



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

# ACTIVE, SAFE & HAVING FUN

**Parent Handbook for School-Age Child Care Programs**



**YMCA OF BRISTOL**

## GENERAL CHILD CARE INFORMATION

Welcome! Our intent is to make our child care program a happy and safe experience for your child. The Y is the largest nonprofit child care provider in the United States, with a history of stability built on Christian principles and morals. Our services extend throughout the community, reaching children of varied ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Our purpose in providing quality child care programs is to support parents in their desire for children to grow to their fullest potential. Providing a safe environment, meeting children's need for challenge and stimulation, and surrounding them with people who know how to listen will help achieve that goal. Each child has talents and skills to develop, energy to put to use, and huge reservoirs of creativity that need to be encouraged.

## CHILD CARE DAYS & HOURS OF OPERATION

**Child Care is available at the Y Monday through Friday, with the following exceptions:\***

- Labor Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day

\*Additional days may be added at the discretion of the Youth & Families Director

**After School:** During pick-up time (5:00-6:00 pm) we will have a staff member greet you at your vehicle, check ID, and send your child to you.

\*Should you arrive before or after pick-up time, upon entering the Y facility, please check in with the front desk. If you are a member, check in using your membership card. If you are not a member, tell the membership representative why you are there and sign in on the community guest form. Children will be released only to persons indicated on the "pick-up" portion of the registration form, and they will need to have their photo ID with them. Any person not known by staff (at any time) will be asked to verify their identity by showing a photo ID. If there is someone who is not allowed to pick up your child, you will need to have a copy of the legal documents on file with the Youth and Families Director. We are sorry if the above inconveniences anyone, but the safety of the children is most important.

**Camp:** Campers must be signed in and out every day of attendance. This is to ensure the safety of every child.

Pre-camp drop-off occurs from 7:00-9:00 am

Post-camp pick-up occurs from 4:00-6:00 pm

Parents who need to drop off or pick up children during camp hours (9:00 am-4:00 pm), will need to notify the Youth and Families Director.

**All child care programs close at 6:00 pm.**

## SCHOOL SCHEDULED CLOSINGS

On days when school is closed (e.g. teacher work days, Presidents' Day), care is available during normal child care hours through School's Out Camp at the Y.

## APPLICATION & REQUIRED PAPERWORK

All parents must complete a child care application for each child attending the program and return it before your child's first day in the program.

The Y's school-age child care programs admit children 4-12 years of age. Children of any race, color, religion, gender and national/ethnic origin are granted all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available at school. The will address physically challenged and special needs children on a per request basis with the hope that we can serve all children who come to us. The Y does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or national/ethnic origin in administration of its personnel and admissions policies. It is our hope to have a culturally diverse population within our staff, participants and programs.

## COMMUNICATIONS

For immediate assistance and in case of emergency, the best mode of communication is to call the Y directly. If we must get in contact with you due to an emergency, we will call the numbers listed on your child care application in priority order. If we are unable to reach a parent or guardian, we will call the emergency contacts. There are many other ways that we communicate with our members, including the following:

- [bristolymca.net](http://bristolymca.net)
- Email updates
- Direct mail
- Follow YMCA of Bristol on Facebook and Instagram
- Text Alerts: Text "Bristol" to 84483



## FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & ADDITIONAL FEES

### PAYMENT POLICY

**Afterschool:** Monthly session fees are due 2 weeks before the month starts (excluding the 1<sup>st</sup> month's fee that is due upon registration). Example: On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, payment will be due for May. Your first session of service must be paid at time of registration. Any fees not paid in advance are subject to a \$10 late fee charge. More than two weeks of non-payment after the due date may result in automatic suspension from the program. You may pay these fees at Membership Services, through automatic draft, or online.

**Camp:** Camp payments are due a week prior to the start of the week your child is attending camp. A \$25 deposit is due for each week of camp upon registration. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. Parents are responsible for full payment for each week a camper is signed up for, unless a two week notice is given. This should give us ample time to fill the spot. Payments for specialty camps are due in full at time of registration.

### LATE OR RETURNED PAYMENT FEES POLICY

Payments made after the deadline will be assessed an additional \$10 late fee. Your child will be removed from the program if:

- Fees become more than two weeks late
- Your child is absent for more than two weeks without payment. Your child may not return to the program until the balance is paid.

If your check or draft is returned for any reason, a \$10 returned check fee will be assessed. If more than two checks are returned, the Y will be unable to accept your personal checks. At that time, all future program fees must be paid in cash in advance or by money order.

### TERMINATION POLICY

If you are withdrawing your child from our program, written notification is required.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Y is able to provide financial assistance based on ability to pay, thanks to generous supporters of our annual giving campaign. We understand that financial hardships may happen at unexpected times during the school year, and we work quickly to provide financial assistance to families based upon their ability to pay. If your family has trouble affording care, please contact Member Services regarding financial assistance options.

If you wish to apply for financial assistance, please obtain an application from Member Services or online at [bristolymca.net](http://bristolymca.net). All scholarships are awarded based on availability of scholarship funds and are made possible through the generosity of Y donors.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Parents are expected to sign their children in upon arrival in the morning and sign them out before leaving in the afternoon. There is a sign-in/sign-out preprinted sheet available as you enter the program. All persons signing children in/out must be at least 16 years of age.

### **AUTHORIZATION TO PICK UP**

Authorization to pick up a child is given in the child care application. We will not release your child to a person not authorized in writing by the custodial parent. Identification will be requested of anyone that we do not know. Our staff cannot legally refuse to release a child to a verified natural parent unless there is a court order in the child's file stating that the parent does not have custodial rights. Only the courts can give us that right.

### **FOOD ALLERGIES/OUTSIDE FOOD**

The health and safety of our children is of the utmost importance. It is imperative that the child care staff is aware of any food allergies before enrollment.

### **VISITATION / INVOLVEMENT / FEEDBACK**

The Y highly encourages parent involvement. We are honored that you choose us to help raise your child and we want to make sure we are on the right track. If you wish to visit your child while in the program, you are always welcome. We just ask for advance notice. If you wish for feedback on your child's development, you are welcome to ask at any time.

### **UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION**

We ask that any updates to phone numbers, emergency contacts or authorized pick-up list be given in a timely manner. We will ask you to review your child's information on file quarterly.

### **NOTIFICATIONS OF ATTENDANCE**

For the safety of all children, please understand that when your child does not show up to our program, we must verify his/her whereabouts. This puts great strain on the rest of the program participants since the program cannot start until a final headcount is accurate. Notification prior to the program start of planned absences, early pick up, or planned tardiness will ensure the smoothest transition for all participants.

### **PARTNERS IN CARE**

At every opportunity, we hope to promote the mission and core values of the Y. Parents/guardians not displaying these core values to their children, our staff or other stakeholders could be asked to exit the program.

## LATE PICK-UP POLICY

If you know you are going to be late, call us. We understand that things come up and traffic can be challenging even in the best of times. We understand that a late pick-up may occur on a rare occasion. However, many of our programs operate in a shared space, and we are unable to continue providing care after we close. Our programs close at 6:00 pm, and if your child is not picked up by the end of the program, then a late fee will be charged to you and collected at pick-up. If it is 6:01 pm (by our clock), then it is time for our program to close and you will be charged a fee. The fee is \$15 per 15-minute interval.

If we have not heard from you by 6:00 pm and we cannot reach you by phone, your emergency numbers will be called and one of those contacts will be asked to come pick up your child. If neither you nor your emergency contact can be reached, we will keep your child for one hour. After that time, the police will be contacted to see if there has been an accident and/or to drive by your home to see if there is a problem. If no problems are found, then Child Protective Services will be notified.

## EXCESSIVE LATE PICK-UP POLICY

The Y has found that it is necessary to have an excessive late pick-up policy, which could result in the removal of your child from our program. This policy is as follows: if you are late more than three times in any program cycle, you may be asked to remove your child.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### MEDICATION POLICY

If your child requires medication during care, we must have a signed authorization through a Medication Administration Form. Medication Administration Forms can be obtained from a staff member. Over-the-counter Medication Authorizations are good for one week, and then the Medication Authorization Form must be completed again. Prescribed and/or long-term medications for such things as asthma, ADHD, allergies etc, must have the Medication Administration Form completed by a parent.

All medication must be in the original bottle labeled with the child's name and will be stored in a locked box.

Please understand that it may not always be possible to administer medications as requested, and we cannot be responsible for missed doses. We are not required by law to administer medication and only do so as a service to the parent. Only those Y child care staff members who are certified "Medication Administrators" may dispense medications. When a child with diabetes is in the program, there will be a staff person certified in Diabetes Medication Training.

### OVER-THE-COUNTER SKIN PRODUCTS

Y child care staff will administer sunscreen, diaper ointment/cream and/or insect repellent as needed. Please alert child care staff of any adverse reactions. If you wish to provide your own skin product, it must be in the original container and must be labeled with your child's name. Note: Children under nine years of age may not administer their own sunscreen. Y child care staff will administer sunscreen to this age group.

## SICK CHILD POLICY

The health and safety of your child is a matter of major importance to all of us. In order to protect the children in the program who are well, we have very stringent rules about sick children. If your child becomes ill in our program, we will call you, and you must make arrangements to pick up your child within 30 minutes. Re-admission will be allowed with a doctor's note or when a child has been without symptoms for 24 hours. This means if we send your child home on Tuesday, he or she may not return until Thursday.

### **Please keep your child home if your child has:**

- Had a fever in the previous 24-hour period
- A cold that is less than two days old
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Constant cough
- Recurring vomiting or diarrhea (two or more times)
- Temperature of 100 degrees
- Symptoms of communicable diseases (sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache and abdominal pain plus fever)

## CHILD INJURY POLICY

Our staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR and will treat your child if they sustain a minor injury while in our care. We will notify you at pick-up if your child had a minor injury during the day. If your child has an injury that requires more than our First Aid skills allow, or your child has been bumped on the head, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you. If we are unable to reach you or the person you have designated in case of such emergencies, we will call the child's physician.

If necessary, we will call an ambulance. The program will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision. Please make every effort to keep the Y up-to-date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and other pertinent information.



## FOOD POLICY

An afternoon snack will be provided to school-age program participants. Lunches must be in an appropriate container that is labeled with the child's name.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The Y will make every effort to provide care in the event of inclement weather; however, the safety of the children and staff are our primary responsibility. The Y could close and/or adjust the inclement policy due to hazardous weather conditions. We will follow the same procedures to contact you regarding closings and/or adjustments to the policy as outlined previously.

## CHILD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

### BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS OF CHILDREN

There are clear and appropriate behavioral expectations for the children in our care. We try to set limits, help children understand rules and give clear definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Children are more likely to follow rules that have been introduced from the beginning. Rules that we teach include:

- We find out what the problem is
- We address the problem in a tactful way
- We listen to each other
- We care about each other's feelings
- We are responsible for what we say and do
- We do not use profanity
- We never leave the group without permission from an adult
- We use words, not fists, to solve problems



## DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is seen as an opportunity to guide children in their relationships and actions. By working with the child and not against, the best interests of the child are put first. The goal of discipline is to have the child control his/her behavior by making conscious decisions concerning his/her actions and to give the child reasonable ownership of the consequence. Children that show a strong and sincere desire to improve will be worked with as long as they are not considered dangerous to themselves or others. Corporal punishment such as, but not limited to, spanking, forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position, restraining to restrict movement through binding or tying, enclosing in a confined space, using exercise as a means of punishment, or withholding food, water or nap is forbidden under the Y philosophy and policies. Toileting accidents will not be disciplined. There will be no abusive language that would include, but not be limited to, threats or belittling remarks about any child or family. Documentation of the child's behavior will be recorded in the child's file. Depending on the offense, at the discretion of the Youth & Families Director, you may be notified via phone or at the end of the day.

All Y youth staff members have been trained to adhere to the following protocol when dealing with challenging behavior.

### Step 1:

When a child acts out for the first time, the negative behavior is discussed between counselor(s) and child until an agreement is reached. Depending on the severity of the action, the Director will be informed. Offenses related to drugs, firearms, smoking, fighting, physical or verbal abuse of staff or children, sexual misconduct, stealing or destruction of property will immediately be related to the Director.

### Step 2:

If negative behavior continues, the Director will become more directly involved. Once again, the behavior will be discussed until an agreement is reached with some possible consequences of breaking the agreement. Consequences will be in direct relationship to the offensive behavior whenever possible.

### Step 3:

If negative behavior continues, the child will meet with the Director. Parents/guardians will be called to help resolve the situation. If a child is unwilling to work within set boundaries, he or she will be sent home.

If it is necessary to dismiss a child from the program for disruptive or harmful behavior or failure to abide by the Participant Agreement, **there will not be any refund of fees.**

## **DRESS POLICY**

Children should wear comfortable and appropriate clothing for indoor and outdoor activities. We use washable paints and crayons; however, clothing can still get stained. We do not reimburse for clothing rips, stains or normal wear and tear. It is expected that parents will provide proper seasonal clothing and bathing suit with towel for swimming.

### **CLOSED TOED & CLOSED HEEL SHOES MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES.**

Open toed shoes can be a safety hazard to your child. Please have your child wear closed toed shoes for safety purposes.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS POLICY**

We have plenty of equipment and activities to keep your child busy. Please do not allow any toys, video games, electronic tablets or cell phones to accompany your child. This eliminates fights, theft and/or lost items that we cannot be responsible for AND WILL NOT REIMBURSE.

**Personal space** is important for every child. Our programs will have a designated place for your child to store their backpacks, lunchboxes and other items that they bring to the program with them.

## **OUTSIDE PLAY**

It is our belief that children need and want to be outside. Running, jumping and other such movement can only be accomplished outside. Outside play is essential for children to gain strength and develop to their fullest potential. We will be outside when the weather will permit.

## **POOL SAFETY**

Because your child is participating in Y programs involving the pool, and swimming is valued as a life skill, it is important that you child understands our pool safety rules:

- Check in with the lifeguard when entering the pool area.
- Shower before entering the pool.
- No unsafe entries from the side of the pool.
- No running, pushing, or shoving.
- Stay off the ropes.
- No shoes on the deck.
- No glass allowed in the pool area.
- A swim test of one pool length is required to swim in the deep end.
- When the whistle blows, pay attention to the lifeguard.

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

The growth and development of men, women, boys, girls and families has been the Y's principle concern for over 150 years. Through programs of health and wellness, aquatics, sports, camping, family programs and child care, the Y is responding to the needs of children and families. Many changes have occurred in the lives of children and families today. Some of these changes are positive. However, the alarming increase in child abuse is of particular concern to the Y. Throughout its history, the Y has been a strong advocate for children's rights. It is therefore most appropriate that mistreatment or neglect of children and the resulting severe effects would be of primary concern to the Y.

The Y advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, redirection, prevention and the development of self-discipline. At no time will the following disciplinary techniques be tolerated: physical punishment, yelling, striking, biting, kicking, squeezing, shaming, withholding food or rest room privileges, confining children in small locked rooms, or verbal or emotional abuse.

Affectionate touch, and the warm feelings it brings, is an important factor in helping a child grow into a loving and peaceful adult. However, Y staff and volunteers need to be sensitive to each person's need for personal space (i.e., not everyone wants to be hugged). The Y encourages appropriate touch; however, at the same time it prohibits inappropriate touch or other means of sexually exploiting children.

Based upon its concern for children, parents and Y staff, the following standards related to reporting procedures, staffing, standards, code of conduct and resources for parents and children, have been developed.

**\*\*Note:** The Y, like many other public institutions, is mandated by law to report suspected child abuse to Child Protective Services within 24 hours of reported incident.

"Child abuse is mistreatment or neglect of a child by parent(s) or others resulting in injury or harm. Child abuse may be physical, verbal, emotional or sexual. Its effects may result in severe emotional and physical handicaps, anti-social behavior, even death."



## **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

1. At the first report or suspicion of child abuse, the staff or volunteer to whom it has been reported will immediately inform his or her supervisor.
2. The Y will make a report within 24 hours to Child Protective Services and will request that the situation be investigated. In the event the reported incident or suspicion involves an employed staff person or volunteer, the CEO will suspend the person from all responsibilities (if appropriate, without pay) until the investigation is complete.
3. All staff members and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of information in this area and are therefore instructed to only discuss matters pertaining to abuse or suspected abuse with their supervisor and the CEO.
4. Y staff and volunteers may not make contact with children or parents involved in a child abuse incident without permission from the CEO.
5. Whether the incident or alleged offense takes place on or off Y premises, it will be considered job-related (due to the youth-involved nature of the Y).
6. All incidents or alleged offenses will be documented on the day of occurrence.

## **CHILD CARE STAFF RESPONSIBILITY**

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

For school-age programs, the schedule will be comprised of a snack, gross motor movement period, academic enrichment time, and programmed and free-time activities.

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

Whenever the Y transports children, parents can be confident that every precaution will be taken to ensure your child's safety.

Motor vehicle injuries represent the greatest threat to a child's life. We ensure your child's safety by being alert to potential dangers, eliminating or avoiding these dangers, and knowing what to do when an emergency occurs. When seatbelts are on the bus, your child will be seat-belted in and expected to stay seated. Children are expected to keep their hands to themselves and remain relatively quiet. At no time will a child be permitted to put his/her arms, hands or head out of the vehicle's windows.

No roughhousing will be tolerated at any time. Loading and unloading children will happen only when the vehicle is pulled up to a curb, the side of the road or in a driveway. We will only release children in our care to an authorized adult. At no time will an adult drive and discipline children at the same time. CHILDREN WILL NEVER BE LEFT ALONE IN A VEHICLE.

### **NO BABYSITTING POLICY**

Y child care staff members are prohibited from babysitting participants of Y child care programs.