



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# **Parent Handbook Community YMCA Early Learning Center**

**Revised 08/2015**

## **OUR MISSION**

The YMCA of Central and Northern Westchester is committed to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities throughout our area. We are a charitable, not-for-profit organization that welcomes all people regardless of age, race, religion or economic status and strives to enrich each and every life through a unique, dynamic combination of programs that strengthens spirit, mind and body.

**Visit our website:  
[www.ymca-cnw.org](http://www.ymca-cnw.org)**

# Welcome to the Community YMCA of Northern Westchester

Dear YMCA Family,

Thank you for choosing the Community YMCA Early Learning Center! Here at the Community YMCA we have been providing high quality, affordable care to our local community for over 20 years.

Our programs enable children to realize their potential in a place where fun & learning go hand in hand. With exciting and engaging activities we encourage our values of caring, honesty, respect and social responsibility. We provide a safe and nurturing space for children, as well as reassurance and flexibility to working parents. You can rest assured that your child is surrounded by caring, trained staff who provide an exciting array of daily activities.

The Early Learning Center is considered a licensed child day care center by the NYS Office of Children & Family Services. Your child's file is subject to random inspection at any point in the school year. For this reason, registration packets must be complete before fully enrolling your child.

Please take a few moments to read this handbook; we designed it to inform parents and children all about our programs, policies and procedures. Our goal is to provide you with great programs as well as excellent customer service. Please let us know if there is anything, we can do to improve your experience.

Sincerely,

Bonnie M. Fogarty  
Executive Director  
Community YMCA of CNW

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## **I. General Information on the Programs**

### **Administrative Staff**

(914) 276-2398 – Office Phone

**Bonnie Fogarty**, Executive Director

[bfogarty@ymca-cnw.org](mailto:bfogarty@ymca-cnw.org)

Extension 17

**Virginia Brunco**, Office Coordinator

[vbrunco@ymca-cnw.org](mailto:vbrunco@ymca-cnw.org)

Extension 10

**Monika Torres** – Early Learning Center Director

[mtorres@ymca-cnw.org](mailto:mtorres@ymca-cnw.org)

914-276-1350

### **Program Location & Contact Information**

<b><u>Site Name</u></b>	<b><u>Site Address</u></b>	<b><u>Phone Number</u></b>	<b><u>Email Address</u></b>
Early Learning Center	106 Titicus Road, North Salem, NY 10560	914.276.1350	<a href="mailto:LearningCenter@ymca-cnw.org">LearningCenter@ymca-cnw.org</a>

### **Early Learning Center Staff**

Monika Torres – Center Director

Paula Bagatta – Head Toddler Teacher

Shana Clark – Head Preschool Teacher

**\*\*IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO REACH THE SITE - PLEASE CALL ANY OF THE ADMINISTRATION NUMBERS OR STAFF\*\***

### **Calendar & Hours of Operation**

The YMCA Administration office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Hours of Operation</b>	<b>Ages Served</b>
Early Learning Center	7:00 AM to 6:30 PM	18 months to 5 years

### **Program Options**

Year Round Toddler Program – Ages 18 to 36 months  
(Full Day and Half Day Options offered 5, 4, or 3 days a week)

Year Round Preschool Program –Ages 3 to 5 years  
(Full Day Options offered 5, 4, or 3 days a week)  
(Half Day offered 5 days a week)

### **School Delays & Closings**

**Detailed information will be available on our Facebook page and WHUD Storm Center. Our agency name is Community YMCA of Central and Northern Westchester.**

**Program Closing:** In the event that weather conditions are hazardous/expected to be hazardous during normal hours of operation, the Early Learning Center reserves the right to **close**.

**Delayed Opening:** In the event that the weather conditions are hazardous, the center may have a **delayed** opening. In the event of a **delayed** opening, watch for updates on Facebook and WHUD Storm Center for the modified opening times.

**\*If weather conditions become hazardous during program hours we reserve the right to close early. In this situation, you must make arrangements to pick your child up at the modified time.**

## **Summer**

We are a year round program, continuing through the summer. Our program focus in the summer is more recreational but we still continue to foster your child's learning. We will have weekly themes, water play, and special guest visitors/presentations.

## **Vacation Days**

Please notify the YMCA Early Learning Center at least two weeks in advance if your child will be absent due to family vacation. There are no refunds or prorating of tuition for absences.

## **Licensing Agencies**

The YMCA Early Learning Center program is licensed by the NYS Office of Children & Family Services. All programs are mandated to uphold the regulations pertaining to Child Day Care programs.

### NYS Office of Children and Family Services – Regional Office

11 Perlman Drive, Pascack Plaza  
Spring Valley, NY 10977  
(845) 708-2400

## **II. Program Policies**

### **Absence**

We ask parents to inform the YMCA staff any time your child will be absent due to family vacation (or other planned event) during their scheduled program hours. Please be sure to advise the Director if your child will be arriving at the program later than their usually scheduled time. If your child is absent, please notify the center via email or telephone. Contact information for the site and the Director are listed in this handbook.

### **Arrival and Departures**

**Morning arrival:** Please accompany your child to the YMCA program site. There is a sign in sheet at the front table. A parent/guardian must sign in the child on the attendance sheet. Please make sure you sign in every day. We realize that this might appear to be an inconvenience, especially when you are in a hurry to get to work in the morning, but it is for the safety of your children and an NYS OCFS regulation.

When you enter the classroom of your child, they will have an assigned cubby or wall hook – please place their belongings in this cubby/wall hook. If you have questions or special instructions for your child, make sure you ask the teacher to take a moment to speak with you.

**Afternoon departure:** All children must be picked up by scheduled time. The YMCA closes promptly at 6:30. An authorized pick up person over 18 must sign the child out.

Parents must inform the Director in writing if an additional authorized pick up person will be signing out the child. If the pick-up person is not listed on the child's emergency form and we have not been notified by the parent, the YMCA **will not** release the child. We do require that authorized pick up persons show identification until the program staff become familiar with them. Authorized persons should always be prepared to present I.D in the case of staffing changes. This step is taken for the safety of your child.

### **Electronics**

All YMCA programs are licensed by the NYS OCFS. As of June 1, 2015 the new regulations state that "television and other electronic visual media is prohibited as a program activity when not part of a planned developmentally appropriate activity". Children are not permitted to use electronic devices such as iPods, iPads, cell phones, video games, etc. Any electronic devices such as those mentioned above will not be permitted for use in the center.



## **Personal Property**

We do not encourage children to bring toys to program. These items can be easily misplaced, lost, or stolen. Any personal items (backpacks, clothing, water bottles, etc.) brought to the YMCA should be clearly labeled with your child's name. The YMCA assumes no responsibility for misplaced, lost, or stolen items.

## **Rest Time**

All children under the age of five are required by state law to have a rest period while at daycare. If you must pick your child up during quiet rest time, please notify a staff person in advance so that we may wake your child and have him/her ready for your arrival.

The YMCA provides a quiet place and a rest mat/cot for each child. If your child has a special stuffed animal/doll or blanket that they use to sleep with, they will be allowed to use them at this time. Only one stuffed animal and one blanket should be brought to the center. These items will be put away during the day and only brought out for quiet time. Bedding must be taken home at the end of each week to be washed.

Children who do not fall asleep or who wake early will be directed to quiet activities that will not disturb other sleeping children.

Upon joining the program, parents/guardians will be asked to sign a rest time agreement.

## **Restroom Policies**

Bathrooms are the highest risk location for children. Consequently, bathrooms and bathroom practices require close monitoring to prevent abuse and/or false allegations. Restrooms must be checked by YMCA employees to make sure they are secure before allowing children to use the facilities. Employees may not be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed. They must stand in the doorway/hallway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy and provides supervision.

## **Snack and Meals**

The YMCA provides 2 daily snacks. Cereals, crackers, apple sauce, and granola bars are examples of some of the snacks we serve. A snack calendar is provided each month. If your child does not like the YMCA snack you are encouraged to send in your own snacks each day.

Children should bring their own lunches and drinks. Please make sure to provide balanced options including protein/calcium (meats, cheese, yogurt, eggs, etc.), carbohydrates (bread, pasta, rice, quinoa, etc.) and fresh fruits and vegetables. Offering variety will often encourage eating. Please send healthy food only, no "junk food" that is high in sugar, fat and/or salt and

low in nutritional value including highly processed meals or prepackaged foods.

Children under five should not be sent in with hotdogs, whole grapes, hard candy, nuts, seeds, raw peas, dried fruit, popcorn or chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole – they are a choking hazard. If you would like to pack a lunch that includes cherry tomatoes, hot dogs, grapes, or strawberries, we ask that you cut them into pieces at home before packing your child's bag. **Please print your child's name clearly on his/ her lunch containers.**

If your child has any dietary restrictions please record them on the registration form and inform YMCA staff. Please also request an Allergy Action Plan if your child has allergies, to complete and return.

*(See **Allergies** section on page 15)*

We expect the children to feed themselves. Parents are expected to provide lunches that are prepared in the way that is easiest for their child to handle independently. Please offer foods for your child in small, manageable portions. All foods should be prepared so that they are ready to eat (i.e., cut into small pieces, peeled, etc.). We ask that you send foods that they have eaten at home and indicated that they enjoy. Do not send food that they have rejected or never eaten before. New food should always be tried at home first before being sent for lunch.

### **Toilet Training Policy**

At the YMCA Early Learning Center, we want to make the toilet training experience as positive, natural, and nonthreatening as possible so that the child feels confident in his/her ability to use the toilet, therefore developing self-esteem and independence. This is accomplished by a partnership between parents/ guardians/ caregivers and the center staff. Please see Toilet Training Policy document for detailed information on this process.

### **Transportation**

YMCA staff are not permitted to transport children enrolled in YMCA programs in their own cars.

## **Visitor Policy**

All visitors must check in with the Early Learning Center staff and sign in and out of the visitor log, while clearly stating the purpose of their visit. The YMCA defines a visitor as:

- A child that is not a program participant
- A person who is not at the program to pick up a child
- A person who is not a parent or guardian of a child
- A person who is not a YMCA employee/volunteer

Visitors must be escorted by YMCA staff at all times and will never be left alone with children.

### **III. Registration, Billing & Scheduling**

#### **Changes in Schedule & Cancellations**

We try to accommodate parents' changes in schedules whenever possible. Children enrolled for specific days can make changes to that schedule with advance arrangements. To make any adjustment to your schedule, such as adding or dropping a day, or cancelling program please contact the administrative office **30 days prior to the change. Refunds will not be given without 30 days' notice.**

#### **Drop In Days**

The YMCA offers a drop in option for current participants who need to attend program on an unscheduled day. This is an option only when space is available, and cannot be guaranteed. Please notify the YMCA in advance. The participant must be registered in the program with billing information on file. **The charge to "Drop-In" is \$60.00 for full day 6-10 hours or \$40.00 for half day 1-5 hours.**

#### **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance is available to those families who demonstrate sufficient need and provide the required documentation. Interested families may request a financial assistance form and submit to the Community YMCA administrative office. Eligibility for financial assistance will be determined upon availability of space and funds, review of the information given, and letter of intent. Call or visit our website for more information or to obtain assistance forms.

#### **IRS/Tax Statements**

We recommend that parents keep a record of payments for IRS purposes. Credit card statements and/or canceled checks will serve as your receipt of payment. We will not issue end of year tax letters. A dependent care receipt can be found on our website.

Our tax I.D. number is 13-1740518

#### **Late Fees**

If a child is left at the program beyond their scheduled time, a \$25.00 late fee will be charged. **More than three (3) late pickups may cause termination from the program.**

## **Payment Policies**

YMCA Membership \$50 per application

All fees/tuitions are non-refundable. Tuition credit is not given for absence due to illness, vacation or emergency closings.

Inclement weather days and scheduled holidays are taken into consideration when we create the tuition cost. There are no credits for missed days, holidays, emergency dismissals or snow days.

- Tuition is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Tuition received after the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month will result in a \$25.00 late fee.
- Non-payment or continued late payment will result in termination of care.
- If your credit card is declined twice, you will be subject to a \$25.00 administrative fee. Returned checks will be subject to a \$30.00 fee.

## **Registration**

Registration is accepted throughout the year, based on license capacity availability. All participants must be YMCA members. All registration forms can be found on our website or through our administrative office. Your child will not be fully enrolled if paperwork is incomplete.

Please return the following for completed enrollment:

- Enrollment form completed
- Enclose the required fees: membership and 1<sup>st</sup> months tuition.
- Please **e-mail/fax/mail** your completed forms to us.

## IV. Health & Safety

### Abuse Prevention Policy

The YMCA is committed to being an abuse-free organization and to ensuring that any relationships between people associated with the YMCA of all ages are healthy and appropriate. Here's how the YMCA prevents abuse in our programs:

- Specific employment pre-screening/fingerprinting and background checks
- Annual training of all employees
- Specific policies/practices governing the action of employees and volunteers

Our policy states that YMCA employees, consultants, volunteers and interns shall not abuse children physically, verbally, sexually, mentally or by neglect. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action and/or termination of employment.

### Investigation and Reporting of Allegations of Abuse/Mistreatment/Inappropriate Behavior

The YMCA takes all allegations of abuse, mistreatment and inappropriate behavior seriously. All employees, consultants, volunteers and interns of the YMCA are considered as mandated reporters and therefore must legally report all suspected or reported cases of child abuse or victimization of a vulnerable adult. Any person who knowingly fails to report suspected abuse or neglect is in violation of YMCA policies and will be subject to discipline and/or termination.

### YMCA of CNW - Child Abuse Reporting Procedures

The YMCA of Central & Northern Westchester is committed to taking all appropriate steps to keep its program free of child abuse. If not withstanding these efforts, YMCA staff, classified as mandated reporters, come to know or to reasonably suspect that any child in any YMCA programs is the subject of child abuse, neglect or mistreatment that information shall be reported to the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (SCR) at:

**Mandated Reporter (800)635-1522** or **Public Hotline (800)342-3720**  
and the appropriate YMCA personnel.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services maintains a Statewide Central Register (SCR) of Child Abuse and Maltreatment for reports made pursuant to the Social Services Law. The Central Register, also known as the "**Hotline**", receives telephone calls alleging child abuse or maltreatment within New York State. The Central Register relays information from the calls to the local Child Protective Service for investigation, monitors their prompt response, and identifies if there are prior child abuse or maltreatment reports. In the event of an accusation of child abuse, the YMCA staff will take prompt and immediate actions as follows:

1. At the first report or allegation that child abuse has occurred, the employed staff who it has been reported to will notify their supervisor. The YMCA staff will call NYSOCFS and will cooperate to the extent of the law with any legal authority involved.
2. The supervisor will review the incident with the branch director. The supervisor and staff will complete a YMCA incident report. Oral reports to the SCR from a mandated reporter must be followed within 48 hours by a written report to the local department of social services' CPS unit on form LDSS-2221A.
3. In the event the reported incident involves a program volunteer, employed staff or YMCA member, the branch executive will immediately, without exception, suspend the volunteer or staff member from the YMCA until an investigation is completed. Accused should be suspended immediately and removed from the program.
4. The parents or legal guardians of the child or children involved in the alleged incident will be promptly notified in accordance with the directions given from CPS/ NYSOCFS

Confidentiality is extremely important to the YMCA and at no time may a YMCA staff or volunteer provide information regarding the incident to anyone other than the branch executive, their designate and the legal authorities. If more than one child is involved (child on child abuse) the names of the other child must be kept confidential.

### **Allergies**

When filling out the registration forms, please be sure to specify if your child has any allergies to food or materials (i.e. peanuts, latex, etc.). You must submit an Allergy Action Plan and Written Medication Consent Form with the program registration. If your child requires an Epi-Pen due to severe allergies, please provide at least one to keep in the YMCA First Aid kit. Participants will not be allowed to attend program unless the appropriate forms are submitted.

### **Emergency Procedures**

In case of an accident, the emergency procedures will be as follows:

1. A trained staff member will administer immediate, basic first aid.
2. A staff member will contact the parent if immediate medical care is necessary.
3. In case the parent or designated emergency contacts cannot be reached, the staff have the authority to call the designated physician and/or 911 for transportation to a hospital. A staff person will accompany the child to the hospital and stay until a parent or guardian arrives.

4. Information regarding the accident will be recorded on the YMCA incident report form, and filed with the appropriate governing agencies as necessary. Parents will also be asked to sign any necessary forms.

### **Illness Policy**

For the welfare of your child and the other children in the group, we ask that you keep your child home if he/she appears ill or has been ill during the night.

The YMCA asks to be informed of the nature of any illness, especially when it is communicable to others. If at any time the staff feels that your child is too sick to remain in the program, you will be called. You, or someone you designate, must pick up the child within one hour of receiving the phone call. This policy is for the safety of all the children and staff.

Your child will be sent home, if any of the following conditions are apparent:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or more within 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Rash (if cause is unknown)
- Suspected communicable disease
- Severe cold with fever, coughing, unclear mucus
- Bronchitis or other throat infections, such as strep
- Nits or lice in hair
- 

Parents, please notify us within 24 hours if your child has a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, strep throat or lice, so that we can inform other parents and staff. Your child is welcome back to the program with a note from the doctor or reasonable evidence of recovery.

### **Medication Administration**

The YMCA honors the Americans with Disabilities Act and will work with parents to accommodate their child's medical needs. All YMCA sites that administer medication under the ADA will have staff trained in accordance with OCFS regulations. All YMCA programs are authorized to administer emergency medications, such as Epi-pens and inhalers. Parents must provide written consent and an allergy action plan prior to the child beginning program. In accordance with NYS OCFS regulations parents must provide a current physical/immunization if required (will be indicated on program registration forms).



### **Shelter in Place Drills**

Every YMCA program is required to perform a Shelter in Place Drill two (2) times per year. This drill is a response to an emergency that creates a situation in which it is safer to remain in the building rather than evacuate. ex: severe weather conditions, extreme temperatures, rabid animal, chemical/biological spill, etc. Staff will inform parents prior to conducting this drill. In case of an emergency, each program has a designated relocation site.

Parents will be notified of relocation via email, social media updates and/or phone calls.

### **Special Needs**

The Community YMCA strives to provide programs that include children of all abilities. Our goal is to provide high quality programs and highly qualified staff to enable your child to have a fun, successful and enjoyable learning and social opportunity.

The Early Learning Center is open to all students without regard to disability. Students with disabilities are invited to participate in the program as long as they can do so without 1:1 assistance. The YMCA will review the needs of each student, including but not limited to a review of the student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) where appropriate, to determine appropriate and necessary staffing to ensure the safety and quality of the program for all students. We work to ensure that accommodations provide successful participation in our programs, while not fundamentally altering the nature of our programs and services.

## **V. Staff Information**

### **Babysitting/Outside Employment**

To make sure your child stays safe outside of the YMCA's supervision and to protect our staff members and volunteers, we request that you do not ask a YMCA employee or volunteer to babysit, lifeguard or spend one-on-one time with your child outside of YMCA programs. YMCA staff are not allowed to sign out any child from the program or transport any child in their own car. This policy is also consistent with recommendation made by the National Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and many childcare licensing consultants across the country.

### **Staff Qualifications**

At the YMCA Early Learning Center, we uphold a high standard of quality, dedication, and commitment when it comes to selecting our staff. Our childcare staff consists of highly qualified employees with many years of teaching experience.

The Director of the Early Learning Center handles all the day to day programming needs. Head teachers and assistant teachers work together to create the environment that will best support the children.

Directors and head teachers are trained in First Aid/CPR safety procedures. All of our staff complete child abuse prevention training, mandated reporter training and orientation prior to their start date. Staff will continue to attend regularly scheduled training events on behavior management, communication skills, and safety procedures for working with children.

Prior to hire, all staff members have a criminal background check, fingerprint check, and a child abuse registry check performed.

\*To review NYS regulations for minimum requirements visit the OCFS website.

## **Supervision of Children**

In our programs a child is never left unattended or unsupervised. Generally, the YMCA prefers that two individuals are present whenever children are in care. When this situation is unavoidable, the YMCA has a standard of behavior that must be observed. This standard involves moving to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by, or asking another staff member to randomly drop-in.

Proper staff to child ratios should always meet/exceed NY state requirements of:

18-36 months	1 staff to 5 children
3 years	1 staff to 7 children
4 years	1 staff to 8 children
5 years	1 staff to 9 children

In general, the YMCA caps enrollments to ensure that the proper ratios can be maintained.

## **VI. Parental Participation & Expectations**

### **Communication**

We believe that communication and cooperation between parents and YMCA staff is invaluable to provide and maintain the highest quality childcare program for your family. It is important that you tell us about any change or special activities in the home. The more familiar we are with your family, the more understanding, supportive, and helpful we can be. Changes that may seem routine or ordinary to an adult are regarded as unusual by a young child who has not had as many years of experience in dealing with changes. These changes and others can lead to different behaviors in the center classroom. We can teach and work better with your child if we are aware of changes at home.

It is of utmost importance that you notify the office staff and Center Director of any changes of address, phone numbers (at work and at home), caregivers, and emergency contact changes.

Please make every effort to read any materials that are sent home or posted at the site. Most of our information will be sent out via email- make sure to add the YMCA Constant Contact to your safe sender list. Daily emails from the director are sent home to inform parents about their child's day and will include any important information parents need to know.

Our Facebook page “Community YMCA Early Learning Center Sharing” is a private page for families of children currently enrolled. This is a great place to learn about new information and see daily photos.

Parents are also welcome to communicate with staff at any time, however, drop off and pick up times are usually not the best times to discuss these concerns in depth. It is difficult for the teachers to have extended conversations at these times, as they need to focus on the children. The teachers can be reached on the site phone at a time when they can be away from the children. The Center Director is available via phone or email during the majority of the day.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice per year. We strongly recommend that all parents attend. This is a time to exchange information, touch base and set goals as well as report on the child’s activities in the room. Please feel free to arrange additional meetings with your child’s teacher or the Center Director as needed.

### **Confidentiality**

The policy of the YMCA Early Learning Center concerning the issue of confidentiality of information is as follows:

Information that families give to the YMCA staff will be shared with other staff, only on a need to know basis. No information about a YMCA family may be released to another agency without the written consent of the family, **unless required by law.**

### **Emergency Contacts**

Your emergency contacts are very important and should be aware of their responsibility. Emergency contacts may include neighbors, family friends, or relatives located within close proximity of the school. All emergency contacts should be able to pick up your child within a reasonable period if we cannot reach you. Phone numbers need to be updated regularly. In an emergency, if you or your designated emergency contacts listed cannot be reached, you give permission for the YMCA to take any action deemed necessary for the best interests of your child. You also give permission for any medical personnel selected by the YMCA to provide needed care including any resuscitation efforts and transportation to an emergency room for care.

### **Information Changes**

Parents are responsible for informing the YMCA of any changes in address, phone numbers, billing information and persons authorized to pick up children. It is very important that this information be kept up to date.

### **Parent Feedback**

From time to time throughout the year, the YMCA will send out electronic surveys to parents to provide you with a voluntary opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on the program and our level of service to you and your child. We encourage your participation in these surveys as it is a significant tool for the YMCA to strive for program excellence.

### **Participation & Appropriate Behavior**

Parents are always welcome to observe and participate in the program. The YMCA welcomes your comments and staff are always available to discuss any aspect of the program. Parents are reminded that all interactions with children (theirs or others) must be positive in nature. Any parent engaging in any negative interaction with any child will face immediate removal from the program and termination of their child's future participation.

The YMCA is a drug, alcohol, smoke and weapons free organization. Possession of illegal drugs, alcohol or a weapon of any kind may result in immediate termination of services and notification of legal authorities. If a parent/pick up person arrives to pick up a child and it is evident that the person is under the influence we will suggest that they call someone else to pick up. If they are not willing to call someone else, or leave with the child, the police will be notified.

## **VII. Behavior Management**

### **Anti-Bullying**

In keeping with our goal to promote acceptance and tolerance for all people and in order to keep all the children in our programs safe, the YMCA cannot allow any child in our program to hurt or be hurt by others. This can include physical, emotional, or verbal actions. Our policy specifically prohibits name-calling, hazing, and sexualized language, and singling out one child for different treatment. The YMCA provides adequate staffing supervision and monitoring of all child activities. The YMCA has established procedures for reporting and tracking such behaviors. Any incidents of the above behaviors will be brought to the attention of the Center Director. Each incident will be handled on a case-by-case basis. All discipline actions will be in accordance with the YMCA Behavior Management Policy in an age appropriate fashion. Parents who have any concerns that their child is being bullied are encouraged to speak with the Center Director.

**The local police department and the NYS Office of Children & Family Services will be notified if any child is found to be in possession of a weapon or anything identified as or used as a weapon. Further action will be under the advisement of the above agencies and the YMCA administration.**

### **Behavior Management**

It is the YMCA's goal to educate the student and instill in them the ability to develop self-discipline, self-control and assume responsibility for their own actions. Misbehavior is seen as a chance to educate a participant about appropriate behavior. It is understood that all children require firm and consistent limits and that no child will be permitted to endanger himself, others, or to damage property. In accordance with NYS OFCS regulations, "Physical intervention is permitted. Physical intervention is the act of using bodily contact as a short-term immediate response to prevent children from incurring substantial or serious injury to themselves or injuring others... Picking up a child, holding the child's hands or gently touching their body to direct their movement... allows the child to regain self-control as quickly and safely as possible".

Positive behavior management is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive behavior management respects the right of the individual child, the group and the adult.

**We use positive behavior management by:**

- **Planning ahead**
- **Intervening**
- **Re-directing**
- **Removal from activity**
- **Showing encouragement**

We strive to work with each child as an individual. Staff will work closely with parents to develop a behavior plan that works for everyone.

### **Biting Policy – Regarding Children Who Bite**

Our program recognizes that biting is, unfortunately, not unexpected when toddlers are in group care. We are always concerned when children are bitten in our program, and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. While we feel that biting is never the right thing for toddlers to do, we know that they bite for a variety of reasons. Most of these reasons are not related to behavior problems.

We do not focus on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reasons for the biting. When biting occurs, we have three main responses:

1. Care for and help the child who was bitten.
2. Help the child who bit learn other behavior.
3. Work with the child who bit and their parents/families to stop the biting.

Our teachers express disapproval of biting. They work to keep children safe and to help the child who bit to learn different, more appropriate behavior. When there are episodes of ongoing biting, we develop a plan of specific strategies and techniques to address it. We give immediate attention and first aid to the children who are bitten. When children bite or are bitten, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day. If a child's biting becomes problematic and consist, we will work with the family for two weeks to correct the aggressive behavior or YMCA services will no longer be available.

### **Separation**

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents in the morning or not wanting to leave when it is time to go home. Please be very brief (no more than 5 minutes) during these transition times. The longer you prolong the departure, the harder it gets. A smile, a cheerful goodbye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back are all that is needed in the morning. In our experience, children are nearly always quick to get involved in the activities as soon as the parent leaves. We highly recommend bringing in family photos of mom, dad, siblings, and other caregivers to help ease your child's anxieties.

### **Termination Policy**

Occasionally there may be times and reasons we must expel/suspend a child from our program; we would decide that on a case-by-case basis. Before we would reach such a situation, we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

Some examples of unacceptable behavior include but are not limited to:

- Physical aggression on the part of a child or parent
- Use of foul language by child or parents
- Disrespectful / Intolerant words or actions
- Disrespect to staff, children (child or parent)
- Consistently ignoring program rules
- Leaving program area without permission
- Failure to complete required forms
- Habitual tardiness when picking up child.
- Bringing a gun, knife etc to the program
- Failure to pay or habitual lateness in tuition
- Parent or Child exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children

**Fighting or intentional physical aggression for any reason results in immediate removal from program.** In order to return to the program, the parent and child must meet with the Center Director. A plan of action will be created by the YMCA to address the child's needs. Any child who has been removed from the program 3 times within a 6 month period would need to have one to one staff – the full cost of this paid for by the parents. This staff person would need to be trained and certified in behavioral interventions or working with special needs children. This staff must also meet all YMCA employment guidelines. If the parent does not agree with this cost, the parent will be given 2 weeks to find alternative care.

The YMCA program will not tolerate any parent reprimanding, punishing or verbally threatening any child on our premises. If there is a problem, you will be asked to leave immediately. The safety of all the children in our care is our first priority.

**A child will not be expelled if the parent/guardian:**

- 1) Made a complaint to the NYSOFS regarding the program.
- 2) Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the school.
- 3) Questioned the program director regarding policies and procedure.