

eliminating racism  
empowering women

**ywca**

Central Massachusetts

# Early Education & Care Program Parent Handbook



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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the YWCA's Early Education and Care program! We are pleased that you have enrolled your child in our program. The YWCA's early education and care programs are family-centered and we encourage you to be a part of our Center and your child's education.

The YWCA has established a number of policies concerning program and classroom practices. These guidelines have been developed to comply with state licensing standards, national accreditation and QRIS Standards. The policies and procedures described in this Handbook provide a clear description of what parents may expect from the YWCA and what the YWCA expects of parents. Our goal is to provide high quality care in a warm, nurturing environment that promotes your child's growth and development. Please read this Handbook and keep a copy at home for future reference as long as your child is enrolled in our program. It will answer many of the questions you may have. In the event your copy is lost, you may download and print another copy at [ywcacm.org/child-care/forms-and-handbooks](http://ywcacm.org/child-care/forms-and-handbooks).

We hope that your experience at the YWCA Child Care Center is a positive one and that you feel secure in the fact that your child is being well cared-for. We look forward to getting to know you and your child and to having you become a part of our extended family.

Sincerely,

YWCA Early Education and Care Department

# overview

## Mission

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The YWCA Central Massachusetts is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people.

## Philosophy

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In keeping with the YWCA's mission, the early education and care programs of the YWCA Central Massachusetts support families through quality care, developmental learning and family support services. Our child care programs empower parents and children by providing an environment that encourages social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth. The program nurtures and encourages individual progress, allowing children to experience success at their own level.

The YWCA Early Education and Care program will:

- engage all aspects of a child's development—emotional, social, physical, cognitive, creative and aesthetic.
- support and work with parents as the primary caregivers of their children.
- foster learning through discovery and involvement.
- create safe, nurturing, child-centered environments that encourage children to progress.

## Enrollment Requirements

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A child is eligible for enrollment to the YWCA Early Education & Care program once the following steps have been completed:

- Physical and immunization forms and developmental history submitted (due annually)
- All enrollment forms submitted prior to start date
- A pre-enrollment visit to the child care center
- Non-refundable \$15 registration fee and 1-week program fee deposit made. 5% sibling discount is offered towards the oldest child's tuition.

### Program Ages

Children are positioned in different care programs conditional upon their age. See program age requirements below.

Program	Age Ranges
Infant Program	1 month–14 months
Toddler Program	15 months–36 months
Preschool Program	2.9 years–6 years
After School	5 years–14 years

## Quality Standards

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Children enrolled in the YWCA's child care programs represent a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Our programs are designed to spark each child's natural curiosity and to encourage true learning. An active parent committee assists with the program, providing feedback and recommendations. Sites are licensed through the Department of Early Education and Care and accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

## License

Sites are licensed through the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). EEC's mission is to provide the foundation that supports all children in their development as lifelong learners and community members, and supports families in their essential work as parents and caregivers.

A parent may contact EEC for the YWCA's compliance history at:

EEC Central Regional Office  
10 Austin Street,  
Worcester, MA 01609  
Phone: 508-798-5180  
Website: [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)

## Accreditation

Sites are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC's mission is to serve and act on behalf of the needs, rights and well-being of all young children with a primary focus on the provision of educational and developmental services and resources.

National Association for the Education of Young Children  
1313 L St. N.W. Suite 500  
Washington DC 20005  
Phone: 202-232-8777  
Website: [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

## Early Learning

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### Screenings

An initial developmental screening is conducted for each child within 30 days of enrollment. This one-month assessment creates a "snapshot" of the child's development in four goal areas: self and others, movement, surroundings, and communication, and is used as a benchmark for future assessments. After a period of active observation, the teacher makes anecdotal notes documenting examples of the child's activities/behaviors. This information is used to determine whether or not the child is on track to achieve age appropriate developmental milestones or if there are potential areas of developmental weakness.

When a child is not meeting her/his developmental milestones, educators meet with the family to discuss the screening results and provide referrals to the appropriate community resources and programs (e.g. early intervention). The YWCA educators remain involved throughout the referral and evaluation process and work closely with the referral agency and family to develop and implement plans that insure the child's developmental success.

### Curriculum

The YWCA Central Massachusetts Early Education and Care program utilizes Teaching Strategies Gold, a developmentally appropriate practice that focuses on each child's individual needs and interests. The curriculum provides intentional teaching while supporting the development of key skills: problem solving, critical thinking, communication, social skills and relationship building.

#### *Infant & Toddler Curriculum*

The infant and toddler programs at both locations use a comprehensive developmentally appropriate curriculum called Teaching Strategies Gold for Infants, Toddlers and Twos. This curriculum includes goals and objectives that show teachers where they need to go and how to get there in the areas of social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development. Teachers plan individual and group activities that focus on the different domains in the classroom. The curriculum has five components; knowing infants, toddlers and twos; creating a responsive environment; what children are learning; caring and teaching; and partnering with families. These components help teachers make good decisions about routines and experiences provided for infants, toddlers and two-year-olds.

Through child observation and assessment, teachers can identify needs and plan for each child's interests and abilities in their group. Teachers plan intentional, appropriate activities and experiences to meet each child's goals and objectives. Teaching Strategies Gold shows the typical sequence of development for each objective. Teachers plan weekly individual curriculum for infants and weekly group curriculum for toddlers. The curriculum is integrated into each classroom and meets the needs of diverse learners.

### *Preschool Curriculum*

Preschool classrooms use Teaching Strategies Gold for Preschoolers and Second Step Curriculum, a violence prevention program that develops social and emotional skills to plan learning experiences that support social, emotional, physical, and intellectual and language development. Both curricula align with implementing the Massachusetts Preschool Guidelines and Standards.

Teaching Strategies Gold child assessments allow teachers to identify and plan a curriculum providing intentional activities and experiences that meet the interests and abilities of each child including those with disabilities. Because the curriculum is developmentally based, it provides a useful framework for assessing where children are on a continuum and for meeting individual needs which may require re-organizing the physical environment to promote learning, knowing the child's learning style, or adjusting the daily schedule. The curriculum, which is theme-based, is planned weekly and teachers indicate the link to the state preschool guidelines and standards on each activity.

### **Assessments**

Developmental assessments are completed every three months. Assessment results give educators the information needed to provide a variety of intentional activities that focus on the goals and objectives that meet the needs of individual children in the room. Educators observe specific children doing intentional activities, document the results and place them in each child's file.

Prior to each child's quarterly assessment, parents will receive communications notifying them of the upcoming assessment. This notification also provides parents with the opportunity to update educators on their child's development, as well as any goals they may have for their child over the next three months. Once assessments are completed, a copy of the report will be filed in the Center's records and parents will receive another copy. Keep in mind two (2) parent/teacher conferences are required yearly.

Parents will receive a paper version of their child's assessment. Assessments are available online for preschool parents to access their child's portfolio with an access code.

### **Swimming Component**

The YWCA's central location in Worcester has a large, heated indoor pool that is staffed by experienced swimming instructors and lifeguards. Every child who is toilet trained and has been enrolled in the Worcester Child Care Center preschool program for two weeks participates in a weekly, 30-minute swim lesson, conducted by certified Red Cross Water Safety Instructors. The class is designed to give children basic water skills and/or confidence in the water. Parents are invited to observe their child from the second floor fitness area observation window that overlooks the pool.

Please have your child wear her/his bathing suit under their clothes on swim day, send the following items to school in a cloth bag or back pack, and take them home for laundering that evening:

- Towel (please label with child's name)
- Bathing cap (can be purchased at YWCA pool desk)
- Underwear to put on after swim lesson

Children who do not arrive prepared with the above-stated items will not be allowed to participate in the swim program, but will have to stay with his/her class. All children should be prepared for swim (unless a doctor's note specifies otherwise). Enrollment on swim day is an agreement to being prepared to participate.

# Educators

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YWCA Early Education and Care educators are professionals with varied educational backgrounds that meet the qualification standards of EEC and NAEYC.

## **Assistant Teachers, Teachers and Lead Teachers**

All teachers are expected to meet the EEC and NAEYC qualification requirements, including experience and professional education courses; required to participate in ongoing educational training; and must be certified in first aid and CPR.

## **Center Directors**

The primary responsibility of the Center Director is to monitor daily operations of the center, supervise educators and uphold center standards and policies for the protection and safety of the children.

## **Director of Children's Services**

Oversees child care centers and early education programs, ensures quality operation and best practices at its various child care programs as well as advocates for funding at the state and federal level.

The YWCA also works in partnership with local high schools and colleges to provide students majoring in Early Education with on-field experience. These students are under direct supervision of center educators.

# policies

## Abuse & Neglect

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All child care workers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are “**mandated reporters**” of known or suspected instances of child abuse (verbal, physical, emotional) or neglect. As “**mandated reporters**,” child care workers are required by law to report known or suspected instances of abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) at 617-929-2130 from 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM or at 1-800-922-8169 after regular business hours.

If any employee of the YWCA suspects a child in the program is being abused or neglected, the situation and documentation must be brought to the attention of the Center Director. The Center Director will determine with the Director of Children’s Services whether to file a report with DCF and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) if, after discussion and observation, there is reasonable cause to believe that:

- a. The child is suffering serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon her/him, including sexual abuse;
- b. The child is suffering from neglect, including malnutrition;

“Reasonable cause” means that, after examining all the facts in a particular situation, most people with similar training and experience would suspect abuse.

If the Center Director/Director of Child Care Services are unsure as to reasonable cause, they will contact DCF’s Screening Department and the licenser at EEC to discuss concerns.

### **Abuse and Neglect Reports**

A written report filed with DCF must be filed within 48 hours of suspicion. A copy of this report will be kept in the child’s folder and the report must contain:

- The Center Director’s name
- The names and addresses of the child and his/her parents or other person responsible for his/her care, if known.
- The child’s date of birth and sex.
- The nature and extent of the child’s injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect.
- The circumstances under which educators first became aware of the child’s injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect.
- Any action taken to treat, shelter or assist the child.
- Any other pertinent information helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries or the identity of the persons responsible for the injuries.

The Center Director will maintain contact with DCF to determine the results of the investigation and any follow-up services that may have been recommended for the child and his/her family. If the investigation shows that the report is untrue, the Center Director is immune by law from civil or criminal liability for filing the report, as are all mandated reporters (including all child care workers).

If any child care worker is accused or suspected of abusing a child enrolled at any of the YWCA’s child care programs, that employee will be immediately relieved of any direct contact with children at the YWCA. EEC will be contacted and an investigation will take place. The procedures to be followed are listed below:

1. The Director of Children’s Services will contact the parent(s) of the child and arrange a meeting to discuss incident.
2. The Director of Children’s Services will file a report with EEC and DCF.
3. The YWCA Central Massachusetts will conduct its own internal investigation.



4. If accusations are found to be unsubstantiated, that person will return to her/his position.

## Arrival & Departure

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### **Westborough Center**

#### *Center Hours*

The Westborough Early Education and Care Center is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM–6:00 PM

#### *Early Morning Care*

The YWCA provides an Early Morning Care (EMC) option for parents seeking care earlier than our normal hours of operation. However, EMC has limited availability and a child must be signed up for EMC in order to arrive at the center prior to 7:30 AM. A parent can register for EMC at the time of enrollment, given availability, or see the Center Director to amend the Daily Schedule.

#### *Parking*

Parking is available on the side of the building. There are designated child care pick-up and drop-off spots for your convenience. The YWCA strongly discourages idling vehicles in our parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperature.

Do not or speed on YWCA property.

Do not park in handicapped spots. The Westborough Police Department will ticket your vehicle, which will result in a \$200 parking violation fine.

Parents who fail to follow the above safety and parking lot rules will be spoken to by administration and a warning will be given. Failure to comply may result in termination from the program.

#### *Arrival*

Parents should enter the building through the side and back entrances using their YWCA access cards. Upon arrival parents should wash their child's hands. If the parent is staying in the center, the parent must also wash their hands upon arrival. Parents must escort their children to their assigned classroom every morning and sign the child in with the attending teacher.

The YWCA is not responsible for a child until the parent makes contact with the attending teacher and signs the child in. Never leave your child unattended. Failure to comply will result in suspension/termination from the program.

#### *Departure*

Parents must report to their child's classroom to sign their child out at the end of each day. Parents should also check their parent pocket each day to pick up any announcements or communications that may be sent from the YWCA.

### **Worcester Center**

#### *Center Hours*

The Worcester Early Education and Care Center is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM–5:30 PM

The YWCA provides an Early Morning Care (EMC) option for parents seeking care earlier than our normal hours of operation. However, EMC has limited availability and a child must be signed up for EMC in order to arrive at the center prior to 7:30 AM. A parent can register for EMC at the time of enrollment, given availability, or see the Center Director to amend the Daily Schedule. If a child participates in EMC, they must be picked up by 4:30 PM or parents will accrue a \$1.00 per minute late fee.

#### *Parking*

The parking lot and main driveway at the Worcester Center gets congested during arrival and departure times. To reduce the level of congestion, please do not block intersections, pathways and ramps. There are designated child care pick-up and drop-off spots located around the parking lot for your convenience. If all the spots are occupied, you

can park in the parking lot. The YWCA strongly discourages idling vehicles in our parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperature.

Do not speed on YWCA property.

Do not park in handicapped spots. The Worcester Police Department will ticket your vehicle which will result in a \$200 parking violation fine.

Parking is not allowed in front of the entrance to the building, it is a fire lane. The Worcester Police Department will tow your vehicle.

Parents who fail to follow the above safety and parking lot rules will be spoken to by administration and a warning will be given. Failure to comply may result in termination from the program.

#### *Arrival*

Parents must have an active access card in order to escort their children to their assigned classroom every morning. Upon arrival parents should wash their child's hands. If the parent is staying in the center, the parent must also wash their hands upon arrival.

The YWCA is not responsible for a child until the parent makes contact with the attending teacher and signs the child in. Never leave your child unattended. Failure to comply will result in suspension/termination from the program.

#### *Departure*

Parents must have a valid access card and present a photo ID prior to signing their child out at the end of each day or his or her child will not be released. Parents should also check their parent pouch each day to pick up any announcements or communications that may be sent from the YWCA.

### **Westborough and Worcester Centers**

#### *Authorization of Release*

Children will be released only to an authorized person. An authorized person is designated by the parent on the Identification and Emergency Form at the time of enrollment. It is the parent's responsibility to keep these authorizations up-to-date and accurate. Parents must submit a written authorization for any changes concerning who may pick up your child. Parents will provide the access card to the designated pick-up person. Authorized person must present a photo ID or your child will not be released to any person.

Note: If you are unable to pick up your child, call the Center immediately. You will be asked who will be picking up your child and at approximately what time. It is extremely important that you call, even if that individual is on the child release authorization list. In the event that you find it necessary to telephone us to make a change in your child's pick-up plans, we will call you back immediately to verify the information. For this reason, it is critical that we have up-to-date work and home phone numbers at all times.

#### *Late Pick-up*

Parents are responsible for picking up their child at the established time noted on enrollment forms. Parents who pick up their children late are charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. The fee will be assessed by the attending educators and classroom clock. There will be a late fee for any child picked up after 5:30 PM in Worcester or after 6:00 PM in Westborough. If you drop off before 7:30 your late fees commence at 4:30.

Late fees must be paid at the front desk and parents are required to complete and sign the standard late-fee form. The child will not be readmitted into the Center until fee has been paid or arrangements have made with the attending educators. Up to 5 business days for payment can be negotiated.

Should the problem occur three or more times, a parent conference will be scheduled with the Center Director to discuss whether the Center's operating hours are meeting the parent's needs. Failure to comply will result in suspension and/or termination from the program.

## **Absence/Tardy**

Please notify the care center before 9:00 AM if your child will be late or will not be attending the center for any reason. Please note that subsidized slots have an attendance agreement form signed by the parent, which must be followed.

## **Holidays**

The YWCA Early Education and Care programs do not operate on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
- President's Day
- Patriot's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Indigenous People's Day (formerly Columbus Day)
- Thanksgiving Day
- The day following Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Credit reimbursement will not be made for holidays that fall during the school week. Parents are required to pay the daily fee for days the Center is closed for holidays.

## **Professional Development Days**

The YWCA has designated Good Friday (the Friday before Easter Sunday), the Friday before Labor Day, and Veteran's Day as professional development days for its Early Education and Care staff. The ongoing education and development of staff ensure a highly competent workforce and high quality early childhood programming—key criteria for meeting licensing requirements, accreditation and QRIS standards. Parents are required to pay the daily fee for these days.

## **Emergency Closure Days**

### *Snow Days*

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has updated its guidelines for inclement weather emergency days. The new guidelines state that the YWCA can in fact close if the "weather conditions are so extreme as to be considered unsafe." We don't anticipate that this change will greatly increase the number of days the YWCA is closed due to the weather. We expect that it will be a rare occasion.

What you need to know in the event of extreme weather:

- The decision to close will be made by 5:00 AM the day of the storm.
- To determine if the YWCA is closed, check the YWCA Facebook pages, listen to WTAG and WSRS, or call the YWCA at 508-767-2505 or 508-791-3181, or 508-366-5777 for Westborough.
- If the YWCA closes for a snow day parents are still expected to pay their daily fee.
- Please note: In cases of inclement weather, parents must call the center prior to 9:00 AM or the YWCA reserves the right to refuse care due to reduced coverage.

### *Building Emergencies*

- The YWCA is licensed through the Department of Early Education and Care. Their regulations specify that childcare cannot be open in the event of power outage, heating issues, or any other event or condition that the fire/building inspection department deems unsafe.
- If the YWCA closes due to a building emergency, parents are still expected to pay their daily fee.

## Birthday Celebrations

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Please notify your child's educators in advance if you would like the center to celebrate her/his birthday. We invite all parents to attend their child's birthday celebration in the classroom. Parents may bring in special treats for all the children to share in the fun of your child's birthday, however any food brought in to be shared *must* be in store bought, factory sealed containers. We suggest cakes, cupcakes or cookies because they are easy to handle and pass out to the children. If you are looking for more nutritious party snacks, ask our educators for suggestions. Your child's teacher will add special stories, songs, finger plays and art activities to make this a special day for your child.

If you are planning a party outside the center for your child, do not distribute invitations in school unless you are inviting the entire class. For a listing of your child's classmates, please see the classroom teacher.

## Child Records

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Confidentiality and distribution of information contained in a child's record shall be privileged and confidential. The YWCA will not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without written consent of the child's parents or to regulatory authorities such as DCF or EEC.

### **Parental Access**

The enrolling parent shall, upon request, have access to his/her child's file at reasonable times. In no event shall such access be delayed more than two (2) business days after the initial request without the consent of the child's parents. Upon such request for access the child's entire record regardless of the physical location of its parts shall be made available. No records will be distributed without the enrolled parent's authorization.

A parent has the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant materials to the child's record as well as the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record. Requests shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:

1. If a parent would like to add information to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the child's record, they have the right to have a conference with the Center Director to make their objections known.
2. Within a week after the conference, the parent will receive the decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If the decision is in favor of the parent, they shall immediately take steps necessary to put the decision into effect.

### **Transfer of Records**

Upon written request, parents can transfer the child's record to any other person the parent identifies, when the child is no longer in care.

## Child Transitions

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At each transition point a transition team comprised of educators and the child's parents develop a transition plan for the child. A transition plan includes:

- Developmental progress of the child
- A parent/child visit to the new classroom
- Child visits new classroom (without parent)

The new teacher addresses changes in daily routines and activities. The transition form is completed, signed by parent and teachers and placed in child's file. If the child is having difficulty with the transition, the team revisits the transition plan.

Parents of children transitioning to another program (e.g. kindergarten), who would like to have the child's records shared with the new program should make an appointment with the Center Director to sign a release form.

## Consent Forms

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At the time of enrollment, parents will be asked to consent to several items including the use of photos, application of sunscreen and insect repellent, and specific activities. Read form carefully.

## Dental Care

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The YWCA Child Care educators will assist children with brushing their teeth once a day. Toothbrush Policies are posted in each classroom.

Children are provided toothbrushes and toothpaste with fluoride (the toothpaste is approved by the American Dental Association.) Children will receive new toothbrushes after three months of use, or after they are sick. Toothbrushes are labeled with each child's name and date they received the brush.

Parents are required to sign the toothbrush form acknowledging that they have read the information about the toothbrush program.

### **Infant Method**

For infants without teeth, teachers will gently wipe out the inside of baby's mouth with a clean damp cloth after feeding.

## Developmental Referrals

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### **Reason for Referrals**

Developmental assessments are completed for every child every three months. This information is used to determine whether or not a child is on track to achieve age appropriate developmental milestones or if there are potential areas of developmental weakness. When a child is not meeting her/his developmental milestones, educators will meet with the family to discuss the assessment results, provide referrals to the appropriate community resources and programs, and create an individual child care plan. Educators remain involved throughout the referral and evaluation process and work closely with the referral agency and the family to develop and implement plans that insure the child's developmental success. Copies of evaluations, recommendations, and relevant communication are kept in the child's portfolio.

If a parent would like a referral for non-developmental concerns, a list of community agencies is available.

### **Referral Procedure**

If teachers determine areas of difficulty, a parent/teacher conference is scheduled to discuss the results from the screening/assessment. Based on input from the parent, a signed parent consent form is required to begin the referral process.

1. The YWCA will provide a written statement to the parent, which includes
  - a. the reason for recommending a referral for additional services
  - b. a brief summary of the center's observations related to the referral
  - c. any efforts the center may have made to accommodate the child's needs

Written observations, activity checklists, screening tools, and parent conference notes are placed in the child's file.

2. Through the use of appropriate external providers, a plan of action is developed to best address the needs of the student.
  - a. If a child is under the age of three, the YWCA will inform the child's parents of the availability of services provided by Early Intervention Programs.
  - b. If a child is over the age of three, the YWCA will inform the child's parents of the availability of services provided by the public school system.
  - c. Children displaying challenging behavior, at any age, may be referred to Together For Kids for services that include child, parent and educators intervention.
3. The YWCA, with parental permission, will contact the external service provider who evaluated the child for consultation and assistance in meeting the child's needs at the center.
  - a. If it is determined that the child is not in need of services from this agency, or is ineligible to receive services, the center shall review the child's progress at the center every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

## Discrimination

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The YWCA Central Massachusetts conforms in all respects to the rules and regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. It is the policy of the YWCA Central Massachusetts to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political belief, marital status, national origin, disability or sexual orientation.

## Evacuation

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In the event of a natural disaster requiring evacuation from the center, educators and children will proceed to the approved evacuation sites. Worcester evacuates to the Worcester Public Library, and Westborough evacuates to the Westborough Fire Station

To view a complete copy of the Emergency Evacuation Plan, please see the YWCA's Health Care Policies located in each classroom.

### **Drills**

Evacuation drills are practiced monthly. Classroom attendance and children's emergency forms are kept with child care educators at all times. Parents are asked to re-sign forms each year.

## Food & Nutrition

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YWCA Child Care Centers do not provide meals for the children. All food items outside of your child's lunch box must be clearly labeled with your child's name and the current date.

As part of our curriculum, children learn and choose for themselves foods that are healthy and nutritious. For this reason, children are not allowed to bring candy, gum or snacks to keep at the center.

Any foods sent to school for the purpose of sharing with other children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared foods packaged in factory sealed containers.

### **Infants**

Parents of infants are responsible for supplying all their baby's daily meals, including formula, juice and baby food. Please date and label these items with your child's name. The center provides a comfortable, private area in a particular classroom for parents to feed their children.

Infants under six months of age may not be offered solid foods or fruit juices without documentation of permission from the child's doctor and written permission from the parent.

### **Breakfast**

Breakfast should be eaten at home prior to coming to child care. Children arriving prior to 7:30 AM (Worcester) or 7:00 (Westborough) may bring their breakfast.

### **Snacks**

Children will receive a mid-morning snack and mid-afternoon snack provided by the Center. The classroom's Lead Teacher is responsible for the planning and serving of snack or breakfast alternate. A snack schedule is posted in each classroom.

### **Hot Lunches**

If you plan to provide a hot lunch for your child, please heat it at home and place the hot food in a clean, primed thermos. The primed thermos will keep the hot food at an appropriate temperature to ensure that bacteria will not form on the food. Tupperware is not acceptable to use in place of a thermos.

### **Food Prep**

Foods that require prepping (i.e. peeled, cut-up, meat removed from bones) must be prepared at home.

## **Guidance & Discipline**

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The YWCA Early Education and Care programs strive to build each child's self-esteem, independence and ability to socialize in a group. This is done, primarily, through developing a child's self-control. All guidance techniques are based upon knowledge of child development and familiarity with the child. In our program we use non-punitive forms of guidance and discipline. Children are not deprived of special privileges (swim/gym) or food because of behavior problems. Corporal punishment (e.g. spanking) is not allowed. Verbal abuse, humiliation and/or severe punishment will not be tolerated. Children will not be punished for soiling or wetting themselves.

### **Positive Environment**

Our Centers provide choices for activities, supportive teachers and an appropriately stimulating curriculum. Teachers act as role models, treating children and adults with respect and reinforcing positive behavior.

### **Natural and Logical Consequences**

Children are not punished. Rather, there are consequences that naturally or logically follow. For example, if a child is throwing Legos she/he is showing that she/he is not able to play with them appropriately. The teacher will remind her/him that Legos are for building. If the action continues then the child is done with the Legos for a period of time.

### **Redirection**

Teachers help/allow children to choose alternative activities. This diffuses the situation when children do not have the abilities to deal with the situation.

### **Separation**

When a child is extremely upset, he/she may need time and assistance in calming him/herself. This is done by sitting in a calm down area. Children can stay in this area until they have calmed down. When the child is ready to leave the calm down area, the teacher will review with the child (1) why he/she went to the calm down area, (2) ask what they could do to rectify the situation (3) be sure the child follows through on 2 and (4) plan the next activity with the child.

The YWCA works directly with Together for Kids by offering support to parents, educators and children with behavioral issues. The program addresses challenging behaviors in preschool children and provides a family liaison to support children and their families dealing with social/emotional issues. This program is free and offered on-site. For more information parents should contact the Center Director.

## Illness & Injury

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### **Sick**

If your child should become ill (i.e. temperature over 100°F, diarrhea, vomiting) during the day, we will make every effort to contact you directly. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the persons listed on the emergency form completed at the time of the enrollment.

Your child must be picked up within one hour of our phone call. If your child is not picked up within one hour of this call, the late pick-up fee will be assessed for the one-to-one care of a sick child.

Any child sent home from the center because of serious illness may not return the following day. If your child has been out due to a communicable illness or is out three consecutive days, a doctor's note must be presented upon her/his return to school. Notify the center immediately if your child has a communicable illness so that other parents may be informed to monitor their children for symptoms.

Please keep your child home if he or she has:

- a fever over 100°F or has had one during the previous 24 hours
- a bad cold with heavy nasal discharge
- diarrhea
- flu-like symptoms
- a communicable illness ( i.e. chicken pox, scarlet fever, impetigo, head lice, strep throat)
- conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- a noticeable rash

### **Serious Injury**

In case of serious injury, every effort will be made to contact you directly. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the person listed on the emergency form completed at the time of the enrollment. If we cannot reach you through the contact person, we will call the child's physician. If the doctor is unavailable, we will call the paramedics or an ambulance.

Until arrival of a parent, the physician, an ambulance or a paramedic, the Center Director or acting Director will assume authority and make all decisions concerning the care of your child. If necessary, we will arrange for medical transport to an emergency hospital.

You will be expected to assume responsibility for any expenses incurred in the above situation. The center will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision.

## Medications

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Medications may be administered to your child in the center provided a parental authorization has been completed and prescription is current. Medication must be in the original prescription packaging. These forms may be requested from your child's teacher. Children on prescription medicine for a contagious illness may not return to the center until they have been on the medication for a minimum of 24 hours, or three doses.

Children with chronic conditions such as allergies, asthma, etc. must have an individual health care plan filled out by the child's pediatrician.

Educators are prohibited from administering the first dosage of a prescription medication.

Non-prescription medicine must be accompanied by a current written order from your physician (valid for 1 year) and a written parental authorization (valid for the length of the dosage instruction) must be provided.

Health care policies are posted in each classroom including the administration and storage of medicines.



## Membership

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The YWCA is a women's membership organization. The annual basic membership helps support the YWCA mission and is non-refundable and non-transferable. If you become a member of the YWCA, you are entitled to a member discount of **\$3.00 per day**. To become a Member, see the Front Desk or fill out a registration form at [ywcacm.org](http://ywcacm.org).

Member/Associate Type	Dues	
Individual (1 Adult)	\$50	Allows the adult access to other programs at the YWCA.
Family (2 Adults, children under 18)	\$70	Allows the family to access other programs at the YWCA.
Senior	\$25	Allows the senior to access other programs at the YWCA.
Youth	\$30	Allows the child to access other programs at the YWCA.

Please visit [ywcacm.org](http://ywcacm.org) to view other activities and programs offered at the YWCA Central Massachusetts.

## Nap/Rest Time

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It is required that all children in our care for more than four hours have mid-day nap or rest. Each child will be provided with his/her own cot, mat or crib. Parents need to provide their toddlers and preschoolers with their own crib sheet and blanket. In addition, children having difficulty at rest time are encouraged to bring a small comforting doll or stuffed animal. If a child chooses not to nap, she or he is given quiet activities.

Blankets and sheets will be sent home to be laundered every week.

### Infant Method

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), infants are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface. Blankets, pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, mobiles and other soft items are not allowed in cribs or rest equipment for infants younger than twelve months. After being placed down for sleep on their backs, infants are then allowed to assume any comfortable sleep position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position.

## Parent Involvement

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Parents can expect:

- Information sharing occurring daily between teacher and parent.
- A quarterly parent/teacher conference to keep them aware of their child's developmental progress.
- A quarterly newsletter.
- Information about community events, services, etc. to be posted on the parent bulletin board.
- The YWCA to send information via email to parents.
- Surveys to determine satisfaction, topic interest for parent education workshops, and for NAEYC.
- To be invited to participate on the Parent Advisory Committee to assist educators in making decisions about their children and the program.
- Free trainings for parents around health, nutrition and safety.

Parents are very important to us and we encourage parents to become involved. Attending special activities, like the book social, ice cream social, Family Literacy Days, parent discussion groups and open houses serves to bring families and educators together and strengthens our partnership in a relaxed setting.

When a child comes from a blended family, we encourage caretakers to be equally involved in their child's education and care. Each parent can request information be shared separately at orientation or meeting with Center Director.

### Communication

Every effort is made to ensure communication with parents is accessible and understandable. Bilingual, bi-cultural educators assist the YWCA in ensuring that all verbal and written communication is accessible to families regardless of

their native language or other communication impairments. If a language is not spoken internally, we will arrange for verbal and/or written translation services.

### **Conferences**

A minimum of two Parent/Teacher conferences a year is required, but parents are encouraged to attend a Parent/Teacher conference every three months. Parents have the right to request a Parent/Teacher conference at any time.

### **Input**

We want your child to experience the very best care, activities and education possible, and your input helps us to achieve that goal. Please speak with your child's teacher if you have any suggestions, concerns, questions.

Most problems that arise are due to misunderstandings that can be solved through communication. If a problem occurs, please:

- Discuss the problem with your child's teacher or the lead teacher who oversees your child's area.
- If unresolved, speak with the Center Director.
- If not satisfied, discuss the situation with the Director of Children's Services.

### **Visits**

The YWC Early Education and Care centers operate under an open door policy, meaning parents can and are encouraged to visit the center and their child's classroom at any point of the day. Your child's teacher will keep you informed on activities and events ideal for your participation.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

Parents will be given information about volunteer opportunities at the time of enrollment.

## **Personal Items & Clothing**

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**All clothing and personal items MUST be labeled. The YWCA is not be responsible for any item brought to the center.**

### **Clothing**

Parents are required to provide the center with an extra set of pants, shirt, socks, underwear and shoes for their children—all labeled. The center reserves the right to refuse care when a parent continually fails to replace soiled clothing.

Dress your child in comfortable clothes that are warm (long pants from at least mid-October to April), free of complicated fastenings and washable. We will go outside in the winter if the temperature is 32 degrees or higher. During the winter, please send your child with snow boots, snow pants, hats and mittens.

### **Diapers**

Children who are not toilet-trained need a weekly supply of disposable diapers and baby wet wipes. We will notify you when your child's diaper supplies are low. The center will provide diapers to a child who runs out for that day, however if diapers are not provided the following day, the center reserves the right to refuse care until diapers are provided. If you borrow from our supply, please return the same amount used in a timely manner.

As with all of your child's belongings, label diapers and wipes with your child's name.

### **Shoes**

Children must wear closed-toe shoes everyday. Shoes are not allowed in the Infant Rooms.

### **Toys**

All toys should be left at home. When toys are brought to the center they are likely to be broken or taken home by another child. Tracking each child's belongings can be a difficult task, therefore toys from home are not allowed.

Guns, war toys or other toys of destruction are not allowed in the center. These toys promote ideas of aggressive problem-solving and will not be allowed in the center at any time, for any reason.

## Smoking

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The YWCA has a smoking policy which reflects our commitment to the health and well-being of women and families.

Smoking is restricted to the designated smoking area outside of the building, not immediately in front of the building. Any person wishing to smoke outside may do so at least 50 feet away from the building.

There is no smoking in any off-site facility of the YWCA. Any person wishing to smoke outside may do so in our designated smoking area to the right of the building.

### **General indicators a child is ready to toilet train:**

- Expresses a consistent interest in using the toilet.
- Understands and expresses the difference between being wet and dry.
- Has started using the toilet at home.
- Can go long periods of dryness for several days and has experienced 1 or 2 days at home without an accident.
- Is least 2 years old—the usual age when bladder control is possible.

## Toilet Training

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Children do not have to be toilet trained to enroll in the program. Our toddler educators will be very supportive during this significant time in your child's development. Understanding every child has different toilet training needs, the decision to begin toilet training must be mutual between you, your child, and the toddler educators.

Once your child has exhibited the general indicators of readiness, you should schedule a meeting with your child's teacher to discuss the transition from diapers to underwear. After you have agreed on a toilet training plan, educators will be happy to support your child's toilet training efforts. Be sure to send in several extra pairs of underwear and pants should there be multiple accidents during the day.

Any change to the plan must be communicated between parents and educators.

## Transportation

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### **Daily Transportation**

Authorized person(s) will

- transport child to and from the center
- drop off and pick up their child from the classroom (following arrival and departure policies)
- notify the educators when their child arrives or leaves for the day

*Parents are required to create a daily transportation plan at the time of enrollment.*

## Tuition

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Tuition payments are due one week in advance. Failure to make payment within the time allotted may result in your child's removal from the program. Payments can be made by cash, check, money order, debit card, or credit card at the Front Desk. Checks and money orders should be made payable to the YWCA. Please be sure to save all receipts, especially for cash and money order payments.

Your child's program fees are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. The YWCA's EIN is 04-2105873.

### **Returned Payment**

A \$20 fee will be assessed for all returned checks or electronic fund transfers. If a payment is returned to the YWCA due to insufficient funds, you will be required to rectify your account in cash upon notification. If you have a payment returned for insufficient funds more than twice, you will be required to make all future tuition payments by cash or money order. There is a returned check fee, which you must pay at time of cash payment for tuition.

### **Tuition Express**

Tuition Express is a payment program that allows your tuition balance to be automatically deducted from your checking, savings or credit card account. Tuition Express forms are available at the time of enrollment and at the Front Desk. Please see Tuition Express forms for details on the program.

### **Access Cards**

A membership card is given to all YWCA members. This card provides access to the Early Education and Care Center. Participants must carry their access card with them at all times. Cards take three business days to process. There is a \$5.00 replacement fee for a lost card, or to purchase additional cards.

## **Termination/Suspension**

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A child may be terminated/suspended from the program under the following circumstances:

- The health and safety of the child or other children at the center cannot be assured.
- The child's developmental needs are not being met at the center.
- Parents are not following the Early Education and Care Policies.

If a concern regarding the preceding criteria develops, a meeting will be scheduled with the parent. A written plan to avoid termination/suspension with guidelines will be established. If progress is not made, a letter of termination/suspension will be issued stating conditions of return. A copy of this letter will be kept on file in the child's record.

### **To withdraw from the program**

A two-week written notice is required if a parent decides to withdraw their child from the program. Payment is required for two weeks after the date on which written notice is received.

### **To switch registered days**

To switch registered days, a two-week written notice is also required. The privilege is available upon approval from the Center Director.

## **Zero-Tolerance**

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Guests of the YWCA have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Acts of violence will not be tolerated. For purposes of this policy, violence is defined as any extreme behavior that could result in the abuse or injury of a person in the workplace and/or damage or destruction of property in the workplace. Violence is not restricted only to physical conduct but also includes verbal, visual, and written conduct.

### **Firearms**

Guests of the YWCA will not possess unauthorized firearms or other weapons or explosive devices on YWCA premises or while on YWCA business.

## Early Education & Child Care **Parental Agreement**

Please read carefully and sign this agreement.

I have read and agree to comply with the policies the YWCA Early Education and Care program has stated in the parent handbook, including registration, payment schedule and procedures, late payment fees, two-week written withdrawal notice, and late pick-up fees.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Parent 1**

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Parent 2**

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_