



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



CHILD CARE PARENT HANDBOOK

Preschool
Before and After School Programs
Day Camp
Child Watch

YMCA of METROPOLITAN CHATTANOOGA
301 West Sixth Street, Chattanooga, TN 37402
423.265.8834 ymcachattanooga.org

Mission Statement

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Child Care Philosophy

The YMCA Child Care philosophy is to serve families with quality, affordable and fun programs that support and strengthen the family unit, help children develop to their fullest potential and deliver a caring, safe and positive environment.

YMCA Policies and Procedures

Quality child care by its very nature has many rules and regulations. Some are self-imposed and some are mandated by licensing agencies. All of them are designed to protect your children and give them a welcoming, safe and nurturing environment. Please help us provide the highest quality care by abiding by our policies.

YMCA Child Watch

While most of this information is applied to the YMCA's fee-based child care programs, the general information regarding health, safety and general policies apply to Child Watch as well. Look for information that applies to Child Watch in italics. Please keep in mind that Child Watch is not licensed child care, and children may be left in Child Watch no more than two hours per day while the parent or guardian is inside the YMCA facility.

Because Child Watch is not intended to be a child development program and because parents are in the same building at the time the child is in the program, many of the following regulations do not apply. However, please note that you must leave a picture ID with Child Watch staff, and you may rest assured that we will not release your child to anyone other than the person shown on the ID.

We keep accurate records.

Registration Forms – A completed registration form is required for children who enroll in YMCA child care programs. The registration form must be kept up-to-date when information changes. For example, new cell numbers or changes in employment or authorized pickup information. Failure to inform the YMCA of these changes can result in a loss of enrollment.

Immunization Records – For a licensed child care program, the State of Tennessee requires that we keep immunization records on file and up-to-date. For school age children, the YMCA must have knowledge that you have these records on file with the school.

We protect your child.

Person's Authorized to Pick Up or Visit Your Child – Only persons authorized in writing by parents may pick up or visit a child. For safety reasons, we will not release your child to anyone without authorization. All persons picking up a child will be asked for identification. Please have this available until we recognize your face and name. Persons not on the registration form will not be permitted to pick up or visit your child.

If the person picking up your child appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, we will not allow the child to leave with this person. For your clarification, if the staff member can smell alcohol, the child will not be released from the YMCA program, and another authorized person must pick up the child.

If a car seat is required by law for your child, and one is not available by the person who is picking up the child, the YMCA will not release the child into their custody.

We communicate with parents. (Sign In and Sign Out)

The YMCA requires that all children being brought into a Y program be accompanied by and signed in by the parent/guardian. Parent/guardians are urged to communicate with the counselors/teachers concerning any special information that is valuable to your child's safety and well-being. At Sign Out, the person that is picking up the child is urged to communicate with the counselor/teacher concerning your child's experience for that day and any special circumstance or event of which you as a parent should be made aware. Please remember that it is the parents' responsibility to educate anyone authorized to pick up a child about these policies, including the requirement that they provide a driver's license for proof of identification.

We are prepared for emergencies.

Each child care program has an emergency procedure plan in place, based on the site and location. Please ask for a copy of the plan so that you will know what to expect in case of a natural catastrophe or unusual conditions.

We work to prevent childhood illness.

Sickness & Illness – If children come to a Y program when they are not feeling well, they will be more vulnerable to infection. It is in the best interest of your child and of the other people at the YMCA to keep your child at home when he/she is ill. Children need to be well in order to be able to participate actively in the program. However, the YMCA recognizes that in some cases children who are not contagious will attend the program when they are not functioning at their best.

Here are some examples of when not to bring a child into a Y child care program.

These include Child Watch, preschools, day camps and after school programs. (If a child becomes ill while at the program, a parent or authorized person must pick up the child within 30 minutes of discovery.)

- 1. If a child has diarrhea, runny nose (colored discharge) or vomiting.*
- 2. If a child's temperature is over 101 degrees.*
- 3. In the event that your child contracts a case of head lice. (It is YMCA policy that a child must be free of symptoms for 24 hours before being allowed to re-enter the program. For the protection of all, children must also have documentation from the Health Department or a doctor indicating that they are free of head lice.)*

We will administer medications with caution.

Before any medication will be administered by YMCA staff, a medication consent form must be completed. The medication should have the child's name, the name of the medication and complete instructions for administration. Please ask to see the medication form each day to *make sure* that the staff is following your instructions as written.

We can't be open every day!

Holidays – The YMCA child care programs will be closed on the following holidays: New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Additional days may be taken, such as the day after Thanksgiving or Christmas Eve as well as training dates. However, you will receive at least two weeks prior notice if any additional holidays are planned.

Absentee – If your child is going to be absent from the program for illness, vacation or just taking a day off from one of the regular child care programs, we ask that you contact the Y office to let them know that your child will not be attending. In some instances, a written notice for vacations is required. For example, in preschool and day camp the written notice will hold your child's place.

Weather Closings – The Y will *generally* follow the decisions made public schools for closing child care programs. After school programs on site at schools will certainly close if their host school closes. However, some child care programs located in YMCA branches may be open even if public schools are closed. For the most accurate information check with your immediate YMCA staff member or check your local TV and radio stations for a complete list of closings. Child Watch will only close if the Y branches are closed due to weather or holidays.

Training – The YMCA will have an annual calendar for staff trainings. You will receive an advance notice of all closings due to staff trainings.

We offer financial assistance.

Quality child care requires quality staff. Quality staff like to receive paychecks, so it's necessary that we have policies regarding child care fees. We also believe that every child deserves quality child care, so the Y offers a financial assistance program. We believe that no child should be denied services simply because his or her parents cannot afford to pay. If you need assistance paying for child care, please see the courtesy desk at any Y branch and ask for a scholarship application. Scholarships are awarded to those who apply and qualify.

By remaining financially stable, we can attract good teachers.

Program Fees – All program fees are due a week in advance. Your program fee does not change if your child is absent or if there is only one day of closing due to weather, holiday or training. However, if the Y closes the program for three or more days due to weather or holidays the Y will pro-rate your weekly fee.

Families who have children in full time day care are allowed one week of vacation exemption from child care fees. Please submit a written notice for the week that your child will be absent. Payments should be made in the form of a check, cashier's check, money order or credit card. Please do not use cash when making your child care payment.

Registration Fees – Each program has one registration fee. This is an annual fee that is due at the beginning of the program start date or at the time you register. A registration fee is charged per family for each program. Registration fees vary by program, so please see the program director for specific information.

Supply Fees – The YMCA preschools have two supply fees each year. The supply fee is \$30 and is charged upon registration and then September and April.

Late Payments – All payments received after the Monday of the program week are considered late. A \$10 late fee is applied for each week a payment is late. If payment is more than two weeks late, your child will not be permitted to attend until payment has been made. Payments must be made on time to ensure your child's continued participation in the program.

Returned Checks – Parents are charged a \$20.00 service fee for each returned checks. The child's participation in the program is immediately suspended until the balance and the service charge are paid. No refund will be issued for days missed due to account suspension. No partial payment will be accepted on returned checks. The amount of the returned check and the service fee must be paid with a money order. If we receive a second returned check, parents must then pay the weekly fee with a money order.

Late Pick Up Policy – *The YMCA understands that emergencies or accidents do happen. However, the YMCA policy for late pick up is as follows: \$5 for the first 10 minutes after the program is officially closed and \$1 every minute after that first 10 minutes. If you are going to be late, please first contact the YMCA or site coordinator. If you cannot reach the site please contact the YMCA branch. If you are going to be more than 20 minutes late, please ask someone else on your pick-up list to come for your child.*

If your child is not picked within 30 minutes of closing, the YMCA staff has the option of taking the child from a school site to the YMCA branch office. If you call before arriving late, you and the staff will be able to work out the details prior to your arrival. Payment for picking up children late must be paid at this time.

For Child Watch, anyone who is late for pickup after their allotted two hours will follow the same policy as all child care centers.

Termination Policy and Exit Form – If you know you will be terminating your child's enrollment, you must notify the Director in writing. Notification must be made at least two weeks prior to your child's last day of attendance so we can make any needed adjustments in staffing. If notification is not made, you are subject to additional charges.

Refunds – All refunds will be made in the order of a YMCA credit. Your account will be credited for any charges and can be applied to another program. If you made a payment by credit card, a credit can be made to your credit card provided you are not still actively enrolled in the child care program.

Tax Credits – The YMCA will provide a letter for tax purposes by January 31 of the following year. You can pick up these letters at the YMCA branch or child care site. If you are receiving reimbursement by an employer, please use your payment receipts for tax purposes.

We teach children appropriate behavior.

Discipline – *The YMCA does not use any form of corporal punishment as a means of discipline. Time out will be the main form of discipline used in the program. Staff members will first attempt to redirect the child away from the behavior/activity, which is the cause of the behavior issue. Children may be removed from the situation, if this is deemed necessary, but will at no time be left alone.*

If these disciplinary techniques do not accomplish the desired behavior, the Y staff will inform the parents of the problems and request a parent/teacher conference. It is the desire of the Y staff that the children enjoy their time in the program; however, listening and abiding by age appropriate rules is expected of all children. It is essential that parents and staff work together to enhance every aspect of the YMCA program.

Discipline Notification Policy – *The YMCA will use the following policy when dealing with disruptive behavior in a child care program. Disruptive behavior consists of talking back with counselors/teachers, aggressive horseplay, use of foul language or gestures, refusal to participate or follow directions, and so forth.*

To address these behaviors, Y staff will follow this three rule procedure.

First violation: *the child will be given a warning, and parents will be given a written copy of the behavior upon pick up.*

Second violation: *the parents will be called to come to pick up the child within 30 minutes, and the child cannot attend the program on the following day.*

Third violation: *parents will be called to pick up of the child within 30 minutes, and the child will be given a week's suspension from the program. Parents will still have a financial obligation to pay for that week of suspension in order to keep their child's space in the program.*

Fourth violation: *the child will be suspended for the remainder of the program.*

The counselor/teacher will consult the site director before implementing any of these procedures.

Zero Tolerance Behavior – *Behavior that threatens or harms another person (adult or child) will not be tolerated. If your child exhibits this type of behavior you will immediately be called to pick your child up, and services will be terminated. Types of behavior include violence with the intent to harm physically, mentally or emotionally, action deemed to be inappropriate or dangerous to themselves or others, aggressive intimidation, theft, destruction of property, carrying objects that would be deemed a weapon (according to the Hamilton County Schools policy), possession of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal substances.*

The safe transportation of your child is important to us.

Bus Transportation – The YMCA will follow the guidelines set by the State of Tennessee Department of Human Services when providing bus transportation for field trips, as well as for school pick-up and drop-off. These policies include the following: a certified bus driver, a second authorized staff member on the bus at all times, role checks before entering the bus, role checks exiting the bus, vehicle safety inspections daily, monthly maintenance inspections and annual service inspections. The children will only be transported to and from authorized locations. Parents must complete a transportation and field trip permission form for each trip.

Personal Transportation – YMCA staff members are not allowed to transport children in their personal vehicles except in the case of a medical emergency, natural catastrophe, or for the immediate protection of a child or children. Please do ask them to bring a child home or take them to another activity. The YMCA asks that you report any such incidence to the Y Child Care Director or YMCA Branch Executive Director.

We work with you for the good of your child.

Parent/Guardian Conferences – The YMCA staff will provide parent conferences on a regularly scheduled basis to provide progress reports on activity, conduct, and special concerns or accolades. A called parent conference can be made in the event that there is a special concern such as discipline, health or educational reasons. Parents have the right to request a conference at any time.

Committees – Each YMCA program has a variety of committees that help serve the program specifically for program development and parent involvement. The YMCA encourages you to become involved in a committee at your branch or child care site.

Volunteerism – The YMCA has many opportunities for volunteerism from a variety of committees, special events, fundraising, program development and policy advisors. Check with your branch about volunteer opportunities.

We provide all the activities and materials your child needs.

Personal Property – The YMCA will not be responsible for personal items. Please do not send toys or valuable games that could be stolen, lost or broken. The YMCA will provide the necessary materials for the program. Toys and other belongings brought from home also can be a cause of discipline problems.

We have high expectations for our staff.

The following is part of each employee's agreement to work with the YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga. The Code of Conduct is listed here in the child care handbook to let you know how serious the YMCA is about the conduct of its employees in relation to children in Y programs and all other individuals.

YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga Code of Conduct

In order to protect YMCA staff, volunteers, and program participants, at no time during a YMCA program may a staff person be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. As staff supervises children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff can see them.

Staff shall never leave a child unsupervised.

Restroom supervision: Staff will make sure the restroom is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for other children and protection for staff. No child regardless of age should ever enter a bathroom alone on a field trip. Always send children in pairs, according to age, and whenever possible, with staff.

Staff should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs (diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc.). When this is not feasible staff should position themselves so that they are visible to others.

Staff shall not abuse children including physical abuse (strike, spank, shake, etc.), verbal abuse (humiliate, degrade, threaten), sexual abuse (inappropriate touch or verbal exchange), mental abuse (shaming, withholding love, cruelty), and neglect (withholding food, water, basic care).

Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and may be cause for immediate dismissal.

Staff must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparing and criticism. Staff will have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline.

Physical restraint is used only in pre-determined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from harm) and is only administered in a prescribed manner, and must be documented in writing.

Staff will conduct a health check of each child, each day, as they enter the program, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in a non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses will be documented.

Staff should respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, abilities or culture.

Staff will respect children's right to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable and their right to say no. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched in areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.

Staff will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents and staff.

While the YMCA does not discriminate against an individual's lifestyle, it does require that in the performance of their job they will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the YMCA.

Staff must appear clean, neat and appropriately attired.

Using, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.

Smoking or the use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.

Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or parents are prohibited.

Staff must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.

Staff will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.

Staff may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers and inviting children to your home. There are no exceptions to this prohibition unless there was an established prior relationship between the employee and parents.

Staff is not to transport children in their vehicles.

Staff is not to communicate with YMCA participants through the internet or text messaging.

Staff may not take photographs of program participants without consent of supervisor.

Staff may not date program participants under the age of 18 years.

Under no circumstances should staff release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with the YMCA).

Staff is required to read and sign all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and attend training on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor.

***When parents and teachers work well together, the child is the chief beneficiary.
Please call us any time that you have a question or a concern!***



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA of METROPOLITAN CHATTANOOGA
301 West Sixth Street, Chattanooga, TN 37402
423.265.8834 ymcachattanooga.org



Financial aid available.