

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian,

Welcome to the YMCA! Choosing child care for your child is one of the most difficult and important decisions that you will make. We are pleased that you have chosen us, and we will work very hard to provide the highest quality program for you and your child.

The YMCA has been operating full and part time educational programs for more than thirty years in the Cheshire Community. We are committed to excellence.

This handbook is designed to introduce you to our general policies and procedures. Specific program information will be distributed in addition to this book. Please feel free to discuss any questions, concerns, or suggestions with any of our YMCA staff.

The Cheshire Community YMCA would like to acknowledge and thank the Cheshire Board of Education and Principals for their cooperation and support to the YMCA.

We look forward to your family joining "our" family.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Genest  
Early Childhood Director  
(203) 272-3150 X560  
[bgenest@sccymca.org](mailto:bgenest@sccymca.org)

Lisa Zaborowski  
Senior Director of Youth Development  
(203) 272-3150 X509  
[lzaborowski@sccymca.org](mailto:lzaborowski@sccymca.org)

Cheshire Community YMCA  
A branch of the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs  
961 South Main St, Cheshire CT 06410  
203-272-3150 – [www.sccymca.org](http://www.sccymca.org)

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.  
Financial assistance available for qualifying individuals and families.  
The YMCA is a not-for-profit 501c(3) organization.

## **Purpose and Goals of the YMCA**

The YMCA's mission, since its founding in 1844, is to develop and clarify human values for living based on Judeo-Christian principles. This is accomplished by designing programs that offer youth and families the opportunity to:

- ☺ Adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles
- ☺ Strengthen the quality of relationships among themselves and others
- ☺ Develop in themselves leadership qualities, self-confidence and self-esteem and
- ☺ Be informed of international issues and YMCA efforts around the world

YMCA membership is open to all without regard for race, sex, color, nationality or religion.

## **YMCA Mission**

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

## **Cheshire Community YMCA Child Care Programs**

The purpose of the Cheshire Community YMCA Preschool Program is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children to grow socially through age appropriate curriculum. We are a play based learning facility in order to build a strong foundation for future school experiences.

The purpose of the Cheshire Community YMCA School Age program is to provide a quality before and after school care program to children in grades preschool through six who reside in Cheshire and are enrolled in Cheshire public schools.

Our programs meets or exceeds all guidelines set forth by the Office of Early Childhood and is fully licensed by the State of Connecticut while in a secure and stimulating environment.

## **Program Philosophy**

For our YMCA program, we believe in a child-centered program which encourages curiosity, exploration and initiative. We recognize and accept that each child is an individual, with unique needs, abilities and life experiences. The activities and materials chosen are geared to the child's level of development and encourage individuality and self-esteem. Our goal is to:

1. To work in partnership with parents, school personnel, and the community to support a child's emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth.
2. To provide a safe, supervised and structured environment in which children may choose from a variety of activities.
3. To encourage the development of social skills of each child through shared activities with other children.
4. To reinforce the positive values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility and help children build personal character.
5. To develop the child's sense of self-worth by involving them in the planning of the program and independence through allowing them to make decisions for themselves.

### **Goals For the Children**

1. To feel safe, comfortable, and respected as an individual.
2. To develop a positive sense of self and a foundation for a healthy life style.
3. To acquire the skills of conflict resolution, positive communication, and a respect for individual differences.
4. To feel comfortable with one's self, one's accomplishments, and one's abilities.
5. To develop self-help skills, independence, and a sense of responsibility for one's actions and behavior.

### **Staff Philosophy**

One of the most critical components to accomplishing our mission and successfully implementing our philosophy is maintaining the highest quality staff possible and providing them with the resources and support to be successful. Our staff is made up of dedicated and caring professionals who welcome the opportunity and challenge taking care of your children. We are confident that we will provide your child with superior nurturing and guidance while they are under our care. In addition to some of the staff having a formal education, all of our staff has a genuine love for young children and a commitment to high quality care. All of our staff participates in continuing education and many are certified in first aid and CPR. Our staff is always available to meet with parents regarding questions and concerns. Please arrange a mutually convenient time with your child's Preschool Teacher or Site Coordinator.

## **Enrollment**

Enrollment in our early childhood programs for a fall start, children must be 2 years and 9 months and turning 3 by December 31<sup>st</sup> and potty trained. If their birthday is after December 31<sup>st</sup>, they must wait until on their third birthday to begin.

Enrollment in our School-Age program is open to any child enrolled in a Cheshire public elementary school. Enrollment is granted without regard to a child's race, color creed, religion, national origin, gender, special needs and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, economic status or special needs. All children entering the School Age Child Care Program must be able to use the bathroom independently.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment forms, signed payment responsibility form, membership form, registration fee and first month's tuition. In addition, all children must have a health form prepared by the child's physician on record. We will accept a copy of the form submitted to the public schools. This form includes a physical exam as well as up to date immunizations.

Children enrolled in the School Age Child Care program begin with a 30-day probationary period. During this time staff will observe the child's behavior, emotional needs, and his/her ability to adapt in a healthy manner to the structure of the program. If during this period staff determine that the program cannot meet the needs of the child, parents will be required to take the child out of the program.

The enrollment forms and payment responsibility form are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration. The YMCA reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

## **Tuition Policies**

Payments are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month before care is provided (example: November's payment is due by October 15<sup>th</sup>). Child care payments must be made on time to assure that your child can continue in the program. After 5 days, a late fee will be charged. Your child must be a program, youth or family member in order to participate in the program.

School Age Child Care payments are due on a monthly basis. The yearly tuition is based on 180 days of school and is broken down into

10 equal payments. The monthly payment is not related to the number of school days in the month.

Please save your receipts for tax purposes. Please contact Karen Thuerk, Program and Membership Registrar at (203) 272-3150 X507 with questions regarding payments. Our tax id number is 06-0646905

The YMCA is able to accept credit card payments for child care (Visa, American Express, Discover and MasterCard). To make it even easier, we are able to automatically charge your child care fees to the card of your choice each month. If you pay by check, please write your child's first and last name and school they attend in the memo section. Please make timely payments in order to avoid any late penalties.

All payments are to be made at the front desk of the YMCA. Please do not give payments to child care staff. For your convenience there are payment drop boxes at the front desk of the YMCA and outside of the childcare office.

### **Chain of Command**

We value your input and want to hear your positive feedback or concerns about the program. As a first step, please attempt to resolve any issues with the staff at your child's site or the Site Coordinator. In preschool, please speak with your child's teacher. If you feel the problem has not been resolved, please contact the School Age Director, Early Childhood Director or Childcare Director. If it still has not been resolved, please contact the Branch Executive Director or Director of Operations.

### **Preschool Program Activities**

In preschool, children are taught in a center-based learning system, combining the use of the Connecticut Department of Education's Preschool Curriculum Framework and Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers as our guide.

Our curriculum is a balance of both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests. We accomplish all of this through well-planned learning and activity centers including: library (language), blocks (construction), music and movement, art, sand and water (sensory), outdoor learning, cooking, science and math.

### **School Age Program Activities**

The School Age Child Care program offers a wide variety of activities to meet the needs of the children in the program. Some activities may include:

*Creative Arts* are activities that include the fine arts, craft projects, art history, or any visual creative expression (excluding dramatic arts).

*Dramatic Arts* include but are not limited to music, dance, theatre arts, and creative movement.

*Active Games* are any sports or active play taking place in the gym or outside. A variety of non-competitive games will be offered during the month. Non-Competitive games help to avoid aggressive play, feelings of failure, and children being excluded. It is important to offer games that are age appropriate; it is possible to offer games for a specific age group or to the group as a whole.

*Enrichment Activities* are learning activities, which allow children the opportunity to investigate, create, and enrich their knowledge base with fun experiences. These activities can include reading, mathematics, and science activities.

*Homework Time* is designated Monday through Thursday with a staff person assigned specifically to this activity and available to children who need help with their homework. Each parent and child will complete a Homework Request Form which outlines expectations during this time.

*Clubs* reflect the interests of the children, and are run a few times a year. Some clubs that have been of interest in the past are Environmental Club, Sports Club, Cooking Club, Science Club, and Drawing Club.

*Community Service Activities* are excellent long-term activities which get your child(ren) involved in the local community. Past activities have included: Bake Sale to raise money for Christmas gifts for less fortunate children, Can Drives to raise money for the shelters in the area, making wreaths for people living in a convalescent home, etc..

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

The Y is not only one of the nation's largest providers of childcare, but we are also determined to be the healthiest. As part of our commitments to young people, the Y has adopted a set of Healthy

Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards for early childhood and after school programs nationwide. The standards will build a healthier future for our nation's children by providing healthy environments rich in opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity and by supporting families to do the same at home.

## **Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards (H.E.P.A.)**

### **Fruits or Vegetables**

We will provide fruits or vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried or canned in its own juice) at every meal and snack. Children will be served a minimum of a ½ a cup.

### **Sugar**

We provide foods free of sugar as one of the first three ingredients or contain less than 8 grams of added sugar per serving. (examples of sugar: sugar, invert sugar, brown sugar, words ending in "ose", syrups such as high fructose corn syrup, honey, etc.)

### **Whole Grains**

We provide all grain foods that are whole grains, determined by the first word listed in the ingredient listed contains the word "whole" (ie. whole wheat, whole oats, whole-grain flour, whole brown rice).

### **Family Style**

During snack or meal time, children serve themselves "family style". All food and beverages are served from common bowls and pitchers with limited help. Our staff will sit with children during snack and meal times to encourage healthy conversations and manners.

### **Trans Fat and Fried Foods**

We prohibit and do not provide any fried foods or foods which contain trans-fat (listed as partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list). Fried foods include items like potato and corn chips in addition to foods that are pre-fried and reheated (ex: pre-fried French fries that are then baked, chicken patties/tenders/nuggets, tater tots, donuts, tortilla chips, etc.)

### **Beverages**

Water is accessible and provided at all times especially during snack times and physical activity times. We will occasionally provide milk that is unflavored 1% or nonfat milk served family style. Juice is limited to no more than 4-6 ounce serving of 100% juice. We prohibit sugar sweetened beverages (including soda, non-100% juice, etc.)

### **Screen Time**

Our program encourages children to be social and to work on relationship building. This cannot be done by having children use electronics (television, movies, cell phones, video games, computer, iPods or other digital device). We ask for your assistance and leave them at home. We understand that there are children that need to use some electronics for homework assistance. Staff are to monitor their usage to less than 30 minutes per day for children in half-day programs and less than one hours per day for those in full-day programs.

### **Physical Activity**

We ensure children receive 30-60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity outdoors every day, weather permitting. This is so they can run, jump, swing, climb and use all of the large muscles in their bodies. Our Y staff will model active living related to physical activity by participating in physical activities with the children.

### **Parent Engagement**

We will keep parents informed and engaged through materials and/or activities that include healthy eating and physical activity at least once every three months.

### **Snacks/Lunches**

A HEPA friendly snack will be provided each afternoon for all children who are enrolled in the After School Child Care program and a morning and afternoon snack will be provided for all children who are enrolled in the Preschool program. Water will be provided at all times in our After School Child Care Programs and milk and/or water will be provided for our Preschool program.

Your child will be provided with a healthy snack including a wide variety of fruits or vegetables each day. We will also serve another food group including but not limited to low-fat cheese, low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese, all natural applesauce, healthy dry foods such as whole wheat pretzels, multi-grain crackers, and popcorn each day for snack. A snack menu will be posted in your child's classroom or site location.

We ask all parents to refrain from packing fried foods and foods high in sugar and saturated fats such as chips, cookies, gummies, fried chicken nuggets, etc. Ideas for appropriate lunches and snacks to bring can be provided upon request. The Office of Early Childhood requires that all lunches in our Preschool program contain an ice pack.



If your child's lunch needs to be heated up, the classroom has a microwave. Please keep in mind that snacks are not designed to take place of meals. They serve as a supplement to the child's food intake for that day.

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the staff of any dietary restrictions or food allergies your child may have. In severe cases it may become necessary for the parents to provide their child with a snack.

### **Days and Hours of Operation**

Preschool is in session year round. Preschool hours are 7:00am-6:00pm with the option of a part day which runs from 9:00am-1:00pm.

The School Age program will operate based on the public school calendar. Morning Care is available from 7:00am until the start of school each morning for those children who attend Darcey, Highland or Norton School.

Morning Care is available from 6:45am until the start of school each morning for those children who attend Doolittle School.

Afternoon Care is available from the time of school dismissal until 6:00 p.m. each afternoon and is available at all of the five elementary schools including.

### **Voice Mail and Site Numbers**

The YMCA's goal is to easily and accurately send and receive information to and from parents. All preschool parents can call the YMCA directly to be in touch with their child's classroom teacher. If you need to leave a message for the site your child is attending, please call the site and leave a message on the Voice Mail. Messages are checked by the sites at the start of each program. If there is an emergency you can contact the site directly during program hours. If you are unable to reach anyone at the site call the Cheshire Community YMCA and a staff will be sent out with the message.

#### **Locations**

Cheshire YMCA  
Chapman  
Darcey  
Doolittle  
Highland  
Norton

#### **Phone Numbers**

203-272-3150  
203-668-6385  
203-530-8344  
203-507-7230  
203-675-1568  
203-668-7087

### **Notification of School Personnel**

It is the Parent/Guardian responsibility to notify the school office and the child's teacher that the child will be attending the YMCA after care program. Please also notify school personnel of any changes to your child's before or after care schedule. Also all parents are required to complete an Available Seat Petition form with the Cheshire Public Schools Transportation office. Forms are available on our website and through the Board of Education.

### **School Vacation Days/Fun Days/Days at the YMCA (Darcey)**

When there are scheduled days off from school, the YMCA offers a full day of exciting activities from **7:00am-6:00pm\***. Age appropriate Fun Day trips are planned for children in grades K-6. Please see our detailed Fun Day flyers at the YMCA Learning Center, at your SACC site or at our Membership Services Desk.

Days at the YMCA are available for Darcey preschool children enrolled in our Darcey before and/or aftercare program. Care is available from 7:00am-6:00pm where your child will be integrated into our full day preschool program.

These days are a separate program that will require interested families to register and pay the program fee independently from the School-Age program. You must register at the main YMCA building. Additional forms may need to be completed at registration and/or on the day of the Fun Day.

Fun Days will not operate on the following days: Columbus Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and Labor Day.

Preschool will not operate on the following days: Columbus Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and Labor Day. We will close early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve at our YMCA Learning Center.

All childcare programs will be closed for two professional development days during the year on Columbus Day and Presidents Day. You will be notified if there is any change in the schedule.

Registration for the next month's Fun Days will begin on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the actual Fun Days. For example, registration for any

November Fun Days will begin on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Registration will continue until the program is full or up to one business day prior to trip. *No registrations will be accepted on the day of the Fun Day.* Your first registration must be made in person to assure that the proper paperwork is filled out completely.

\*Note: A late fee will be charged to those children who are picked up later than 6:00 p.m. (See Late Fee policy.)

### **Scheduled Public School Early Dismissal Days**

School Age Child Care will be held from the time of dismissal until 6:00pm on all scheduled early dismissal days.

### **Delayed Openings and Early School Closings due to Inclement Weather**

Darcey Before Care, Doolittle Before Care, Highland Before Care and Norton Before Care will open at 8:00am on Cheshire Public School delayed openings. Preschool will also open at 8:00am on delayed openings unless otherwise noted.

If school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, After Care will **NOT** be available. On these days parents should make arrangements for their child prior to the beginning of the school day. *An Available Seat Petition form should be filled out before the school year to ensure your child has a seat on a bus when school closes early.* The child should be aware of these plans as well as the school they attend. It is the responsibility of the parents to find out if the Cheshire Public Schools are dismissing early, the YMCA will not notify you. Remember, YMCA staff will not be at the After School sites.

If the Preschool program closes early, the Early Learning Center will contact you and notify you. Please also look for the Cheshire YMCA Learning Center closures on Channel 3 and 30.

### **Snow Days**

When there are school cancellations due to inclement weather, the YMCA offers a full day of age appropriate activities from **8:00am-6:00pm** at the YMCA for children in grades PreK-6 who are registered in our before and/or aftercare program.

Snow Days are a separate program that will require interested families to register and pay the program fee independently from the School Age program. You must register at the main YMCA building. Additional

forms may need to be completed at registration and/or on the day of the Snow Day. Registration opens October 1<sup>st</sup>, and is limited so please register early!

Preschool will run from 8:00am-6:00pm on Snow Days unless you are notified.

### **Emergency Closing**

There may be times during the year when it will be necessary to close our Child Care programs (severe weather, power failure, etc.). In such an event:

- Parents will be contacted and are expected to pick up their children within one hour.
- If the parents cannot make it, the parents should call someone who is authorized to pick up the child.
- If the YMCA cannot reach the parents, they will attempt to reach someone on the authorized pick-up list.

### **Summer Vacation (children K-6)**

During the summer vacation, the Cheshire Community YMCA School Age Child Care program is not held. Parents are encouraged to register their children for an exciting camping experience at YMCA Camp Quinnipiac and/or YMCA Camp Sloper. Details are available in the spring at the front desk of the YMCA. Before and After Camp care is also available through the Cheshire Community YMCA. For more information, please visit our website, [www.sccymca.org](http://www.sccymca.org), or contact the YMCA front desk.

### **Clothing**

Children should wear comfortable clothing suitable to the season and activities of the Child Care program. Please feel free to send a change of clothes with your child if deemed necessary. Please be sure to dress your child appropriately during the winter months so they may participate in outdoor play. For all full day Preschool programs please provide a change of clothing and shoes to keep in your child's classroom. All children's clothing should be labeled with the child's name. The YMCA is not responsible for damaged or dirty clothing due to program activities. Flip flops are not allowed.

### **Health Regulations and Records**

A current health form must be kept on file for each child in the program and must be provided by the parents before the start of the school year. This is a State of Connecticut licensing requirement and children will not be permitted to attend the program without a health

form. Please update your child's health record following all well child visits so that we may have accurate and up to date information. At a minimum health forms must be updated in kindergarten, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Preschool and Darcey preschool children are required to provide a current health form annually.

The School Age Program is required to keep accurate records for each child in our program. Please report changes in information (address, home, business or emergency phone #, etc.) to your Site Coordinator or the School Age Director.

### **Communicable Diseases**

Children with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain in our program:

Temperature of 101 or higher, greenish discharge from the nose, a chronic, deep or hacking cough, stomach ache, ear infection, conjunctivitis (pink eye), strep throat, head lice, vomiting, diarrhea, rashes of unknown origin, or the presence of a contagious disease.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occurs 3 or more times in a 24 hour period of time. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

A child who has vomited must be kept home for 24 hours after their last episode.

A child with an ear infection may return once they are on medication for the infection, have a normal temperature and are experiencing no pain or discomfort or with approval from your doctor.

A child will be allowed to return to Before/After Care if he/she has been on medicine for a contagious illness for 24 hours and/or is fever free. Fever free means no Tylenol or any other antipyretic (fever reducer) for 4-6 hours prior to checking in.

A child with greenish discharge from the nose, a chronic, deep or hacking cough, a sore throat, or rash may return to the program when symptoms are gone or with a doctor's note stating that the child is not contagious.

**If a child is well enough to attend child care, he/she is well enough to participate in all activities at the YMCA including outdoor play and gym time.**

A child will be sent home if any of the above symptoms are seen during the day. **It is expected that if a child leaves the YMCA after 12 noon, he/she will remain at home the full next day to assure complete recovery.** The center is not equipped to care for ill children. Each family must be prepared with a reliable emergency contact in the event the child becomes ill during the day and parents cannot be reached.

Once a parent has been notified, the child should be picked up from the site within one hour. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick up their child within one hour, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact form once a parent is reached. If a parent is unable to be reached, the staff will begin to call people listed on the emergency contact form until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

If your child is absent due to illness, we request that you notify the Director. This enables us to keep track of any illness that may occur at school. This information will only be shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis. If your child has a communicable disease we will share the nature of the disease with the parents in the center and the symptoms to look for. No child's name will be released to the other parents.

### **Illness**

Parents are required by the Department of Public Health to notify the program director whenever their child has been exposed to or has contracted a contagious illness. If your child has specific medical needs, the program director should be notified.

If a child contracts lice, parents will be notified immediately to pick up their child. To return to the program, proof of treatment must be provided. The child must be nit free and re-treated after seven days and cleared. Specific details regarding lice are available at the YMCA Learning Center.

### **Hand Washing**

Hand washing is one of the most important steps in controlling illness. Our staff and children wash hands before eating, before handling food,

after wiping noses, after using the bathroom and following any messy activities. Please encourage this practice with your child at home. For hands to be considered thoroughly washed, children should be able to sing "Happy Birthday" twice (or any other songs that total 20-30 seconds in length).

### **Injury**

If a child is injured during the program hours a staff person certified in first aid will treat the child if the injury is minor. If the injury is more serious and emergency medical care is needed, parents will be contacted immediately. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, the YMCA will take necessary steps to obtain an ambulance. Emergency personnel will determine which emergency treatment center to transport the child to.

Should your child be injured during the course of the day, an injury report will be completed by a staff member. You will be asked to review the report and sign off that you have been notified of the injury. A staff member will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pickup time. Please contact the School Age Director or Early Childhood Director should you feel it necessary to have an in depth discussion regarding an incident.

### **Administration of Medication**

*Medication administration is available by certified staff.*

1. Before medication (prescription and non-prescription) is administered, the Cheshire YMCA must have the following:
  - Authorization for the Administration of Medication form must be filled out completely. Please make sure the dates on the order are current and that the order has doctor's signature and parent's signature.
  - Medication must be in a safety cap container. Please make sure that the medication matches exactly what the doctor has prescribed. We cannot accept generic forms of medications if the doctor has indicated a brand name. We must also have the medication in the form which the doctor has prescribed i.e. tablet, liquid, capsule.
  - The original prescription label must be on the container.
  - The name of the child must be on the container.
  - The date of the prescription will be within one month for antibiotics and within the expiration date for medications which are also labeled.
2. Medications need to be brought the Learning Center so that all information can be reviewed by a director prior to the

implementation of the doctor's order. **Do not give medications to site staff or to children to deliver.**

3. No medication will be administered until all the above have been given to the YMCA.

### **Individual Care Plans (ICP)**

If your child has special health care or developmental needs you will need to complete the appropriate individual care plan for your child. Care plans will be required for severe allergies, asthma, seizure disorders, chronic illness, specific dietary needs, hearing or visual impairments, chronic illness or the history of a contagious disease or specific behaviors such as developmental delays or court documentation relating to custody and/or pick up of children. If your child has special health concerns please contact the School Age Director or Early Childhood Director to obtain the appropriate care plan.

For all custody agreements **PLEASE** provide the YMCA Learning Center with a copy of any legal court documentation and a care plan to be kept on file. This form is used to ensure all staff caring for your child are aware of his/her specific needs.

### **Diabetes**

If your child has diabetes, please obtain the proper paperwork from the YMCA Learning Center for your pediatrician to complete. These forms will include information such as maintenance of the child's individual monitoring equipment, reading and interpreting the results, appropriate actions to take when test results fail to fall in the specified ranges and any dietary restrictions. Prior to the child enrolling or continuing in the program, parents need to arrange a time with the staff and the Child Care administrative team to go over any instructions related to your child's diabetic needs.

If a prescription is to be administered to assist in the treatment of diabetes, our center will only administer medication from an automatic, pre-filled cartridge injector.

### **Fire/Emergency Drills/Actual Emergencies**

We conduct fire, lock down and emergency/evacuation drills throughout the school year. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times because this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.



During a drill or real situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into or out of the program.

In the event of a real fire or emergency situation, the Director or designee will inform each staff member if the program site will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by phone of the situation. As with the sick child pick-up policy, children must be picked up within one hour of the telephone call.

### **Alternative Safe Location**

Should the administration of the YMCA or any emergency service personnel determine the main YMCA building is too dangerous to occupy, below are our expectations and procedures.

- The staff and children will be evacuated to the back of the building or to Cheshire High School. Once the children are assembled there, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up.

Should the administration of the YMCA or any emergency service personnel determine the school building is too dangerous to occupy, below are our expectations and procedures.

- The staff and children will be taken to the YMCA main building, a close proximity school where they may join the YMCA program or Cheshire High School from the School Age child care program. Once the children are assembled there, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up.

### **Fees Will Be Charged Regardless of Attendance**

There is no partial payment if a child is out sick. The only exception would be if a child were away from the program due to a prolonged illness. In such a case, the School Age Director, the Early Childhood Director or the Program and Membership Registrar needs to be notified at the beginning of the absence not upon returning to the program. No credit will be given for past time missed.

## **Arrival and Departure**

Please understand that a child entering a new setting may have mixed emotions. The experience may be exciting as well as overwhelming. The separation period can also be somewhat uncomfortable for parents and children. This is normal, separation will be handled with the utmost care.

In complying with state regulations, and more importantly, for the safety of your child, we ask that you bring your child into the program site each day. We ask that you sign them in every day on the sheets provided for you. Please ensure that you also write the time you are dropping off your child. Please also make sure a YMCA program staff member acknowledges your child's arrival. We begin the program promptly at 6:45am or 7:00am depending on location. Children may not be left unattended until they are signed-in at this time.

When you pick up at the end of the day, please sign your child out and check for any notices or memos that may be posted for your information. Please ensure that you also write the time you are picking up your child. If, for any reason, you feel that you will be late to pick up your child, please try to make other arrangements for your child to be picked up or call the YMCA to tell us of the situation. Please make every effort to pick up your child by 6:00pm.

If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up your child, a written note is needed (if not already listed on the pick-up list). In an emergency, verbal permission will be accepted; however, we will verify the call to verify your identity. A picture ID will be needed by the person picking up your child from the program. Please be sure to update your child's pick-up list as often as necessary.

## **Late Pick Up Fees**

It is important that you pick up your child by 1:00pm for the part day preschool or 6:00pm for full day preschool and aftercare, as we schedule our staff around these times. Children enrolled in the Preschool program or School Age Child Care programs are expected to be picked up by 6:00pm each day. If you arrive late, a late fee of \$1 for every minute or any portion thereof will be charged to your account. Upon your late arrival you will be asked to sign a late pickup form which will be returned to the YMCA for billing purposes. Continued lateness may jeopardize your child's spot in the program.

### **Authorized Pickup**

Children will only be released to those individuals who are listed on the authorized pick-up list in the child's file. Anyone who is picking up for the first time or someone who the staff does not recognize will be asked to show photo identification. This is done for the safety and security of each child in our program; so please make sure whoever comes to pick up your child brings a photo-ID with them. Minors must be at least 16 years of age with a current photo ID and must be on the pickup list in order to pick up children in any of our child care programs.

If the person picking your child up is not on the pickup list, you must send in written permission authorizing this person to pick up your child. Please include that person's address and phone number where they may be reached. Again, staff will need to see a photo-ID. YMCA staff will not release your child to someone they do not recognize without a photo ID and written permission from the parent.

The Cheshire YMCA Learning Center is a secure facility. All families are issued a code for building access. We ask that you please keep your code confidential.

### **Child Not Picked Up**

If a child has not been picked up fifteen minutes after their scheduled pick up time, the staff will attempt to contact the parents. Staffing will consist of two staff at least 18 years or older. If staff are unable to reach the parents and the child is not picked up by 6:30pm, staff will call the emergency contacts. If staff are unable to reach anyone and the child has not been picked up by 7:00pm we have no choice but to contact the Cheshire Police Department and request their assistance in locating you. (This is one of the reasons why it is crucial that work phone numbers and emergency numbers be kept up to date.)

### **Absences**

If your child is going to be absent from any Child Care Program please leave a message on the Site's Voice Mail or contact the Cheshire Community YMCA at (203) 272-3150 and ask for your child's classroom teacher or the Early Childhood Director or Child care Director. Our staff account for each child every day. It is much appreciated if you let us know that your child was not at school that day. You may also contact the site directly 15 minutes prior to school dismissal and inform site staff if your child is going to be absent.

## **Mandated Reporters**

All YMCA staff members are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Public Health. An oral report will be made within 12 hours of the suspicion and a written report within 48 hours.

*Child Abuse includes:* any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning), any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation), neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision) emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth) or at risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect)

If a child's abuse is so severe that it requires medical attention, an ambulance will be called. The child will be accompanied by two staff people.

The YMCA also takes many precautions to hire quality staff to care for children in our programs. We strive to create an environment where potential abusers will choose not to pursue employment due to the lack of opportunity for individual contact with children and the likelihood of discovery and negative consequences if such an attempt occurred. We have a stringent screening system to eliminate applicants with various risk factors. We provide child abuse training to all of our Child Care staff upon hire and annually after that.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

Within the YMCA, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of the YMCA who have a "need to know" to provide appropriate and safe care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about YMCA staff, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as the YMCA strives to protect everyone's right of privacy.

Outside of the YMCA, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided by law.

You may observe children at our programs who have special needs or who exhibit a behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, etc.). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of

the YMCA are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

We assess your child's developmental progress in our preschool program through staff observation. We use this information to formulate lesson plans, guide themes and create an individualized educational plan for your child. Assessment records are confidential and will only be shared with the teachers in your child's class, the Early Childhood Director and the child's parents.

### **Parents Right to Immediate Access**

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in the care of the YMCA, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) the YMCA must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, we must have court documentation to that effect.

In the absence of a court order on file with the YMCA, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The YMCA cannot, without a court order, limit access of one parent regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, the YMCA suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. The YMCA staff will contact the Cheshire Police should a conflict arise.

Visitors (other than parents) are asked to schedule appointments with the Director, bring a photo ID and are allowed in the facility only at the discretion of the Director. An employee of the YMCA will accompany visitors at all times throughout the program.

### **Legal Custody**

We require a copy of the legal custodial agreement in situations when parents are unable to pick up their children on specific days or at all. If a court has not determined parental custody, both parents have a right to pick-up their children and we are not legally allowed to keep a parent from picking their child up from our program.

**Withdrawal from Program**

At least two weeks notification must be given to the Childcare Registrar prior to the withdrawal of a child from the Child Care program. This notification should be in writing. You will be responsible for fees until the last day of your child's attendance.

**Inclusion/Special Needs**

The YMCA does not discriminate against any child on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, marital status of the parent, or because of a need for special care. Our goal is to meet the individual needs of each child within the structure of our program while maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff.

The YMCA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable Federal, State or local law in providing services to children with special needs or disabilities. Each child brings his or her own uniqueness to the program. We will consider the application of any child.

Children with special needs will be considered for admission to the program on a case by case basis. If your child will require special services or additional accommodations are requested, please contact the appropriate program's Director so that we may set up a plan to best serve your child's needs.

A YMCA Director will meet with parents/guardians before enrollment to assess the child's individual care needs. The YMCA has an obligation to ensure the physical and emotional safety of each of the children entrusted to our care. It is essential that all information about the child's needs be available to staff from the beginning of the enrollment process, so that a continuing bond of trust and mutual partnership exists for the benefit of the child. Upon enrollment, a written care plan will be developed between the parent and the program (and possibly with outside specialists), on specifics relating to the care of the child. Staff and parents will continue to meet regularly to monitor the child's progress.

It is sometimes necessary to redirect children with special needs, especially if we do not have the facilities or staff to help that child. Children who pose an actual direct risk of harm to others or who cannot be accommodated safely will not be admitted/continued in the program.

Minimal monitoring and extra supervision is reasonable as long as it is not fundamentally different from the responsibilities that all child care staff have for safety and well-being of their program participants. The YMCA is unable to provide one-to-one care for any child except on an intermittent basis, such as injuries, immediate disciplinary issues, and certain personal care needs customarily provided to other children.

If it is unclear whether the YMCA can reasonably accommodate the unique needs of a child, we will arrive at a final decision by reviewing the circumstances on a case-by-case basis. A review will be comprised of: 1) the Director meeting with the child and family to observe the child in the childcare setting. 2) The Director assessing the staff person's ability to properly care for the child. This may include whether additional staff training, at a cost that is not unreasonable to the YMCA would mitigate the difficulty. 3) The Director observing the child's adaptation to the group of children and discuss the child's needs with the program's staff.

A discussion of possible, necessary accommodations will be undertaken and accommodations that are reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program will be offered and implemented. If a proposed accommodation is prohibitively costly or would fundamentally alter the nature of the program, the parents will be informed without delay.

A two week trial period may be utilized to help make a final determination of our ability to provide child care services.

The YMCA does not offer diaper-changing services as part of our child care service. In general, mandated staff-child ratios and the YMCA's risk-management policies do not permit us to sequester one or more staff in a private area away from the group of children in order to perform this service.

In licensed child care program a staff member certified to administer medications will be on site at all times. This staff member will administer medications to children who have asthma, who experience allergic reactions, or require blood-glucose tests. The YMCA will not administer insulin shots, or shots of any other kind. Any other substitute foods for raising blood sugar, such as honey, or orange juice, or other food substance, will be maintained at the parents' request if we are reasonably able to do so. Parents of children with any potentially life-threatening illness or condition must provide the YMCA of an emergency contact that is available while the child is in our care.

The parents or other professionals designated by parents must train staff in the proper administration of medications and complete all required paperwork.

Guidelines for behavior are just that – guidelines and not rigid rules. If staff believes that a situation exists that poses a direct threat of immediate physical harm to the child, to other children, or to staff, the Director may make the decision to immediately suspend or to expel the child.

If it is determined that a child whose needs cannot be met in our child care program through reasonable accommodations, but could potentially be met successfully with an accommodation such as an additional caretaker not funded by the YMCA, an agreement with the YMCA must be in place prior to enrollment.

The agreement will provide that the caretaker: 1) is at least 18 years of age, 2) has been fingerprinted and cleared of criminal records, 3) is free from tuberculosis and is determined fit to care for children by a physician 4) meets all applicable state standards for the type of services 5) is not an employee or independent contractor of the YMCA 6) will be subject to the overall supervision of the YMCA while he or she is present at the program.

### **Positive Discipline and Behavior Management**

The Cheshire Community YMCA Child Care Program promotes the belief that discipline is a method of providing children with the structure, support, encouragement, and problem-solving skills they need to make responsible decisions. Positive discipline is teaching children how to be productive members of society and giving them the opportunity to learn from their mistakes in a safe and supportive environment. In the YMCA Program staff are trained to use redirection, problem solving, and logical and natural consequences to help children learn to make better choices and behave responsibly. Children are held to high standards of behavior and staff members are expected to be consistent and firm in their approach to behavior concerns.

Prevention is the most powerful tool for managing discipline in a large program. A program environment that encourages freedom of movement, choices of activity, and clear boundaries prevents behavior problems. Each program must set clear expectations, adults who model appropriate communication and problem solving strategies, and activities that teach and encourage children to discuss problems and deal effectively with anger. A quality and well run program has a team



of staff members who are calm, use appropriate language, help children work through problem solving steps, and use reflective and active listening techniques.

The following techniques may be used to help modify children's behaviors:

- Changing the setting
- Giving consequences
- Diverting attention
- Encouragement
- Giving choices
- Reinforcing positive behaviors
- Encouraging the use of words to express feelings
- Giving reasons
- Appropriate humor
- Setting limits
- Encouraging better conflict resolution techniques
- Using positive language
- Redirecting behavior
- Warnings

Physical force may not be used as a disciplinary measure. There will be continuous supervision by staff during any disciplinary action with children. Continual disruption of class (when your child requires continual one on one attention and redirection throughout the day) is jeopardizing the quality education programming of others. A meeting will be requested to help limit this.

### **Cheshire Community YMCA Discipline Standards**

1. Children will be treated with respect and dignity.
2. Children will abide by the expectations in our child care programs:  
Be kind, Be safe, Take care of each other, Take care of our surroundings.
3. Program expectations will be posted so both children and parents can see them.
4. Staff will review the expectations as needed with the group and individually.

### **Low Tolerance Behaviors**

Low-tolerance behaviors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Biting
- Hitting an adult, teacher or staff in our program (aggressive and intentional)

- Risk of flight (attempting to run or running out of the classroom or program area, not to be confused with disassociating from a group or activity)
- Consistent profanity

The staff will use the discipline procedure outlined in the behavior modification section of this handbook and observe the child to determine what may provoke the inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control the behavior. Because our goal is to develop, not dismiss, a child may be given an opportunity to correct the behavior after a consequence has been served. Limited chances may be given in low tolerance behavior situations.

Any instances of low tolerance behaviors will be documented and kept on file for review. A copy will be given to parents for signature. In the event of a serious threat of violence to children or staff, a director will determine appropriate steps of action. Directors will also determine future participation in the program.

Guidelines for behavior are just that- guidelines and not rigid rules. If staff believes that a situation exists that poses a direct threat of immediate physical harm to the child, to other children or to staff, the Director may make the decision to immediately suspend or to expel the child.

### **Suspension Policy**

There are times in which a child's behavior is harmful verbally or physically to other children or staff in the program. At these times the following steps will be taken:

1. Staff will meet with the child and their family to develop a behavior agreement.
  - The agreement will address what steps staff have already done to help the child with their negative behavior including behavior charts, incentive program, or special privileges.
  - The agreement will also outline which behaviors will not be tolerated and consequences for continuing them. Suspension from the program will be determined by School Age Director or Early Childhood Director.

*When possible parents will be provided with two weeks notice to find alternative care arrangements. The YMCA reserves the right to*

*terminate without notice when the safety of children or staff is threatened by the attendance of a child.*

### **Dismissal of a Child**

Children enrolled in our program begin with a 30-day probationary period. During this time staff will observe the child's behavior, emotional needs and their ability to adapt in a healthy manner to the structure of the program. If during this period the program cannot meet the needs of the child, parents will be required to remove the child from the program.

Parents will be required to remove a child from the program if:

- The child is a danger to him/herself, to the other children in the program, or to the staff.
- The parents refuse to follow the program policies as described in this handbook.
- The child cannot adapt in a manner that will encourage healthy growth and development, or whose needs cannot be met with the resources available to the program.
- If a special accommodation for the care of a child is made that:
  1. Can no longer be met with the available resources
  2. Is not consistent with the policies, program philosophy or practices of the YMCA

If a child is dismissed from our program, parents will be refunded any unused tuition. A YMCA check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file.

### **Bullying Statement**

With the influence of state guidelines, local school systems and community consultants, the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCA's define bullying as follows:

Bullying is any obvious and premeditated act by a child or group of children directed towards another child with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other child while in a YMCA program or event. These acts are targeted towards the same child over a continuous period of time.

Bullying behavior by any child at a YMCA program is strictly prohibited. This conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or permanent dismissal from our YMCA program or programs.

Children and parents may file verbal or written reports of suspected bullying behavior. We encourage these reports to be made to the department or program director. Children are permitted to anonymously report suspected acts of bullying to the YMCA staff and/or YMCA program directors. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed.

If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the person, consistent with his/her right of due process. Both the suspected bully's parent and the bullying victim's parent will be notified.

Dishonest and fabricated claims of bullying to discredit or harm another child or family will also be reviewed and taken seriously.

### **Payment for Damages**

Parents will be held responsible for payment of replacement or repairs to property that has been damaged by their child as a result of inappropriate behavior. Example: vandalism, rock throwing, fighting, or throwing fragile equipment.

### **YMCA Outside Care Policy**

The YMCA prohibits its staff from providing outside care services to YMCA members and program participants. Outside Care Services are defined as babysitting, instruction or tutoring, giving lessons, life-guarding, transportation, etc. and are provided off YMCA premises and on the employee's own time.

### **Personal Items**

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and possible loss, children are discouraged from bringing in toys from home unless specifically requested. iPads, iPods, leap frogs and music players, personal games and toys are also not permitted unless specifically requested with the understanding that the YMCA is not responsible for items lost or stolen. For preschool, these electronics may be permitted with parent's permission for rest time. All electronics must have headphones so as to not disturb others. Cell phones are not permitted for general use for school age children.

### **Family Communication**

A successful program cannot exist without effective communication with your family. At the YMCA, we value your input and support and welcome your participation. This may include spending some time at the program with your child, sharing a special hobby or talent with the program, attending our family events, or communicating with the staff about any concerns, comments, or suggestions you may have.

Parents may visit our Child Care Program at any time. We do ask that you limit your visit to 20-30 minutes. We do not allow cameras except on special occasions (i.e., first day of school, Halloween, etc.) or with special permission for the privacy of other families.

As for the YMCA, our efforts to promote successful communication include:

- Asking staff to be available to greet and talk to parents/guardians before and after school.
- Displaying notices, special events, and articles of interest to on a parent board.
- Sending regular newsletters to inform you of our activities and plans for the future.
- Planning family events throughout the year.
- Scheduling parent-staff conferences whenever needed or requested.
- Remind.com updates

Preschool offers parent conferences once per school year with the option to schedule another whenever necessary. Written notice indicating exact dates and times will be sent home in the newsletter with the conferences are approaching. The conferences are a time when teachers can discuss your child's developmental progress at length with you.