals and sanctions. This means children are self-learners and do not require an adult to choose what or how they should learn. When the child's natural activity of play is supported by caring and responsive professionals in positive, developmentally appropriate learning environments, we believe, a child will flourish. The child's innate competence, capacity, curiosity and potential will be maximized.

"YMCA Playing to Learn is a wonderful, academically sound, and highly accessible document. At the heart is a view of children, teachers and parents as capable and competent. This is one document that will be highly valued in the field, not just sitting on a shelf."

Jean M. Clinton, BMus MD
FRCP(C), Associate Clinical
Professor, Department of
Psychiatry and Behavioural
Neurosciences, McMaster
University

PHILOSOPHY

The study of the theoretical basis of a particular branch of knowledge.

PEDAGOGY

The method and practice of teaching.

GOAL

An aim of desired result.

APPROACH

A means of attaining a goal.

HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

The philosophy or view of human development that recognizes the necessity to include all aspects or domains of development in order to understand the whole person.

SANCTION

For a recognized authority to give approval of something.

INNATE

Existing from birth (i.e. born with).



YMCA Curriculum

The YMCA of Stratford-Perth has a well-established, research based approach to early learning. Our curriculum YMCA Playing to Learn has been successfully implemented in all programs for children 0-6 since 2005. In 2006, all YMCAs across Canada adopted this curriculum.

YMCA Playing to Learn 2nd Edition was published in 2015. This edition incorporates new research, best practices, knowledge and experience. There is more information on infants and toddlers and it has a greater focus on the social and emotional development of the young child.

In 2012, YMCA of Stratford-Perth launched our school age curriculum, based on A Place to Connect, a YMCA National Curriculum for children 5-12. The national roll-out of this curriculum began in January 2016 which provides in-depth training and extended frameworks for programming.

The YMCA has been involved in shaping the development of the provincial early learning framework by sharing YMCA Playing to Learn and our training materials to support educators in implementing a play-based approach. The goals and approaches of the YMCA curricula align in philosophy, standards, and recommendations with the provincial frameworks below. It is gratifying to see Ministry of Education embrace play and adopt a very similar approach.

- ✓ **Minister of Education's Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy**
<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/programCCEYA.pdf>
- ✓ **"How Does Learning Happen?" Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years**
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>
- ✓ **Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)**
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf/>

CURRICULUM

The deliberately organized part of the child's experience and the experience that occurs through everyday aspects of life. Playing to Learn is a curriculum based on play development.

SOCIAL LEARNING

The process of acquiring knowledge about individuals and groups by observing, imitating and interacting with others.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The complex changes within the individual over time that involves the self and feelings and regulating behavior.



Our Statement on Play

Each child can reach his or her full human potential through play. Our intention is to provide the best possible environment that allows the best possible play for all children in our care. We endeavour to meet the play needs of all children and must do whatever possible to support the natural urge to play.

Play helps the child to be both engaged with everyday realities and to be absorbed in an ecstatic self-forgetfulness. It ensures involvement, enjoyment, and various forms of success. Play can be powerful or profound, but it is always purposeful.

Play is a vehicle that propels learning and development. Play and development are intertwined; neither precedes the other. All domains of development are supported by play, and play has the additional benefit of being self-initiated and therefore a joy rather than a chore. Play makes discovery pleasurable, but it also propels the child into the vast realm of learning. Play provides a way for children to be healthy in body, mind and spirit.

Play fosters **skill** development. It offers opportunities for gaining new skills as well as refining existing ones.

Play is directly linked to the child's learning. His or her **cognitive** development and academic success are enhanced by the play experience.

Play is **physical** and increases activity levels, fitness, balance, gross motor skills and fine motor actions. A wide range of scientific, mathematical, perspective-taking and other cognitive processes in discovery and other types of play.

Play is **social** and aids in **language** learning while supporting social skills development. Self-concepts and emotions are better understood through play, as is the building of **emotional** intelligence. Important **self-regulatory** skills may be acquired and reinforced through play.

Play builds **resilience** and can help children **manage stress**. There are often therapeutic benefits to play. Typically children direct their play in ways that address their own socio-emotional issues.

LEARNING

The process of changing existing understanding to accommodate new ideas; acquiring new knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions; discovering through play.

BODY

The physical self.

MIND

The individual's place of thinking; human consciousness emanating from the brain.

SPIRIT

The part of the self that transcends the physical self or thought processes.

DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS

The categories that academics and practitioners use to manage the vast amount of information about human development.

SKILL

A learned behaviour.

COGNITIVE

Related to thinking or reasoning.



“The YMCA’s Playing to Learn is a curriculum guide built on the importance and value of play for young children. The document makes, and backs up, arguments of why and how children’s play is essential to the healthy social, physical and cognitive development of all children.”

Martha Friendly, Executive Director of the Childcare Resources and Research Unit

YMCA Curriculum Goals & Approaches

1) Promoting health, safety, nutrition & well-being:

Keeping children healthy and safe is a priority at the YMCA and we understand that the well-being of their child is a parent’s # 1 concern. Therefore we have developed comprehensive, research-based procedures to support children.

Some of the procedures in place at the YMCA include:

- ✓ Safe supervision of children
- ✓ Child Protection procedures and training
- ✓ Sanitation and disinfection procedures
- ✓ Menu Planning following the Canada Food Guide
- ✓ Communicable disease prevention
- ✓ Emergency procedures
- ✓ Standard First Aid and CPR training

2) Supporting relationships:

At the YMCA we understand that young children flourish in all areas of development when they are in positive and responsive relationships with adults. YMCA educators build a foundation of trust with children by being available, sensitive, responsive, and caring.

YMCA educators create an inclusive and respectful environment to foster positive, equitable, and collaborative relationships. When children feel safe, secure, valued and a contributing member of their world they are able to explore, discover, try new things, grow, learn and develop.

To support your child's care, growth and development YMCA educators interact and communicate with parents on a daily basis sharing observations, documentations, and reflections.

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Learned actions involving the large muscles of the body. (E.g. kicking a ball)

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Learned actions involving the small muscles of the body, including the hands, mouth and feet. (E.g. cutting with scissors)

SELF-REGULATION

The child’s conscious or unconscious control of her body, relationships and other aspects of him or herself.

RESILIENCE

The ability to recover quickly from difficulties.

WELL BEING

The state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.

RESPONSIVE CAREGIVING

The process of offering consistent, reliable care via careful observation of cues.



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

The YMCA believes that it is the role of the adult in a child's life to support them to learn how to interact effectively with the world around them including other children, adults, and the environment.

Generally self-regulation involves gaining a degree of control over one's bodily functions and impulses, managing one's emotions, changing one's behaviours and maintaining focus our attention on something or someone.

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

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

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

- ✓ Educators provide small group experiences that allow for more individualized adult attention
- ✓ Educators role model inclusive, respectful, and collaborative interactions with children and other adults
- ✓ Educators ensure the learning environment is flexible so they can respond in the moment and build on or scaffold the children's interests
- ✓ Educators ensure toys, equipment, and materials are plentiful and available to children at all times
- ✓ Children are given freedom to make choices
- ✓ By engaging as a play partner with children, educators are able to demonstrate pro-social skills including promoting discussion, problem solving when conflict arises, and understanding how their actions effect others
- ✓ Educators attend trainings that address self-regulation and resilience

DISCOVER

To find something unexpectedly.

OBSERVATION

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

DOCUMENTATION

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

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

STRATEGY

A plan or method of achieving a goal.



4) Fostering exploration, play & inquiry:

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

As parents and educators, we watch children explore their world through their senses, repetition of tasks, imitation, asking questions, pretending. But what are children really doing? Children are putting together all the pieces of how the world works through exploration, play and inquiry.

YMCA Educators understand the importance of play. They foster, expand and scaffold this natural talent called play by being:

- ✓ active participants
- ✓ architects of the play scape
- ✓ keen observers
- ✓ planners
- ✓ reporters
- ✓ collaborators
- ✓ reflective practitioners

Observing a day-in -the-life of a YMCA child care program, you will note that the majority of activities are directed by the children. Children decide where, when, what and how they wish to play. Their decisions are based on their interests and curiosity. The educator responds by adapting the environment by adding new toys, materials and equipment, posing questions, and being a play partner. This sets the stage for further play, inquiry, discovery and learning. The educator's role is to support play so that learning and development flourishes.

ROLE-MODELLING

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

SCAFFOLD

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

PRO-SOCIAL SKILLS

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

CURIOSITY

Mental interest that leads to behaviours of discovery and learning.

INQUIRY

The act of asking questions in order to gather information.



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

Children and parents are warmly greeted upon arrival and after a brief check-in to share news from the evening before, the children get down to the serious business of playing.

The room is set up with a variety of activities that support the observed interests of the children. The children might join some friends at the creative art table to work collaboratively on a collage, or they might work on a Lego structure they safely stored on the counter to complete the next day.

There are no expectations imposed by the educator or curriculum on where children play, or whom they play with, or how long they play at one activity. That is for the child to choose based on their interests.

You may overhear a small group of children in the dramatic play centre dressed in costumes acting out a scene of being “mama, papa, and baby at the doctor”. The educator has been assigned the role of “doctor” by the children and takes this opportunity to ask the children questions that expand their understanding of what happens at a check-up.

Tomorrow the educator supports the children’s interest by adding books about doctors and hospitals to the dramatic play centre hoping to build on the children’s interest and spark more questions and play – resulting in more learning.

CHILD DIRECTED PLAY

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

PLAY PARTNER (SHIP)

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

DRAMATIC PLAY

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

CHILD CENTRED EDUCATION

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



6) Planning learning environments to support every child's learning:

YMCA Child Care programs are located in a variety of facilities including schools, community centres, and YMCA owned buildings.

At the YMCA we understand that the parent is the child's first teacher, the YMCA educator is the second teacher and the learning environment is the child's third teacher.

The YMCA's unique approach to planning and creating learning environments supports children's play so that early learning and healthy development is maximized.

YMCA learning centres are designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the children.

We have created home like environments that include calm colours, soft furnishings, items from nature like plants and pets, family photographs, and accessories that are intended to make children feel comfortable and safe.

YMCA educators understand that children learn holistically not in one area of development at a time. We understand that riding a tricycle involves gross motor and fine motor skills but the play children engage in while riding a tricycle involves many more - communication skills, social skills, etc.

Therefore you may find books, paper and crayons in the block area because children are using these items to figure out how to build a bridge from one shelf to another. Or you may find play dough in the dramatic play area where children are making pizza. And on a beautiful day you may see indoor furniture move outdoors to take advantage of the weather.

PLANNING

The act of preparing and designing experiences and activities (in this instance in accordance with YMCA curriculum).

ENVIRONMENT

Aspects of the immediate surroundings including the delineation of space, the presence or absence of objects, furniture, light, colour, toys and play things and the inclusion/exclusion of indoor and outdoor space.

LEARNING CENTRES

Specially prepared places where materials are provided to respond to children's interests or trigger new ones; spaces for learning in content specific areas; discovery or inquiry based spaces designed by educators for small groups of children.

PLAY MATERIALS

Any found items or purpose-made manufactured items that are used for props, for creative enterprises or construction.

WHOLE CHILD

A concept of the child that sees all developmental domains as interacting, the child being more than the sum of domains.



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

YMCA educators design a daily schedule that meets the needs of the children and provides for a balance of activities throughout the day.

Consideration for the care requirements, age, developmental level, energy level, and interests of the children are included.

Generous blocks of time for children to explore, play, and inquire are included both indoors and outdoors.

The daily schedule is not rigid but operating in small groups is mandated. One small group of children may be on a walk in the community, while the other small group may prefer to stay indoors and bake cookies.

Periods of active and quiet play are interwoven throughout the day both indoors and outdoors.

At the YMCA we don't let the weather stop us from having fun in nature. The children love to bundle up in warm dry clothes and head out to jump in puddles or make snowballs. In very poor weather active play takes place indoors so that children get the physical activity their bodies require.

YMCA educators are trained to keep transitions from activity to activity to a minimum so children get to play more.

However, young children thrive on regular schedules and feel secure when they can predict what will occur throughout the day therefore snacks and meal times are consistent as is the rest period in the afternoon for young children.

TRANSITIONS

Aspects of the planned and unplanned day that create changes from one type of activity or event to another.

FAMILY

A number of people who decide to live together or who are bonded by birth-ties, who share a home and who share common values and similar life-styles; adults taking on a parental role, and one of more children living and functioning as a unit.

ENGAGEMENT

Time spent paying attention to something or someone.

COMMUNICATION

The two way process of sending and receiving information to reach a shared understanding.



8) Fostering engagement & communication with parents:

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

YMCA educators and parents communicate on a daily basis about children's activities and health. YMCA educators keep a record of each infant, toddler, and preschool age child's learning and development using documentation and journals available to parents to read each day.

Getting to know family members is critical as an educator and including family members in program helps a child to feel a greater sense of belonging.

Other strategies to engage parents and gain input include:

- ✓ Documentations that describe play and its connection to learning
- ✓ Parent/Educator interviews
- ✓ Celebrations & events
- ✓ Parent surveys
- ✓ Displays of children's artwork, sculptures, and creations
- ✓ Photographs of children at play
- ✓ Posting planning documents that include observations of children's interests and activities introduced by YMCA educators

9) Involving community partners:

While our range of community partners is broad, the largest and most important is the education system. Many of our centres are located in schools, so relationships with principals, faculty and staff are critical.

The YMCA works closely with local community agencies and partners in order to support the children and families in our programs. We view the community as a valuable resource and our staff plan learning opportunities to engage the community in our programs.

The YMCA actively seeks out opportunities to share our knowledge and to learn from others in the community through networking opportunities, community planning tables and conferences.



10) Supporting educators' continuous professional learning:

The YMCA is committed to the ongoing professional development of all our educators.

After all, what the educator learns informs practice and the benefit is passed onto the children.

YMCA educators attend a series of YMCA curriculum training sessions throughout their career with the YMCA. Additionally the YMCA provides opportunities for educators to attend external learning events and conferences and keep legislated training requirements like Standard First Aid & Infant and Child CPR up to date.

On a day-to-day basis the child care centre supervisor is responsible for the leadership, mentorship, coaching and development of educators. Based on the learning needs of the educators the supervisor may meet with staff to suggest strategies, conduct learning huddles to focus on a particular area of YMCA curriculum with the entire team, conduct regular staff meetings to reflect and plan, invite speakers from other YMCA departments or community agencies to attend the centre, or provide materials including links, articles, and various readings to supplement educator's professional learning.

11) Documentation:

YMCA educators participate in a continuous cycle of observation;

- ✓ Documenting play and its significance
- ✓ Determining the children's interests
- ✓ Planning activities that support the interests
- ✓ Discussion with team members
- ✓ Reflection that informs the planning of activities and the learning environment.

Links are made between theory, research, YMCA curriculum, the YMCA Program Statement, government pedagogy, and children's interests to inform the planning decisions YMCA educators make.

You will see this cycle reflected in the toys, materials, and equipment provided in the play areas, the furniture arrangement, the creative work of children, the activities children are engaging in, on the planning documents posted weekly for parents to read and discuss with the educators, in individual children's' Developmental Profiles, and in photographs and written descriptions of activities.

This process of continuous program assessment is called reflective practice. Daily educators are observing and engaging with children and evaluating the effectiveness of the learning environment to build on children's interests. Weekly they are reviewing planning and discussing with their team and supervisor to ensure they are supporting children's learning and development and monthly they are meeting as a team to look back on what did and didn't work and then plan for the future.



Program Statement Implementation and Monitoring

The YMCA is committed to supporting children to grow to their fullest potential in a safe, caring and nurturing environment. The program statement describes YMCA specific goals for children's learning and development, and the approaches that will be implemented. Each member of the program team holds a role and responsibilities in ensuring the approaches in the program statement are implemented.

Roles and Responsibilities in Implementation & Monitoring

YMCA Management will:

- Conduct a comprehensive annual review of the YMCA Program Statement including the goals and approaches and integrate information gathered through various monitoring practices including curriculum assessments, parent and employee surveys, trends in performance reviews, etcetera. A record will be kept of the review and signed and dated by a senior manager.
- Verify curriculum assessments are completed at each centre on an annual basis.
- Respond immediately to any concerns or commissions of prohibited practices observed or reported in consultation with Human Resources.

Supervisors will:

- Orient all new staff, students and volunteers to the YMCA Program Statement before they interact with children. A sign off sheet with the staff, student, or volunteer and supervisor signature indicating the date of orientation will be kept.
- Review with all staff, students, and volunteers on an annual basis at the time of the final performance review or any time there is substantive changes to the program statement. A sign off sheet with the staff, student, or volunteer and supervisor signature indicating the date of orientation will be kept.
- Provide time, coaching and guidance for staff to engage in ongoing reflective practice and collaborative inquiry with the program team.
- Monitor all staff, students and volunteers for compliance with the approaches set out in the program statement and the commission of any prohibited practices through a combination of observation, reports from colleagues, parents, and community partners, reviewing documentation. An observation is completed and documented on the Staff Monitoring Documentation Tool for every staff, student, and volunteer. The results are discussed with the individual and an action plan will be documented where required.
- Performance Management will be conducted with each staff, student and volunteer following the format and cycle selected by either Human Resources (staff), the post-secondary institution (student), Volunteer Development (volunteer). Goals related to the implementation of the program statement are included in the reviews.
- Discuss curriculum assessment results with program team and develop a plan of action to be implemented and shared with YMCA management
- Immediately report any concerns or commission of any prohibited practices to YMCA management.



Educators will:

- Prepare documentations as prescribed by the YMCA curriculum standards that demonstrate the implementation of the approaches in the program statement.
- Engage in ongoing reflective practice and collaborative inquiry with the program team as a means for reflecting on and discussing documentation.

Monitoring

- Supervision of program areas on a regular basis conducted by Supervisor or designate
- Site Checks are done within School Age Programs and Room Checklists for full day programs are completed monthly by Supervisor or designate
- Annual Performance Assessment Plans for all staff include Coaching/Mentoring Documentation Forms and Collaborative and Inquiry Forms.
- Scheduled and spontaneous coaching and mentoring conversations with all staff occur.
- External Agency reviews and audits (Resource Consultants, YMCA Play in Action, A Place to Connect, Health and Fire Inspections, Ministry of Education annual License Reviews)

Staff Monitoring Documentation Tool

This is a living document. It is used regularly to monitor program quality, set goals and celebrate successes of individual Child Care Professionals, teams and YMCA Program Delivery.

- Staff Monitoring Documentation – Category 1, 2 and 3 staff (>32hrs per week) is up to date with each staff member with a minimum of 2 entries per staff per month and is discussed with staff a minimum of 3x per year during Performance Management meetings.
- Staff Monitoring and Documentation – Supply and Contract Staff is up to date with each staff member with a minimum of 6 entries per calendar year and discussed with staff a minimum of 1 time per year (Supply) and a minimum of 12 entries per calendar year and discussed with staff a minimum of 2 times per year for (Contract Staff).
- The SMDT will be an electronic document, shared on a common computer system and accessible to all Supervisors who may have a staff member working with their programs.
- The SMDT will be printed in a hard copy for the staff to have on site with them each March, July and November or as requested by the Child Care Educator.



Prohibited Practices

Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach to manage unwanted behaviour. Research from diverse fields of study shows that children who attend programs where they experience warm, supportive relationships are happier, less anxious and more motivated to learn than those who do not. Experiencing positive relationships in early childhood also has significant long term impact on physical and mental health, and success in school and beyond.

The YMCA Program Statement sets out approaches that support positive interactions between children, families, staff and the community.

Ontario Regulation 137/15

No licensee shall permit, with respect to a child receiving child care at a child care centre it operates or at a premises where it oversees the provision of child care,

- a. corporal punishment (which may include but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, slapping, pinching);
- b. physical restraint of children, including but not limited to confining to high chair, car seat etc. for discipline or in lieu of supervision unless for the purposes described in the regulation (to prevent self-harm, harm to others and only until risk of harm/injury is no longer imminent);
- c. locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency;
- d. use of harsh, degrading, measures or threats or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- e. depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- f. inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Additionally, the following practice is prohibited by the YMCA:

- Interacting or relating to children outside of YMCA program activity (e.g. personal visits, calling or online chatting, etcetera.)
- Any form of abuse – physical, sexual, emotional and/or neglect

Providing care for any child who attends a YMCA Program, after hours is strongly discouraged and not condoned by the YMCA for any reason. Staff are urged to maintain professional distance with families and children associated with the Child Care Programs.

Measures Used to Deal with Contravention of Policies and the Use of Prohibited Practices

Any reports involving breach of the above prohibited practices are taken seriously and will be dealt with by YMCA management. Individuals who violate the prohibited practices and this procedure are subject to disciplinary or corrective action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer assignment.

Communications will occur with all appropriate governing agencies as required throughout the process. (example: Ministry of Education, Employment Standards, Police, College of Early Childhood Educators, College of Teacher's, Children's Aid Society)

Human Resources and Child Protection Policies are reviewed upon hire and annually thereafter.





Inclusion Policy

Early childhood education inclusion embodies the values, policies and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. (DEC/NAEYC, 2009: 2)

POLICY

The YMCA of Stratford-Perth Child Care programs provide essential learning to encompass and develop different cultures, policies and practices so as to include all learners.

We believe that learning, achievements, opinions and happiness of all our children, parents and staff matters. We encourage and promote a sense of community and offer prospects to all learners who may have never had the opportunity before. However, we recognise that all learners are not treated the same and for some this may be specific and sometimes require the help of other outside professionals. For example, Speech and Language specialists or Resource Consultants.

Inclusion is about providing equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their ability, age, gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, impairment, status, sexuality, or social or economic background. It is our responsibility to provide an inclusive environment to our children, parents and staff.

Inclusion will be supported in the following ways:

- We believe that all children are unique individuals and will add value to our programs.
- Parents and families are involved, consulted and informed partners with the program's staff and volunteers.
- Our staff seek out appropriate community partners to enhance our ability to support children with specialized needs through training and consultation.
- Our staff strive to ensure the environment and program are adapted to meet the needs of all children.
- Individualized Support Plans will be in place through consultation with Parents and involved outside agencies and will be reviewed on a schedule that is meaningful to the child's development and needs and reflective of the parent/guardian input
- ISP's will outline any supporting aids/equipment and instructions for use or processes that will benefit the child's integration into full program. Aids and equipment may be accessed by all children in the program if deemed appropriate and safe by the Support Team.
- Consent for shared information and consultation will be provided by the parent/guardian for the prior to any integration of outside agencies or services becoming involved within the YMCA Programs in reference to this policy.

Role of the Family

We view parents and/or guardians as partners to ensure children enrolled in our program develop positive long-term outcomes. Therefore, ongoing continuous communication between our program staff and parents/guardians is critical to the success of these common goals.



Role of the Program and Staff

- All program staff and volunteers will adapt the environment and routines as necessary to meet the needs of children enrolled.
- All program staff understands that they will receive and have access to confidential information about children and families. They agree to keep this information in the strictest of confidence. Before sharing information about children with outside agencies or schools, all program staff will obtain parental consent. All documentation of consent to share information will be kept on site in the child's file
- All program staff are committed to working with community partners to enhance our ability to support children with special needs through training and consultation.

Termination of Services

The YMCA of Stratford-Perth Child Care program is an inclusive program which strives to meet the needs of children and families. In situations where the program is having difficulty meeting the child's needs, we may decide to terminate care.

In each situation where it may be necessary to withdraw services, we make the following considerations:

- Reasonable care has been taken in assessing the child's needs, including program's ability to support those needs
- Special needs resources and other outside agency support is unavailable or has been exhausted

Two week written notification of withdrawal will be given and documentation of meetings and discussions with special needs support staff if applicable is documented and shared with parents. In extreme circumstances, termination of care may be immediate.

The following additional situations may be considered cause for terminating care:

- Non-payment of program fees
- Chronic late pick-up
- Situations that require specialized services that the YMCA is not able to provide
- Parents or child(ren) who exhibit abusive behaviour towards staff, other children and families
- Children who are unable to manage in a group care setting
- Refusal by parent/guardian to meet with program staff and/or consent to the use of support services for child(ren)



Setting the Stage for Positive Environments

A positive approach is used to guide children in all YMCA Child Care programs. Each situation and child is dealt with individually. Adults and children are expected to keep themselves safe, other adults and children safe, and their environments safe. Guidelines and expectations are consistent, clear and based on individual learning and development stages. Staff and Child interactions continue to follow the Program Statement Standards and Expectations.

Methods used:

- Adjustment & Reflection of Environment: support positive outcomes, assuring the environment is stimulating for the child's age and interests.
- Re-direction: guiding a child into acceptable options when engaged in an unacceptable activity
- Logical and Natural Consequences: striving to make children aware of the results of their actions
- Limit Setting: developing boundaries for the children as a group
- Modeling: demonstrating appropriate ways of interacting
- Providing Choices: outlining appropriate choices and encouraging children to make decisions for themselves
- Anticipating Trouble: planning and preparing the environment
- Ignoring: some inappropriate behaviour can be ignored with more emphasis given to appropriate behaviour
- Positive Reinforcement: encouraging
- Under NO circumstances will the following be used: Corporal punishment, harsh, belittling, sarcasm or degrading responses, depriving a child of basic needs or confining a child.

Programs follow three basic guidelines:

- All bodies must be safe
- All feelings must be safe
- All environments and equipment must be safe

We want all the children to have fun and enjoy our programs. It is for this simple reason that we have set up a system based on a few simple expectations that respect the rights of all members of the programs, children and staff.

Be safe... Be Respectful... Be Responsible... Have FUN!

The following are behaviours that are identified threats to the safety of our participants and programs and may result in immediate suspension from the program for 24hrs up to termination of program participation.

- Hitting
- Biting
- Swearing
- Spitting
- Throwing toys/equipment
- Unauthorized departure from any program



Ongoing incidents which cause concern for the safety of participants and programs require parental support and co-operation. Each child and case is managed individually.

Steps to be considered and implemented where appropriate to support children, families and staff:

- Evaluate program, delivery, set-up and content to ensure all requirements are in place
- Create an individual action plan for the child and program
- Identify triggers – talk to child, parent, staff
- Remove or avoid triggers where possible; make program adjustments where possible
- Follow methodology from Program Statement
- Consult with support agencies: Resource Consultants, Small Talk, OEYC for support resources for staff and families
- Access Program Assistance hours where possible/necessary
- Re-evaluate based on an established timeline, using successes as new reference points for the next goals to be set.

Documentation of concerns requiring parental involvement will be completed and provided to the parent upon pick up. Incident Reports act as a reference for further communication with the child and between the program Educators and parents in an effort to ensure a full support system is in place. Adjustments for programming, schedules, toys and equipment will be accommodated wherever possible.

Considerations for ongoing or severe concerns:

- Verbal Notice
- Written Notice
- 24 hour suspension (up to 3 times)
- One-week suspension (up to 2 times)
- Continued consistent concerns may result at this time, termination of child care space

Parents are responsible for child care fees during periods of suspension. In severe cases where the program, participants or staff have been put in jeopardy, verbal and written warnings and 24 hours suspensions may be bypassed and one-week suspensions may be implemented. Each case will be managed individually with the participation of the child, staff, Supervisor, parent/guardian and when necessary the Manager of Child Care Services.

Every effort is made to keep all children in our programs according to their schedules. However if ongoing safety concerns arise and all measures have been put in place to help support the child consideration of suspension of services may be necessary during this process.

Factors in this decision will include:

- Severity of injury or damage caused to the participant(s), staff or program equipment
- Parent engagement
- Each child's age, development and identified needs will be a gauge affecting decisions related to service suspension



Please note: a child that leaves the program without Educator permission will automatically receive a WRITTEN WARNING. This type of behaviour jeopardizes the immediate operations of the program, the safety of the child and the remaining group of children.

Shared Consent between the School and YMCA MUST accompany all registrations for the School Age Programs. The YMCA School Age Programs are trained with the Safe School's Act and accordingly will complete Safe School's Act Reports which are managed by the School Boards. These situations may result in suspension from School and as a result, suspension from the YMCA Programs.

Under Ontario Regulation 221/11, third party operator must report to a school principal where a pupil of a school in the board may have engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, that these employees must report the matter to the school's principal and this may result in suspension or expulsion of the student."

If any child is removed from program the Manager of Child Care will inform the CEO of the Stratford-Perth YMCA.

Daily Health Checks

To maintain a good standard of health, a daily check is made. It is necessary to have suitable arrangements in the event of illness. Should your child become ill during the day, he will be supervised away from the other children. The parent/guardian will be contacted immediately to pick up the child. A child should not return to the Centre until he is ready to participate in all aspects of the program, including outdoor activities.

Parents/Guardians are to keep their children at home if they display any one of the following symptoms:

- Fever – see fever management
- Diarrhea – twice in one day (once in one day if during an outbreak)
- Vomiting
- Undiagnosed rash/skin condition
- Communicable disease
- Obviously infected discharge
- Lethargy and irritability and are not able to participate in program
- Persistent pain
- Cough frequent bouts (3 to 5 times/hour, especially if choking or vomiting)
- Head lice, eggs or nits apparent

If a child is showing signs of ill health, the parent/guardian may be asked to take their child home and may be asked to provide the program with a doctor's note clarifying the child's health. Children with diagnosed communicable diseases will be excluded according to the local Health Unit guidelines.

Staff, volunteers, students & children are required to have up to date immunizations. This information is a requirement of the Health Unit and mandatory prior to work or participation in our programs.

The Health Unit has access to all files as it pertains to the wellness of the program.

All programs are smoke-free. At no time will smoking be permitted on the premises or near any entrances of the programs.



Medications and FEVER MANAGEMENT:

When a child falls ill with a fever, the following steps will be followed to ensure the health and safety of all children is maintained:

- Staff will notify the Supervisor they have taken a child's temperature and the preceding events that lead to the health inquiry of the child
- Parents will be notified of the child's condition, immediately

If the child is able and has the desire to participate in the programs, parents/guardians will have the option to come to pick up their child, to come and administer fever management, to authorize the staff to administer fever management per our Medication Policy, or to have the child monitored without fever management.

(Note: fever medication for these purposes may only be kept on site for children 3 months-2.5 years. Children 2.5 years and older may only bring medication on a 5 day limit that is directly connected to a current illness/need)

The staff team will monitor the child closely and temperature will be taken again within an hour. If the fever has lowered and the child's condition has not changed, the child may remain in program. Staff will follow through with the parent/guardian to report the status of the child's health.

If after fever management has been administered and one hour has passed without the fever going down, and/or the child's condition worsens, the parent/guardian will be requested to pick the child up immediately.

If the child is not able to participate due to his/her condition, parents/guardians will be requested to pick up their child immediately. The child will be monitored and made as comfortable as possible and may be removed from the general population to a designated location within the program with a designated supervising staff member.

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE ANY MEDICATIONS IN YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK OR CUBBY.

ALL MEDICATIONS MUST BE LOCKED IN A DESIGNATED AREA.

Please see your child's educator for more information.



Community Partnerships and Program Enhancements

Throughout the year opportunities are provided to work with our community to enhance curriculum development and experiences for the children. Visitors from a variety of agencies and business come to the programs to share time, talent or treasures with the children. Some of the agencies include: Pet Stores, Sporting stores, Culinary Specialists, Fire and Police Departments, Health Unit, Library, Dance Studios and Fitness Specialists, to mention a few. The children's interests guide the invitation of special visitors to the programs. If you have time, talent or treasures to share with the children, please see your child's Educator to discuss your involvement with the programs.

Field Trips

The children and staff may take short walking trips as an extension to their learning. All walks and trips require parent/guardian consent. Forms for consents are included in your registration package.

On occasion a trip involving bus transportation may be planned. Parents/guardians will be given complete details regarding learning outcomes, destinations, dates and times. All children regularly scheduled to be in attendance are required to attend. Alternate child care will not be provided should you choose not to send your child. Parents are always welcome to attend these events.

All preschool, kindergarten and school-age programs participate in swim sessions at the YMCA located at 204 Downie Street. Ask your program Supervisor or child's Educator for further details.

Staff Training and Development

As a requirement of employment with the YMCA, all staff complete mandatory Orientation Training as deemed appropriate through Human Resources to maintain compliance with ESA and YMCA Personnel Policy Standards.

Included with these HR trainings, all staff receive full policy orientation to Child Care Policies and Procedures that include but are not limited to:

- **YMCA Curriculum Training – YMCA Playing to Learn 3mth-5yrs**
- **YMCA Curriculum Training – A Place To Connect 3.8yrs – 12yrs**
- **Child Protection (includes CRC/VS Policy)**
- **WHIMIS**
- **Workplace Violence and Harassment**
- **AODA**

Additional Trainings offered through YMCA Human Resources Online – specific to the role of each employee are available through Annual Performance Assessment Goal Setting processes.

Criminal Reference Checks with Vulnerable Sector are updated every 3 years for all staff, volunteers and students. These are verified and scanned to Human Resources and a certified copy available to Program Advisor upon request.

Standard First Aid and CPR are up to date for all staff and renewed according to individual expiry dates.



Registration at the College of Early Childhood Educators is completed annually and tracked for all RECE's.

The YMCA makes time or resources available to support Continuous Professional Learning for all Child Care staff to participate in voluntary workshops, seminars or conferences as they are made available throughout the year.

Key documents: How Does Learning Happen; Think, Feel, Act; ELECT and The Code of Ethics for the College of ECE are made available to all staff upon hire as resources to support Professional Learning.

The YMCA Child Care Programs offer an Annual Easter Monday Professional Development Day to support current trends in the field and needs of the staff pertaining to their work being done with the programs.

All Staff Meetings (minimum 6 per year) include discussion around:

- Pedagogical Approaches
- YMCA Stories – highlighting teaching moments valued by the Educator delivering their own story
- Child Protection – inquiry and questions
- Curriculum Strategies and Current Trends
- Team Meetings and Huddles

Additional Team Huddles and Networking is arranged for School Age Programs min 3 per year.

Each Educator and Child Care staff are expected to set annual goals as part of their performance assessment that are geared to their unique interests and goals pertaining to their professional development and are supported through consultation with their direct Supervisor and monitored by self-evaluation and supervisor evaluation throughout the year.

Staff are required to maintain an up to date record of qualifications and trainings and make this information available to Human Resources for record keeping. This information is also kept in the Program Statement Implementation Monitoring Tool (SMDT) and staff are encouraged to build their own Professional Portfolio (mandatory for RECE's).

Concerns regarding performance or compliance with any YMCA Policy will be managed through Performance Assessments and Human Resources. Performance Action Plans will be implemented when required and monitored on a case by case plan, specific to the improvement needs required.

Volunteers and Students

Interview: Before a student or volunteer is introduced to any of the YMCA Child Care programs, a brief interview to determine the viability of the placement will be conducted. Goals and planned outcomes will be discussed and if deemed appropriate, the Program Supervisor will initiate the following procedure prior to placement commencement.

Requirements:

High school co-operative placements and College Students– endorsement of Education Faculty
Adult Volunteers – CRC with Vulnerable Sector Screen



Placement/Volunteer Hours:

All students/volunteers will be actively involved in interactions with the children and staff. Course requirements will be completed at the convenience of the programs and will not interfere with the quality or value of play and programming the children receive.

Assessment and evaluation of the placement will be done on a weekly basis and careful consideration will be given to the observations documented to determine the continuance of a placement or interaction with the programs. A brief overview will be noted in the daily journal regarding the placement progress. Any personal confidential information will be recorded separately and a notation will be in the journal, directing further detail located with the Program Supervisor.

A key staff member will be identified for communication purposes and mentorship for the duration of the volunteer/student placement. Key staff will be qualified RECE and have a minimum of one full year experience with the YMCA Child Care programs.

Overall supervision responsibility will be that of the Child Care Supervisor with direct report received by identified key staff member.

Policy and Procedure Review

Volunteers and Students will:

- Have a full orientation, including staff introductions, site tours and question/answer session prior to commencing placement or volunteer hours.
- Parent Handbook, Behaviour Management, Child Guidance and Anaphylaxis policies and procedures are reviewed with volunteers/students who will be providing care or guidance at the Child Care Centre/Program before they begin providing that care or guidance and twice per year thereafter.
- All Policy reviews will be followed by written sign off of understanding by each Volunteer/Student
- Criminal Reference Checks with Vulnerable Sector Screens are required for all volunteers having direct contact with children in licensed child care programs.
- The ministry criminal reference check policy does not apply to students placed in the child care program by an educational institution; however criminal reference checks are routinely required by community colleges and universities prior to students beginning a placement in child care.

Supervision of Students and Volunteers

- Direct unsupervised access is not permitted for persons who are not **employees** of the Child Care Centre/Program (Volunteers and Students will not be left alone with a child)
- Students and Volunteers will not be considered part of the required ratio coverage and as such will not be left alone with any child or group of children
- Placement students/volunteers/students may not be counted in the staffing ratios in the Child Care Centre/Program
- No child is supervised by a person under 18 years of age;



Clothing and Possessions

Children should be dressed in casual, comfortable clothing that allows them to explore and play without fear of getting dirty. Clothing that is appropriate for the weather and the season should be at the Centre, i.e. snow pants, mitts, boots in winter; sun hat in summer; extra sweater or jacket for spring and fall etc. When boots are worn it is necessary that indoor shoes be provided. Please label all belongings.

Please limit belongings from home to special occasions or requests. If your child has a desire to share his/her experience or enjoyment, please notify staff of what has been brought and ensure it is clearly labelled. Staff will make efforts to provide time for your child to share the experience with friends then request home toys to be kept in a safe location within the room.

Accidents can happen, so please provide a set of clothing that can be kept at the program. Children being toilet trained should have a couple of changes of clothing available.

Child Protection

The YMCA is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people in its care. It recognizes its responsibility to promote safe practices and to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.

The YMCA is committed to ensuring that it:

- provides a safe environment for children and young people;
- identifies children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm; and
- takes appropriate action to see that such children and young people are kept safe at the YMCA.

In pursuit of these aims, the YMCA will approve and annually review policies and procedures.

The YMCA will refer concerns that a child or young person might be at risk of significant harm to the Children's Aid Society.

A full Child Protection Policy is accessible to our staff.



Nutrition

The YMCA Child Care programs follow the Health Unit's, Healthy Eating Guidelines. Please do not send candy, snacks, gum, etc. to the programs.

Due to children and staff with severe allergies, YMCA Child Care programs are 'nut aware'. An Anaphylaxis Policy is in place for all programs, which refers to unlimited allergens with severe symptoms.

For PA Day Programs where parents provide lunches, all lunches will be checked upon arrival. If "off limits" items are identified, they will be disposed of immediately or sent home with the parent/guardian. Parents/Guardians will be required to supply appropriate substitutions.

At times, parents/guardians have a desire to send treats or snacks in support of a celebration. Anything being brought into the programs must be pre-approved by the supervisor first, for use in the Health Unit regulated kitchen, labelled with ingredients, sealed and must not contain nuts or have come into contact with nuts or site specific severe allergens.

Educators will use their judgment regarding the distribution of treats/snacks and may choose to send them home with a note with the children rather than serve them at the program. To prevent disappointment, please communicate with the staff ahead of time in these situations.

Snacks and Meals

All programs will provide healthy morning and afternoon snacks on a regular menu rotation, which is posted for your viewing. Snacks are not substitutions for meals. Children should be served breakfast prior to arriving at the program.

Full Day Child Care Centres provide a balanced lunch for children up to 5 years of age. In the case of infants, if your child is not on table food, you are required to supply baby food and formula. New foods will not be served to infants until it has been done at home. A food chart is kept for each infant and is required to be updated as new foods are introduced at home.

Your input and suggestions regarding family favourites or cultural experiences is encouraged and appreciated. Menus are reviewed and altered periodically based on the children's tastes and the seasons.

Children are encouraged to try all menu options. At no time will food be withheld from a child as a means to encourage them to attempt to try food choices.

Where possible, the menu items will be altered to meet the allergy needs of the children. If a substitution is necessary, parents/guardians will be required to provide a suitable alternative for their child.

Parents are welcome to submit healthy menu recipes at anytime to the supervisor for consideration on menu updates.



Registration and Fees

Parents/guardians are requested to call ahead to set up an appointment for an initial visit and orientation to the program.

During this visit you will receive several registration forms. It is necessary for you to fully complete these forms and return them, along with a copy of your child's immunization record, before your child's first day. It is absolutely essential that all information be completed.

Parents/guardians may help to prepare children for attendance by outlining to them the types of activities that they will be involved in throughout the day. Special emphasis should be placed on the fact that the parent/guardian will be leaving the child, but will return.

Where possible, parents/guardians are encouraged to bring their child for a visit during the week prior to the admission date. This gives the child an opportunity to become familiar with the program and to make new acquaintances **before** the first day of care.

During the initial period of adjustment, tears are a very natural occurrence. Our staff have specialized skills in helping your child through difficult times. We suggest that you settle your child into an activity and our staff will assist you both as you say good-bye.

Forms

All forms from your registration package need to be returned to the Program supervisor **PRIOR** to your child's first day. Forms must be completed in full.

Waiting lists are kept for all programs where the need is higher than the numbers of spaces are available. Care will be offered on a first come first served basis as spaces become available.

ALL School Age and Kindergarten programs run from September to June with regular registration. Each year all spaces are terminated at the end of June and reassigned according to a registration process that happens in February each year. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT IF YOU ARE A CURRENT FAMILY ENROLLED IN ANY OF THE PROGRAMS AND NEED CARE IN THESE PROGRAMS FOR THE FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER THAT YOU ATTEND THE PRE-REGISTRATION TO CONFIRM YOUR INTENTIONS. Half a month's fee is required for deposit at registration time to guarantee a spot in the program for September. This fee will be used towards your first month of care. For details, please speak with the program Supervisors or the Manager of Child Care Services.

There is no fee charged to be put on a waiting list. The Waiting List is accessed to fill vacant spaces throughout the year as they become available.

Fees

Fees are payable through pre-authorized withdrawal from a bank account or by credit card (MasterCard or Visa)

If payments are returned from the bank or declined, you will be notified and the payment will be added to the next scheduled withdrawal. A **\$20 service charge** will be applied to your account. Cash or certified payment of missed fees and service charge is required no later than the last day of the month. If your account balance remains outstanding beyond the end of the current month, child care services may be terminated. Any changes that you need to make to your banking or credit card information need to be made by the 20th of the month for the next month.

Please refer to the Fee Schedule and your Financial Agreement in the registration package for further details.



Subsidy

The YMCA has a Purchase of Service Agreement with the City of Stratford and County of Oxford Social Services Departments. Parents/guardians are encouraged to speak to the Program Supervisor for further details.

Withdrawal from Programs

One calendar month written notice is required for all programs when a child is to be withdrawn from the program. One month's fees will be billed to your account if sufficient notice is not given. Fees are not adjusted for absenteeism for any reason.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURES:

An individual health check will be completed for the arriving child and the status will be noted on the attendance sheet. If the child's health is in question, the receiving staff member will communicate concerns with the guardian/parent and will document the conversation, resulting actions in the daily log book. Situations requiring documentation or follow up will be reported to the Program Supervisor immediately.

There is a late fee of \$1.00 per minute late charge after the program closes, which goes directly to the closing staff.

Early Learning and Development Centres

All children will be signed in immediately on the daily attendance sheet upon guardian/parent release to a qualified program staff member. In Early Learning and Development Centres Educators will sign children in and out. Guardians/parents are required to make contact with the receiving staff member to ensure the child is acknowledged.

Upon pick up of a child, guardians/parents must make contact with the staff member on duty to ensure they are aware of the child's departure. At this time, the staff member on duty will sign the child out on the attendance sheet and have any daily forms that refer to the child completed or reviewed by the guardian/parent. Pick up of children must be done by pre-arranged authorized individuals minimum age 18yrs identified in the registration package.

School Age Programs

For off-site School Age Programs, parents/guardians are required to sign children in and out. This ensures parent and Educator contact occurs daily for groups with older aged children. Pick up of children must be done by pre-arranged authorized individuals minimum age of 12yrs and identified in the registration package. If under 18yrs old, a documented process is required. You can get more details from your child's educator or call the Program Supervisor.



Operations / Closures and Emergency Management

Hours of operation may vary from site to site. Contact the Program Supervisor for specific site information.

Programs are closed on these dates: New Years Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day.

Holiday hours will be determined each year based on when the statutory days fall. Programs typically close early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve at 2:00pm. Notice of Christmas hours will be given to families by November 15th of the current year. Additional closures are posted.

Programs remain open year round. If schools close for inclement weather, all School- Age Programs will be closed.

Full day Child Care programs remain open unless Public Transit systems are closed or a decision is made by Senior Management or the CEO, related to safety and/or staffing.

If in doubt, please call the Administration office at 519-271-0480 and tune into AM 1240 CJCS/107.7 MIX FM for details.

Each location has a designated Emergency Evacuation Site, located in the nearby community. If our programs are required to evacuate the building for extended periods of time that require the use of an Evacuation Site we will post a sign on the access doors (SA on the exterior door accessible upon departure)

Parents will be called immediately upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site. It is imperative as a result that contact information is ALWAYS kept up to date with the Administration /Supervisor of your child's program.

Please call the Administration office 519-271-0480 if you have any concerns during a possible evacuation notification of your child's program.

If programs are required to close mid-day, all parents/guardians or pick up alternates will be notified to come for their child(ren). Staff will remain on site until all children have been picked up.

Your safety is a priority for us. Please do not take unnecessary risks. Contact the Program Supervisor in all cases of concern.

Drinking and Driving

The YMCA of Stratford Perth Child Care staff have been directed to follow specific procedures should a parent who has been drinking arrive to pick up their child. Staff are instructed to request the parent to take a cab or call the other parent to come and get them and the child. If this request is not adhered to by the parent/guardian of concern, the police will be notified of a suspected impaired driver.



Graduation & Transitions

When a child is of an appropriate age and development and the next room is able to accommodate them, the Supervisor will inform the educators of both rooms that a child will be moving up. The following procedure will then take place.

- Parents will be given at least **1 months verbal and written notice** before moving their child to a new room.
- The child will have opportunities to visit his/her new room a minimum of 5 times
- Decision will be based on the needs of the program and the child's development/readiness, as to who graduates and in what order. Age is only one factor in the process.
- Preschool placements may take place at either location to accommodate enrolment needs. Families will be made aware of program location availability throughout the process.
- **Fees will be applied to the current program group, not the age of a child.**
- Each year a formal graduation ceremony occurs in June, for all of the children eligible to attend Kindergarten in September. Details of the event will be posted and shared well in advance to allow for families to reserve the date in their schedules.
- ***Regular registration for these children ends effective June 30th of their JK year. Attendance in the program will be only as available throughout the summer months prior to starting JK. Families will receive a reminder notice when transitioning into either of the preschool programs that their care will be terminated on this date to ensure alternate arrangement can be made with plenty of notice.***

Parent Participation & Communication

We know it is important to your peace of mind to have regular information about your child's experiences. As well, your participation and input are valuable to your child and the Program. The programs provide the following opportunities to ensure communication and information exchange between parents and staff.

Families are encouraged to participate in special events that are offered throughout the year. Parents are invited to visit the program and participate in activities whenever possible.

Information and Reference Materials – Parents/guardians will receive a number of materials for reference upon registration and periodically thereafter. Our experienced staff are qualified and trained in Child Development and may have valuable resources that could assist with child specific questions and concerns. If the information is not readily available we have a number of contacts of which likely have information we will be able to access for you.

There are a number of ways that parents can be involved in their child's day at the YMCA. For some parents, involvement means that you share a special recipe with the staff that can be added to the menu or that children can prepare as part of a cooking experience. For others who may work in professions that lend themselves to classroom visits you might come in and talk to the children about your job or share a special talent.



Communication and Inquiry Policy

From time to time, parents/guardians will communicate with Educators of our programs with request for follow up being required or resolutions expected for questions, inquiries or concerns they may have regarding their child's participation or the program.

Feedback and communication is expected to follow the following process:

- Initial communication is requested to take place between the immediate parties involved (parent/educator)
- If follow up communication or further details are requested after an initial conversation with the parties directly involved, the inquiry should be forwarded by either or both parties to the next person available to tend to the needs regarding a resolution.
 - This would be the program Site Supervisor, staff designate or Supervisor of the Program – depending on the urgency of follow up required
- If there are outstanding concerns after these steps have been followed, follow up and request for communication from the next level of responsibility should be taken. (see below)
- It is expected that all inquiries are managed with professionalism, respect and confidentiality for all parties, working towards a positive outcome and experience for all involved.

Staff, Supervisors and Child Care Manager will commit to a response within 24hrs. This response may be resolution based or a confirmation of a pending resolution date if more time is needed to fulfill the inquiry or request made by a parent/guardian.

“Who do I speak to?” Level of Responsibility Chart:

- 1. Program Educators
- 2. Program Site Supervisor
- 3. Supervisor of the Program
- 4. Manager of Child Care
- 5. CEO, YMCA of Stratford-Perth

School-Age Programs

Our programs adhere to the Ministry of Educations “Safe Schools Act”

Any behaviour that could be considered suspendable at school that occurs within our programs within Schools, will be reported to the School Principal and investigated further by the Principal and the Superintendent of Education.



Program Locations

Early Learning and Development Centre 3mths – 5yrs: Supervisor Angela Charbonneau
220 Oakdale, Stratford – 519-273-9622 angela_charbonneau@ymca.ca

Early Learning and Development Centre 2.5-5yrs: Supervisor Alenka Watson
204 Downie Street, Stratford – 519-271-0480 Alenka.Watson@ymca.ca

School Age Programs

Bedford, Avon, Romeo, Jeanne Sauve – Supervisor Ashley Rose
Hamlet, Sprucedale, Shakespeare, Anne Hathaway, YMCA - Supervisor Alenka Watson
519-271-0480 ashley_rose@ymca.ca and alenka.watson@ymca.ca

PA Day and School Breaks: Registration information and availability: Alenka Watson
Ready, Set, Go! Kindergarten Summer Program: Ashley Rose 519-271-0480

Join our Facebook group

YMCA Stratford-Perth Early Learning & Development

Child Care Manager: Lori.Darling@ymca.ca 519-271-0480

Other YMCA Programs for Your Family

Our YMCA is committed to providing you and members of your family with special programs and services to develop body, mind and spirit. The Child Care staff will be able to direct you to information and brochures on YMCA programs and services.

There is something for everyone. Ask your Program Supervisor for a Guest Pass and try it out today. As a YMCA Child Care family, ***your family qualifies for the Member Rates and privileges*** at all Stratford Perth YMCA programs.

Stratford location:

204 Downie Street
N5A 1X4
519-271-0480

St. Marys location:

268 Maiden Lane
PO Box 2740, N4X 1A5
519-284-2500

Visit the website: www.stratfordperthymca.com