

YWCA of the Hartford Region School Age Programs

Parent Handbook
Revised July 2008

**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca
hartford region

*135 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105
(860)525-1163 - www.ywcahartford.org*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	1	Nutrition	13
YWCA Statement of Philosophy	1	Managing and Modeling Behavior	13-14
School Age Program Description	2-3	Our Philosophy	13
Hours of Operation	3	School Age Code of Responsibility	14
Calendar of Operation	4	Conflict Resolution	14
School Vacation Programs	4	Parent Code of Conduct	14-15
Program & Inclement Weather Closing	4	Late Pick-up Policy and Procedures	15
Program Locations	5	Late Pick-Up Procedures	15
Staff Qualifications	6	Repeated Late Pick-Ups	15
Admission Policies and Procedures	6	Schedule Changes	15
Parental Involvement	7	Withdrawal from Program	15
Daily Communications and Expectations	8-9	Re-enrollment	15
Emergency Contacts	8	Confidentiality	16
Daily Drop Off and Pick Up	8	Parent Complaint/ Concern Policy	17
Absences	8	Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect	17
Conferences	8	Children w/ Special Needs	17
“Open Door” Policy/ Visits & Volunteering	9-10	Difficulty Adjusting to Program	18
Fundraising	9	Collaboration with other Agencies	18
Family Information Area	9	Financial Information and Procedures	18-19
Outdoor Activities	9	Types of Payment Accepted	18
Clothing	10	Monthly Payment Plan	19
Toys from Home	10	Finders Fee	19
Holidays and Celebrations	10	Credits and Refunds	19
Birthdays	10	Returned Checks/ Credit Card Denial	19
Photographs	10	Payment by Check	19
Health and Safety	11-13	State of CT Financial Assistance	20
Illness/ Exclusion Policy	11	Sibling/Multiple Child Discount	20
Special Care Policy	12		
Medication	12		
Emergency Care Procedures	12-13		
Emergency Communication	13		

WELCOME

Welcome to the YWCA of the Hartford Region school-age child care programs. We are glad that you have chosen the YWCA to meet your family's childcare needs. The YWCA of the Hartford Region looks forward to building a partnership with each of you in caring for your child. Our programs provide quality before and after school programming for children in grades K-5 (K-6 in some communities).

The YWCA is a membership organization. We require an adult membership of all families whose children under 12 are enrolled in our programs. Parents are welcome to participate in programs and share knowledge with children.

YWCA STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

- We believe that children learn best in a setting that respects their unique patterns of growth and development.
- We believe that the setting must be physically and emotionally safe if children are to develop trust in their world.
- We believe that children benefit from the company of others. We encourage the development of social skills by arranging opportunities for small and large group activities.
- We believe in a child's desire for independence. We provide environment rich opportunities to help children develop a positive self-concept.
- We believe in the natural creativity of children. Each individual's creative expression is unique and valued.
- We believe that children should exercise and play. We plan time for large and small muscle activities.
- We believe in families. We see ourselves as part of an extended family, working with families to provide the very best care for their children.
- We believe that children learn best in an accepting and nurturing setting that reflects the world around them. We provide opportunities that empower women and families.
- We believe in demonstrating responsive attitudes and practices to diverse cultures throughout the organization.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

YWKidslink meets the needs of parents who require a safe place for their children before and after the school day. The program, if located in a school, is typically held in the cafeteria.

Typical Morning Program

- 7:00 a.m. Children begin to arrive
Morning activities may include: arts/ crafts, board games, Reading, finishing homework, visiting with friends and snack
- 8:25 a.m. Cleanup, group game and announcements until dismissal
- 8:40 a.m.* Children report to regular classrooms

**The morning time of departure varies depending on the start of the school day*

Typical Afternoon Program

***The afternoon time of arrival varies depending on the end of the school day. Also, programs open earlier on scheduled early dismissal days.*

- 3:00 p.m.** Children arrive from classrooms
- 3:05 p.m. Attendance taken, announcements made, activity choices and schedule
- 3:10 p.m. Outside or indoor play for 30 to 45 minutes
- 3:40 p.m. Inside, wash up, snack available or activity center
- 4:15 p.m. Quiet time - reading, homework, puzzles, drawing (table activities) or library corner for story time
- 4:35 p.m. Activity Centers open – centers may include:
- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Arts and Crafts | Service Learning Projects |
| Outside Play | Science |
| Group Games | Board Games |
| Individual Sports | Interest Clubs |
| Homework Help | Drama |
| Special Events and Parties | |
- 5:45 p.m. *All Manchester programs close*
- 6:00 p.m. *All other programs close (i.e. Bolton, West Hartford, Wethersfield and Rocky Hill)*

YWKinderfun is designed for children who attend morning kindergarten. It is located in the **Bolton Program Center**.

Typical Program

- 11:30 a.m. Buses arrive from school – Children are greeted
 - 11:45 a.m. Attendance taken, announcements made
 - 11:50 a.m. Wash hands and have lunch
 - 12:30 p.m. Circle time
 - 1:00 p.m. Activity centers open
 - 1:45 p.m. Outside play and/or gym activities
 - 2:30 p.m. Quiet time –quiet music, reading, time to relax
 - 3:30 p.m. Wash hands and have a snack
 - 4:00 p.m. Individual group activities with a teacher
- Centers open. Centers may include:
- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Arts and Crafts | Math |
| Science and Nature | Library/Reading |
| Manipulatives | Home Living Area |
| Board Games | Music and Movement |

Interest centers are set up around the classroom with a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials, thus encouraging each child to be actively involved in the learning process at his or her own level.

HOURS OF OPERATION

YWKidslink:

- Before School hours of operation are from 7:00 a.m. to the start of the school day, approximately 8:45 a.m.
- After School hours of operation are approximately 3:00 p.m.until 6:00 p.m.
- *The YWKidslink programs in Manchester close at 5:45 p.m.*
- Programs open earlier on scheduled early dismissal days

YWKinderfun:

- **Hours of operation are** from 11:30 until 6:00 p.m.
- The YWKinderfun program is available at the Bolton Program Center only.

CALENDAR OF OPERATION

YWKidslink and the YWKinderfun programs follow your child's school calendar with the exception of a staff retreat during the month of June. We offer alternate programs with pre-registration during some school vacations and selected holidays. The programs end for the summer on the last scheduled day of school.

SCHOOL VACATION PROGRAMS

During school vacation the YWCA may offer an alternative program for families. Vacation programming may include a field trip, swimming, or a special event or guest visitor. An additional cost is charged for your child to attend these events. Registration forms for vacation programs announcing the location, tuition and event for the day, will be sent through your child's program during the school year.

PROGRAM AND INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSING

Parents are asked to plan accordingly and have a backup plan for closings. All school closing and late openings are announced on WTIC AM radio and WFSB Channel 3. Please follow your child's individual school announcements. If the school is closed or closes early, YWKidslink is closed.

YWKidslink/YWKinderfun programs will close for the following reasons:

- The town school system closes
- A program site does not meet licensing requirements (i.e. a power outage, no water, etc.)
- There is a severe storm announcement (snow, tornado, etc.)
- The State of Connecticut closes
- A state of emergency is declared
- The school system declares a dismissal (weather, power, evacuation, etc.)
- If the school system delays opening in the morning, YWKidslink opening will also be delayed by the same amount of time. *Example: School delay of 90 minutes - YWKidslink opens at 8:30 a.m. instead of 7:00 a.m.*

PROGRAM LOCATIONS

YWKidslink programs are available at the following locations:

TOWN	SITE	TELEPHONE
EAST REGION YWKidslink:		
	Administrative Office:	645-2240
	78 North Main Street	Fax: 645-1646
	Manchester, CT 06040	
MANCHESTER		
	Bowers School	647-3315
	<u>141 Princeton Street</u>	<u>525-1163 ext. 415</u>
	Buckley School	647-3306
	<u>250 Vernon Street</u>	<u>525-1163 ext. 400</u>
	Keeney Street School	647-3358
	<u>179 Keeney Street</u>	<u>525-1163 ext. 410</u>
	Martin School	647-3368
	<u>140 Dartmouth Road</u>	<u>525-1163 ext. 412</u>
	Waddell School	647-3396
	<u>163 Broad Street</u>	<u>525-1163 ext. 417</u>
BOLTON*		
	Notch Road Municipal Building	645-2245
	104 Notch Road	525-1163 ext. 431
		<i>*KINDERFUN program available at this location.*</i>
WEST REGION YWKidslink:		
	Administrative Office:	525-1163 ext. 220
	135 Broad Street	
	Hartford, CT 06105	
WEST HARTFORD		
	Bugbee School	232-3911
	<u>1943 Asylum Avenue</u>	<u>525-1163 ext. 426</u>
	Duffy School	561-4104
	<u>95 Westminster Drive</u>	<u>525-1163 ext 427</u>
	Webster Hill School	561-4105
	<u>125 Webster Hill Blvd.</u>	<u>525-1163 ext. 428</u>
	Wolcott School	561-4106
	<u>71 Wolcott Road</u>	<u>525-1163 ext. 430</u>
WETHERSFIELD		
	Charles Wright School	257-4121
	186 Nott Street	525-1163 ext. 433
ROCKY HILL		
	Myrtle Stevens School	257-4879
	<u>322 Orchard Street</u>	<u>525-1163 ext. 436</u>
	West Hill School	563-2451
	95 Cronin Drive	525-1163 ext. 432

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

We hire qualified staff members who, at a minimum, meet all licensing requirements of the State of Connecticut. Child/staff ratios are 10:1. In many cases, the ratio exceeds these minimums. Substitutes, students and volunteers are also part of our programs. All staff and volunteers are screened and trained as required by State of Connecticut regulations.

Babysitting: Staff members are not permitted to provide babysitting services for families enrolled in YWCA programs.

ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The YWCA of the Hartford Region, Inc. believes there is strength in diversity. We offer equal access to all programs and services and do not discriminate in admission or employment on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, gender, religion, marital status, disability, political belief, military status or language differences. All childcare programs are inclusive and made available to children without regard to individual ability according to federal and state law.

Prior to enrollment:

Families must complete the registration process as described below:

- A registration packet must be sent to an authorized YWCA representative.
- Parent and child must visit with the program Regional Director to review policies and procedures.

The following are required to complete the registration:

- a. A current YWCA Membership
- b. Program Registration Form
- c. All fees, including non-refundable membership and registration fees along with first tuition payment
- d. Current Physical Health Form (including immunization record)
- e. School Age Intake Form
- f. Emergency Forms (including Childcare Enrollment, Authorization and Emergency Medical)
- g. Permission Forms or updated Release Form
- h. Signed Letter of Agreement that includes a statement indicating the family has read and understands the Family Handbook
- i. Authorization Form regarding photo, video and recording
- j. A recent photo of your child
- k. School Age Code of Contract

PARENTAL INVOLVMENT

We firmly believe that one important key to high-quality childcare is parent participation and we strongly encourage parental involvement. We offer a wide variety of ways that you can become involved, make the YWCA a better place for the children and have fun! Parent involvement is encouraged in the following areas:

- Meetings/discussions
- On-going planning, development and evaluation of the program
- Parent-Teacher conferences
- Fund raising
- Involvement with day-to-day activities (i.e., read a story, do a favorite cooking activity, share a special interest or hobby)
- Educational and community activities
- Participation in center-based family events
- Field trip supervision and planning

Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis (more than 12 times) will be required to secure all criminal background checks as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips.

Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody as per the court order. For example, if a parent is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, then that parent will only be able to volunteer on those days. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements) will only be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent. **Court orders will be strictly followed.**

DAILY COMMUNICATION & EXPECTATIONS

Emergency Contacts

All emergency contacts must be current. Failure to notify the Regional Director and onsite staff of emergency numbers can result in a child's dismissal from the program. Emergency contacts must be individuals other than parents or guardians. It is essential that we have current phone numbers and that you update forms with changes in emergency contact names and telephone numbers. Beeper numbers will not be accepted.

Daily Drop Off and Pick Up

It is ESSENTIAL, and required by state regulations, that parents sign their children in when they arrive and sign out when they depart the program each day, as well as noting the time of day. This is critical information for us to have in the event we need to evacuate the Center. The sign in/out sheets are displayed prominently in each classroom.

Children are NOT allowed to enter or exit the program site without a parent or designated adult. Adults must present photo ID if they are not known to the staff on duty. **Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on the school premises. The parent should not allow a child to wander through the school and/or playground or parking lot.**

If someone else will pick up your child, please notify the staff in advance. It must be a person you have designated on registration forms. Please note this information on the daily report. No one under age 18 (including siblings) may be listed as an emergency contact or may sign your child in or out.

Parents are required to notify the staff of any special instructions or needs. The parent must present the special instructions in writing and verbally discuss them with a staff member. These special instructions include but are not limited to: early pick-up, alternative pick-up person, health issues over the previous night that need to be observed but do not warrant exclusion from care, and/or any general concerns that the staff should be aware of to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

The staff of YWCA will contact local police and the other custodial parent should a parent or authorized pick-up person appear to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Because of the parent's right to immediate access, the program is not permitted to deny a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. The staff of the YWCA will contact the child's parent/s, and/or local police to notify them of the situation.

Absences

If your child will be absent for any reason, you must notify the School Age program before 8:30 AM on the day of absence or write a note in advance with the date(s) of her/his absence.

If the absence is not reported a finder's fee of \$50 will be assessed to your account if a search of the school is involved in trying to locate your child.

Conferences

The staff is always available to work cooperatively with your family to meet your child's individual needs. During sign-in or sign-out times you should take the opportunity to learn about your child's day. Of course, should you or the staff find it helpful to talk more formally about progress and issues, we will arrange a conference.

"OPEN DOOR" POLICY/ VISITS & VOLUNTEERING

Once you have enrolled your child at a YWCA program, you are welcome at any time. You never need to call ahead to announce your intention to visit. We look forward to having you drop by as your schedule permits. Other visitors should request an appointment in advance. We believe that your involvement enhances the program and we encourage participation by families and members of the community. We also are eager for you to share personal talents or interests with us. Crafts, computer skills, storytelling, and other activities are welcome additions to our programs.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order or Protection from Abuse Order), the YWCA must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments. **Court orders will be strictly followed.**

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, the YWCA is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of the YWCA cannot, at the request of anyone except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated.

In the absence of a court order on file with the YWCA, both parents shall be allowed equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The YWCA cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent at the request of the other 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 YWCA suggests that the parent keep the child with him/herself until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access.

Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days when they are afforded custody as per the court order. For example, if a parent is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays that parent is only able to volunteer on those days. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements) are only permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent.

Fundraising

Occasionally the YWCA asks parents to participate in fundraising activities for special projects and activities. Participation in fundraising events is voluntary and greatly appreciated.

Family Information Area

Each site offers a family resource area. Information in the family resource area includes program happenings, special upcoming events, current health and education information and program newsletters. We encourage families to check the resource area frequently.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Health experts agree on the importance of fresh air and exercise as a part of children's daily routine in order to release energy and develop gross motor skills. We schedule outdoor play and activity and it is expected that all children will participate daily.

We play outside throughout the year. When the temperature drops below 32 degrees F, playtime is limited to 30 minutes. In warm weather, children are kept hydrated with frequent drinks of water.

CLOTHING

The most appropriate kind of clothing is easy fitting, comfortable, washable and easy to maintain. Please provide proper clothing for outdoor play in all weather, including long pants in cold weather and sneakers or shoes suitable for running and climbing (flips-flops and sandals can be dangerous). Layers of warm clothing that fit loosely for cold weather are especially important. Your child will need gloves or mittens, boots, and a hat.

TOYS FROM HOME

The YWCA provides games, sports equipment and a wide variety of materials for educational enrichment and recreation. At no time will super hero toys, toy guns and/or weapons or video games or other electronic devices be allowed in any of our programs. Please have your child leave these items at home.

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

The YWCA stands with firm roots in our belief in diversity. We expose children to a variety of cultural experiences as part of our curriculum. Holidays and special celebrations from many cultures throughout the world are part of our programs.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special days for children. We encourage families to celebrate these events with your child and their classmates. Parents may send in a special birthday treat. Prepackaged low sugar cookies, quick breads or muffins are recommended (rather than sugary treats such as cupcakes). Please let the teacher know what ingredients are in birthday treats as some children may have food allergies. Please notify staff in advance if you plan to provide birthday treats. NOTE: We do not permit balloons in our programs.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The YWCA does not permit outside agencies or vendors to photograph or videotape children without consent signed by families. However, we reserve the right to take photographs of children in our programs for educational purposes. We identify children only by first name and age for use in our program site. Any photographs for YWCA publication will be used only with family authorization. Every family is asked to sign an authorization form at time of registration.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All YWCA programs are continuously monitored for health and safety standards. In order to reduce exposure to illness, we adhere to the following practices:

- Children and staff wash their hands entering the classroom from the playground/outdoors, after using the bathroom, before eating, when serving snacks, giving medication, handling bodily fluids, wiping noses, mouths or sores, cleaning and handling garbage or when otherwise necessary.
- Children are assisted with proper hand washing techniques.
- Toys are washed and disinfected regularly.
- Tables are sanitized with an approved solution.
- Equipment is checked to ensure safety.

Illness/ Exclusion Policy

*****If your child will be absent due to illness, please call the program that morning to tell us*****

We realize that illness is part of growing up and it is not uncommon for a child to have as many as 8-10 episodes a year. Families are strongly encouraged to arrange back-up care for days when a child is too ill to attend school, as exposing others to an illness can be serious.

If your child becomes ill during program, we will contact you to pick her/him up immediately. If we cannot reach you, staff will contact name(s) on the emergency information form. The following are guidelines for exclusion from the program:

- A temperature of 100 degrees “axillary”
- One or more episodes of vomiting
- One or more episodes of diarrhea
- Symptoms of communicable disease (chickenpox, head lice, conjunctivitis/ pink eye)
- Severe nasal and chest congestion and a cough that interferes with daily activities
- Behaviors indicating pain or distress
- Children who cannot participate in normal daily activities/schedule

You must notify staff immediately if your child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness. When an illness such as diarrhea, vomiting or fever requires exclusion, we require children to remain at home until they have been symptom free (without any kind of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours.

After trying to reach a family and/or emergency contact for one hour, we will seek medical attention for the child. Families are responsible for any medical costs.

Special Care Policy

Prior to a child attending the program, special diets, health conditions and/or allergies must be brought to the attention of the Regional Director and teacher by the parent/guardian. It is a State requirement that a written plan of care is in place before the child attends the program. This plan can be developed in conjunction with the parent, the staff, the child's physician and the YWCA Nurse Consultant. We make every effort to make all reasonable accommodations for a child's specific health issues.

Medication

The YWCA recommends that prescription medicine not be administered during the program day. Ask your child's physician to prescribe medications in dosages that can be done before or after program hours. If it is necessary to administer medication, the staff will do so only in accordance with state regulations and our policy.

The following procedures must be followed and forms must be completed prior to a trained staff member administering the prescription/medication: *Medication Permission Forms must be filled out and signed by 1) the child's physician 2) the parent/guardian 3) a staff member.* They will be kept on file at the program site. Permission forms are available from the staff. Medicine must be provided to the YWCA in the original prescription container. The name of the medication, expiration date, child's name, date of birth and strength of medication must be clearly labeled on the prescription container.

YWCA staff will not administer the first dosage of a medication. The first dose should be administered by the parent/guardian at home in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the medication, and to observe possible side effects.

Children may not be in possession of any medicines. This includes leaving medications in a child's lunch box, bottle, food, etc. Families/guardians must provide the medication to the YWCA staff directly. Medication is stored in a locked box at the center and is inaccessible to children. All unused medication shall be returned to the family. If medication is not picked up, the staff will discard it.

No "over the counter" medications will be administered (unless prescribed by a physician in conjunction with the administration of an Epi-Pen). "Over the counter" topical treatments such as sunscreen and diaper changing ointments require parental permission forms for staff to use them. Authorization forms will be provided during registration and are available from staff.

Emergency Care Procedures

At least one staff member in each center is trained in first aid/CPR for children. In the event of an accident that requires medical attention, we employ the following procedures:

If immediate emergency medical treatment is required a staff member will call 911 and families are contacted immediately thereafter. If families can't be reached, designated emergency contacts will be called. If necessary, your child will be transported to the nearest hospital emergency room by paramedics. A staff member will accompany her/him.

If a less serious injury occurs, staff administers first aid on site. Families will be contacted and families will receive an Incident Report stating the details of any injury.

Despite precautions, minor accidents occur in the course of everyday play and activity. When a minor injury (i.e. small bumps, scraped knees, etc.) occurs that requires first aid, you will receive a written "Ouch Report". The "Ouch Report" includes the following information: description of what happened, first aid administered, description of the mark that remains, who treated the child and who the incident was reported to. A parent or guardian must sign the form when picking up your child.

Emergency Communication

During an emergency or disaster situation, communication with those outside the Center may be extremely difficult. It is absolutely crucial that we have accurate phone numbers for:

- Home
- Work
- Cell
- Pick-up contacts
- Emergency contacts

NUTRITION

Children's nutritional needs must be met for them to maintain the energy and interest level needed to get through the day. The YWCA provides nutritionally sound snacks daily.

At no time will gum or candy from home be allowed in our programs. If your child requires a special diet or has food allergies, please notify the teacher and supplement your child's snack when needed.. Allergies for children in our programs are posted so that all staff is aware and take appropriate precautions.

Other important guidelines if bringing snacks from home:

- Certain foods cause allergic reactions. Please try all foods at home twice before sending them into the Center for your child.
- Glass bottles or containers of any kind are not permitted.

MANAGING AND MODELING BEHAVIOR

Our Philosophy

Discipline, like any other life skill, is a learning process. In our programs this process is carried out by:

- Providing a positive learning environment where there is consistency and routine
- Setting reasonable rules, limits and expectations that are developmentally appropriate
- Using redirection to refocus a child's attention, achieve a more positive outcome and avoid unnecessary confrontations
- Praising and reinforcing appropriate behavior;
- Modeling behavior and language for other children to follow
- Teachers who serve as role models for appropriate behavior
- Creating an environment that is safe and comfortable for all children
- Stating clear and consistent rules
- Acknowledging and respecting each child's feelings
- Developing consistent and ongoing communication between teaching staff and families

Families are asked to follow these same guidelines at home as well as at the center. This is a children's program – they need to feel safe here. We cannot let the child's trust in us or in the program be broken. To that end, we will never yell, curse, hit, physically mishandle or humiliate a child. Consequently, we firmly insist that no parent ever hit, physically mishandle, humiliate, yell or curse at their child or any other child while in the program or while on a program outing.

School Age Code of Responsibility

Prior to attending the program each of the students is asked to review the code of responsibility with their parents/guardians. Children sign a performance contract which is witnessed by the parents and returned to the program. The first time the code is broken the child will be asked to review the contract and write a note home letting her/his parents know what happened. The second time the code is broken the child will again review the contract and write a note home stating what the problem was and the parent will be asked to meet with the staff to determine a plan to help the child succeed in the program. If the child does not correct the behavior and it happens a third time, the child will be suspended from the program for an entire day. The parent will be sent a written notice stating that on the fourth occurrence their child will be dismissed from the program.

If behavior occurs that severely jeopardizes the health or safety of other children or staff members the Regional Director reserves the right to dismiss a child immediately, without advance warning or notice.

NOTE: If a child is removed from the program due to behavioral issues, no credit or refund will be given.

Conflict Resolution

The YWCA does not permit its staff to use any form of punishment. Staff members are trained to implement positive and proactive methods of dealing with challenging behaviors with the goal of developing children's abilities to discipline and control themselves. We are very conscious of appropriate behavior by both children and adults in our programs. The YWCA defines unacceptable behavior as:

- Inflicting physical or emotional harm and/or
- Using abusive language

The YWCA acknowledges that individuals should be encouraged to articulate feelings and frustrations in a constructive manner and work out solutions with guidance from staff. Our goal is to foster development of these problem-solving skills and help children and adults learn from their experiences.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The YWCA requires parents to behave with courtesy and respect. One of the goals of the YWCA is to provide the most appropriate environment for a child to grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of the YWCA, but also of each and every parent or adult involved with the Center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will no longer be permitted in YWCA programs and their child may be asked to withdraw from the program.

No parent or adult is permitted to use profanity or use other inappropriate language at any time whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is offensive and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using inoffensive language. At no time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff. Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the YWCA will not assume the risk of a second incident.

For the health of all YWCA employees, children and parents, smoking is prohibited anywhere on school or program property. This includes in the building, on the grounds and in the parking lot of YWCA property. Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. The procedures are designed to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and volunteers of the YWCA.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY & PROCEDURES

Closing and pick-up times are strictly enforced. If you are unable to arrive by scheduled closing time, you must notify the program staff to reassure your child, as well as staff. Late pick-up fees are imposed if a child is not picked up by closing time. They are assessed on your account the next business day and must be paid immediately. Charges are:

- ***\$10 per child for the first 15 minutes or any part thereof; plus***
- ***An additional \$20 per child for each extra 15 minute period or any part thereof.***

After 30 minutes, the staff will contact local authorities for action (see next section).

Late Pick-Up Procedures

If a family/guardian has not contacted the program center by closing time, the staff members will attempt to reach the family using contact numbers provided. If the family is unreachable, staff members will contact the emergency names provided by the family.

If no one can be reached 30 minutes after the posted closing time, staff members will contact the Regional Director who will call local police. Police will assist in trying to locate the family up until 60 minutes after posted closing time.

After 60 minutes, the Regional Director or head teacher will notify the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Care Line at 1-800-842-2288. A DCF representative generally is dispatched to the program center to pick up the child and place her/him in protective custody until the family is located.

Repeated Late Pick-Ups

On the first incident of lateness, the Regional Director will issue a reminder about our policy. On the second occasion, a written report is added to the child's file. If a parent/guardian is late in picking up a child 3 times, the YWCA reserves the right to remove the child from our program.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Withdrawal from Program

If a family is planning to withdraw a child from the program, they must contact the Regional Director in writing at least two-weeks in advance, stating that they plan to withdraw their child from the program. The Regional Director will respond no later than one week after your request. *If two weeks notice is not provided, your family will be charged for that period.* If you need to withdraw your child due to financial reasons, the Regional Director will set up a payment plan to satisfy any outstanding balance.

Re-Enrollment

Any request to re-enroll your child must be made in writing to the Regional Director. If you withdraw your child from the program for any reason, you may not re-enroll her/him for at least four weeks, and then re-enrollment is only on a space available basis.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Trust is a key component to the relationship we build with your family. Information that is gathered concerning your family will be treated with greatest care. Information on registration forms, child or parent referral services, as well as any other data added to a child's file during her/his enrollment, is confidential. This information is available only to the appropriate program staff, personnel from the State of Connecticut Childcare Licensing Unit, and the YWCA nurse consultant. Families may access a child's file to review or update information at any time. When a child leaves a program, the family should obtain a release form from the program staff. Copies of all releases are kept on file.

Records are kept in a secure cabinet. Before information is shared with anyone, two factors are considered: Does this person need to know this information? Do I need to get the family's permission to share this information?

Children's files are accessible to the Director of Early Learning and School Age programs and Regional Director. Your child's teacher has access to all file information with the exception of income documentation. The YWCA nurse consultant has access to the child health records. State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) licensing personnel have access to information when they monitor our Center. It is critical to remember that you, as parents, have access to these files, also.

Should anyone outside of Center staff, whose review has been approved, view your child/family file, s/he will sign an "Access to Record" form that includes the date of review, name of individual, agency, reason for review and signature. This form is kept in your file for your review.

An authorization for Release of Information will be signed by the parent as part of the registration process. There are four exceptions to strict confidentiality:

1. As Mandated Reporters, staff will report suspected child abuse and neglect to DCF and DPH.
2. If subpoenaed, staff will cooperate with the court, releasing files and testifying.
3. Staff have a "duty to warn" which means that if a family member is dangerous to self or to others, they will take steps to ensure safety.
4. The Department of Health may review your child's files for childcare licensing, and accreditation purposes.

You may observe children at the program who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate. You may be curious about the other child. ***However, our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy, and employees of the YWCA are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.***

PARENT COMPLAINT/ CONCERN POLICY

Should you have a concern about any aspect of a program, we ask that you follow these steps in addressing the issue(s):

- Contact the Regional Director or Director of Early Learning and School Age programs, to state the nature of your complaint.
- If you feel that your concern has not been adequately addressed, contact her/his supervisor. You may obtain the name of the staff member by calling (860) 525-1163 for further information.
- Finally if you feel that your problem should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director, you may call her at (860) 525-1163 or write c/o: YWCA of the Hartford Region, 135 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105.

If you have questions about your child's well being while s/he is enrolled in a YWCA program, please speak to the Director of Director of Early Learning and School Age programs.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

We take our obligation to protect children from harm very seriously. All staff of the YWCA are Mandated Reporters to the Department of Children and Families. It is required by law “that where there is evidence of abuse or neglect...or when there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe a child is in danger of being abused”; it must be reported to the Department of Child and Family Services (DCF). This means that any situation that appears out of the norm must be reported. Occasionally, a child's appearance and behavior may raise concerns about possible abuse or neglect.

We have taken certain steps to promote the safety and protection of children at YWCA programs. Careful pre-employment and screening is one method of protection. Additionally staff members receive training in appropriate childcare and behavior modeling techniques, and the YWCA maintains strict guidelines as to the nature and type of staff/child interactions. (NOTE: *A complete copy of abuse and neglect policies is available upon request.*)

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The YWCA believes in inclusion for all children in its programs and we work to ensure inclusion whenever possible. If a child requires an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the staff will assist families in obtaining and implementing it.

Occasionally the staff and family may conclude that a child requires additional types of diagnostic and support services beyond the scope of the YWCA program related to her/his emotional, physical or psychological development. These may include psycho-educational testing, medical evaluation or specialized ongoing services. The staff will work closely with a family in identifying and obtaining such services, as well as providing an appropriate program whenever possible.

No referrals for diagnostic or support services are made without prior written consent from the family. Staff members will work with the family in implementing recommendations resulting from evaluations to support the child. Family confidentiality is maintained in all referrals. Referrals to agencies and persons who provide evaluations, child observations, family counseling, ESL classes, job training and other services that support families are made upon request.

Difficulty Adjusting to Program

The YWCA employs a professional staff that is adept at helping children comfortably and successfully transition into our program. In the event that a child experiences continued difficulties, the following steps will be taken:

- The teacher will alert the Regional Director and parents to the concern.
- The Regional Director, teacher and parents will meet to define the situation and map out a course of action to help with adjustment.
- The Regional Director will confer with all staff who work with the child to share information and agree on a consistent course of action.
- Within an agreed amount of time, not to exceed one month, the Regional Director, teacher and parents will meet at a follow-up conference.

Areas of discussion will include, but not be limited to:

- a) What progress is being made
- b) The effect on the other children
- c) Goals for further progress or whether the YWCA is the appropriate setting for this child.

If the child is still having difficulties, or if the safety of other children cannot be assured, the family will be asked to find alternate childcare arrangements. Assistance in this process will be offered to the family.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Collaborations with outside community agencies are vital to the quality of our programs. The YWCA works with many agencies in an effort to provide information, opportunities and assistance beyond referrals for special services noted previously. Family resource areas in each program offer information about such collaborations. Cultural and linguistic considerations are part of our collaborative efforts.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION & PROCEDURES

The YWCA tuition schedule has been established to provide your child with the best possible care at the most reasonable cost to you. We endeavor to keep our fees low and review them annually. Tuition is due monthly. Tuition is based on the number of school days and is broken up into 9 equal monthly installments. **Post dated checks will not be accepted.** The tuition schedule is based on the Public School calendar. *Payment for all programs is required in advance of the child's participation for that period.*

Tuition Payments

- All payments are to be submitted to the program center office by mail or in person. Only Regional Director or the administrative assistant may accept tuition payments. No other staff member is authorized to accept payments.
- Tuition payments can be made by a check, money order, MasterCard or VISA. **NO CASH PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

- Families will be sent a reminder letter about an overdue account if payment is not received. A family is subject to collection proceedings and a child's immediate removal from program if the account is not brought current within three days.
- If a child has left a program while an account is in arrears, the child may only return to the program when full payment has been made, providing space is available.

Monthly Payment Plans

- Tuition payments are due on the 20th of the month prior to the month of enrollment (e.g., August 20 for September enrollment).
- Payments not made by the 1st day of the current month of care are subject to an immediate \$20 late fee. Late fees are added automatically to the account on the 2nd of the month and are due immediately in addition to the outstanding balance.

Finder's Fee

If your child attended school but you neglect to report her/his absence from the after school program and staff have to search the school and notify you that your child is not in a program, a finders fee of \$50 will be assessed to your account.

Credits and Refunds

The YWCA does not provide tuition reductions, credits or refunds for individual absences due to illness or for personal reasons such as vacations. Tuition payment is expected regardless of daily attendance. Only in the case of an illness of a week or more requiring hospitalization will credit be given (maximum of two weeks). A doctor's note must accompany your written request for credit.

Returned Check/Credit Card Denial Policy

Non-sufficient funds (NSF) checks are re-deposited only one time by the bank against an individual's account. If the redeposit is rejected, the bank returns the NSF check and a \$25 NSF fee is added to the family's account. The family must replace the payment within 2 (two)-business days or the child may be removed from the program. If a family presents an NSF check twice within the same school year, all future payments must be made by money order or credit card.

Payment by Check

The YWCA may utilize on-site deposit technology which will result in your checks clearing your bank more quickly and will result in you receiving a "substitute" check (a legal copy of a check) rather than your original cancelled check with your bank statement.

In addition, the YWCA may elect to convert your check to an automated clearinghouse debit. If you do not want your check converted to an automated clearinghouse debit, you must notify us in writing.

State of Connecticut Financial Assistance

The YWCA program staff will be happy to assist a family with the process of applying for state childcare subsidy. Any family that wishes to enroll a child in a YWCA program and requires financial assistance must first apply to State of Connecticut through CCAP (Childcare Assistance Program - Care4Kids).

Once approved for State Assistance through the CCAP, the family must provide written official confirmation from CCAP showing amount of subsidy prior to the enrollment for the child. **No child will be accepted into a program without a certificate.** The YWCA completes and signs our portion of the Care4Kids Parent Provider Form, retains one copy, makes a copy for the family, and then sends the form directly to Care4Kids.

If a family requires childcare prior to approval for subsidy, the family must pay the full fee until the subsidy starts. Once the subsidy begins, all applicable payments are credited to the account. If a family's financial situation changes they must reapply for this program.

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure payment to the YWCA even when receiving state subsidy. Although we may be able to assist in resolving problems with state agencies, payments remain the responsibility of the family.

Families are responsible for tuition balances not paid by the State for care already provided. Outstanding balances can result in a child's dismissal from the program, and the YWCA will initiate collection procedures. Readmission to any YWCA program requires full payment of the balance due. .

Sibling/Multiple Children Discount

Families with more than one child in a YWCA childcare program are offered a tuition discount. Tuition discounts are applied as follows: the first child (with the highest tuition) is charged full tuition, second and subsequent children from the same family receive a 10% discount each. The tuition discount is offered only to families with children enrolled in 5 day programs (full day, AM or PM). *Please Note: This does not apply to families where the YWCA accepts a reduced rate because of any arrangements negotiated by a third party (e.g. Department of Children and Families).*

NOTE: *We ask that you please sign and date the Parent's Letter of Agreement indicating you have received, read and understand the parent handbook. If you have any questions or comments about the contents, please speak to **Regional Director**.*

All policies and procedures are subject to change. Families will be notified of changes. The YWCA reserves the right to change schedules or programs due to inadequate enrollment.