



YMCA OF GREATER HARTFORD
Child Development Programs

Parent & Family Handbook

Policies and procedures

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1. ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

1.1 OUR VISION

The YMCA of Greater Hartford builds strong communities by helping individuals reach their fullest potential through transformative programs that promote Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. We do this by:

1. Putting a 'caring adult' in the presence of every child;
2. Being 'good stewards' of the resources entrusted to us; and
3. Working, in 'partnership' with others, to eliminate the disparities in health and education.

1.2 MISSION STATEMENT

The YMCA of Greater Hartford is an Association, open to all, and committed to helping everyone reach their fullest God given potential in Spirit, Mind and Body. Our commitment is based on the belief that the purpose of the three-fold development is to better live out the values of our Judeo-Christian heritage, including Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

1.3 PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the YMCA's Child Development Program is to develop the whole child – spirit, mind, and body- by fostering the social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative needs of all children, regardless of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, disability, and/or ability to pay.

We recognize that each child has unique needs, abilities and experiences, thus all activities and materials are geared to each child's developmental level. This will enhance a child's self-esteem and desire to learn, while providing a positive, happy and nurturing environment.

1.4 PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Our goal is to offer quality child care and educational services, with age appropriate activities. Our staff commits to recognize and meet the learning and developmental needs of the children we serve in a caring and nurturing environment. All programs and centers are licensed by the CT State Department of Public Health; and our Early Childhood Programs are either currently accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), or are in the process of obtaining accreditation.

Our staff strives to continually develop professionally in order to:

- Provide a safe, supervised, structured environment in which a child may choose from a variety of activities that help them develop socially, intellectually, physically and emotionally in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Develop a child's gross and fine motor skills.
- Develop and foster a child's language skills and literacy.
- Promote a positive value system by encouraging a child's self-worth and emotional development that will enhance self-esteem.
- Develop a child's healthy habits such as nutrition, dental care, cleanliness, hygiene and physical fitness.
- Create a partnership with parents that offer the opportunity for parental support, engagement in all facets of their child's experience, and educational training and workshops.



2. STAFF

The YMCA child development staff is a group of dedicated professionals who are committed to providing a warm, caring and stimulating environment for your child. Staff is hired based on their education, experience and desire to work with young children.

Head Teachers in programs serving children birth to five years of age are required to have either:

- 1) A current center-based Child Development Associate Credential issued from the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition OR
- 2) Twelve (12) credits in early childhood education or child development, from an accredited institution of higher education with program approval from the Board of Governors of Higher Education AND at least one thousand and eighty (1,080) hours of documented supervised experience over a nine (9) month span of time working with unrelated children age birth to five (5) OR
- 3) A four (4) year college degree in early childhood education or child development, from an accredited institution of higher education with program approval from the Board of Governors of Higher Education AND at least three hundred and sixty (360) hours of documented supervised experience working with unrelated children age birth to five (5) PLUS at least one semester of student teaching with children age birth to five (5).

Head Teachers in programs serving school age children are required to have either:

- 1) Twelve (12) credits in early childhood education or child development, elementary education, recreation, group social work or a related field from an accredited institution of higher education with program approval from the Board of Governors of Higher Education AND at least five hundred and forty (540) hours of documented supervised experience over a nine (9) month span of time working with unrelated children age five (5) to twelve (12) OR
- 2) A four (4) year college degree in elementary education, recreation, group social work or a related field from an accredited institution of higher education with program approval from the Board of Governors of Higher Education AND at least two hundred and seventy (270) hours of documented supervised experience working with unrelated children age five (5) to twelve (12).

These requirements are mandated by the Connecticut Department of Public Health and certificates are issued by Connecticut Charters-a-Course. All staff is required to attend ongoing training in areas such as recognizing child abuse, positive discipline, child development and more. A reference check, drug screen, criminal background check, finger printing, and Department of Children and Family review are completed on each employee.

2.1 STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

Staff Relationships with Program Participants and Families

YMCA staff is not allowed to babysit or provide other services to the children and families within our programs outside of the YMCA Child Care program. The only exception to this rule is if there was a pre-existing relationship prior to enrolling in the YMCA program, which should be noted by both staff and family at the time of enrollment. Staff that violates this policy is subject to discipline including potential immediate dismissal.

Likewise, YMCA staff is not allowed to communicate or socialize with program participants and families outside of the program. There can be no texting, Facebook, Instagram, and/or meeting at an outside venue (i.e., the mall, etc.). Staff that violates this policy is subject to discipline including potential immediate dismissal.



3. ENROLLMENT

To enroll in a YMCA of Greater Hartford's Child Development program, the following is required:

- All previous YMCA accounts must be in good standing.
- Registration forms must be completed in their entirety.
- A physical/medical form signed and dated by a physician, which includes up-to-date immunization information. Children are required to have an updated physical form annually before entering kindergarten and then as required by the town Board of Education policies.
- "Medical Emergency Permission" form - gives staff trained in first aid/CPR permission to administer aid/CPR and obtain care from a licensed physician or dentist if a medical emergency should arise.
- "Emergency Transportation" form - gives permission to staff to have a child transported to a medical facility by police or ambulance.
- Receipt of the family's first payment for services.
- Paperwork must be updated every year.
- A separate enrollment form must be completed for each child in a given family.
- There is a minimum of a two day administrative processing time for paperwork before your child may start a program.
- For enrollment in our Early Childhood Programs, children enrolling in September, October, November or December, must be three (3) years old on or before December 31, to be enrolled as a three year old. At any other time of the year, a three (3) year old must have reached his or her third (3rd) birthday to be considered a three (3) year old.

Important: *Forms are kept in the child's file on site

3.1 INCLUSION

The YMCA welcomes children with special needs. Parents and family are asked to identify any health concerns or special needs their child may have. Together, we will then be able to determine what accommodations the child may need to be successful in our program. We will do our best to accommodate these needs; however, if we are unable to meet said needs, we will work with each family in an attempt to find a solution.

"The Greater Hartford YMCA values and embraces diversity and is committed to the development of an inclusive environment that attracts, retains, and maximizes the potential of a diverse workforce, volunteers, membership, children and the families we serve."

3.2 ORIENTATION TO PROGRAM

Site Directors will provide parents and children with an orientation to the program. At the beginning of a program cycle (ex. September, January), a group orientation is held at the end of the day, or on a weekend, to orient new families as a group. During other times of the year, a one-on-one orientation may be scheduled with Site Directors.

3.3 PAYMENT POLICIES

A deposit of 25% of the monthly payment is required. For School Age Child Care, the deposit will be applied to the month of June and is non-refundable. For all other child care programs the deposit will be applied to the first month of care.



All payments are due before the end of the first week of the month. If payment is not made before the end of the first week of the month, a late fee of \$5.00 will be assessed each day a payment is late, starting the Monday of the second week of the month. If your payment has not been received by the end of the second week of the month, your child will not be permitted to attend care until: A payment plan is in place and signed by the business manager and primary guardian AND balance and late fees are paid in full. Automatic draft payments are set up from parent credit/debit account for future payments.

Accounts must be kept current. Accounts delinquent by more than 2 weeks may require dismissal of the child from the program.

The YMCA has financial assistance available for all families in need. If you are unable to make your monthly payment, please speak with the business manager or child care director at the YMCA regarding a financial aid application to help support the cost of care.

ALL PAYMENTS WILL BE MADE TO THE YMCA. No payments will be accepted at the YMCA program locations.

PAYMENT CONDITIONS

1. Fees are payable on a monthly basis. There will be no adjustments made for half days, snow days, or holidays. There is a two week written notice required for withdrawal of a child from a YMCA program. Failure to notify withdrawal will result in charges.
2. There is no discount for the holidays or closings due to weather.
3. Failure to pay a family share or tuition for two consecutive weeks may result in dismissal of the child from the program.
4. Any parent/guardian having difficulties in making payments should consult the appropriate YMCA staff to apply for financial assistance based upon income and family size or to discuss the situation.
5. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged if children are not picked up by the program licensed time of closing. The State of CT has an "Abandoned Child Policy". If a child is not picked up within 1 hour of the Center's closing, and all efforts have been made to contact the parent/guardian or authorized emergency list persons, the YMCA is to assume the child has been abandoned, and providers must contact the CT Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the police to have the child picked up and brought to the local DCF office.

3.4 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial assistance is made possible through donations to the YMCA's Annual Campaign. For more information, please contact the YMCA of Greater Hartford's office. In addition, we encourage all participants who apply for Financial Assistance to also apply to Care 4Kids. **Please inquire at branch office**

3.5 CREDIT/REFUND

- Full credit/refund if the child is withdrawn before the second day of care.
- Full credit/refund if YMCA cancels the program.
- A credit/refund will be given for unused portion of program fee with a doctor's note, or if the child is removed from the program, or if the customer is dissatisfied.
- There will be a \$25 charge for returned checks.
- Credits are valid; there is no expiration date.



- Families must give the YMCA of Greater Hartford written notice, at least 14 days before withdrawing a child from a SACD programs, and 30 days' notice before withdrawing from an Early Childhood Education program.

3.6 YMCA (FULL DAY) PROGRAM PARTICIPANT PRICE REDUCTION POLICY

As a way to say thank-you for being part of our full day child development program, we offer your families a 3-month YMCA membership* and a 50% discount on all youth and aquatics programs, excluding the swim team, for the duration of the child's participation in our full-time program.

To get started, parents and families must fill out the attached membership application and bring a parent & family handbook with them to any of our YMCA branches to sign-up for the 3-month membership.

*Please note that YMCA Membership is for three consecutive months.



4. GENERAL POLICIES

Enrollment in the YMCA's Child Development programs constitutes an understanding that families will abide by the policies listed herein below:

4.1 MEALS AND SNACKS POLICY

A nutritious breakfast, lunch, morning and afternoon snack will be provided daily and will be based upon the CACFP (Child and Adult Food Program) nutrition program for qualifying programs. For all programs participating in CACFP, the lunch service is provided by outside contractors. All food is prepared, served and stored at temperatures that are approved according to USDA guidelines. Liquids and foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach.

Monthly menus are posted in each classroom and can be provided to the parent upon request. Each meal will consist of a bread or grain product, protein source, fruit and/or vegetables. For children two and older, we serve low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk, or 100% fruit juice (no more than one 4-6 oz. serving per day.) We serve only whole milk to children of ages 12 months to 24 months.

The following food items may not be allowed at the center: *hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels and chunks of raw carrots. (*Please check with teacher)

FOOD ALLERGIES/SENSITIVITIES

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the staff of any dietary restrictions or food allergies a child may be experiencing. Each child, with documented food allergies/sensitivities, must have a Special Care Plan on file for reviewed by Child Care Director and Nurse Consultant.

Programs that provide meals (i.e., breakfast, lunch, snacks) food is not allowed from home due to allergies and sensitivities of the children and staff. If the program does not provide meals, and food is needed, food must be brought from home within properly sealed containers. For centers whose participants bring in their own lunches, please check with the Center Director about possible allergy concerns.

*Please see the program's Site Director to see if the child's program provides food.

4.2 ABSENTEE POLICY

If a child is going to be absent from a YMCA Child Development program, parents are asked to notify the YMCA as far in advance as possible by phone or in writing. If the child is going to be absent from an early childhood education program, it is requested that parents and family notify the YMCA by 9:00am. Parents are required to drop children off before 9:00 AM for grant funded programs and are encouraged not to drop off after 9:00am for all Early Child Development programs.

Except for prolonged illness, you will be charged the monthly rate. Instances of prolonged illness will be handled on an individual basis. If your child is absent for more than 3 days due to illness, a doctor's note will be required for your child to return to program.



4.3 SCHEDULE CHANGE POLICY

The YMCA office must be notified, in writing, two weeks prior the child's last day of the program or with any changes in schedule.

4.4 AUTHORIZED PICK UP LIST

When enrolling a child in a YMCA Child Development Program, families are required to provide the names of those individuals who are authorized to pick up and be responsible for their child. YMCA staff is not permitted to release children to anyone not designated by a parent or caregiver on the authorized pick up list (enrollment form). If any changes need to be made to a child's authorized pick up list, the YMCA requires that these changes be submitted in writing.

4.5 ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICY

According to the Connecticut State Department of Public Health, daily attendance records for both children and staff must be recorded daily at the time of arrival and departure. Therefore, an authorized adult (YMCA staff or individual authorized by the parent/guardian on the enrollment form), must document the time of arrival and/or departure each day. Care giving adults who sign a child in or out of the program must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. This policy will be strictly enforced.

4.6 LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Children must be picked up from the YMCA program by closing time. If an emergency necessitates that a child be picked up late, call the YMCA staff to beforehand.

A **\$1.00** per minute late fee will be charged for each minute a child remains at the program past the closing time, regardless of staff notification of the late arrival. Two staff over the age of 18 will remain at the program until all children are picked up. At least one of these staff members will have current CPR, CT Child Care, and Administration of Medication certificates.

If a parent or guardian has not called and all emergency contacts listed on the child's Emergency Contact sheet cannot be reached, the CT State Department of Children and Families requires the child care and education program to regard this situation as child abandonment, which requires YMCA staff to notify the local Police Department or the CT State Department of Children and Families. Please refer to *section 4.34* on Child Abuse and Neglect.

4.7 CUSTODIAL DOCUMENTATION AND INJUNCTIONS POLICY

A copy of any court ordered custody decree or injunction that the YMCA is required to comply, must be kept on file at the YMCA.

4.8 PROGRAM CLOSING POLICY

The YMCA Child Development Programs will not operate on these specific holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

If needed, the YMCA also reserves the right to close Early Childhood Education programs for up to



ten (10) calendar days for staff development and training. **School Age Child Development programs will operate according to the local Board of Education School Calendar.** Most branches will have programs that will cover days when school is closed for school vacation, snow/weather related emergencies or staff Professional Development. Contact your local YMCA branch for specifics.

4.9 RECORD KEEPING POLICY

In addition to current health records, the Program is required to keep accurate personal records for each child in the program. Changes in information indicated on the forms must be reported, in writing, to the YMCA immediately. Parents are asked to update their child's health and safety information, as needed, for School Age Child Development Program and in January, April, July, and October for all Early Childhood Education programs.

4.10 VACATION & TIME OFF POLICY

Early Childhood Education fees are based on 12 months of care and are divided equally and School Age Child Care Monthly fees are based on 180 days of school and are divided by 10 months (September-June); therefore, fees are not discounted or prorated for shortened weeks due to holidays, Board of Education scheduled days off, inclement weather, participant vacation, or staff Professional Development. The YMCA reserves the right to close Early Childhood Education programs for up to 10 days per year for staff professional development and/or facility repairs/upgrades.

4.11 COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

If you have a complaint, there are several ways to report it:

YMCA PERSONNEL

Most problems within a child day care are non-life threatening and can be resolved by:

1. Discussion of the problem with the classroom teacher.
2. Discussion of the problem with the Center Director.
3. Discussion of the problem with the Child Care Director, Senior Program Director or Executive Director. Directors can be reached by calling the main YMCA branch office.
4. If the problem is not resolved you may contact YMCA Greater Hartford VP of Youth Development at 860.522.9622.

YMCA VALUES HOTLINE

Visit www.ghymca.org and click on the **Values Hotline** option towards the bottom of the page. The page then allows you to file a report either by telephone or online.



OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

If the problem is still not resolved, you may contact the CT Office of Early Childhood. In the case of an emergency, notify the Department of Public Health as soon as the emergency is under control.

CT Office of Early Childhood
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

(860) 509-8045 (inside
the Hartford area)
1-800-282-6063
(outside of the Hartford
area.)

All YMCA Child Care program inspection reports and compliance letters are available for parent inspection at the day care program or by contacting the CT Department of Public Health.

4.12 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

The YMCA's Child Development Centers will provide appropriate programs, with reasonable accommodations, for children with special needs. Referrals to outside agencies will be made with the permission of a child's parent or guardian.

In an effort to collaborate with the family and school/community resources, the YMCA will look to support any and all educational plans that are in place to help the child succeed. Placement and/or programming will be determined at the Education Plan Meeting. If invited to the meeting, the Director and/or Head Teacher will represent the YMCA and will provide information to the staff with the parent's permission. In conjunction with the public school system and/or state agency, an Individual Educational Plan will be designed and implemented.

4.13 PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION POLICY

The YMCA's Child Development Programs have agreements with Education, Dental, Social Service, Registered Dietician, Nurse Consultant, and health professionals. These professionals are available for the annual review of our policies, and review of our in-service programs. They are available for consultation regarding the program by phone and in person.

The YMCA Center Director or Child Care Director will make the appropriate referrals if medical services for a child are needed.

***Please note:**

We are NOT responsible for costs associated with these or any other medical treatments or health care.

4.14 TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIP POLICY

The YMCA utilizes licensed school busses or certified YMCA vehicles, with state approved drivers, for its transportation needs, including field trips and emergency situations.

Upon registration, parents are required to give permission for the YMCA to transport their child as required. Prior written notice will be obtained for all field trips.



4.15 SWIMMING FIELD TRIPS AND SUPERVISION POLICY

When children are participating in swimming or wading as part of a program, whether at the facility or on a field trip, the following staff to child ratios, shall be maintained at all times with the children:

- all non-swimmers shall be clearly identified in a way that is visually and easily recognized by lifeguards and staff;
- for infants twelve (12) months of age and younger, there shall be at least one (1) program staff person with every child. for toddlers under three (3) years of age, there shall be at least one (1) program staff member with every two (2) children;
- for preschool children (3 years to 5 years of age) there shall be at least one (1) program staff member with every four (4) children; and
- for school-age children there shall be at least one (1) program staff member with every six (6) children.

The YMCA operator shall be responsible for assuring the supervision of the children at all times while the children are at the facility, indoors or outdoors, or on field trips. At no time shall a child be left unsupervised. A certified life guard will be present at any pool or waterfront.

4.16 OUTDOOR PLAY

Children will not go outdoors when the temperature is below 30F or above 90F, or when local authorities announce that the air quality is unhealthy.

During warm weather months:

Families should apply sunscreen BEFORE children come to the program for the day. If the sunscreen needs to be reapplied to your child before outside activities, a sunscreen application form will be required. Please fill out the form, sign it, and return it to the child's classroom teacher. This form is valid for one calendar year. Be sure to send in the child's sunscreen labeled with the child's name.

During cold weather months:

Children shall wear hats, gloves, boots and snow pants (as needed). Their clothing should be layered and dry. Staff will frequently check on children's extremities for warmth and dryness.

Water:

Water will be accessible to children at all times. Staff will bring water outdoors daily or have it immediately accessible to children. Please make sure children are well hydrated before prolonged physical activity and on extremely warm days.

Insects:

For insect repellent, the permission sign off sheet is located at the bottom of the sunscreen application form. The insect repellent must be supplied by the parent and labeled with the child's name. Only repellents containing DEET are allowed. These will be applied to the child once daily and only with a valid permission form.

4.17 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

Emergency notification and parent/emergency contact numbers are located in each program space. Emergency evacuation maps are located in each program space with two evacuation routes. If the first route is inaccessible, then the second route will be used. Emergency evacuation drills are conducted monthly.

The Head Teacher in each class is responsible for taking attendance before and after an evacuation. They are also responsible for taking along the classroom attendance and first aid kit. The director or designated in-charge person will check all program areas including classrooms, bathrooms and



kitchen to ensure no one remains in the building.

Each YMCA has its own evacuation plan. Please check with your child's program to find out the meeting location in the event of an evacuation. Once all of the children are outside, the director or designated in-charge person will ensure all are accounted for before children will be released to families.

In the event of a civil emergency evacuation, local police, fire, hospitals and radio stations will be contacted immediately to inform the public of the evacuation. YMCA officials will be responsible for informing the appropriate authorities. If the town instructs us to vacate the town, we will follow the town wide evacuation procedures as instructed. YMCA staff will make every effort to contact parents as soon as they are physically able to do so. If time permits, parents will be contacted prior to the evacuation. As the safety of the children and staff are paramount, notification may occur after any evacuation.

4.18 PROVISION FOR SHELTER

In the event that evacuation out of the building is not permissible, children and staff will relocate to a determined area indoors. Please contact the YMCA to learn where the determined area is located at your child's program.

Once children are safe and secure, the Director and/or designated staff will gather the appropriate supplies necessary for the evacuation.

In the event that emergency shelter is required, the children will be transported by local emergency vehicles to a designated emergency location.

4.19 EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency numbers for children enrolled in our programs must be kept up-to-date. This is to ensure that staff members may be able to contact parents or guardians, at any time, in case of an emergency. Please notify YMCA staff on a timely basis.

4.20 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT PROCEDURES

If a child becomes injured during program hours, the following steps will be taken by the staff:

1. Minor injuries will be treated on-site, in accordance with the accepted CT Child Care First Aid practices. The incident will be documented in the Child Day Care log and a report will be completed according to Greater Hartford YMCA protocol.
2. Injuries requiring immediate further medical attention will be handled in the following manner:
 - a. Perform emergency first-aid.
 - b. Dial 911.
 - c. Notify the hospital emergency room, parents, child's physician and senior branch staff, as soon as possible.
 - d. Accompany child to the hospital, if parent is not present at the child care facility.
3. If immediate emergency medical attention is not needed, the procedure will be as follows:
 - a. Perform needed first aid.
 - b. Notify the child's parents regarding additional steps to be taken.
 - c. Transport child to their home, hospital or doctor's office at parents' request.
 - d. Report accident to senior branch staff.



4. In case of a fire follow the posted evacuation plan. Children present will be counted and verified against the daily sign in and out sheet. It is critical that all children and staff are accounted for.
5. In case of emergency weather conditions, the YMCA office will contact the parents requesting immediate pick-up. Staff will remain until the last child is picked up.

4.21 FIRE EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE

1. Line children up at the designated area in the program space. If the exit is obstructed, escort children to the secondary designated area.
2. If, for any reason, one of the exits is inaccessible, the other exit will be used for both groups.
3. Staff will obtain attendance and sign-out book.
4. Remove all children from the building and walk them to designated meeting area, with emergency and attendance forms.
5. Take attendance to make sure all children are accounted for.
6. A staff member must then contact the YMCA to notify the Child Care Director. If a staff member does not have a cell phone to place the call, they are instructed to go to a nearby location and ask permission to use a phone.
7. In the event that the children must leave the site for the day, the YMCA will provide transportation to a designated emergency location where their parents will be contacted.

4.22 WEATHER

The YMCA reserves the right to close any and all Child Development Centers and programs, due to inclement weather, emergencies, or the inability to maintain State required staff to student ratios. If severe weather develops during the day, parents will be contacted and will be expected to pick up their children as soon as possible. If the parent or guardian is not able to pick up the child, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to arrange for the child to be picked up by an authorized person as determined by the child's pick-up list. The YMCA staff will only call persons on the child's authorized pick-up list if unable to contact the parent or guardian.

In the event of extreme weather conditions, the YMCA reserves the right to delay opening, close early, or close for the day. An announcement will be made two hours prior to the start of a program. Our first priority is to provide care for families who need our services. The decision will be announced on channel 3, and local radio stations.

4.23 UNIDENTIFIED GUESTS

All staff will ask, "Can I help you" when an unidentified person enters their Center. Staff will show and escort the guest, if possible, to the office for proper sign-in procedures.

4.24 MISSING CHILD POLICY

If, at any time, it is discovered that a child is missing, an immediate search of the area will begin. The remaining children will gather in a designated area, with supervision by one staff person who should take attendance. The remaining staff will search the immediate vicinity, prioritizing the most dangerous areas first (i.e. water, busy streets). If the child has not been located in 10 minutes, staff shall call 911, notify the parents of the child and the YMCA Program Director.

At arrival time in the After School Age Child Care program, all children will be accounted for within



ten minutes of the program beginning. If a child has not arrived, the following will be done:

- Call the YMCA office to determine if any absences have been reported by parents/guardians.
- Check with the school office to determine if the child was absent from school that day.
- Call the parent, if they cannot be reached call the emergency contact person.

If all of the above steps have been followed and the child still has not been located, 911 shall be called and a missing child report will be completed, and the YMCA Program Director shall be contacted.

4.25 MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

The Department of Public Health requires that each child enrolled in a Child Care program have an up-to-date medical form signed and dated by a physician or physician's assistant, with the date of the last exam specified. This form is to be kept on file at the YMCA's Child Development program. A new Medical Form will be required each year on the date of the last physical for children 5 years old and under, and then as required by the local Board of Education. The YMCA cannot accept a child without the proper medical forms. When a child is overdue for any routine health service, parents/guardians must provide evidence of an appointment for that service before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program. If a child does not have a physician or health insurance, the YMCA staff can assist in locating those services.

4.26 CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS, RASHES, AND PARASITES

Parents are required to notify the Center whenever a child has been exposed to a contagious disease or illness. This includes, but may not be limited to: Strep Throat, Pink Eye, Fifth Disease, Meningitis, Hepatitis, Ringworm, Impetigo, Lice, etc. If an outbreak occurs in the child's program, YMCA staff will notify the parents by way of a written posting at the site, as well as a posting on the child's classroom door. Information will be given to families explaining the symptoms of the outbreak or illness, along with suggested action to be taken by the parent or guardian of the child. Any child contracting a contagious illness must submit a doctor's note stating when the child may return to the program.

If a child is absent due to an illness, they are not allowed to return to the Center until free from any of the following symptoms or infections:

<i>SYMPTOM/CONDITION</i>	<i>EXCLUDED FROM THE CENTER UNTIL:</i>
Temperature over 100°F	One full day with no fever (un-medicated)
Vomiting	No Vomiting for one full school day
Diarrhea	Child's stools are firm
Green or yellow color nasal secretions	Nasal drainage is clear
Rash of unknown origin	Rash is gone, or diagnosed & treated
Strep	24 hours (or 3 doses) of antibiotic treatment and there has been no fever for 24 hours.
Purulent Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)	No drainage from eye. Eye & lid no longer flamed & on medication for 24 hours
Impetigo	24 hours (or 3 doses) of antibiotic treatment
Head Lice	Nit free
Chickenpox	6 days after onset of rash, or until all lesions are dried and crusted

If an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children,



then the child will be made comfortable in a location where she or he is supervised by a familiar caregiver. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until s/he can be picked up by the family, the child is located where others will not be exposed.

4.27 MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

In compliance with Public Act 02-84, Child Care Program may not deny services to a child who has an allergy or a prescription for an automatic pre-filled cartridge injector (such as an epi-pen). The YMCA requests, however, that whenever possible, medication be administered to the child outside the program hours by the parent or guardian. Only those prescription medications that must be administered during the program day will be administered.

The YMCA Child Development Programs will provide staff trained in the administration of medications, including the use of automatic pre-filled cartridge injectors with a written order from a physician and signed by the parent or guardian. The YMCA requires that, at all times, at least one staff person in the YMCA program be certified in the Administration of Medication as mandated by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (Section 19a-79-9). A parent/guardian has the option, and is welcome, to come to the center to administer medication personally.

All medications will be counted by two staff upon arrival each day, upon distribution to child, upon return to parent, or upon disposal, and will be stored in a double locked environment. Medication must be picked up upon termination of the medication order. The State of Connecticut Drug Control Division will be contacted at (860) 713-6065 to destroy any controlled substance not picked up within one week following termination of a medication order.

In order to administer any medication, an Authorization for the **Administration of Medication by Child Care Personnel** for all types of medication (prescription and non-prescription) must be filled out and signed by the physician and by the parent. One form is required for each medication. This form must include the name of the medication, dose, method of administration, time of administration, reason for medication, dates of administration, expiration of medication, relevant side effects, potential allergies, prescriber's name and verification statement of prior use without adverse side effects.

Non-prescription medications include all types of over the counter medications (e.g. Tylenol, Advil, lozenges, cough drops, antibiotic creams, peroxide, etc.).

All medication must be in the original bottle or packaging and the prescription label must include:

- child's name
- dosage/route of administration (mouth, inhalation)
- specific time/intervals to be given
- current date of order
- physician's name and telephone number
- individual measuring spoon as may be required with medication
- medication expiration date

Prior to the administration of any medication, at least one dose (two doses if antibiotic) must have been administered outside the program, without adverse side effects, even if taken before for another illness.

Trained staff will document the administration of medication on Medication Administration Record form maintained on site, upon completion of medication treatment order. Any unused medication will be promptly returned to parent after completion of treatment or will be destroyed within one week of termination of the order if not removed.



STORAGE AND HANDLING PROCEDURES FOR MEDICATION

All medications will be stored in a locked medication box. Controlled substances will be double locked at all times within the storage cabinet.

All staff handling medications of any kind will observe proper hand washing procedures both before and after application of medications. Gloves should be worn when administering medications. All application devices will be thoroughly washed after use or disposed of according to package or application directions.

Children's privacy will be respected at all times when administering medications.

INHALENTS

Inhalers will be cleaned after each use. Inhalers with spacers should be taken home weekly to be thoroughly cleaned.

MEDICATION EXCLUSION POLICY

The YMCA reserves the right to exclude certain types of medical applications including, but not limited to, needle injections and rectal routes of administration, except for emergency situations such as an epi-pen. Parents will be required to seek alternate means of administration of medications if these forms are required during operating hours of the YMCA Child Care programs.

4.28 SICK CHILD

If a child is ill with a temperature, diarrhea or vomiting during the program hours, the following steps will be taken:

1. The child will be immediately removed from the other children and placed in sight of a staff member at all times.
2. A staff member will make the child as comfortable as possible.
3. A staff member will attempt to contact the child's parent/guardian. If the child's parent/guardian cannot be reached the staff member will then call the authorized persons listed on the emergency form to pick up the child. It is requested that the child must be removed from the program within one half hour of parent notification.

Other conditions warranting the child leaving the program include, but are not restricted to: a rash or other skin irritation, lice, severe pain in any body part, pink eye or other signs of a contagious disease. This procedure is for the ill child's protection, as well as the protection of the other children and staff members in the program.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR SICK CHILD

A child that has had a temperature above 100 degrees, has been vomiting, or has had diarrhea must be cleared of symptoms for at least 24 hours before returning to the program (one full school day). If your child is out for 3 or more days, a doctor's note or a copy of the child's prescription will be needed to return to the program. The child must be on an antibiotic for the first 24 hours before returning to the program.

Parents must advise staff of any physical or emotional conditions for which the child is being treated, particularly when the child is using mood-altering medications. Other physical conditions that staff should be made aware of would be, but is not limited to, allergies, asthma, or any restriction of activities.



Parent should notify staff of any medications taken at home prior to arriving at center. This will be helpful to medical staff treating the child in the event of an emergency.

4.29 HANDWASHING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Hand washing is critical to maintaining a healthy environment. All children and visitors are required to wash their hands upon entering program spaces. Parents will escort their child to the restrooms and assist in cleaning. Hand washing procedural signs is posted at each hand washing area.

Staff and children are required to wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arrival for the day
- Before and after handling food
- Before and after giving medication
- Before and after playing in water/sand
- After toileting
- After handling bodily fluids
- After cleaning
- After handling pets
- Before and after participating in water play

The procedure to be used is as follows:

- Scrub hands with soap and water. Include between fingers and under and around nail beds and backs of hands.
- Rinse hands well under running water with fingers down so water flows from wrist to finger tips. Leave water running.
- Dry hands with paper towel.
- Use paper towel to turn off faucet.

4.30 TOY POLICY

A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or that is otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion is either to be (a) washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized, and air dried or (b) washed and dried in a mechanical dishwasher before it can be used by another child.

Children that are enrolled in before and after school programs are permitted to bring their own toys, including electronic devices, to the program, upon permission from both the YMCA program staff and the child's parent. Any and all toys brought in from home must be clearly labeled. The YMCA strictly enforces a "no trading" policy. **Please contact your child's YMCA program to discuss the specific rules that must be followed.**

4.31 SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The YMCA maintains program facilities free from harmful animals, insects/pests and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.



4.32 ANIMALS / PET POLICY

Personal pets are not permitted in the classroom due to allergies. However, if a Site Director decides to introduce a classroom pet into the center, they are responsible for the following procedures:

1. Any pet or animal present at the facility, indoors or outdoors, must be in good health, show no evidence of carrying any disease, and be a friendly companion for the children. Dogs, cats and other furry animals, if allowed, will be immunized for any disease which can be transmitted to humans and will be maintained on a flea, tick and worm control program. The following animals will not be permitted in Child Care:
 - a. Ferrets
 - b. Turtles or other reptiles that can carry Salmonella
 - c. Birds of the parrot family
 - d. Any wild or dangerous animal.
2. Pets will be kept clean and housed in clean living quarters. Children will not be allowed access to the pet's food or excrement. Animal tanks and cages will be secured in such a manner that prevents children from climbing on the structure and prevents the structure from tipping over.
3. All pets will be enclosed in cages or separated by some other means from the children, except when the children are handling them under adult supervision. Children will not 'mouth' pets or put their hands in their mouths after touching the pet or areas used by the pet. Pets will not be allowed in areas where food is prepared, stored or eaten.
4. Children, caregivers, and staff will follow proper hand washing procedures after handling animals.
5. In the event of an animal bite or scratch, procedures for first aid and notification of parents or legal guardians contained in these policies will be followed.

4.33 CHILD GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES

The YMCA is committed to working with children and families to resolve challenging behavior issues. YMCA staff may work with supervisors, peers and outside consultants to find a solution that will help children develop positive behaviors. However, in extreme circumstances, YMCA administrators may ask a family to leave a child care program. In these cases, every effort will be made to provide families with advance notice and to help families identify community resources and alternate care arrangements.

For all age groups, if a behavior issue arises the staff will address the child or children directly following the YMCA policies of positive guidance and discipline techniques based on developmentally appropriate practice, including positive guidance, redirection and setting clear limits that encourage children to develop self-control, self-discipline and positive self-esteem.

1. Staff will divert attention away from any activity that they disapprove of by substituting another play thing or leading the child to another activity.
2. Staff will offer children choices of activities/games they can participate in
3. Staff will set limits for children that are consistently enforced and are based on reasons children can understand.
4. Children will be given warnings when they have done something wrong. Warnings are necessary to allow children to know in advance what to expect, reduce resistance and ease transitions.
5. Staff will structure the environment in such a way to help reduce misbehavior and accidents.
6. Staff will redirect behavior. It is necessary at times to move a child away from a behavior by suggesting an alternative acceptable behavior.
7. Staff will model appropriate behaviors for children.



8. Staff will be aware when a conflict between children arises. Staff will engage children in helping to solve the problem by analyzing the situation and all possible solutions, and working with the children to pick one they all agree as the best one.
9. Staff will separate children if they are having difficulty getting along.
10. Staff will remain objective when there is a problem with a child.
11. Staff will give children positive attention, and will engage children in behaving positively.
12. Staff will encourage children to behave positively and to continue to behave in appropriate ways.
13. Staff will explain the consequences of misbehavior to all children, and will continually remind students of the consequences.
14. No child will be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child and others.
15. Site Directors and staff will discuss positive guidance techniques with parents, and will review these techniques as needed during the period of the child's enrollment.
16. The parent/guardian will be required to pick the child up from the child development program when a child's behavior is deemed unacceptable and/or is a safety risk to self or others. When the parent(s)/guardian(s) have been called more than two times during one week to pick up the child and there has not been an improvement in their behavior, a meeting between the parent(s)/guardian(s), staff, and Program Director will be held to develop a Behavior Management Action Plan.
17. If a child's behavior is determined by the Program Director and Executive Director to be a danger to the child, to other children or to the staff in a program, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to withdraw the child from the program.
18. Staff will report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect, or imminent risk of serious harm of any child to the Department of Children and Families as mandated by section 17a-101 to section 17a-101e inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes. Connecticut General Statutes identifies professionals who, because their work involves regular contact with children, are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. All YMCA employees are considered Mandated Reporters by the State of CT. Mandated Reporters are required to report abuse or neglect based on a reasonable cause to suspect, such as what is observed, what is told or said.

Staff will communicate any behavior issues to parents promptly and be available for discussion.

4.34 REMOVAL FROM PROGRAM

The determination to ask a family to leave a child care program is difficult, and may be disruptive to the program, staff and potentially to the family. We strive to provide the best possible care to everyone who has chosen our program. However, in the following circumstances, the YMCA may be unable to continue to provide child care:

1. Failure to provide complete, accurate and up-to-date paperwork.
 - GHYMCA Child Care enrollment packet (updated annually)
 - State of CT Early Childhood Health Assessment form (updated annually)/State of CT Department of Education Health Assessment Record (updated according to Board of Education requirements)
 - For any medication to be stored and administered in a program, the YMCA requires appropriate paperwork signed by a medical professional. Any children with expired medication will not be allowed at the program until new medication is provided.
 - For any illness or disability requiring accommodation in a program- Specialized Care Plan (updated annually)
2. Failure to pay for child care services in a timely and consistent way.
 - Payment for the first month of child care is due before the child starts in a program



- Payment for each month of care is due on the first of the month (for example, payment for January child care must be made on or before January 1st). Overdue accounts will be assessed a late fee on the 8th of the month. If a payment is more than 30 days past due, the child will be removed from the program until such time that the outstanding balance is paid in full.
- The YMCA accepts reimbursement from Care4Kids. It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to ensure that required documentation is submitted to Care4Kids. There may be delays in processing incomplete, inaccurate or late paperwork. If Care4Kids has not approved payment, or if a Care4Kids certificate has expired, parents or guardians are responsible for the full cost of care.
- The YMCA strives to serve everyone regardless of ability to pay. Thanks to our generous donors, our Strong Kids Annual Fund raises money to provide financial assistance to those in need. If your family could benefit from our financial assistance program, please contact your Child Care Director.

***Please Note:** In the case of missing paperwork or late payment, the Child Care Director will contact the family through phone calls, emails and/or letters home and at the program. Families will be given one week to provide up-to-date paperwork or to make arrangements for payment. If the problem has not been resolved, the YMCA will be unable to provide care until the requirement has been met.

3. Failure to comply with Greater Hartford YMCA policies and procedures.

The YMCA strives to resolve disagreements and challenges in order to maintain strong, positive relationships with members and families. Under certain extraordinary circumstances, the YMCA may be forced to ask a family to leave a child care program. These circumstances may include: repeated late pick-up from program; excessive absenteeism from program; repeated failure to supply necessary supplies (for example, diapers and baby wipes), food or weather-appropriate clothing for a child; abusive behavior toward YMCA staff, volunteers, or other members.

4. Dangerous or disruptive behaviors

The YMCA is committed to working with children and families to resolve challenging behavior issues. YMCA staff may work with supervisors, peers and outside consultants to find a solution that will help children develop positive behaviors. However, in extreme circumstances, YMCA administrators may ask a family to leave a child care program. In these cases, every effort will be made to provide families with advance notice and to help families identify community resources and alternate care arrangements.

4.35 PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Disrespect toward staff or property or repeatedly injuring other children or staff will not be tolerated. If deemed unsafe behavior, a parent or guardian will be contacted in order to remove the child from the program. To ensure safety, the parents must remove the child from the program within one half hour of notification. The staff and parents together will develop a plan to prevent future inappropriate behavior. If the behavior continues, the child may be suspended from the program for a determined amount of time or expelled entirely from the program. The following procedures will take place when a child's behavior is inappropriate:

1. The child will be given a verbal warning and redirected to another activity.
2. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child will be removed from the group until staff believes that the child is ready to re-enter the group safely. Whenever possible, unless staff determine that a child's behavior continues to be dangerous to themselves or to others, the period of removal from the activity will be limited to 1 minute per year of the child's age, up to a maximum of 10 minutes. Inappropriate behavior can be, but is not limited to, the



following:

- a. Biting
 - b. Kicking
 - c. Hitting
 - d. Swearing
 - e. Bullying
 - f. Flight Risk (running away from the program)
3. Whenever there is a serious concern about a behavior or discipline problem, the staff will verbally and in writing inform the child's parent or guardian. The staff and family will meet to develop plans to resolve the problem and regular reports will be given to the family on the child's progress.
 4. The parent/guardian will be required to pick the child up from the child development program when a child's behavior is deemed unacceptable and/or is a safety risk to self or others. When the parent(s)/guardian(s) have been called more than two times during one week to pick up the child and there has not been an improvement in their behavior, a meeting between the parent(s)/guardian(s), staff, and Program Director will be held to develop a Behavior Management Action Plan.
 5. If the problem persists, a consultant, with parental or guardian consent, may be brought in to assess the situation and an additional plan of action may be put into place. The child will be placed on an individual probation for a specified time period. Parents will be advised of the recommendations.
 6. In the event that a recommendation is made for the child to receive an assessment from local health, education or mental health services provider, families are encouraged to share the results of these assessments with the center. The YMCA strives to work as a team with family, consultants and staff. The YMCA will facilitate observation time in the program if it is considered helpful. (Any costs relating to these services are the responsibility of the parent or guardian).
 7. If the above actions have not resulted in improved behavior from the child, written notice will be given to the parent/guardian to remove the child from the program for a determined period of time. During this time period, the YMCA staff will continue to work with the parent/guardian and child on behavior modifications.
 8. The YMCA strives to provide a safe and caring environment for all children. We reserve the right to remove a child from any YMCA program at the discretion of the executive director or designee if the child's behavior is determined to create a dangerous or unacceptable situation for him/her, other children or staff.

Parents or guardians must advise staff of any physical or emotional conditions for which the child is being treated. Any changes in a child's behavior (i.e. sudden aggressiveness or withdrawal) noted by the staff will be brought to the attention of the parents or guardians. Parents or guardians should make the staff aware of any problems that the child may be experiencing, in order for the staff to better understand and assist the child.

YMCA staff members may not physically or verbally abuse a child, nor may a child be physically restrained except when it might be necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or others. Staff members are prohibited to use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment. All staff members receive training in guidance and discipline issues upon hiring and on a continual basis.



4.36 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICIES

The YMCA has a responsibility to prevent any child enrolled in the center from being abused or neglected. To help ensure the safety and well-being of children, and in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes, the YMCA, shall make a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Public Health (DPH), when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, neglected or at imminent risk of abuse.

All YMCA staff is trained in the knowledge of mandated reporter responsibilities and reporting requirements, child care abuse and neglect prevention techniques and detection methods, as well as the definitions of child abuse and neglect as defined below. All staff members are mandated to read and sign a comprehensive code of conduct to which they are expected to adhere.

No staff member is allowed to have any contact, including, but not limited to, babysitting, phone, email, or texting with any YMCA participants under 18 outside of YMCA programs and activities. Parents who have any concerns or questions with respect to these issues may contact the YMCA Child Care Program Director.

DEFINITIONS

CHILD ABUSE

Defined as any child under the age of eighteen who has had a physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him or her by a person responsible for his/her health, welfare or care or by a person given access to the child by the responsible person other than by accidental means, or has injuries which are at variance with the history given to them, or is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, cruel punishment or has been neglected.

CHILD NEGLECT

Is defined as any child under the age of eighteen who has been abandoned, is being denied proper care or attention, physically, emotionally or morally or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his or her well-being or has been abused.

CHILD AT RISK

Defined as reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is in danger of being abused as opposed to believing that the abuse has actually occurred.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. All YMCA child care employees are considered Mandated Reporters and will make a report to CT-DCF and CT-DPH when a situation arises where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, neglected or in imminent risk of abuse by parent/guardian, YMCA staff member, or any other individual.
2. All staff persons and volunteers making a report in good faith are immune from any criminal or civil liability. A person required to report who fails to do so shall be fined not more than \$500.
3. A staff person must report a situation directly to the Child Care Director. In the absence of the Child Care Director, the staff member will follow the chain of command. A mandated reporter must make an oral report within 12 (twelve) hours of suspected abuse or neglect to the CT-DCF HOTLINE at 1-800-842-2288.
4. Within 24 hours of an oral report the mandated reporter must submit a written report to the CT-DCF and CT- DPH notifying them of the incident.



5. Requirements of oral and written reports:
 - i. The names and addresses of the child and his parents or guardians.
 - ii. The age and gender of the child.
 - iii. The nature of the child's injuries, maltreatment or neglect.
 - iv. The approximate date and time of injuries, maltreatment or neglect.
 - v. Any information concerning any previous injuries or neglect.
 - vi. The circumstances in which the injury, maltreatment or neglect came to be known to the reporter.
 - vii. The name of the person suspected of abuse, maltreatment or neglect.
 - viii. Whatever action, if any was taken to treat and assist the child.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR STAFF

YMCA Staff who are named in an allegation will be placed on PAID administrative leave until the investigation has been completed. A meeting will be held with the employee, and at least one of the following: Center Director, Child Care Director or Executive Director. The Executive Director will consult with the Human Resources Department to inform them of the allegation. If the internal YMCA investigation concludes that abuse may have occurred, appropriate actions will be taken, up to and including termination, depending on the situation. If the internal YMCA investigation concludes that abuse did not occur, the employee will be allowed to return to work with no documentation in their file.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION

1. Staff orientation on a yearly basis will include training on child abuse, neglect and mandated reporting procedures. Staff will be trained by CT-DCF personnel and/or local police.
2. Parent and Employee Handbooks will include policies and procedures on reporting child abuse and neglect.
3. CT-DCF phone numbers will be posted on the emergency phone list.
4. Resource materials will be kept on file.
5. All staff hired after staff orientation will be briefed on policies and procedures of reporting child abuse and neglect.



4.37 SUPERVISION

Children are under staff supervision at all times. There are two staff, over the age of 18 years, on site at all times, during all hours of operation. Child Care staff will supervise the safe arrival and departure of all children. No child is allowed outside of the center without staff or parent/guardian supervision.

CHILD: STAFF RATIOS

Child: Staff ratios followed by this program will always comply with the following requirements according to state regulations:

Infant/Toddler:	4:1
Preschool:	10:1
School Age:	10:1

Our goal is to maintain the following national standards for child-to-staff ratios (which are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association) whenever children are in care:

Age	Child: staff	Maximum Group Size
0-35 months	4:1	8
3-year-olds	10:1	20
4-5-year-olds	10:1	20
6-12 years	10:1	20

When there are mixed-age groups in the same room, the child-to-staff ratio and group size will be consistent with the age of the majority of the children when no infants or toddlers are in the mixed-age group. When infants or toddlers are in the group, the child-to-staff ratio and group size for infants and toddlers will be maintained.

A substitute may be employed or a volunteer assigned to assure that the required child-to-staff ratios are maintained at all times. Substitutes and volunteers will work under direct staff supervision and will not be left alone with children at any time. A substitute who is regularly employed as a caregiver by the facility and who is well-known by the children in the group will be considered staff and may function in the same way as a caregiver for whom the substitution is being made.

SUPERVISION OF ACTIVE PLAY

Staff observation of active play in indoor and outdoor spaces will be as follows:

1. High-risk play areas (i.e. climbers, slides, swings, and water play) will receive the most staff attention.
2. All children using playground or indoor play equipment will be supervised. No children will be permitted to go beyond a caregiver's range of direct supervision. Child-to-staff ratios will be at least as stringent as for the other child care activities. Every child will be specifically assigned to a staff person to be regularly counted to confirm their safe whereabouts at all times.
3. A written schedule will be prepared by the Site Director or Head Teacher and used to assign staff to supervise high risk areas.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION



Staff observation of bathroom activities will be as follows:

1. Escort a group of children to the bathroom;
2. Check each stall and the bathroom to ensure the space is empty;
3. Check the bathroom prior to use and then stand in the doorway of the bathroom while the children use the individual bathroom stalls;
4. When the children are done using the bathroom facilities, the staff member will check each stall and the entire bathroom before leaving the bathroom area with the group of children;
5. When available, boys and girls will have access to their own designated bathroom area; otherwise unisex bathrooms may be utilized;
6. When a child goes inside to use the restrooms from outdoors, a staff member is designated to accompany him/her (each group must stay in ratio);
7. Children are never allowed to travel from the outside to inside by themselves;
8. A staff member will accompany children in a group to the bathroom and will reinforce good personal hygiene measures; and
9. The staff bathroom will be separate from the children's bathrooms.

TRANSITION SUPERVISION

Staff observation during transitions will be as follows:

1. Children will be lined up by staff in a single line;
2. One staff will be at the front of the line and one staff at the end of the line;
3. Before leaving the current space, staff will remind children of the expectations of the space they are going to;
4. In order to ensure that all children are accounted for, a staff member will take attendance when leaving the current space and when arriving at the new space;
5. Attendance is hearing and seeing the child (facial recognition);
6. Staff always bring the sign in/out book and first aid kit wherever they go;
7. If staff are splitting up (i.e. staff go outside and staff stay inside), then staff will produce a written list the children under his/her supervision so that they can check them off when they get picked up or transition to a new location;
8. Each group must have a first aid kit; and
9. Staff must radio/call/communicate to other staff when a child is picked up, to ensure that staff have an accurate head count at all times.

BUSES & VANS

Staff observation during travel will be as follows:

1. Children getting off a bus or van will always be met by a staff person at the bus before traversing to the room or playground;
2. Children will always be walked to busses and vans by a staff person; and
3. All children under the designated height and weight will be required to sit in a booster/car seat. A YMCA staff member will assist children with buckling the seat belt if necessary.

FIELD TRIPS

Staff observation on field trips will be as follows:

1. Attendance is taken before getting on to the bus. Attendance includes both a verbal and visual recognition of each child;



2. Children will sit up in seats facing forward. Staff must position themselves throughout the bus in order to see the back, middle and front seats. Only staff members are allowed to sit in the backseat;
3. Staff will conduct a walkthrough of the bus after the children have gotten off the bus, starting in the back of the bus and checking under each and every seat;
4. Staff will be assigned to a group during the field trip and will be responsible for taking attendance for his/her group. Each child will be assigned a buddy for the duration of the field trip. Attendance will be taken before the group transitions to a new activity, to ensure that all children are accounted for;
5. Staff will stay with his/her group at all times during the field trips never letting a child out of sight;
6. Before a child enters a public bathroom, a staff member will conduct a walkthrough of the bathrooms to ensure that it is safe, and to be aware of the entrances and exits. A staff member will position themselves in the doorway of each entrance/exit of the public restroom, in view of both the other staff member as well as the remaining children not using the restroom;
7. Staff will not be permitted to use the restroom until all children have exited; and
8. Attendance will be taken prior to leaving the field trip as well as on bus. Attendance includes both a verbal and visual recognition of each child.

4.38 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is practiced at all times. Information about children in the program will not be discussed among other parents or in the program in front of child/children. The YMCA will retain any information you share with us, to enable us to better meet your child/children's needs, in the strictest confidence. This applies to information you share in writing or verbally.

Every effort is made to keep information about children and families confidential. Children and families information is kept in a confidential location in the main office. Only staff members directly involved with the family are permitted to examine files and/or discuss file contents. Written consent must be obtained from Parent/Legal Guardian before program information can be transferred to other programs, schools, or agencies. Information gathered from other agencies or organizations about a child/family cannot be transferred and the family should be instructed to contact those organizations directly. All documentation about children/family can be given to parents who can review and distribute it as they see fit. Local and Federal agencies have the right to request to see a child's file at any time. All staff members are urged to handle content of files carefully and to place or replace documents properly.

Staff and volunteers must be professional and protect the rights and privacy of the children and families in regards to confidential matters.

All financial information will be kept confidential between the Child Care administration and the families. Information verifying your eligibility for this program may be released to funding sources upon their request.

All medical, behavioral or emotional information will be confidential between the staff and the Director.



5. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAM

Our curriculum is based on the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards for Children in Pre-School and Infant/Toddler Programs.

Our staff uses the developmental domains of personal, social, physical, cognitive and creative development to assess children and provides the focus for individualizing learning to meet each child's needs. Child-initiated and teacher-selected activities are designed for children to experience areas of literacy, language, math, science, creative experiences and motor development.

5.1 UPON ARRIVAL

For Early Childhood programs, children are encouraged to arrive at the program each day by 9:00 a.m. The program day begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. and late arrivals disrupt the staff and children within the program. For grant funded programs, if a child must arrive after the 9:00 a.m. start time for a particular reason, advance notification is needed or the child will not be allowed to attend the program if arriving after.

Consistent late arrivals may result in suspension or dis-enrollment from the YMCA program.

All children entering an Early Childhood Education YMCA Child Care program **MUST** wash their hands upon arrival. It will be the responsibility of the person dropping your child off in the morning to walk to the bathroom or sink and ensure that your child washes his/her hands properly.

5.2 CHILD ASSESSMENTS

Once a child enrolls, the family shall complete a questionnaire regarding the child's developmental level and abilities. The information is used to provide individualized instruction and to better observe and assess the child's developmental goals.

Assessments are regularly conducted by staff to identify children's interests, strengths, and areas of need; and this information is then used in alignment with teaching strategies to meet goals set for the child.

Progress is monitored at a minimum of 3 times per year and results are shared with the child's family to help improve curriculum and teaching to ensure children are learning and growing to their potential.

Assessments are also used to identify children that may require referral for further diagnostic assessment with written permission from parents.

All information is kept confidential and children's records are kept in a locked file. Information is shared with parents both informally and formally.



5.3 SAMPLE ECE DAILY SCHEDULE*

7:00 - 8:30	Arrival – hand-washing, open centers, creative experiences, and stories
8:30 - 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:30	clean-up, bathroom break, story
9:30 - 10:30	Outdoor play
10:30 - 10:45	Circle activities
10:45 - 11:45	Open centers
11:45 - 12:00	Story
12:00 - 12:45	Lunch, bathrooms and clean-up
12:45 - 1:00	Tooth brushing
1:00 - 2:30	Naptime and quiet areas
2:30 - 3:30	Clean-up, bathrooms and afternoon snack
3:30 - 4:00	Outdoor play
4:00 - 5:00	Open centers
5:00 - close	Story, group discussion and dismissal

*A daily schedule for your child will be posted in the classroom and on parent information board.

5.4 PROGRAM TRANSITIONS

Our groups are designed based on the size of the group, program space and age of the child. The YMCA works with the teachers to make decisions regarding creating appropriate groups. The YMCA staff work as a team to develop routines and schedules that allow for smooth transitions between activities during the day. The YMCA staff provide ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect children's well-being.

The program is organized and staffed to minimize the number of group, staff, and classroom transitions experienced by an individual child during the day and program year. We make every attempt to maintain the continuity of relationships between staff and children and among groups of children. For toddlers and twos, we make every attempt to keep children with their teacher for nine months or longer to develop a sense of stability for the child.

Children need time to become familiar to new situations. Children entering the program for the first time should visit with their family for a short period of time. It is suggested that the child, contingent upon his/her adjustment should stay at the program for gradually longer periods of time to ensure a successful adjustment/transition in the program. This allows family members to assist the child in developing relationships with the children and staff members in his/her program.

The YMCA makes every effort to provide each child with a stable, consistent and caring environment. For young children, specifically infants, toddlers and preschoolers, when a transition to another program space is needed, the decision will be made in consultation with the family. The following procedures will be implemented to ensure a successful transition:

1. The child will visit the new classroom with a familiar staff person for a short period of time during the day.
2. The time in the new classroom will increase over several days.
3. The child will visit the new classroom independently for a short period of time during the day.
4. The child will join the new classroom for morning activities.
5. The child will join the new classroom for morning activities and lunch.
6. The child will be enrolled in the new classroom.
7. At all times, the parents will be informed of the transition process prior to



implementation and how the child is handling the transition daily.

5.5 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES FOR ECE PROGRAMS

Activities for the Early Childhood Education program (ECE) include free choice, creative activities, process and product, quiet time/nap, physical activities, group time, story time, music, and computer time.

For details on activities for the ECE program, please visit *Appendix 1* found at the end of this document.

*Note: Activities are modified as needed for toddlers/two year olds.

5.6 CLOTHING POLICY

For all Early Childhood Education programs, **CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE TWO SPARE SETS OF CLOTHING THAT ARE LABELED** and to be kept in each child's cubby space. Please be aware that some activities may result in clothes becoming unclean (ex: painting), and having an extra set of play clothes is helpful. The YMCA and its staff are not responsible for lost, stolen or vandalized items.

5.7 BOTTLE POLICY

In order to promote and protect a child's health and to control infectious disease, the YMCA does not allow infants and toddlers/twos to have bottles while on their cots during naps. We also do not allow children to eat from propped bottles at any time. In order to safeguard our toddlers, we do not allow them to carry bottles, Sippy cups, or regular cups while crawling or walking.

5.8 WATER PLAY

To ensure that the environment is healthy for all during water play, the children wash hands prior to and after playing in water. Children with open sores on their hands will be redirected to other activities until the sores are healed. Fresh potable water is used to fill each water table. The water is emptied after each group of children and all equipment is cleaned and sanitized. If a new group of children comes to participate in the water play activity, potable water is used.

5.9 HEALTH SERVICES

For Early Childhood Education programs, lead, hearing, vision and dental screenings are offered to all School Readiness children contingent on services available. Parents will be informed in advance of testing dates. Written permission by parent/guardian is required for all screenings.

5.10 TOOTHBRUSHING

In early childhood programs, children may brush their teeth, upon parent's request, after lunch. The children will use water to clean their teeth, under the supervision of the classroom teachers. If a parent or guardian chooses to have a child brush his/her teeth, the parent or guardian must provide a newly wrapped toothbrush for the child's use during program hours. The toothbrush must be replaced every three months. The toothbrush must be clearly labeled with the child's name and the date the toothbrush was brought to the center. The toothbrush will be stored in a rack facing away from the other toothbrushes in use to avoid contamination. Toothbrushes will be sprayed after each use with a bleach solution, rinsed and air-dried. All sinks used for brushing teeth will be cleaned and sanitized after the children have completed brushing.



5.11 TOILETING AND CHANGING

1. In the event of a toileting mishap, the child will be encouraged to assist in changing themselves as they are capable.
2. Staff will not leave children unattended, but will provide verbal instructions and follow appropriate toileting and changing procedures.
3. If assistance is required, or the child needs to lay down, the staff will:
 - a. Perform hand hygiene first
 - b. Gather and bring supplies to changing area
 - c. Cover changing surface with disposable paper
 - d. Put on disposable gloves
 - e. Never leave child unattended
 - f. Remove soiled articles and avoid contact with soiled items
 - g. Place soiled items in a plastic bag to be sent home
 - h. Clean child's soiled area with disposable wipes, wiping from front to back
 - i. Remove disposable gloves and discard
 - j. Assist child in changing into clean clothes as required
 - k. Remove child from changing area
 - l. Wash child's hands
 - m. Remove paper and discard
 - n. Sanitize changing table
 - o. Wash own hands
4. Cloth Diaper Policy: When cloth diapers or training pants are used, a plan for their use and care shall be submitted to and approved by the department prior to implementation of the plan. This plan shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, these procedures:
 - (A) placing soiled clothing and diapers in a sealed air tight container,
 - (B) removing soiled clothing and diapers from the child day care center or group day care home daily, and
 - (C) cleaning and sanitizing the container daily.

For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper has an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit.

Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering

SELF HELP SKILLS AND TOILETING

Preschool children are expected to be able to toilet independently under the supervision of the staff. While it is not uncommon for the children to have bathroom accidents, if an accident occurs, the staff will address the incident calmly. Children will be encouraged to change themselves independently according to developmental capability. When a child needs assistance, or is unable to use the toilet in a consistent manner, the staff and family will set up a plan to address these concerns.



6. SCHOOL-AGE CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SACD) PROGRAM

Our before and after school programs are designed to provide children with a safe and enriching environment, where they can develop to their fullest potential.

Along with the YMCA's four core values (Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility), the YMCA of the USA has developed four (4) goals for all YMCA School Age Child Development Programs:

1. Encouraging children to take an active role in the day-to-day operation of the program.
2. Offering activities that extend and enrich children's experience.
3. Providing choices every day for how children will spend time at the programs.
4. Encouraging children to make decisions that affect the program.

6.1 SAMPLE SACD AFTERNOON DAILY SCHEDULE

3:00-3:15	Arrival, Attendance and Announcements
3:15-3:30	Bathroom & Hand washing
3:30-3:45	Snack
3:45-4:15	Homework & Quiet Time
4:15-4:45	Physical Fitness Activities (large and small group games)
4:45-5:30	Daily activity such as arts & humanities project, service learning project, science experiment etc.
5:30-6:00	Free play & Clean up time

6.2 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES – FOR SACD PROGRAMS

A variety of activities are offered daily, both staff facilitated and child driven. All School Age Child Development Programs incorporate the following activity themes into their program schedule: Arts & Humanities, Character Development, Health, Fitness & Wellness, Homework Help/Quiet time, Literacy, Science & Technology, Multi-Cultural Learning, and Service Learning.

For details on activities for the SACD program, please visit *Appendix 2* found at the end of this document.



7. PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND CONTACT

The YMCA staff is available by appointment to meet with parents as needed. This enables parents to meet with teachers, plan events and help evaluate the program. A strong home/program connection is important to building a good environment for your child. Parent participation is important as it enhances the programs and provides balance in the life of your child.

The facility will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes, as well as informal conversations. Families are encouraged to leave written notes with important information so all the staff who work with your child can share the parent's communication. Staff will write notes for families on a daily basis for infants and toddlers, and no less than weekly for preschool or kindergarten children. Staff will use these notes to inform families about your child's experiences, accomplishment, behavior, sleeping, feeding, and other issues related to personal care such as wet diapers and bowel movements for infants and toddlers.

7.1 PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Each YMCA has a Child Development Committee that consists of YMCA staff members, a parent representative from each program, and the Child Care Director. A parent from each program is asked to be a member to the committee during parent orientation each fall.

The committee meets at a minimum bi-monthly and is charged with facilitating program evaluations, accreditation standards, special events, as well as communicating information to the other parents. If a parent vacates a spot on the committee during the year, the Child Care Director will recruit a parent to fill the position. The YMCA also seeks professionals from the community to sit on the committee meetings.

7.2 CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are offered a minimum of two times per year and on an as needed basis, to discuss each child's development and behavior while at our program. However, a parent, teacher or the director may request a meeting at any time throughout the year. These are scheduled at a mutually convenient time for all parties involved. Parents or guardians are invited to attend workshops or round table discussions as they become available.

Parents or guardians are encouraged to call upon the knowledge and expertise of the staff and the additional parent resource materials available. These include books, videos, articles and reference materials. The YMCA employs a diverse staff and can provide translations as needed to interpret communications.

7.3 NEWSLETTERS

Monthly newsletters will be sent home informing parents and guardians of daily activities, monthly happenings, and special events. Our monthly newsletter also includes informational topics such as literacy activities and nutritional guidance. Any parent that would like to add to the newsletter is encouraged to speak to the child's teacher or the Child Care Director.



7.4 BULLETINS

Notices and letters will be posted on the Parents' Information Board. Special notices and letters regarding children and/or parents will be placed in the child's cubby, as needed. There is a special bulletin board specifically for CT State Licensing Information.

7.5 PARENT OPEN DOOR POLICY

The YMCA's Child Development Programs encourage parents to participate in activities with the children, and welcomes parents to visit the program during the day. Parents are welcome eat lunch with their child, drop by and tell a story, share a family tradition, or just take a break and chat with their child. Parents are also encouraged to participate and chaperone field trips.

In addition, the YMCA strives to incorporate multicultural learning experiences. In the event that the YMCA Child Care Program is not parallel with your family's values and practices, please feel free to speak to a program teacher or any executive staff member at any time.

7.6 FAMILY RESOURCES

There is a Family Service area available at many centers with listed resources. The following consultants are also available and can do on-site evaluations and meetings:

- Education Consultant
- Social Service Consultant
- Health Consultant
- Dental Consultant



8. HEPA (HEALTHY EATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY) POLICIES

8.1 PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Staff will send out parent newsletter monthly using the HEPA communication pieces. Newsletters will include healthy recipes for families. Staff will also include a section for parent resources relating to HEPA at a designated parent section of the program space.

8.2 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Children will be provided 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity for a ½ day program and 60 minutes for a full day program. Bone and muscle strengthening activities will be included as a part of this physical activity. Infants will be given daily time to freely express their indoor and outdoor environments under adult supervision. Staff will engage with infants on the ground to optimize adult-infant interactions. Infants will be provided daily tummy time, or in the prone position, for children less than 6 months of age.

8.3 SCREEN TIME

The YMCA will eliminate screen time (television, movies, cell phones, video games, computer and other digital devices) for children under 2 years old. For children over 2, the YMCA will limit screen time to less than 30 minutes per day for children in ½ day programs and to less than 1 hour for children in full day programs. During screen time, children will not be exposed to commercials and ads marketing unhealthy foods.

8.4 FOOD

Children will serve themselves (family style) all food and beverages from common bowls and pitchers with limited help. Staff will sit with the children during snacks. Fruits or vegetables will be provided at every snack/meal. The YMCA will not provide any fried foods. The YMCA will not provide any foods that have trans-fats. The YMCA will only offer whole grains. The YMCA will not offer snacks that list sugar as one of the first three ingredients or that contain no more than 8 grams of sugar per serving.

Children and staff are prohibited from bringing fried foods from home.

Servings of fruits and vegetables will be ½ cup or more.

8.5 BEVERAGES

Water will be accessible and available to children at all times, including at the table during snacks and meals. Only water and unflavored low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk (for children 2 or older) will be provided, family style. Sugar sweetened beverages are not allowed to be brought from home, including parties and holidays. If juice is served, it will only be 100% fruit juice and limited to 4-6 oz./ day.



Appendix 1

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES – FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAMS

FREE CHOICE

Children can choose from a variety of activities in our learning centers that include science and nature, dramatic play, blocks, art, gross and small motor skills, language arts, math, sand and water activities. When children are allowed to choose activities, they will choose what is most important to them. They use the materials in ways that meet their own developmental needs. We create the environment to allow each child to choose activities that are developmentally appropriate for their age. When children work at a task they selected, they find it very satisfying and this is the most effective and engaging way to learn.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Activities such as arts and crafts, puppet play, storytelling, dramatization, block building, music and dance are a great time for children to learn to follow directions, use their imagination, employ their own ideas, and work in groups or individually.

PROCESS AND PRODUCT

Children are learning all the time. They need the time to explore and learn about cause and effect (i.e., what happens if I do this?). Children need the freedom to try new experiences without worrying about the final product. Children will focus on the process of doing things. This is why a child will do the same puzzle over and over again or pour sand from one container to another repeatedly. The child may be learning coordination or beginning writing skills or making discoveries about gravity. Mostly, he/she is building confidence. Your child's artwork will center on the process. Patience is important as the child will need the time to grow and learn that this is part of the task. Your child is learning to be creative and to problem solve at the same time.

QUIET TIME/NAP

Children in Early Childhood Education programs lay down for a quiet or rest time each day to allow children to relax and refuel for the afternoon. Each child will rest on an assigned cot. Please provide the following for your child:

- small sheet (crib size),
- blanket and pillows

*Please label these items with your child's name. Parents are responsible to take these items home weekly to be washed and returned to the center.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Twice daily children may play outdoors, take a walk or play group movement games inside. Music/movement activities are provided throughout the day as well. Water play is incorporated during summer season when weather permits.

GROUP TIME

This is a time where staff and children share experiences and talk about topics of importance for that particular day or activity. This is also a time to learn about the world around them by discussing the weather and what is happening outside the classroom. New materials may be introduced as well as how to care for and use these items. The children are also developing their social skills such as: listening, taking turns, sharing and empathizing during group time. The children are discovering how to solve problems, ask questions, brainstorm, as well as the importance of the sequencing of events and consequences. They are learning how to be fair, to be respectful and to gain an understanding of one another.

STORY TIME

This is an interactive time when children will have the opportunity to listen to stories, develop literacy skills, and learn how to expand on different subjects. Stories often enhance deeper learning of topics that have been discussed during group time. Children are learning to value language as well as basic reading skills.

MUSIC

During music time, children are learning different concepts and skills. Skills such as numeracy, alphabet, basic shapes, vocabulary, order and sequence, increasing attention span, enhancing listening skills, learning rhythm, tone pattern, developing manual dexterity and increasing muscle control are all learned through songs, finger plays, nursery rhymes, dance and movement.

COMPUTER TIME

Each pre-school classroom has scheduled computer time with developmentally appropriate software. Children rotate in the computer center using the computer for 15-minute intervals. A log is maintained to ensure that all children wanting to use the computer have equal access to this learning enhancing tool in both individual and group activities.



Appendix 2

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES – FOR THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SACD) PROGRAM

ARTS & HUMANITIES

Our art program offers a wide range of creative opportunities in fine arts, creative writing, music, dance, cooking, drama and much more.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Through a variety of activities, staff will encourage children to demonstrate the YMCA's Four Core Values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility, as well as use the Developmental Assets Framework used to help influence young people to make wise choices

HEALTH, FITNESS & WELLNESS

In response to a call by First Lady Michelle Obama and the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), in addition to adopting the Healthy Eating Physical Activity (HEPA) Standards, the Y has committed to adopting new standards for nutrition and physical activity.

The standards will:

- Establish a minimum of expected physical activity for children of different ages enrolled in our programs;
- Define food and beverages offerings, including designating water as the primary beverage during snack times and offering fruits and vegetables as snack options;
- Limit the amount of screen time (watching TV, playing video games, using computers)

HOMEWORK SUPPORT

Managing and organizing the homework environment involves supporting students' homework completion by setting a predictable schedule for homework, establishing routines, and creating safe and productive spaces with easy access to materials.

LITERACY

Our staff will work to foster literacy through a variety means including book clubs, a newspaper club, story time, as well as continuously developing literacy skills within the other content areas.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

With an increasing focus on STEM learning, it is more important than ever to incorporate Science and Technology into aftercare programs. According to a report by the Afterschool Alliance, "high-quality STEM afterschool programs yield STEM-specific benefits such as improved attitudes towards STEM fields and careers, increased STEM knowledge and skills, and a higher likelihood of graduation and pursuing a STEM career". The report demonstrates that afterschool programs are playing a key role in engaging children and youth from diverse communities in STEM fields and careers."

SERVICE LEARNING

Service-learning, a teaching and learning strategy, integrates meaningful community service with internal learning objectives and reflection. The goal is to provide enriching experiences, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Service-learning takes traditional community service to the next level by transforming it into a learning experience with specific objectives. Service-learning aims to impact both those engaged in community service and the benefactors of the community service through reflection and intentional learning.

SOCIAL COMPETANCE & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Social competence is improved during participation in after-school programs and extracurricular activities. In addition, conflict resolution is taught in order to teach children how to recognize dangerous situations, how to communicate in stressful scenarios, and how to calmly and successfully navigate through adverse conditions at school, at home, in the neighborhood and other locations. This is accomplished through creative staff and student-led role-play and theatrical activities.

