

YWCA HARTFORD REGION

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS & BOLTON NURSERY SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

Updated 2018



**eliminating racism
empowering women**

ywca

Hartford Region

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTACT INFORMATION	1	GUIDANCE AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT	15
PROGRAM LOCATIONS	1	Conferences	15
WELCOME	2	Student Code of Conduct	15
EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY	2	Confidentiality	16
PROGRAM CONTENT	3	Release of Information	16
Kidslink	3	Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect	17
Nursery School	4	Complaint Policy	17
SPECIAL CLOSINGS	5	Collaboration with Other Agencies	17
INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS	5	ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	18
CURRICULUM GOALS	6	Special Needs	18
COMMUNICATION & EXPECTATIONS	7	Required forms	18
Emergency Contacts	7	TUITION AND FEES	19
Email Communication	7	Where to send payments	19
Absences	7	Registration Fees	19
School Activities	7	Membership Fees	19
Drop off & Pick Up	8	Sibling Discount	20
Children not Picked by Close Of Program	8	Withdrawal from Program	20
Photographs	9	Forms of Payment	20
Outdoor Activities	9	Care 4 Kids	21
Clothing	9	Late Payment Fee	21
Toys from Home	9	Locator Fee	22
Fundraising	9	Late Pick Up Fee	22
Snack and Nutrition	9	Letter of Agreement	22
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	10	Credits and Refunds	22
Parent Code of Conduct	10		
Smoking policy	10		
Cell phone policy	10		
COURT ORDERS AND LEGAL DOCUMENTS	11		
HEALTH AND SAFETY	12		
Special care policy	12		
Medication	12		
Illness exclusion policy	13		
Emergency care procedures	14		



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Program Locations

BOLTON*:

Kidslink Before and After School Program and Nursery School

Municipal Building (Bolton Senior Center) (860) 500-6865
104 Notch Road
Bolton, CT 06043

**All-Day Care Available at this location*

ROCKY HILL

Myrtle Stevens School
322 Orchard Street
(860) 500-6863
Stevens@ywc Hartford.org

West Hill School
95 Cronin Drive
(860) 500-6864
WestHill@ywc Hartford.org

WEST HARTFORD

Bugbee School Kidslink
1943 Asylum Avenue
(860) 500-3216
Bugbee@ywc Hartford.org

Duffy School Kidslink
95 Westminster Drive
(860) 500-3224
Duffy@ywc Hartford.org

Webster Hill School Kidslink
125 Webster Hill Blvd.
(860) 500-3229
Websterhill@ywc Hartford.org

Wolcott School Kidslink
71 Wolcott Road
(860) 500-3321
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WELCOME

Welcome to YWCA Hartford Region school-age childcare programs and Bolton Nursery School. We are glad that you have chosen YWCA Hartford Region to meet your family's childcare needs. We look forward to building a partnership with you in caring for your child. Our programs provide quality before and after school programming for children in grades K-5 (K-7 in some communities).

Established in 1867, YWCA Hartford Region is the third oldest affiliate of YWCA USA, a women's membership movement dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. YWCA Hartford Region provides valued programs and services in the greater Hartford area including childcare, supportive housing, teen leadership development, racial justice awareness, and financial literacy.

ywca hartford region is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

YWCA HARTFORD REGION'S EDUCATIONAL 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 enrichment 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 gross and fine motor skill activities.
- We believe in families. Each child has a unique family structure. 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 by providing a racial justice component to our curriculum.

PROGRAM CONTENT

At the heart of the YWKidslink program is the Mission of YWCA. Our Mission is addressed through our ways of work as well as through intentional activities designed to help children grow to be caring, responsible citizens. This responsibility will be reinforced by our teachers as they guide the children to be kind and compassionate in their interactions. Children are reminded to be helpful to each other and learn civic responsibility through shared tasks in the program. Our goal is for each child to have fun and be safe, while learning valuable skills to help them throughout their life. Through a variety of activities they will learn about each other and all the ways each person expresses their individual identity.

YW KIDSLINK

YW Kidslink 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. Our teachers plan curriculum to explore topics such as problem solving, conflict resolution, racial justice, social justice, math, and science. We have programs in four communities: West Hartford, Rocky Hill, and Bolton.

Our program schedules are adjusted to the specific needs of the children and the site. Please refer to the daily schedule posted at your site.

Typical Morning Program

- 7:00 am** Program opens & children begin to arrive
Morning activities may include: arts and crafts, board games, reading, finishing homework, visiting with friends.
- 8:25 am** Cleanup, group game and announcements until dismissal.
- 8:40 am*** Children report to regular classroom spaces.

**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 pm**** Children arrive from classrooms
- 3:05 pm** Attendance & Announcements
- 3:10 pm** Outdoor or indoor play for at least ½ hour
- 3:40 pm** Children return to the program space to wash hands and eat snack (provided)
- 4:00 pm** Planned curriculum may include
- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Arts and Crafts</i> | <i>Service Learning Projects</i> |
| <i>Outside Play</i> | <i>Science</i> |
| <i>Group Games</i> | <i>Board Games</i> |
| <i>Team Sports</i> | <i>Interest Clubs</i> |
| <i>Dramatic Play</i> | <i>Special Events and Parties</i> |

YWKidslink hours of operation

- Before School hours of operation are from 7:00 am to the start of the school day, approximately 8:45 am. Children may not be dropped off in program prior to 7:00 am.
- After school programs open at the end of the school day, **including scheduled early dismissal days.**
- Programs close at 6:00 pm. For scheduled early dismissal days, please refer to your district calendar.
- YWCA Bolton Nursery School offers all-day care at the Bolton Program Center. The Nursery School program runs from 9:00am-11:30am. Extended day care is available through 6:00pm.

For inclement weather schedules, please see page 5.

Sixth and Seventh Grade Students (Bolton Only)

YWKidslink will accept children up to 12 years old. If your child is in 6th or 7th grade and will not turn 12 until the end of the school year, he/she may attend our program. Sixth and seventh grade programs begin when school is dismissed.

YWCA Bolton Nursery School

The main goal of the Nursery School program is to provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing learning environment. We have blocked off large time periods so that children have the opportunity to get involved with their classmates and their play. Our classroom is set up in a way that allows children to help themselves to the material and toys easily. Shelves are low and easy to reach so that they develop and enhance self help skills. We focus on fine motor skills through the use of manipulative toys and art projects, and large motor development is through daily outside play, weather permitting.

We welcome children from diverse backgrounds, knowing that playing and developing together at a very young age is a basis for better understanding in the future. Our programs are state-licensed and we strictly adhere to all state guidelines and regulations. We provide quality early childhood experiences that promote health and safety, while preparing children for kindergarten. Our curriculum development is in accordance with the Connecticut State Department of Education's Preschool Curriculum Framework and Preschool Assessment Framework which outlines standards specific to children's readiness for kindergarten with a focus on literacy and math.

It is our belief that children learn through hands on play and positive experiences. Preschool is an important first step in your child's education. We look forward to working with you and helping your child make this important transition between home and school.

YWCA Bolton Nursery School offers all-day care to children ages 3 and up. The Nursery School program runs from 9:00-11:30am. Before care is available beginning at 7:00am and can be extended to 6:00pm.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS

YWKidslink/YWCA Bolton Nursery School programs will **close** for the following reasons:

- School is closed in your district for the day due to inclement weather or other emergency
- Afternoon activities for the school are cancelled
- School is closed or closes early due to inclement weather, excessive heat, power failure, etc.
- The State of Connecticut closes or a state of emergency is declared
- When we are not able to provide two staff members who are over age 18, as required by CT Office of Early Childhood.

YWKidslink/YWCA Bolton Nursery School programs will **delay opening** for the following reasons:

- If the school system delays opening in the morning, YWKidslink will be delayed by the same amount of time. Example: School delay of 90 minutes = YWKidslink opens at 8:30 am instead of 7:00 am.

Please follow your child's individual school announcements. Parents are asked to plan accordingly and have a backup plan for closings. All school closings and late openings are generally announced on **WTIC AM radio** and **WFSB Channel 3**. You can also register for text notifications at **NBCConnecticut.com**.

Please be sure to submit a valid daytime email address and phone number so your family can be contacted during the day.



YWCA HARTFORD REGION SCHOOL AGE CURRICULUM GOALS

YWCA Hartford Region stands with firm roots in our belief in diversity. We expose children to a variety of cultural experiences as part of our curriculum. Our racial justice, multicultural, anti-bias curriculum provides year round exploration of holidays and special celebrations from many cultures.

The following four goals are for *all* children. They interact with and build on one another. The specific activities and strategies for working toward these goals will depend on children's backgrounds, ages, and life experiences. The underlying intent of anti-bias education is to foster the development of children and adults who have the personal strength, critical-thinking ability, and activist skills to work with others to build caring, just, diverse communities and societies for all.

Goal 1: Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities. This goal calls on teachers to create the educational conditions in which all children are able to like who they are without needing to feel superior to anyone else. It also means enabling children to develop bi-culturally – to be able to interact effectively within their home culture and within the dominant culture.

Goal 2: Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections. This goal involves guiding children's development to respectfully and effectively learn about differences, comfortably negotiate and adapt to them, and cognitively understand and emotionally accept the common humanity that all people share.

Goal 3: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts. This goal asks teachers to guide children's development of the cognitive skills to identify "unfair" and "untrue" images (stereotypes), comments (teasing, name-calling), and behaviors (discrimination) directed at one's own or others' identities (be they gender, race, ethnicity, disability, class, age, or weight) *and* having the emotional empathy to know that bias hurts.

Goal 4: Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skill to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions. This "activism" goal requires helping every child learn and practice a variety of ways to act when another child acts in a biased manner toward her/him, when a child acts in a biased manner toward another child, or when an adult acts in a biased manner. Goal 4 builds on and enhances the other three Anti-Bias Education Goals.

Derman-Sparks, Louise and Patricia G. Ramsey, What if All The Kids are White? Anti-Bias Multicultural Education with Young Children and Families, Teacher's College Press, Columbia University, New York & London, 2011, pg. 15.

COMMUNICATION AND EXPECTATIONS

YW Kidslink and YWCA Bolton Nursery School have an open door policy for families enrolled in our program. Parents are welcome visitors 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. 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. Other visitors should request an appointment in advance.

Family Communication Area

Each site will designate a family communication area which will include a parent communication log, parent mailboxes, program happenings, upcoming special events, current health and education information, and program newsletters. We encourage families to check the communication area daily.

Emergency Contacts

All emergency contacts must be current. If you fail to notify the Manager of School Age Programs and onsite staff of emergency numbers, your child may not be allowed in the program. Emergency contacts must be individuals other than parents or guardians **and** over the age of 18. It is essential that we have current phone numbers and that you update us with changes in emergency contact names and telephone numbers. Those who are listed as emergency contacts also have permission to pick up your child.

E-mail Communication

We recommend families give us a **daytime** email address so that we may communicate quickly and conveniently in the event of any urgent changes in the program schedule.

Absences

If your child will be absent for any reason, including a regular absence from school, you must notify the YWKidslink program before 3:00 PM on the day of absence for the afternoon program or write a note in advance in the parent communication book, with the date(s) of her/his absence. If your child leaves school for any reason during the school day and will not be attending YWKidslink you must call and notify the program. The school office does not have a responsibility to inform us about your child's absence. It is the parent's responsibility to notify YWKidslink of any absence.

*Failure to notify YW Kidslink of your child's absence will result in staff conducting a search. A locator's fee of \$50 will be assessed to your account if a search of the school is involved in trying to locate your child.
(refer to Locator Fee on page 22)*

Special Enrichment Activities Offered by the School

If your child will be involved in any before or after school activities offered by his/her school, you must notify YWKidslink staff and write a note in the parent communication log. We will need to know the exact activity, time and duration of the activity, and exactly how the child will come to the YWKidslink program after the activity.

Daily Drop Off and Pick Up

It is mandatory, and required by state regulations, that parents initial and note the time of arrival and departure each day. This is critical information for us to have in the event we need to evacuate the site. The sign in/out sheets are located in a central area of the program space or with a staff member if a program is outside.

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 that need to be observed but do not warrant exclusion from care
- general concerns that the staff should be aware of to best meet the needs of your child

Children are NOT allowed to enter or exit Kidslink without a parent or designated adult. Adults must present a 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.** If someone else will pick up your child, please notify the staff in advance. If they are not designated on the registration forms, please notify the staff in writing and give them the full name of the person who is picking your child up. You may add or remove individuals at any time.

No one under age 18 (including siblings) may be listed as an emergency contact or may sign your child in or out.

The YWCA Staff 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 YWCA will contact the child's parents, and/or local authorities to notify them of the situation.

Children Not Picked Up by Close of Program

Closing and pick-up times are strictly enforced. If you are unable to arrive by scheduled closing time, you must notify the program staff so they may reassure your child. Late pick-up fees are imposed if a child is not picked up by closing time. Fees are assessed on your account the next business day and must be paid within 48 hours to the billing office (refer to late pick up fees on page 22).

If a child is still at the program at closing time and a parent/guardian or has not contacted the program, the staff members will attempt to reach the parents using all contact numbers provided. If staff are unable to contact parents, alternate pick ups/emergency contacts will be called. If no one can be reached 30 minutes after the posted closing time, staff members will contact the Director and Manager of School Age Programs 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, Program Management will notify the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A DCF representative generally is dispatched to the program to pick up the child and place her/him in protective custody until the family is located. At least two staff will remain with the child until such time as custody of child is handed over to DCF.

Photographs

YWCA does not permit outside agencies or vendors to photograph or videotape children without consent signed by families. Any photographs for YWCA, the Kidslink Facebook Page, or other publication will be used only with family authorization given on the initial registration form. We identify children only by first name and age for photographs used in media that is used outside of YWCA.

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 activities and it is expected that all children will participate daily. We play outside throughout the year in all kinds of weather. When the temperature drops below 32°F, playtime is limited. Boots and snow pants are recommended because we go outside in snow. In warm weather, children are encouraged to drink water frequently.

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 sneakers or shoes suitable for running and climbing (flips-flops and sandals can be dangerous), long pants in colder weather and layers of warm clothing that fit loosely for snowy weather. If your child does not have weather appropriate clothing, their outdoor activities may be limited.

Toys from Home

YWCA provides games, sports equipment and a wide variety of materials for educational enrichment and recreation. Any toys or items that are banned from the school will also be banned from YW programs. Toys from home are only allowed into program at the discretion of the Head Teacher, and children should be prepared to share any items they bring into program. Tablets, cell phones, and other mobile devices ARE NOT allowed in program. At no time will toy guns and/or weapons be allowed in any of our programs. We are not responsible for lost or broken items.

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.

Snack and Nutrition

Children's nutritional needs must be met for them to maintain the energy and interest level needed to get through the day. YWCA provides nutritionally sound snacks, as defined by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. Snack menus are posted in advance for your review.

At no time will gum or candy 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. A list of allergies in our programs are posted so that all staff is aware and take appropriate precautions.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We firmly believe that one important key to high-quality childcare is parent participation and we strongly encourage parental involvement. There is a variety of ways that you can become involved and make 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
- Fund raising for special activities or projects
- Involvement with day-to-day activities (i.e., read a story or share a special interest or hobby)
- Educational and community activities
- Participation in program-based family events

Any parent who volunteers in the program space 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 program space.

Parent Code of Conduct

One of the goals of 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 YWCA, but also of each and every parent or adult involved with the program.

- Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment.
- 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.
- Refrain from the use of profanity or other offensive language. Violation of this policy may result in the immediate expulsion of the family. If a parent/guardian feels frustrated or angry, we encourage you to speak quietly to a teacher or step out into the hallway if ratio permits. You can also ask to set up an appointment or communicate directly with Program Management. At no time shall inappropriate language be used or directed toward members of the staff.
- Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. Violation of this policy may result in the immediate expulsion of the family. All threats may be reported to the appropriate authorities. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, YWCA will not assume the risk of a second incident.

Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will no longer be permitted in YWCA programs and their child may be withdrawn from the program.

Smoking Policy

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 the school.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phone conversations by parents while in program space are prohibited. Please end cell phone conversations before entering Kidslink and leave cell phones in the car. Your child deserves your full attention. Staff and parents need to communicate as well.

COURT ORDERS AND LEGAL DOCUMENTS

It is YWCA's policy to handle sensitive family situations in a way that supports the best interests of the child or children involved. We are sensitive to each child's emotional needs and we encourage parents who are in the process of family changes or unanticipated stress to notify the child's teacher as soon as possible so that YWCA may be informed of the child's home situation and any effects the situation may have on the child's well-being.

If a family has court orders and legal documents outlining child custody and visitation, papers must be presented to the Manager of School Age Programs and must remain on file with the program in order for YWCA to properly uphold them. A YWCA program cannot prevent a parent from visiting with or picking up his or her child unless a valid, enforceable court order or legal document has been presented to and discussed with the Manager of School Age Programs. All staff working with children who have special instructions with regard to custody will have a complete understanding of legal orders and procedures for compliance. Once presented with a court order or legal document, YWCA is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of 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.

All staff will use their best efforts to uphold court orders and legal documents regarding child custody and visitation. However, under no circumstances should any staff member jeopardize his or her own safety or the safety of any child in order to prevent a non-custodial parent from visiting with or picking up his or her children. In the event of a flagrant violation of an order, staff will ensure proper authorities are notified and that every effort has been made to ensure the child's safety.

In the absence of a court order on file with YWCA, both parents shall be allowed equal access to their child as stipulated by law. 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, YWCA suggests that the parent keep the child with him/herself until a court order is issued if the parent feels the child's safety is at stake.

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 visitation/custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, then that parent will only be able to volunteer on those days.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

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

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 Manager of School Age Programs 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 must be developed in conjunction with the parent, the staff, the child's physician and YWCA Nurse Consultant. We make every effort to make all reasonable accommodations for a child's specific health issues.

Medication

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.

In the event that medication must be administered during the program, an Authorization to Administer Medication must be on file. This form must be filled out entirely and signed by the child's physician, parent, and staff member. This applies to ALL over the counter medications including but not limited to medicated creams, cough drops, cold medications, fever/pain reducing medication, etc. Medicine must be provided to YWCA in the original prescription container with the name of the medication, expiration date, and child's name, date of birth and strength of medication and dosing instructions clearly labeled on the prescription container. Forms are available from staff or your child's doctor's office.

"Over the counter" topical treatments such as sunscreen and skin lotions without medication require parental permission only. Authorization forms will be provided during registration and are available from staff.

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.

Controlled substances require special handling by staff as required by state law. A staff member trained in the administration of medication will meet individually with families to review the policy and procedure, doctor's orders, and create a special care plan for any controlled substances.

As required by the State Department for Early Childhood, children may not be in possession of any medicines. This includes asthma inhalers, cough drops, etc. left in a child's lunch box, backpack, etc.

Children who carry inhalers with them throughout the school day may not carry them during Kidslink. Parents must notify the staff that the child is in possession of such medication and it will be placed out of the reach of the children. Medication will be returned to the child in the morning program to go to class or to the parent/guardian at afternoon pickup. Children who can self administer inhalers may do so only with written authorization from a doctor and parent. All medication is stored in a locked box out of the reach of children. The only exception would be an epi-pen which is stored out of reach, but not locked. An epi-pen would also accompany staff to the playground or gym. All unused medication shall be returned to the family. If medication is not picked up, the staff will discard it according to our policies.

Illness Exclusion Policy

We realize that illness is part of growing up and it is not uncommon for a child to have as many as 8-10 illnesses 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 individuals on the emergency information form. 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.

The following are guidelines for exclusion from the program:

- A temperature of 101^o or higher taken orally
- 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
- Your child has lice nits

You must notify staff immediately if your child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness. When an illness such as diarrhea, conjunctivitis, 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.

If your child will be absent due to illness, please call the program that morning to let us know.

Emergency Care Procedures

There will always be one staff member present during program hours who is certified in first aid/CPR for children.

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". A parent or guardian must sign acknowledging receipt of the form when picking up your child.

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.
- Families are contacted immediately thereafter.
- If families cannot be reached, designated emergency contacts will be called.
- If necessary, your child will be transported to the nearest hospital emergency room by paramedics. Every effort will be made to have a staff member accompany your child.

During an emergency or disaster situation, communication with those outside the program may be extremely difficult. It is absolutely crucial that we have accurate daytime e-mail addresses and phone numbers for home, work, cell, and all alternate pick-up/emergency contacts.



GUIDANCE and BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

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;
- Utilize positive guidance by praising and reinforcing appropriate behavior;
- Modeling behavior and language for other children to follow;
- Serving as role models for appropriate behavior;
- Creating an environment that is safe and comfortable for all children;
- Stating clear and consistent rules and limits that develop self control, self discipline and positive self esteem;
- Acknowledging and respecting each child's feelings;
- Developing consistent and ongoing communication between teaching staff and families;
- Providing continuous supervision by staff during disciplinary actions.

Families are asked to follow these same guidelines at home as well as at the program. 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 not allow abusive, neglectful, physical, corporal, humiliating or frightening treatment or punishment of children. We will not yell or curse at 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.

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.

Student Code of Conduct

It is our goal to help every child be successful in our program. We understand that everyone makes mistakes and that sometimes an individual has a tough day. We will always work with your child to help them through those moments.

To be successful in any situation one must understand the expectations of that situation. Rules are posted and reviewed often. Parents will be notified by a teacher if their child is not complying with the rules. If a child's behavior continually disrupts the program or jeopardizes the physical and/or emotional safety of others, the parents will be required to meet with the Director of School Age Programs and the child may be suspended while we work to determine if the child can be a successful participant in the program.

If behavior occurs that severely jeopardizes the physical or emotional health or safety of other children or staff members, the Director of School Age Programs 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.

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 be self disciplined and learn self control. YWCA defines unacceptable behavior as:

- Inflicting physical or emotional harm and/or
- Using abusive language
- Bullying, humiliation or intimidation

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.

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 great 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, the Department of Public Health Licensing Unit, and the YWCA nurse consultant. Families may access a child's file to review or update information at any time

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 School Age programs and Manager of School Age Programs. 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 Office of Early Childhood and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) may have access to your family's information as needed with the authorization of a YWCA employee. It is critical to remember that you, as parents, have access to these files, also.

Release of Information

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 Public Health Licensing Unit may review your child's files for childcare licensing.

Should you observe behaviors or actions by any person (staff or child), that are deemed by you to be inappropriate you must follow appropriate guidelines and bring your concerns to the person in charge at your child's site or by contacting the Manager of School Age Programs.

Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy, and employees of YWCA are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. Please be assured that your concerns will be addressed and a team member will follow up with you.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Occasionally, a child's appearance and behavior may raise concerns about possible abuse or neglect. We take our obligation to protect children from harm very seriously. All staff working with children at YWCA Hartford Region are Mandated Reporters to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). 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 Children and Families. This means that any situation that appears to be out of the norm must be reported.

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.

FAMILY 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 Director of School Age Programs (contact numbers listed at the beginning of this handbook) to state the nature of your complaint.
 - If you feel that your problem should be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer, you may call her at (860) 525-1163 or write c/o: YWCA Hartford Region, 135 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105.
 - You may also contact the Office of Early Childhood. The complaint procedure is posted at every site.
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COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Collaborations with outside community agencies are vital to the quality of our programs. 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.

ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

YWCA Hartford Region 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. Children requiring more individualized attention will have a special care plan created from information shared by the family with staff. Every effort will be made to ensure each child's comfort and confidence in our program.

Children with Special Needs

YWCA believes in inclusion of all children in its programs. If a child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the Kidslink staff will assist families in 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. The staff will work to assist a family in identifying and obtaining 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.

Prior to enrollment:

Families must complete the registration process as described below:

- A registration packet must be completed and sent to an authorized YWCA representative.
- All parents are expected to understand and abide by information in the family handbook and must sign off on receipt of the family handbook.

The following items are **required** to complete the enrollment process:

- A current YWCA Membership
- All fees, including non-refundable membership and registration fee along with the first tuition payment
- A current Health Assessment Record (including immunization record and TB Risk Assessment)
- A recent photo of your child(ren)

TUITION AND FEES

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 based on the number of school days on the Public School calendar and divided into 10 equal monthly installments. Payments are due in advance on the 20th of each month from August to May. Tuitions are paid in advance of the month of care. The first tuition payment of the school year is due August 20th for September tuition. Payments can be mailed or hand delivered to the appropriate address below. Only the Billing Specialist, Director of School Age Programs, or Manager of School Age Programs may accept tuition payments. Payments may be left at the front reception desk. Please include your child's name, name of the school on the check, and Attn: Billing Specialist on the envelope. **Payments may not be accepted by the teachers in our programs.**

Please send payments to:

YWCA Hartford Region
Kidslink
135 Broad Street
Hartford, CT 06105

Registration Fees:

A one time \$50.00 registration fee is due upon registration for all new families.

Membership Fees

YWCA Hartford Region is a membership association. We require membership for all YWCA Program participants. The membership fee is \$35.00 a year and billed annually to your account on October 1st or on your first day of enrollment if you enroll after October 1st of any school year.

YW membership allows you:

- Be part of the world's largest and oldest, multi-racial women's movement;
- Participate in YWCA's diverse programs & services including *Stand Against Racism, Money Conference for Women*, YWCA's annual meeting and more;
- Meet women with diverse backgrounds and build lasting relationships while working together with a common goal to make a difference ;
- Get the inside scoop and up-to-date information on YWCA happenings and news with our newsletter and monthly e-newsletter; and
- Know that your membership enables YWCA to help women, girls and families in the community and support our racial justice and advocacy work.

Sibling/Multiple Children Discount

Families with more than one child in a YWCA childcare program who attend five days a week are offered a tuition discount. Tuition discounts are applied as follows: the child with the highest tuition is charged full tuition; second and subsequent children from the same family receive a 10% discount each. *Please Note: Sibling discounts do not apply to families where the YWCA accepts a third party payment. (Department of Children and Families or Care 4 Kids).*

WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

Withdrawal Procedures

If you are planning to withdraw a child from the program, you must contact the Billing Specialist ***in writing*** (e-mail is acceptable) at least two-weeks in advance, stating that you plan to withdraw your child from the program. ***Failure to provide a written notice two weeks in advance will result in your account being charged for that two week period.*** Families who take extended vacations and withdraw from the program risk losing their space in program. No spaces will be held “open” while a family is on an extended vacation, unless enrollment is active and tuition payments are up-to-date.

Re-Enrollment

Any request to re-enroll your child must be made in writing to the Director or Manager of School Age Programs. 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.

ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF PAYMENT

No cash payments will be accepted.

Personal Checks & Money Orders

Checks and money orders must be payable to YWCA Hartford Region. Please be sure to write your child’s name and program clearly on the check or money order.

- The YWCA may utilize on-site deposit technology which will result in your checks clearing your bank more quickly than taking your check to the bank manually and will result in you receiving a “substitute” check (a legal copy of a check).
- 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.
- If the bank returns an NSF (Non-sufficient funds) check, a \$35 fee is added to the family account. Payment for a returned check is expected within 72 hours (3 days) notice to the family.
- 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.
- At no time will a post-dated check be accepted. YWCA takes no responsibility for a post-dated check that gets deposited before the check date. NSF fees will apply if your check is returned from the bank.

MasterCard & Visa

When using a credit card, a written credit card authorization must be completed. Your name, address and zip code on the authorization form must be the exact billing address for the card being used. It is recommended that credit card authorizations be authorized in advance for all 10 payments through May 20th. Submission of a timely authorization form is the responsibility of the parent. If your credit card is due to expire within the school year, please ensure a new authorization is submitted to the Billing Specialist before the 20th of the expiration month to avoid late payment fees. The Billing Specialist will attempt to contact you if your card is declined due to an expiration date or non-sufficient funds. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that a current credit card is on file. Failure to contact the billing specialist in this situation will result in a late payment fee of \$20.00 as well as a \$25.00 processing fee.

- If the bank returns a credit card payment, a \$25.00 return payment fee is added to the family account. Payment for a returned credit card is expected within 72 hours (3 days) notice to the family.
 - There is a \$10.00 minimum charge for a credit card.
 - Credit card charges that are for fees other than the monthly tuition must be authorized in writing. An email to the Billing Specialist is acceptable. Examples would be late payment fees, locator fees, or late pick up fees.
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Care 4 Kids Childcare Subsidy Program

YWCA staff will be happy to assist a family with the process of applying for the Care 4 Kids Subsidy Program (C4K). YWCA completes and signs the Parent Provider Agreement, retains one copy, and then sends the form directly to Care 4 Kids. Families can request a copy of their Parent Provider Agreement from the Billing Specialist.

Once approved for assistance through the Care 4 Kids Program, the family must provide a valid C4K certificate in order to receive the subsidy. If a valid certificate is not received, full tuition will be expected from the parent. Once a valid certificate is received, adjustments will be made to the family's account and if applicable, parents will receive a refund for any overpayment.

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

ADDITIONAL FEES

Late payment fees:

Payments received after close of business on the 20th will be considered late and a \$20.00 late payment fee will be applied. If you are mailing your check, ensure enough time for your payment to be received at the office. You may drop your check off in person at any time. Late fees will apply to credit card payments as well if the office does not have an updated form or if the credit card payment is returned from your bank. If tuition is not paid in full by the last day of the month, your child will be withdrawn until payment is received in full.

Locator Fee

If your child attended school, but not the YW Kidslink program you must notify the YW Kidslink teachers. We must account for every child on the attendance sheet. If we have to make calls to locate your child a fee of \$50 will be assessed to your account. This fee must be paid within 24 hours.

Late Pick-up fee:

Charges are as follows for first and second offenses:

- \$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.

For third and fourth offenses, charges are as follows:

- \$50 per child for the first 15 minutes or any part thereof; plus
- An additional \$75 per child for each extra 15 minute period or any part thereof.

YWCA reserves the right to remove the child from our program after the fifth time of picking up late.

Letter of Agreement

All families will be required to initial the payment agreement and handbook acknowledgement at the time of registration (page 3 of the enrollment packet). By signing, parents and guardians acknowledge that they have received, read, and understand all information in the handbook as well as tuition responsibilities.

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.

All policies and procedures are subject to change. Families will receive a written addendum if any changes are made.