



YMCA of Medicine Hat
150 Ash Avenue South East
Medicine Hat, AB, T1A 3A9
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YMCA Before and After School Program Parent/Guardian Handbook

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*Building healthy
communities*

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Administration Policies

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YMCA Child Care programs are required to meet the mandatory Licensing regulations and are visited regularly by a Licensing Officer to ensure programs are in compliance. Reports from these visits are posted in a location that is visible in the programs and are available for families to read. Any recommendations from these reports are used as an opportunity to improve the program.

YMCA Before and After School programs are licensed for children ages Kindergarten to Grade 6. Children must be school attendees to participate in a school age program.

Accreditation

The purpose of Accreditation in Alberta is to raise the standard of Child Care in the Province and improve best practices in Early Learning and Child Care Services. Accreditation is a voluntary process and involves great dedication on the part of the Educators and the program.

The benefits of an accredited program:

- Provides families who are looking for a high-quality program
- Attracts Educators who are looking to work in a quality program
- The Educators receive support funding

All YMCA programs participate in the Accreditation process.

Hours of Operation and Program Information

YMCA Child Care Programs are open Monday to Friday, 7:00am until the first bell, and from the final bell until 6:00pm. Children are welcome to be dropped off for program anytime during our operational hours.

YMCA Child Care is closed on statutory holidays. Days in lieu for statutory holidays are determined by the Association and take into consideration closure schedules for schools we serve. The YMCA will poll families for care required on other non-stat holidays and non-school days (examples: Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve). Programs with low numbers may have care offered at another facility or reduced hours at the program. All families will be notified in this instance.

The YMCA may provide full day care for children during Professional Development days. Families of children that attend a school other than the one in which the program is based are required to provide two weeks' notice. YMCA locations only serve certain schools. Children may attend alternate programs and be transported to our programs if Supported Child Care (for example, Inclusive Child Care Funding, PUF Funding or Ratio Enhancement Funding) is in place. See the Transportation Policy.



Qualified Educators

Our dedicated Educators are carefully chosen and have the appropriate educational background to ensure quality care and are required to have or obtain Certification from the Government of Alberta:

- Child Development Assistant (Level 1)
- Child Development Worker (Level 2)
- Child Development Supervisor (Level 3).

Educators are selected based on their education, experience working with children and willingness to learn and grow within the YMCA. Educators have personal qualities of friendliness, warmth, and the ability to relate openly to children and adults. The YMCA has a Hiring and Orientation Process where policies and procedures are reviewed, and Educators are required to acknowledge and document their understanding of the process. Educators are screened using resume, interviews, three reference checks and Police Intervention Clearance with vulnerable sector search.

The YMCA believes Professional Development training and lifelong learning is important and the mutual responsibility of the Educator and the Association. Educators are required to attend Professional Development and may contribute their own time and share costs with the Association. Professional Development Grant Funding is available for learning opportunities.

Open Door and Family Involvement

YMCA Child Care programs are committed to communicating with families, children, educators, schools and community members in a respectful and professional manner to facilitate positive relationships and create an optimum Child Care experience.

The YMCA encourages family input into our programs and ongoing communication between families, Educators and Program Directors to support the ongoing and ever-changing needs of children.

To support the transition to care we encourage pre-enrollment visits, where the parent/guardian must accompany the child, to give children and families an opportunity to spend time in the program. We do ask that these be scheduled with the program. As the transition to care is unique for each child and family, the Director will work with in collaboration with the family to be sure a plan is developed.

Items that pertain to all families will be made available on a consistent basis:

- Licensing, Accreditation and Alberta Health Reports
- Programming
- Programming Documentation
- Notification of program Educator changes



- Menus
- Program Changes (hours, off site excursions, etc.)
- Community Resources
- Health Care Notices
- Off Site Excursions and Special Activities
- Emergency Procedures
- Newsletters
- Child Care Policies

Parent/guardians are encouraged to communicate their questions and concerns to their child's Educators. Educators will take care to acknowledge families when they arrive and leave the program and take each opportunity to offer relevant information about their child's day. All potentially sensitive issues will be discussed with families in a non-public place. Communication from parent/guardians will be considered and changes to the program may be made accordingly. All comments and suggestions will be considered on an individual basis. Families are encouraged to share their Time, Talent and Treasure with our programs.

Orientation and Registration

YMCA Child Care centers will provide a comprehensive orientation to families, including a tour, access to our policies and introductions to the Educators, to ensure they are making informed decisions about their child's care.

All children must have a fully completed Registration Package prior to beginning care.

Transfers

The YMCA tries to accommodate all families; however, we cannot guarantee a continuation of care if a family wishes to transfer between locations.

Part Time or Drop in Care

Part time or drop in care is available on a limited basis and is vulnerable as the program nears capacity.

The Program Director will require minimal advance notice of drop-in attendance to ensure that staffing ratios can be adjusted and/or maintained:

- For attendance in morning programming, the Program Director requires notice by 4:00PM the day prior.
- For attendance in afternoon programming, the Program Director requires notice by 10:00 AM the same day.

Records



Children's records

The children's file is on site in a locked filing cabinet. The YMCA must in accordance with Child Care Licensing Regulation maintain on the program premises an up to date record containing the following information for each child:

- The child's name, date of birth and home address
- A complete registration package
- The parent/guardian's name, home address and telephone number
- The name, address and telephone number of a person who can be contacted in case of an emergency
- If medication is given (the written consent of the parent/guardian is required and the name of the medication, the time of administration, the amount administered and the initials of the person who administered the medication will be recorded)
- The particulars of any health care provided to the child including the written consent of the parent/guardian
- Any other relevant health information about the child including the child's immunization, allergies and dietary needs

Administrative Records

The following records are kept in a locked area at the YMCA Program for 2 years (including the current year) then the YMCA stores all records in a secured YMCA location or secured storage facility.

- Sign in/out sheets for children that include arrival and departure times (made available to the parent/guardians when requested)
- Sign in/out sheets for Educators that include arrival and departure times and hours spent providing Child Care

The following records are kept in a locked area at the YMCA Program until no longer relevant and then the YMCA stores all records in a secured YMCA location or secured storage facility.

- Evidence of Director and Educators Child Care certification
- Current first aid certificate for Director and each Educator
- Children and Educator files

Criminal Record checks, including vulnerable sector searches for each Educator and Volunteer are updated every 3 years and kept secured at the downtown YMCA location as well as on site at each program.

Portable Records

The YMCA maintains portable records for all participants. All records are updated every 6 months. The YMCA must maintain a portable record of emergency information. This



information includes: Child's name, date of birth, home address. Parent/Guardian's name, home address and telephone number. The name, address and telephone number of a person who can be contacted in an emergency as well as any other relevant health information about the child provided by the child's guardian including immunizations and allergies, if any.

The Portable Records also include Emergency Procedure Information.

Fees

Parent/guardians will only pay for the time their child attends, rounded to the nearest 0.25 hourly increment. A pre-authorized payment plan authorizing the YMCA to debit your bank account or credit card is required at the time of registration. Attendance hours will be calculated at the end of the month and an invoice will be emailed to you showing the amount that will be taken from your bank account on the payment date. The payment date is the 15th of the following month. If that date falls on a weekend or stat holiday, payments will be pulled on the last business day before the weekend/stat holiday.

- For children who are scheduled to be in the program the cost is \$5.00 per hour.
- For children who are not scheduled to be in the program the cost is \$6.00 per hour.

Default Payments and Outstanding Balances

NSF payments are subject to an administration charge of \$35.00. Families will be notified of outstanding balances on account. Families are required to clear balances on account within 5 business days of notification or Child Care will be suspended. Failure to correct any outstanding balances on account prior to the beginning of the next month will result in the termination of Child Care. Consistent default on payment of fees will result in termination of care.

Payment Methods

We require families use a pre-authorized payment plan. The YMCA accepts payment by Visa, MasterCard or Automatic Bank withdrawal. YMCA Child Care programs do not accept cash.

Financial Assistance

The YMCA accepts Provincial Subsidy. It is the responsibility of families to have their subsidy in place prior to registration. It is also the responsibility of families to renew, communicate and/or provide updates to Government Subsidy, as required. Should the program not receive confirmation of subsidy approval, families are required to pay full fees. Should the approval be backdated, we will credit families' account for the subsidy



amount. Should a child not attend the required hours, families are responsible for paying the balance owing which will be automatically deducted with the next Preauthorized Fee Withdrawal.

The YMCA accepts alternate financial assistance from government or community programs. Families are responsible for communicating with these programs to provide updates to fees, term and/or attendance. Should the YMCA not receive the agreed upon assistance, families are responsible for paying the balance owing.

Tax Receipts

Child Care fees are tax deductible. Official Tax Receipts will be provided prior to Federal tax deadlines.

Late Fees

All programs close at 6:00 pm. The YMCA requires families to contact programs directly if they will be late. Late fees will be charged as follows:

Late Fees:

- \$1/minute per child – first and second time
- \$2/minute per child – third time
- \$5/minute per child – fourth time

Consistent late pickups may lead to termination of Child Care.

The YMCA follows Child Abandonment Procedures, as indicated in the Emergency Procedures.

A Late Fee form is to be signed by the parent/guardian upon pick up. Late fees will be added to families next scheduled payment.

Uninformed Absence Fee

As per our Transportation Policy, families must notify us of any absences, especially after school. If children are absent and/or unaccounted for After School, all Educators follow the Procedure for Children Unaccounted for After School, as indicated in the Emergency Procedures.

If the YMCA is required to follow the Procedure for Children Unaccounted for After School and a child is determined to have been expected to attend, families will be charged a \$25.00 fee.



An Uninformed Absence Fee form is to be signed by the parent/guardian upon pick up. Uninformed Absence Fee will be added to families next scheduled payment.

Fee Increase

The YMCA implements regular fee increases. A market assessment is completed prior to finalizing the increase amount. Families will receive written notice, at least 30 days prior to the fee change.

Program Review

Evaluation of our YMCA Child Care programs occurs on an ongoing basis. Methods include, but are not limited to: Policy Review, Family and Educator Surveys, Family/Stakeholder Feedback, Family/Stakeholder Meetings, Internal and External Audits, and the YMCA Annual General Meeting.

Each year, parent/guardian evaluations are provided to all our families. These evaluations help identify which areas family's value in a Child Care program and ask parent/guardians to rate and comment on each area of the program's operation. This input is then used to create meaningful changes within our programs.

The YMCA will host Family Focus Meetings twice annually to discuss issues of importance pertaining to Child Care. The meeting will also provide parent/guardians with the opportunity to offer feedback regarding the operation of the program. An agenda will be distributed to families prior to the meeting.

Information gleaned from parent/guardians will be reviewed at meetings and by Child Care Management and changes to the program may be made accordingly. All comments and suggestions will be considered on an individual basis.

Feedback and Appeals

If families have a congratulation, concern or complaint, we encourage families to let us know by using the following process:

1. Contact the Director of the Program your child attends.
2. If a family requires further information, the family may contact the Before and After School Program Manager. Contact information is available at the Child Care Program.
3. If a family feels their feedback was not sufficiently heard, they may then contact the General Manager of Child Care
4. Any further feedback can be directed to the YMCA of Medicine Hat CEO.



Any feedback pertaining to licensing concerns that families feel have not adequately been dealt with by the YMCA, can be passed along to the following:

Child and Family Service Office

Rm 101, 346 3 Street SE
Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 0G7
Phone: 403-529-3753
Fax: 403-528-5244

When a complaint is made to Child and Family Services:

- the identity of the caller will not be divulged to the license holder
- the complaint will be investigated by a Licensing Officer

Dealing with Differences with Families

The YMCA's purpose is to serve the needs of children and families in accordance with the Mission and Values of the Association. When families choose to participate, it is with an understanding and acceptance of those values.

When a conflict arises, YMCA Educators will make every attempt to work with the family to resolve the issue to their mutual satisfaction, provided the arrangement does not:

- Compromise the Mission and Values of the YMCA;
- Put Educators, the child or other participants at risk;
- Diminish the value of the YMCA experience for other participants by placing undue stress on the YMCA program

All situations are dealt with on an individual basis, considering the specific needs and circumstances of the family. After working with the family and making every attempt to resolve the situation, the Director, in consultation with the Manager and/or General Manager, may conclude that it is not appropriate for the family to continue involvement in YMCA Before and After School Programs.

Behaviour

The YMCA understands that severe behaviors will occur on occasion. The YMCA follows our Child Guidance Policy to best support children. However, in some cases, group care is not ideal and the YMCA, after working with families and in consultation with the Manager and/or General Manager, may conclude that it is not appropriate for the family to continue involvement in YMCA Before and After School Program.

Long-term or Chronic Medical Conditions



When the safety of a child with a diagnosed medical condition or the safety of other children is a concern, the YMCA has the authority to exclude a child with a long term or chronic illness. A diagnosis may be required.

Philosophical Differences

Occasionally, the needs and opinions of a family or child do not fit with the principles, policies and procedures of the YMCA. The program will strive to promote discussion to come to agreeable terms and to ensure that all children who attend YMCA programs are happy and comfortable in their surroundings. However, if this is not possible, it is in the best interests of the family to enroll the child in a program that is more in line with their needs and beliefs. The YMCA reserves the right to ask the family to find a more suitable Child Care arrangement.

Supported Child Care

If a child has a diagnosis that requires additional supports in program, we ask families to provide this information prior to registration as we must have Educators/strategies in place prior to attendance, when appropriate.

If we find that a child may require additional supports to be successful in our program, we will work with the family to identify the best way to access the necessary resources. We are committed to working with families to provide resources.

Suspension and Termination of Care

Although a last resort, the YMCA reserves the right to suspend or terminate a child's care.

Divorced and Separated Families

The YMCA strives to provide Child Care of the highest quality to families from all family structures.

Communication

- Directors will ensure that each parent/guardian has access to the information available to all families.
- Duplicate copies of incident reports or other written documents pertaining to the child of a divorced or separated couple will be made available upon request of the parent/guardian.
- Both parent/guardians will have the opportunity to meet with the Director separately, if a meeting is arranged that conflicts with the schedule of one parent/guardian.





- The YMCA will not be used as a mediator for parent/guardians to communicate with each other. Despite any differences, parent/guardians need to communicate with each other, prior to communicating to the YMCA.
- The YMCA will not provide letters of support to either parent/guardian unless ordered by the Court.

Fees

- Divorced and separated parent/guardians must discuss and arrange the payment of fees before their child is enrolled in a YMCA program.
- Before any changes can be made to the predetermined payment of fees, a copy of the Payment Plan must be submitted to the Director which will be signed by both parent/guardians. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure this is completed and signed by both parent/guardians.
- The YMCA will not involve themselves in disputes over financial obligations beyond requiring families to maintain a consistent payment schedule.
- The YMCA will only release specific payment information to the person paying the fees as per the Pre-Authorized Payment Agreement, except if an outstanding balance on. This includes annual income tax receipts, in which the YMCA will only release a tax receipt to the person responsible for paying the fees.
- If a scheduled payment does not go through, full payment, clearing the balance on account, is due 5 business days after the parent/guardian responsible for that payment is notified. If that payment is not made, the other parent/guardian will be made aware that a balance is owing on the account and payment clearing this balance is required within 2 business days to avoid suspension of care.

Access

- The YMCA requires formal court documents to enforce any custodial access issues. A child can be released to any person who has legal guardianship of that child unless appropriate court documents are on file.
- The YMCA will not withhold access to a child based upon family dispute. Current spouses or partners of a child's parent/guardian will be permitted to collect that child from a YMCA program unless court produced documents state otherwise.

Pick up and Drop off

- To facilitate smooth transitions and to avoid potential disruption, the YMCA will request a written schedule detailing when each parent/guardian will be responsible for pick up and drop off of their child
- Any parents and guardians listed on the emergency card can pick up the child at any time unless otherwise stated in provided court documentation of guardianship. The YMCA will not communicate a parent/guardian's request to make alternative arrangements to the other parent/guardian.



Philanthropy

The YMCA mobilizes people to build better communities by giving something back through philanthropy- the giving of time, talent, treasure and trust. The YMCA strives to make programs, services and facilities available to all. Our goal is that no one will be denied membership or program participation because they are unable to pay the full fee.

The Strong Kids Campaign raises money for our Opportunity Fund, which is then used to make our programs and facilities accessible to everyone in the community. Families can participate in the annual Strong Kids Fundraising campaign at their Child Care Programs and thus become actively involved in the YMCA's work in the local and global community.

Partnerships/Community Engagement

The YMCA works with multiple stakeholders and works to build partnerships with communities we serve.

Communication

YMCA-Internal Communication

Directors and Educators will have numerous, open-ended means to contact Child Care Management and the Directors of other programs. This will ensure consistency between the programs and allow for input on policy facilitation from both front line and administrative staff.

Communication methods may include but are not limited to meetings, workshops, emails, coaching, communication books, bulletin boards, goal setting, performance reviews, trainings, procedures and documents

YMCA-External Stakeholders

YMCA programs build relationships with the buildings we occupy and schools the children attend to complement the programs and share information. The basis for sharing information is that there is reasonable belief that the information shared will be in the best interests of the children.

All parent/guardians will sign an Information Sharing Agreement in their Registration Package. Communication methods may include but are not limited to e-mails, meetings, Collaborative Agreements, exchange of newsletters/events and other documents. YMCA makes all available efforts to comply with outside agency policies while adhering to YMCA policy, licensing, accreditation A Place to Connect requirements.





Emergency Contact Information

An emergency telephone number will be posted on the main entrance to YMCA Before and After School Programs should parent/guardians require emergency after hours contact.

Incident Reporting

Information pertaining to individual children will be communicated in a formal and confidential manner as per our Incident Reporting Procedures. Instances of injury, illness or serious incidents of behavior misconduct will be documented in an Incident Report, which will be reviewed with a parent/guardian upon collection of their child. The Incident Report will be kept in the child's file. Parents/Guardians will be notified as soon as possible by phone of the following incidents: an injury that may require immediate medical attention, a head injury and/or a Critical Incident that is reported to Licensing.

If a Critical Incident occurs in a YMCA program, information about children will be shared with licensing according to the Government of Alberta Licensing regulations. Critical Incident Reporting Procedures, as indicated in the Emergency Procedures, will be followed. Annually, each program analyzes Critical Incident Reports and submits them to the regional Child Care office using the Incident Reporting and Annual Summary and Analysis Report.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures are posted in the programs and available for Educators and families review. Emergency procedures are reviewed with the children, where developmentally appropriate.

Emergency procedures will be reviewed with staff at monthly staff meetings and will be documented in the meeting minutes.

Personal Technology Usage

All YMCA Educators are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children. Use of personal technology devices during program time does not allow proper supervision of children. Personal technology devices may be checked during a break ensuring that Educators are out of sight of children and families. Personal technology devices cannot be used to record photos or video of children in program.

YMCA cell phones must be taken when off site and used for program purposes.

Child Guidance Policy



The YMCA is committed to helping children grow to their fullest potential in a safe, caring and nurturing environment. Educators are to practice proactive, prevention and intervention Child Guidance strategies, while avoiding prohibited practices. All Child disciplinary action taken must be reasonable for the circumstances that are occurring.

The YMCA also focuses on providing opportunities for children to practice independence, autonomy, personal choice, empathy towards others and a sense of responsibility for their actions. Problem solving skills will help children to learn ways to cope with difficulties and frustrations.

What we do and how we do it: Prevention and Intervention

What we do	How we do it
Plan for positive outcomes (Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer age appropriate programming, with opportunities to expand and extend children’s ideas • Offer choices and provide enough material for each child to participate • Plan experiences based on the interests of the child • Be organized and plan materials and equipment ahead of time to avoid unnecessary waiting • Provide small group experiences • Reflect and interpret children’s play for future learnings
Anticipate issues / be flexible (Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay close attention to children who tend to require more guidance and intervene before situations arise • Children will be given time to finish an activity they are involved in • Plan for transitions • Use proximity to help prevent situations from escalating (i.e. Educator hears children begin to raise their voices, so they move closer to them)
Create Emotional Attachments (Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create trust through relationship building • Be present and engaged with children • Be positive • Provide Stability • Use Verbal and Non Verbal Behaviours
Project a cheerful, professional attitude (Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laugh with the children • Enjoy being with the children • Participate in all aspects of the children’s experience • Care about the children





<p>Provide safe and nurturing environments (Prevention)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in play with the children • Develop clear expectations with or for the children and be sure children are aware of the expectations • Promote risky play in the spirit of learning • Teach children about natural and logical consequences
<p>Communicate clearly (Prevention)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate using words and phrases the child will understand • Make requests in clear, concise and simple terms (i.e. "Chairs are for sitting on.") • Use reminders (i.e. "The sand stays in the sand box") • Acknowledge feelings (i.e. "It's hard to wait for a turn") • Communicate with children at their eye level • Allow children to respond and finish speaking and listen to the children's words • Participate in conversations • Communicate to children where developmentally appropriate • Educators practice active listening
<p>Recognize children through praise, compliments and encouragement (Prevention)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use non-verbal opportunities to encourage (i.e. smile, nod, pat on the shoulder) • Tell children when they have done something well and be specific about what they did well (i.e. "You put all of the markers in the container!") (i.e. instead of "I'm proud of you." The Educator could say, "You look really proud of your work!" or "I see you have a big smile, is that because of the picture you drew?")
<p>Treat every child as an individual (Prevention)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that we will need to respond to each child differently because they are unique • Spend time getting to know each child, and really listen to them • Respect children's individuality • Recognize and be sensitive to the diversity of each child (cultural, religious, etc.)
<p>Role model desired behaviors (Prevention)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role model the behaviors Educators would like to see in the children • Highlight positive behaviors that you want to see more of especially pro-social skills (i.e. "Thank you for sharing with Ayden." "Thank you for mopping up the spilled water. Now we won't slip and fall.")



Recognize our own emotions and attitude (Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requesting help to implement Child Guidance, when needed• Recognize when the Educators emotions will prevent them from following the Child Guidance Policy and ask for help and remove themselves from the situation
Offer choices (Prevention or Intervention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choices should be mutually accepted by the educator and the child choices must support children's safety• The child should have more than one activity/experience offered as a choice• Include the children in determining choices when possible• Allow and encourage new play opportunities to be added at any given time• Limiting use of equipment or choices (i.e. "Do you want to pick up the blocks or put the cars on the shelf?" or i.e. "Do you want to wash your hands now or in five minutes?")
Allow children personal space (Time Away) (Prevention and Intervention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a child demonstrates the need for personal time to cool off, allow the opportunity to do so where they are comfortable while adhering to the Supervision Policy• YMCA Programs will have a space that allows for time away. The space may include pillows, books, music, stuffed animals.• Let the child know that when the child determines they are ready to return to activities they can do so
Promote discussion, problem solving and conflict resolution. (Prevention and Intervention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give children the opportunity to solve their own problems (i.e. Observe the children problem solving from distance before instantly intervening• If necessary, intervene by facilitating a discussion encouraging children to talk and listen to each other• Encourage children to report bullying behavior• Remind children of expectations• Provide logical, age appropriate consequences (i.e. "if you continue to throw the blocks we will have to put them away and find something else to play")• Follow through with consequences (i.e. "We had discussed that if you threw the blocks again we would put them away. I will help you do this now and then we can go play something else together.")



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set limits: i.e. "I can't let you hurt Ayden." • Follow Canadian Child Care Federation Conflict Resolution Steps
Comfort Children (Prevention and Intervention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use physical contact to calm children when required • Be sure a child wants to be comforted by asking the child and/or observing their body language (i.e. "Can I give you a hug?") • Reassure children who are emotionally distressed • Be available for children to discuss experiences

Families as Partners

Family involvement and insight in the behavior guidance process is strongly encouraged and welcomed. YMCA Educators will provide regular feedback to families regarding their child's behavior, sharing both positive and challenging behaviours. The YMCA requires parents/guardians be available to meet with Before and After School Educators, when mutually convenient, to discuss their child's behaviour or conduct, if necessary.

The YMCA will support and incorporate the guidance used at home as long as it falls within Licensing and our policies and procedures. On a day-to-day basis the YMCA requests that families share with educators any relevant information to better care and understand the children.

Information such as:

- Changes in the home
- Physical or emotional upsets
- Tired from a busy weekend
- New experiences
- Custody issues

Should ongoing concerns be noted by either the family or program the following steps will be taken.

Guidelines for De-escalating Volatile Situations

On occasion, the YMCA understands that severe behaviours will occur. The YMCA classifies severe behaviours as those listed below:

- Severe defiance and disruption
- Verbal abuse to educators or other children, including profanity
- Destruction of YMCA property



- Physical abuse to educators or other children
- Leaving the program boundaries or group of activity without permission
- Theft of property
- Bullying or antagonizing behavior

In the case that a child exhibits any of the above behaviours and the all efforts have been exhausted to follow Child Guidance Prevention and Intervention strategies, the following guidelines will be followed.

1. Child will be redirected to a safe place and encouraged to calm down. Other children may be removed from the space, depending on the circumstances (i.e. If they are being threatened).
2. Educators will work with the child to assist them in calming themselves, so they can rejoin the group and follow all program expectations. This may mean speaking to them, sitting with them, or letting them have time to themselves.
3. In rare cases, parent/guardians may be contacted if a child continues to put themselves or others at risk. i.e. a child continuously running away from the program and not returning to the site or throwing chairs and tipping shelves in the room and unable to be reintroduced for 15 minutes

Follow up

- Incident will be documented on YMCA Incident Report and shared with the family
- Upon parent/guardian arrival an Educator will discuss the situation
- Child Care Management will be notified of the situation
- Suspension may be issued depending on the severity of the situation, pending a Collaborative Meeting
- The child can return to care, once a meeting has been held between the Director and the Family:
- The Meeting will include, but is not limited to:
 - Behaviour strategies used at home and school
 - Behaviour strategies that can be used/implemented at the Y
 - Parent/guardians will be provided Behaviour Incident and Suspension Procedure
- In all cases, the Director will meet with parent/guardians to work through a plan of action to assist the child. Termination is a last resort.

The YMCA may have to modify these procedures pending the severity of the incident.

Allegation of Educator Misconduct

The following practices by employees and/or volunteers are unacceptable and will incur an investigation and may result in disciplinary action, including termination:



- Inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical or corporal punishment, verbal or physical degradation, emotional deprivation/abuse or sexual abuse
 - Physical punishment is any form of child discipline that employs the non-accidental application of force or an agent to a child's body. It can include: striking (directly or with an object), shaking, pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, spanking, choking, stabbing or burning a child (as defined by Licensing)
- Deny or threaten to deny any necessity to a child such as food, shelter or personal liberty (i.e. not allowing a child to use the washroom when needed)
- Use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation
- Demeaning and/or demoralizing behavior such as humiliation, threats, intimidation, swearing, yelling, sarcasm, discussion of a child or their family.
- Leaving children unattended or unsupervised.

See the YMCA of Medicine Hat Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Persons Policy Procedure for Handling an Allegation.

Health and Wellness Policy

Principles

In keeping with the YMCA's mission to enhance the development of people in spirit, mind and body, the YMCA of Medicine Hat has a responsibility to create and maintain a healthy

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communities*



environment for its participants, families and volunteers. The most basic element of a safe and healthy environment is prevention. In children's program settings, prevention must be a team approach involving Educators, participants and families. The YMCA is committed to taking all the necessary precautions related to health and safety issues as well as encouraging participants and families to do the same.

YMCA Responsibilities

- Communicate with parent/guardians regarding issues, concerns and questions pertaining to their child
- Ensure that all information on the child's file is relevant and current
- Possess the required first aid skills
- Ensure Emergency Medication is taken with child on all outings
- Educate and provide information to children and families about the benefits of nutrition, fitness, hand washing and hygiene
- Communicate with Public Health and Licensing when required
- Complete Incident Reports for all children who are ill or become injured
- Be sure a child receives medical attention, as necessary, in the event of an injury or serious illness
- Maintaining a clean and safe environment

Parent/Guardian's Responsibilities

- Communicate to YMCA about their children's individual needs and health status and ensure children are well and able to participate
- Ensure emergency information is up to date by informing educators of a change in address and/or phone number or any change in emergency contact person
- Provide Emergency Medication to be kept at the program, and ensure it is replaced when expired
- When a child shows signs of sickness at home, it is the parent/guardians' responsibility to find out what the illness is and to keep the child at home or make other arrangements if the child's condition is infectious. If a child cannot take part in an activity (including outdoor play) because of illness, they should not come to the program that day.
- If a child comes to the program ill or has any symptoms as indicated below, parent/guardians will be asked to find alternate care for that day.
- The YMCA requires a doctor's note to be presented upon the child's return to the program after having a contagious disease.
- If parent/guardians are unsure of whether their child will need a doctor's note, they are asked to contact the child's Educator prior to bringing their child to the program.

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Potential Health Risk

At the program, if the child develops symptoms listed below, the Director or Educator will contact the parent/guardians or emergency contact immediately. If neither can be reached or refuse to pick up their child immediately, (within 2 hours), the YMCA will contact Child Protective Services and the Before and After School Program Manager. While the child is awaiting pick up, he/she is kept separate from the other children as much as possible. The YMCA abides by the following procedures:

A child should not attend when	A child may return to care when
he/she cannot fully participate in all program components for the day (outdoor, swimming, field trips)	he/she can fully participate
he/she has a fever of 100 degrees (38.0 C)	his/her fever has remained below 100 degrees (38 C) for 24 hours without medication
he/she has diarrhea	he/she has had at least one normal bowel movement
he/she has skin infections, new or unexplained rash, or signs of any contagious disease	he/she has been examined by a doctor and has received medical clearance
he/she has any form of untreated infestation (i.e. scabies, head lice, etc.)	he/she has been treated and has no eggs or nits
conjunctivitis (pink eye)	he/she has seen a doctor and 24 hours after first eye drops have been given
Vomiting	Symptom free for 24 hours
New or unexplained cough	Symptom free for 24 hours



He/she requires greater care and attention to be provided which compromises the care of the other children in the program	Symptom free for 24 hours or a physician note
Having or displaying any other illness or symptom the Educator knows or believes may indicate that the child poses a Health Risk to persons on the program premises	Written notice from a physician claiming the child does not pose a health risk to persons on the program premises

The YMCA will complete Incident Reports for all children who leave the program due to an illness. This incident report contains the name of the Educator who identified the ill child, name of the child, date child was observed to be ill, time parent/guardian was contacted; name of the person who contacted the parent/guardian, time the child was removed from the program and the date the child returned from the program and any follow up.

Supervised Care for Sick Children

When children are observed to be ill, YMCA Educators strive to ensure they are kept away from the group. While children wait for pick up from their parent/guardian, children are given a quiet space to rest. This space may be inside the room to ensure ratios or outside the room, if ratios allow.

Health Care

The YMCA will provide or allow for the provision of health care to a child only when written consent of the parent/guardian has been obtained or the health care provided is in the nature of first aid.

If first aid is administered to a child, the family will be informed and be required to sign an Incident/Illness report form that was completed by the Educator administering first aid.

Medication

The YMCA will administer or allow the administration of the medication when the written consent of the child's parent/guardian has been obtained, the medication is in the original labelled container, and the medication is administered according to the labelled directions. Medication will be administered according to a child's age, where applicable.

Parent/guardians are required to complete a Medication Form and additional medical forms, as required for Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Diabetes and Febrile Seizures, prior to medication being kept on site and/or being administered.

Where medication is administered to a child, the YMCA will ensure that the following information is recorded on the Medication Form: the name of the medication; the time and date of administration; the amount administered; the initials of the person who



administered the medication. Children will be monitored to ensure no unexpected reactions.

All non-emergency medication is stored in a locked container that is inaccessible to children.

Medication that may be needed in an emergency is stored in a place that is inaccessible to children but available at all times (including outings).

Medical Emergencies

A medical emergency is defined as a serious illness, injury or potential hazard that is beyond the ability of the Educators on site to be able to deal with effectively and therefore requires third party intervention. In group care settings, most of these emergencies, although serious, are not life threatening. In some situations, the occurrence could be life-threatening, and, in these cases, the steps are outlined in the YMCA Emergency Procedures.

Educators must employ extreme care, common sense and knowledge about the child's history in determining whether a situation is an emergency or one that can be treated on site or at home. When in doubt, a Manager should be consulted.

Outbreaks

An outbreak may be suspected in a child care facility when there are two (2) or more children or Educators with the same category of symptoms that started within 48 hours of one another.

If a case of an Outbreak is reported in the program, the following steps will be taken:

- A sign will be posted regarding the number of cases in the program and parent/guardians will be notified
- Alberta Health Services (AHS) will be notified and provide any next steps as necessary
- The YMCA will take necessary steps to clean and sanitize and prevent further spread of the Outbreak. This may include reduced/eliminated play in high contact areas (ie: sensory areas) and removal of soft items.

For more information on outbreaks, please visit:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/medstaff/Page13790.aspx>

Release of Liability

If, for any reason a child or educator is not immunized, a Release of Liability exemption form must be completed by the parent/guardian or Educator. In these circumstances,



Educators and families will be required to make alternate arrangements in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease for which the child is not immunized.

Nutrition and Manner of Feeding

All our programs provide a morning and an afternoon snack. All snacks follow Canada's Food Guide. Snack is provided as a choice. All YMCA Before and After School Care programs provide a morning and afternoon snack. Educators will encourage healthy eating but will not force children to have snack or complete their lunches. When families do provide food and drink, we encourage them to follow the recommendations of the Canada Food Guide. As we are committed to healthy eating, we will encourage moderation regarding unhealthy foods at the program. Water is always available for children. Children are educated about healthy snack options and about monitoring eating of sugary snacks. The manner in which children are fed is appropriate to their age and level of development, children are seated while eating and drinking, and no beverages are provided to children while they are napping.

YMCA menus are posted for families and Educators and will be reviewed by the Management team with input from child care programs.

Allergies

While menu items will not be revised for children with allergies and food sensitivities, substitutions will be made if need be or the program will work with the family for the family to provide alternate items. Educators are aware of children with any medical conditions, allergies and dietary restrictions. An Allergy and Medication Information Sheet is available for the Educators and are provided to Food Service Providers when there are updates.

Children with life threatening allergies will be monitored during snack time.

Educators should ensure that the children wash their hands and clean off the table where they were eating. Many of our programs are designated as Nut Aware facilities and because of the nature of our programs and our involvement in the community it is not possible to be an entirely nut free facility. Your Director will notify you if your facility is not Nut Aware or has any allergy concerns. We ask that parent/guardians do not send products containing nuts to any of our Before and After School Care Programs.

During program time all food that will be provided to the group of children, when parent/guardians are not present, must be in its original packaging that clearly states all ingredients. This includes if parent/guardians bring treats from home. During family events, homemade items are welcomed, however, will not be provided to any children in the absence of their parent/guardian. Parent/guardians will be notified of any severe allergies that children and/or Educators have, and families will be asked to



not provide products with these items in foods from home (including in children's lunches).

Outdoor Play and Weather Conditions

Educators will evaluate the following risks and may limit or eliminate outdoor play during these conditions:

- An outside temperature of -23C and or temperature with a wind-chill to make the temperature
 - -23C (i.e. -18C with wind chill is -23C)
- Tornado Watch/Warning- spotting of green sky and funnel clouds
- An outside temperature of 30C or higher.
- Heavy rain, freezing rain, ice covered grounds or playgrounds, hail or snowfall
- High winds gusting over 50 km per hour
- High UV rating of 11(Extreme) children will not be outside during peak hours (11-4 PM)
- High UV rating 8-10 will limit outside play between 11-4pm and/or ensure children have access to shade and water on a consistent basis
- Air quality rating of above 10, children will not be outside
- Air quality rating of 7-10, play will be limited as per Management's discretion

Children are required to have adequate outdoor clothing for all weather conditions, provided by the parent/guardians. Parent/guardians will be asked to supply safety equipment for any activities that occur using equipment from home (i.e. Helmets for bicycle riding/rollerblading/skating).

Clothing

Children should be dressed in casual, comfortable clothing that allows them to explore and play without fear of getting dirty. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather. In Out of School Care, we may request an extra set of clothing to be kept onsite and request that all children's possessions are labelled.

Children are required to have indoor shoes, that are not flips flops or backless.

Program Cleanliness

Child Care Educators follow cleaning checklists to be sure all daily, weekly and monthly tasks are completed so that the program is clean and safe. Cleaning of the program takes place with Alberta Health approved cleaning products.

Pests of Concern

Head Lice

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Head lice can spread quickly in groups of young children if not caught and treated immediately. Regular checks of the children should be done to prevent the spread of lice. Head lice travels on a person's belongings and are not a sign of poor hygiene nor do they transmit disease. Children will be excluded from the program until they are treated with an appropriate chemical treatment. Proof of treatment may be required before re-admission to program is allowed. Children can return to the program once there are no lice or nits (eggs) on the child's head. Spot check by Educators may be required for admittance into the program. Daily checks of all the children should continue for 7- 10 days to ensure that the lice have not spread to other children.

If a case of lice is reported in the program, the following steps will be taken:

- Children's belongings will be kept separate
- All dress-up and cloth material (pillows, blankets, etc) activities will be discontinued. Washable items will be laundered in hot water and a hot dryer and stored until the lice has been rectified for at least two weeks
- A sign will be posted regarding the number of cases in the program and parent/guardians will be notified

More information from Alberta Health Services:

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?hwId=hw51114>

Bed Bugs

The YMCA will not exclude children or families if they or their home are having issues with bed bugs. Bed Bugs travel on a person's belongings and are not a sign of poor hygiene nor do they transmit disease.

If a family or Educator reports they have bed bugs at home, the following steps will be taken:

- Children's belongings will be kept separate
- Any washable items that may have come into contact with bed bugs will be placed in a dryer on the hottest setting for at least 60 minutes

More information from Alberta Health Services:

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=za1160>

Insect Repellent Policy

It is the policy of the YMCA of Medicine Hat to protect the well-being of the children in its care. Insect repellents can help you reduce mosquito and tick bites, which can cause a range of health problems, from itchiness and irritation to potentially serious diseases. Insect repellent application will start in the year when the weather is warm enough for



children to wear t-shirts and shorts. It will end when the weather is cold enough that children attend in long sleeves and pants.

All information for this policy is based on the Canadian Government Health Canada Website <http://healthy Canadians.gc.ca/index-eng.php>. The YMCA of Northern Alberta will use insect repellent with up to 10% DEET concentration. For children aged 2-12 years insect repellent with up to 10% DEET can be applied up to three times daily. One application of 10% DEET will allow for three hours of protection.

Insect Repellent Application Instructions

- Educators must read the label and follow all directions, including restrictions for use on children and the maximum number of applications allowed per day.
- Application of insect repellent will occur outside
- Apply on exposed skin and on top of clothing.
- Do not spray in children's eyes, if repellent goes in eyes immediately flush with water.
- Do not use repellent on open wounds.
- Insect Repellent is only to be applied outside and never near food. Children are to be made aware that they are not to breathe in the repellent.
- Do not spray a child's face. Educators will apply insect repellent to the child's hat.
- When returning indoors children are expected to wash hands.
- Insect repellent is to be kept out of reach of children.
- Avoid applying repellent to children's hands to reduce the chance of getting the repellent in their eyes and mouths, spray the hats and collar.
- If you suspect the child is having a reaction to the repellent, immediately wash the treated area and contact the parents so they can seek medical attention.
- If applying sunscreen and insect repellent the sunscreen must be applied first in accordance with the sunscreen policy.
- Aerosol insect repellent may be used, provided it remains locked when not in use.

Parent/guardians are required to provide insect repellent for the child to apply; or the educator to apply when required. Parent/guardians may also choose not to allow their child to have any insect repellent applied to them. In this case the parent/guardian would have to sign a release of liability form.

According to Health Canada the following items will not be suitable replacements for insect repellent: wrist, neck or ankle bands that contain repellents, Vitamin B1 taken orally, skin moisturizer and insect repellent combination products, sunscreen and insect repellent combination products and electronic devices.

Sun Safety Policy

All information for this policy is based on the Canadian Government Health Canada Website. It is the policy of the YMCA of Medicine Hat to protect the well-being of the



children in its care. Prolonged exposure to the sun can cause sunburns and skin cancer. It is important to wear sunscreen, along with other sun protective measures, to protect yourself from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. Sunscreen application will start in the year when the weather is warm enough for children to wear t-shirts and shorts. It will end when the weather is cold enough that children attend in long sleeves and pants. During this period of time parents/guardians are expected to provide their children with a hat for additional protection, along with a water bottle.

Sunscreen Application

YMCA educators will ensure children are wearing sunscreen with a SPF of 30 or higher. Sunscreen application will be monitored following the procedures below:

- Sunscreen will initially be applied to children at least 30 minutes prior to going outside, where possible
- Children in Kinder Care will have an educator apply sunscreen to their body. Children that are enrolled in grade 1 or higher will be given the option to apply their sunscreen themselves. This is to occur, at all ages, under the supervision of an educator, who will sign off that each child has appropriately applied their sunscreen (covering exposed skin, including hard to reach areas such as the back of neck, arms, back etc). Educators will be available to assist in the application of sunscreen where needed.
- Sunscreen will be reapplied each hour when the UV index is rated high 8-10 or children are playing in and out of water.
- Sunscreen will be reapplied each two hours when the UV index is rated moderate 3-7 and children are not playing in the water
- Educators will document application of sunscreen (Daily Sign Off Sheet)
- Educators will wash hands prior to sunscreen application (at the beginning of the activity), rewashing does not need to occur between applications provided that children's skin is clean, and skin is intact.
- Visually assess children's skin for rashes or signs of contagious skin infections. If this is observed wash hands or change gloves between applications.
- Be aware of potential skin sensitivities to sunscreen or chemical sensitivities and prevent exposing the child to particular products that irritate them. Wear gloves or hand wash prior to application for these children.
- If both sun screen and insect repellent are being applied the sunscreen must be applied first and the insect repellent is to be applied afterwards in accordance with our insect repellent policy.
- Families are required to send an extra shirt for water play ensuring children have extra protection.
- When there is an Extreme UV Rating of 11+ the YMCA will limit outside time and there will be NO outside play between 1-3 pm
- UV ratings will be taken from Environment Canada's UV Index at www.ec.gc.ca/UVindex
- Aerosol sunscreen may be used, provided it remains locked when not in use



- Inside applications should be by lotion or pump. A specified area with a small rug or mat should be used as the application area to minimize damage to the facility

The YMCA of Medicine Hat requires that parent/guardians provide sunscreen for their child; educators can apply it in accordance with this policy and the sunscreen guidelines provided to us by Alberta Health (SPF 30 and above and in its original container with manufacture's label). Parents/Guardian may also choose not to allow their child to have any sunscreen applied to them. In this case the parent/guardian would have to sign a release of liability form.

Sunscreen is mandatory for outdoor programming when the UV is considered high (8 or above). If parent/guardians do not allow sunscreen application to take place for these higher risk outdoor programming times we will ask for children to be removed from the Child Care Center for this time.

Programming Policy

The YMCA is committed to providing children with an opportunity to further their personal development within a responsive and deliberately implemented program. Given the diverse nature and requirements of the communities served, programs may differ in terms of daily structure and routine. However, all share a common philosophy, core values and certain key characteristics that facilitate the provision of high quality Child Care.

YMCA Before and After School Program are play based programs that use YMCA Canada A Place to Connect Curriculum for Early Years and School Aged Programs, respectively.



Educators are always prepared to engage children in programming. The following developmental needs of children must be addressed and met through the program planning.

Social Needs: need to interact with both peers and adults, to develop pro-social skills and function as a group member. To meet these needs, Educators must provide times of the day or activities and/or materials which encourage social development, social interaction.

Intellectual needs: Need to explore, observe, know and understand and to develop language and listening skills. To meet these needs, Educators must provide children with materials and activities that stimulate their language, listening and observational skills.

Creative Needs: creative self-expression, problem solving skills, invention, imagination, discovery and experimentation. Educators provide open ended materials and focus on process instead of outcome; and think of and accept more than one solution to a problem.

Physical Needs: development of physical skills and need of adequate nutrition, rest and health and safety. To meet these needs Educators must provide time in the day or activities which develop both gross motor through large muscle activities and fine motor skills. Manipulation of small materials and develop perceptual motor skills (i.e. body awareness, directional awareness, sensory development, body development and coordination).

Emotional Needs: need to feel accepted, respected and secure. Educators are to provide an accepting, secure environment where children can belong. A place where children's ideas are respected, and children's individuality is encouraged. Educators are to help children learn to cope with frustrations and express anger appropriately. The program planning must address and help develop a child's positive self-concept (what the child believes about his/her self; their self-image) through accepting and valuing their family and their culture and through providing activities which allow children to be appropriately successful in their endeavors.

All Educators needs to prepare a program list of things they would need for programming. This will give the Director time to collect the lists and purchase the materials they will need for their planning.

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Schedule

Each program has a visible and constant routine that is familiar to Educators, families and children. The schedule is posted for parent/guardians. Schedules are open-ended to allow flexibility to meet the individual needs of the children in the program. The daily routine includes active and quiet times, time with friends and time to play alone. Many opportunities are given to children to interact individually or as part of a group. YMCA programs offer interest-based activities in the following areas: arts, crafts, music and movement, science, blocks and construction/manipulatives, literacy and numeracy, community and culture, sensory, technology, character and asset building, core values, dramatic, risky and outdoor play.

Programming and Child Involvement

Various activities are offered each day, depending on the emergent and stated interests of the group. Each program's planning allows for children to experience both independent and Educator directed activities in both large and small groups. Planning is flexible enough to allow for spontaneous activity to develop. Educators will work to ensure that toys, equipment and planned activities are available to the children that reflect their ages, interests and abilities. This will be based upon observations as well as the stated preferences of the children. Each program has an established means of allowing their children to be involved in programming which also gives Educators an understanding of the children's current interests, ideas and strengths. For example, observations, daily conversations, surveys, programming clubs, and/or suggestion boxes. All children are given leadership opportunities in programs. Educators will work with the children in each component of their care to develop a set of behavior expectations for inside and outside of the program. These will be linked directly to the YMCA's core values and how they relate to behaviour practices and relationship building.

Documentation of Programming

Programming is documented for each component of the program by Educators with prominent involvement from the children – directly or through observation. Accurate documentation of observations and weekly plans is kept to maintain consistency and allow for emergent interests to be identified. Four weeks of programming are posted. In addition, photos and videos will be used to document programming.

Family Involvement and Events

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At the YMCA we strongly believe that Child Care must be a shared responsibility between parents/guardians and Child Care Educators. Programs will host special events throughout the year and families are encouraged to participate.

Gross Motor Activity

Each program will offer a compulsory daily component of gross motor activity, to promote a healthy lifestyle for those in our care. In Out of School Care, children will experience gross motor activity outdoors for a minimum of 1 hour (weather permitting). Children will have the opportunity to experience both competitive and co-operative games in an outside or gym environment. Portable sports and recreational equipment will be available to the group during the gross motor component. This equipment will facilitate physical activity that promotes both group and independent play.

All School Age Programs incorporate a weekly physical literacy component to their gross motor play. This is documented on their weekly programming sheet.

Homework

Homework is available as a choice for School Aged children except during Gross Motor Activity. Educators can aid children as per ratio requirements but cannot offer tutoring.

Diversity and Inclusion

The YMCA is an inclusive and diverse charitable organization and makes a deliberate effort to recognize and celebrate differences and unique abilities. Programmed activities are open ended and can be adapted to meet children's exceptionalities. Directors and Educators ensure that children can express and share these qualities within their peer group. This may involve displaying children's work in the program, celebrating and recognizing culturally significant holidays and deliberate opportunities for children to share their abilities, such as a talent show or a show-and-share.

Upon registration parent/guardians are asked to share with us what their family celebrates so we can, if possible, incorporate their celebrations into our program.

Educators enable children to understand one another better by demonstrating an inclusive attitude and by using materials like books, puzzles and toys, which address a full range of diversity (e.g. ability, culture, ethnicity, family composition, gender).

Educators will work in partnership with families and children to allow for every success for all children in our programs. When it is recognized that children require additional support steps will be taken, with family assistance, to foster this success. These steps may include, but are not limited to:

- Supported Child Care
- Collaborative Agreements



- Parent/Guardian/Teacher/YMCA meetings
- Parent/Guardian/YMCA Educator open communication (in person, email and/or phone)
- External Agencies

Community Involvement

Children will be given the opportunity to identify activities to support within the local and global community. Educators will work with the group to determine the nature of the program's involvement with that organization and ensure that it is framed within the Time, Treasure and Talent statement.

Transitions

Programs will work to ensure that transitions between different components of the program, such as gross motor and children's choice, are minimal in both time and disruption. Educators will allow those children who are ready to progress to the next activity to do so in a supervised small group. Educators will be prepared prior to the transition beginning and be mindful of the needs of the children in their care.

Indoor/Outdoor Environment

The rooms at the YMCA are arranged to meet the diverse needs of the children in the program. Our indoor space is arranged so that a variety of quiet, messy and noisy activities can occur simultaneously, supporting small groups and the emergent curriculum approach to play. We provide sufficient portable materials and equipment, including recyclable materials, for the children that is either available on shelves or provided by an Educator.

Natural materials will be brought into and used in the indoor environment. Items may include rocks, shells, pinecones, branches, leaves, snow, dirt, plants and animals.

The YMCA provides a safe outdoor environment for physical activity and for children to explore the outdoors. We always provide a variety of outdoor equipment which is available to children.

YMCA Before and After School Program facilities that are for school aged children make use of the playground structures provided by the school. These play structures are built in compliance with Provincial standards. Educators will inspect these sites daily for broken equipment or materials which may injure a child and inform the school or city if repairs or cleanup are needed.



Children will have the opportunity to engage with their natural surroundings. For example, through exploration of their outdoor environment ravines, forests, gardening and community walks.

Items from Home

We recommend personal items from home (i.e. hats, mitts, jackets, blankets, cups, bottles etc), be labeled with children's names to prevent cross contamination.

Each program has developed guidelines surrounding toys from home as we recognize that comfort items are important to children and families. Any items brought from home are the responsibility of the child and not the program.

Technology

Electronics are incorporated into the programming and the YMCA provides electronics for the children's use. Screen time and playing sedentary devices is monitored and limited. Photos and videos of children can only be captured on YMCA electronic devices with family permission. YMCA is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal electronic devices. Cameras, cell phone, gaming devices, iPads and iPods (any portable electronics) from home are usually prohibited from use by children at all YMCA Before and After School Programs as these items are a distraction during program. These items must be kept in children's backpacks and not to be used in programs. During special activities children may be invited to bring electronics from home.

The internet has become an important learning tool for children and it is important to teach and role model responsible usage to the children in our program. At some programs, the internet is available for children to use as an information resource. Children may choose to use the internet to research a school provide, assist with YMCA activities or program planning, playing approved games or videos.

Educators will monitor children closely during any online activity.

- Videos, apps and games available may only be rated G, C or E
- As many apps or online videos are not rated, as per the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) (<http://theesa.ca/>) games or videos that contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humour, blood and gore, simulated gambling, and/or use of strong language or other inappropriate content are considered a rating of T or higher and will not be allowed in programs.
- Games or videos with a rating of Mature, Adult, PG, PG-13 or R are not allowed in our Child Care programs.

All children are informed about the expectations surrounding computer use. Any child who violates the above surrounding social media or online video viewing, will have privileges revoked.



Supervision Policy

It is the responsibility of every YMCA Educator to ensure that all children in YMCA programs are supervised at all times, indoors and outdoors. Educators should always be within the range to easily communicate with children without the need to raise their voice. Supervision is actively participating in or guiding children’s activities, while being attentive, alert and watchful of each child, as well as engaged with an entire group.

Supervision is adjusted to the specifics of the child care environment and the individual needs of children attending the program (defined by Licensing).

Ratios and Supervision

To meet the social, intellectual, creative and physical needs of our children, the YMCA adheres to ratios as outlined by the Child Care Licensing Act. As children age, the Educator to child ratio decreases which demonstrates that children to have more capabilities based on their developmental stage.

Age of Children	Educator/Child Ratio	Maximum number of children in a group
Kindergarten	1 educator: 10 children	20
Grades 1-6	1 educator: 15 children	30

The YMCA may combine children of two or more age groups. The Educator to Child ratio that applies to a mixed age group depends on the majority of the age of children in the combined group. Infants less than 12 months are excluded from this majority ratio.

Educators must position themselves strategically to supervise all children in their group effectively. Educators will move to regularly cycle through the different areas where the children are. Small groups are carried out as much as possible to increase individual needs of the children.

The Director (or Supervisor on Site) must be aware of group locations and numbers. This will be monitored by radio or by physical check.

Checklists are completed to ensure that Educators are aware of the programs indoor and outdoor physical environments.

Educators may not have unsupervised access to children until they have obtained a minimum Child Development Assistant Certification. Achieving a certification level is evidence that Educators have obtained the knowledge and skill to work with children during their different developmental stages. Educators must also have Police Information



Check with vulnerable sector check and Valid First Aid accompanying their certification to be alone with children.

Educators will take the portable first aid kit, including emergency cards, two-way radios and portable attendance any time a group leaves the room.

Sign In and Out (Arrivals and Departures)

It is a requirement that children are signed in and out of the program. When a child is picked up or dropped off by a parent or guardian, the parent or guardian must be greeted by an Educator and sign the child in or out on the attendance sheet. When a child arrives or leaves the program to attend school or an alternate program, an Educator must sign the child in or out on the attendance sheet.

Parents/guardians must notify the program if someone other than themselves will be picking up the child and that person must be 14 years or older. A child will not be released to anyone without authorization. If an Educator is not familiar with a person who arrives to pick a child up, that person will be asked for Government Issue photo identification and the name will be compared to the Child's Emergency Card and/or a phone call will be made to the parent or guardian.

In the best interest of the child, if YMCA Child Care Educators suspect the person picking up the child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol the Supervisor on Site must:

- notify the police if the child or their family is at risk of personal injury or harm
- notify their Senior Director, who will then notify Management

Portable Attendance

A small group tracking system (portable attendance) will always be utilized. Educators use a portable attendance sheet/ the TimeSavr app to ensure children are accounted for. This portable attendance sheet includes children's names, times in and out, Educators assigned to the group, headcounts, bathroom checks, transitions, and notes.

Headcounts

A headcount is ensuring that Educators can see each child at the program, whose name is on the portable attendance sheet. Headcounts must occur at least every 15 minutes and during transitions and be documented on the portable attendance sheet. When completed, educators must communicate the number of children in care with their room partner, if applicable.



During transitions, headcounts occur before leaving one location, upon arrival at destination, during the outing, upon leaving the destination, and upon return. If headcounts are not accurate, a roll call of each child must be completed. A roll call is reading each child's name aloud and waiting for a response to be sure all children are accounted for. If all children are not accounted for the Lost/Missing Child Protocol, in the Emergency Procedures, will be followed.

Communication

YMCA Educators must clearly communicate changes to the attendance of the group, including Educators responding that they understood the information. All Educators will be made aware of any changes to a child's typical daily schedule.

To support supervision and communication the YMCA of Medicine Hat Before and After School Program always expects each Educator or group to have a two-way radio on their person/location. Radios should not be left unattended.

Radios are to be used to help Educators throughout the day. This is done through:

- Communicating transitions
- Communicating attendance, including arrival and departure of children
- Communicating location and numbers of children for ratio purposes
- Informing Educators of any emergencies such as lost child, lockdown, fire drill, etc

Washroom Supervision

In School Age programs onsite, Educators must do a safety check of the washroom and document prior to children's arrival. Children are encouraged to use washrooms prior to transitions and before arrival to program. Children notify educators prior to leaving the classroom and report back to the Educator upon their return.

Transitions

Educators will be prepared prior to the transition beginning. Educators will review expectations with children for safe travel and play. When Educators are transitioning it is important that they position themselves to appropriately supervise the children at all times.

If multiple Educators are transitioning with the children, they must remain in visual contact of each other and/or use Two Way Radios to communicate with each other.

Playground and Outdoor Supervision

On community/school playgrounds, there must always be two Educators supervising a group of children. During outdoor play, in a non-enclosed play space, two Educators must



be outdoors (Educators may be supervising differing groups). The exception to this is, in Out of School Care, when there are 6 or less children in a group, one Educator may be supervising a group of children outdoors. In enclosed play spaces, there may be one Educator supervising a group of children outdoors. During transitions, there may be one Educator supervising a group of children outdoors, while maintaining ratios. Boundaries will be designated when playing outdoors and children will be made aware of these boundaries.

Transportation Policy

YMCA Educators will not transport children while on duty in the program.

Child Care Emergency Procedures

The following is a guide for emergencies. The Evacuation Routes will be posted in a visible location. The Child Care Programs have portable first aid kits which includes emergency information cards. Educators will take the portable first aid kit, including emergency cards, two-way radios, emergency medication and portable attendance any time a group leaves the room.



Monthly drills will be held for:

- Fire
- Man Down Drills

Safety Talks occur with the Educators monthly.

Twice a year the following drills will be held:

- Lost Child
- Lock Down/Security Tactical Response Procedure

Child Care Program and Management Phone numbers will be attached to this.

Table of Contents

- Emergency Numbers
- Medical Emergency Procedures
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- Procedure for Children Unaccounted for After School
- Lost/Missing Child Protocol
- Man Down Procedures
- Lock Down Procedures
- Severe Weather & Tornado Warning Procedures
- Child Abandonment Procedures
- Blood or Body Fluid Clean-up
- Licensing & YMCA Procedure for Reporting Critical Incidents
- Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act
- Duty to Report

Emergency Numbers

Police/Fire/Ambulance: 911

Police Non-emergency: 403-529-8481

Poison Control: 1-800-332-1414

Medicine Hat Regional Hospital: 403-529-8000

Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-387-5437

Mental Health Crisis: 1-877-303-2642

Site Director: _____

Before and After School Program Manager: 403-594-0961

General Manager of Child Care: 403-548-1285



Licensing & YMCA Procedure for Reporting Critical Incidents

License holders and contract holders are required to report serious illness of or injury to a child that occurs while child is attending a program and any other incident that occurs while a child is attending a program that may seriously affect the health and safety of the child. Incidents that require reporting include, but are not limited to: emergency evacuation is necessary at the site, unexpected program closure, an error in the administration of medication by a program staff or volunteer resulting in the child becoming seriously injured or ill and requiring first aid or the program requesting emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in hospital overnight, if a child becomes seriously injured or ill and requiring first aid or the program requesting emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in hospital overnight, the death of a child, an unexpected absence of a child from the program ie. lost child, a child removed from the program by a non-custodial parent or guardian, an intruder on the program premises, an allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child by a program staff member or volunteer, the commission by a child of an offense under an act of Canada or Alberta, a child left on the premises outside of the programs hours (7 AM to 6 PM).

YMCA expects that incidents are called to Licensing immediately with Incident Reports sent within 24 hours.

The following guidelines are in place for our YMCA Child Care Programs to ensure we are properly reporting critical incidents and have the proper contacts for Directors and Educators.

When a Critical Incident occurs, our Educators must:

- Notify Director; let them know immediately of the incident.
- Contact YMCA Management to notify of the incident
- All educators involved in the incident required to complete an incident report immediately; to be fully completed and signed by Director and parent/guardians at time of pick-up.
- If there are any community members/outside YMCA persons somehow involved in the incident, please collect their contact information or share YMCA Management contact information
- Director or Educators to notify parent/guardians of child; by phone call at time of incident
- The director notifies the licensing office; make sure that a conversation has been had as a voicemail is not sufficient
- Submit the complete Critical Incident document found on the Government of Alberta website (www.humanservices.alberta.ca), a copy of the YMCA Incident Report to the licensing office.



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- Director and Before and After School Program Manager will draft up an Action Plan in regard to prevention of incident from happening again and will have it prepared for the Inspection visit.
- Document incident on monthly report and file incident report in child's file.

Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act

As this is a large document, which is updated regularly, please view it online at <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf>

Duty to Report

Duty to Report is defined under section 4(1) of Alberta's Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act and sets out what must be reported to a child protection authority (ie. Southeast Alberta Child and Family Services Authority). A report must be made immediately if a child is or appears to be suffering from abuse or is at risk of harm. Duty to report applies to the public and includes special reporting responsibilities for professionals whose work involves children.

For further information regarding duty to report policies refer to the policy "6.2 Child Protection".



Parent/Guardian Handbook

By signing this form, I, _____ verify that I have read and understand the policies outlined in the parent/guardian handbook. I agree to follow the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Date: _____

Director/Manager Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

