



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA EARLY LEARNING CENTERS PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK





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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA

Early Learning Center Parent Policy Handbook

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA seeks to put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

The mission of the Early Learning Centers are to provide open access for children to age appropriate quality learning that promotes the health and safety of children and prepares them for formal schooling.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA preschool programs will provide curriculum activities and developmentally appropriate programming that will support and build young children's character, particularly the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. In our Early Learning Centers, children are motivated to explore, manipulate, question, discover and express their ideas through play, group and individual activities. Children are given choices as they interact with other children, teachers and the environment.

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY/Framework STATEMENT

The Early Learning Centers' goals are to offer quality care with age appropriate activities by trained, caring and nurturing staff. All staff understand child and family development and will recognize and meet the learning and developmental needs of the children and families we serve. The educational philosophy shapes and supports the curriculum through the Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards. We will strive to continually develop our professionalism and to:

- Provide a safe, supervised, structured environment in which children may choose from a variety of activities which will help them develop socially, intellectually, physically and emotionally in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Develop gross and fine motor skills.
- Develop and foster language skills and literacy.
- Promote a positive value system by encouraging a child's self-worth and emotional development that will enhance self-esteem.
- Develop healthy habits, i.e.: nutrition, dental care, cleanliness, hygiene, and fitness.
- Develop a partnership with parents, offering support and welcoming them into our program in all facets of involvement, as well as offering parent educational topics and workshop.
- Use the Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards to support curriculum development and planning
- Support the Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards used to observe and monitor each child's progress related to curricular goals and performance standards.

STAFFING

The Early Learning Center personnel are selected to meet the necessary standards of educational and occupational qualifications, who can effectively advance the objectives of the Y, who have the capacity for personal and professional growth and who can become a viable part of the organization.

The Early Learning Center's goal is to hire a diverse and dedicated staff. It is valuable for the children to have the opportunity to interact with adult caregivers of both sexes and from many different age groups, who have diverse cultural and racial backgrounds. Our child care program encourages and rewards ongoing staff education and emphasizes professionalism.



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CURRICULUM

The Early Learning Centers use the Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards. We believe that early learning is multidimensional and that the developmental domains of personal and social, physical, cognitive and creative development are interrelated and connected. These domains give our staff the foundation for our assessment tool and provide the focus for individualizing the planned learning experiences. We plan for individual needs, providing children opportunities to explore their environment through child-initiated and teacher-selected activities. Topics of study emerge from the interests of the children, families and center staff. Activities are designed for children to participate in content areas such as, literacy, language, math, science, creative experiences, motor development and quiet and active experiences.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

It is important to continually evaluate the program and make improvements where needed. Staff, parents and others are instrumental in the evaluation process in collecting information on quality and engaging in a reflective process to assess the effectiveness of the program. A variety of sources for program evaluation are used. All assessments will be used to generate action plans for improvements and changes in the program.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

LEARNING CENTERS - This time allows children to choose activities in various learning or discovery centers. These centers may include science and nature, dramatic play, blocks, art, woodworking, gross and small motor, language arts, math, sand and water activities. When children are allowed to choose activities, they will choose what is most important to them. They use the materials in ways that meet their own developmental needs. We create the environment to allow each child to choose activities that are developmental appropriate for this age. When children work at a task they selected they find it very satisfying and this is the most effective and engaging way to learn.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES - Activities such as arts and crafts, puppet play, storytelling, dramatization, block building, music and dance are a great time for children to learn to follow directions, be creative, and work in groups or individually.

PROCESS AND PRODUCT - Children are learning new things all the time. They need the time to explore what happens if they do this or do that. They need the freedom to try things without worrying how it must turn out. Children will focus on the process of doing things. This is why a child will do the same puzzle over and over again or pour sand from one container to another repeatedly. The child may be learning coordination or beginning writing skills or making discoveries about triangles or gravity. Mostly, he is building confidence. Your child's artwork will be of the process type. Be patient. Allow your child the time to grow and learn- that this is part of the task. Your child is very involved in what s/he does. S/he is learning to be creative and to problem solve.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES - A period will be given daily for physical activities. The children may play outdoors, participate in physical education activities, music and movement or play group games.

GROUP TIME - Children and teachers discuss many things. Sometimes it is the calendar, or weather. This time may be used to introduce new material and how to care for and use it. Teachers plan what they will do for the day. The children are developing their social skills such as: listening, taking turns, sharing and empathizing. The children are discovering how to solve problems, ask questions, brainstorm, as well as the importance of the sequencing of events and consequences. They are learning how to be fair, choose solutions, compromise and the routines of their day.

LITERACY TIME - A quiet time when children will have the opportunities to listen to stories, learn and experience new things. Our stories often enhance deeper learning of topics that have been discussed during group time. Children are learning to value language.

MUSIC - Songs, finger plays, and nursery rhythms are especially good for introducing children to the patterns and rhythms of language. They are learning numbers and shapes as well as new vocabulary, grasp of order and sequence, increased attention span, listening skills and manual dexterity and muscle control.



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GENERAL POLICIES ENROLLMENT IN ANY OF THE EARLY LEARNING CENTERS CONSTITUTES AN UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU WILL ABIDE BY THE MEMBERSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT AND POLICIES LISTED AS FOLLOWS:

ADMISSIONS

The Early Learning Centers are open to all children regardless of race, creed, color, religion, natural origin, gender, disability, or family personal financial position.

ABSENCES

Early learning can help prepare your child for success in school- and in life. These early years are so important to a child's development and learning. What happens now in the early years does make a difference in your child's life. If your child is not present they will not learn. Obsessive absenteeism may lead to forfeiting your child's slot in the center. If your child is going to be absent, for any reason, please notify the center as soon as possible.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Care giving adults who bring the child to, or remove the child from the facility, are required to sign children in and out of the facility. Care giving adults who pick up a child from the center must be at least 18 years of age, be listed on the Pick-up list and have proper ID with them to identify who they are. This policy will be strictly enforced. To further ensure your child's safety we ask that you list and update your emergency contacts and phone numbers with your program provider. Please refer to our specific late arrival policy for additional information.

LEGAL CUSTODY AND INJUNCTIONS

Either parent will be allowed to pick up their child unless a copy of the court order restricting a parent is on file. A copy of any court ordered custody decree or injunction must be kept on file in the Early Learning Center.

OPEN ACCESS

The Early Learning Centers employ an Open Door policy for parents/guardians- this means that parents/guardians may make an unannounced visit to any area of the facility at any time during the program's regular hours of operation.

CLOTHING, JEWELRY, TOYS & ELECTRONICS

Children should wear comfortable clothing suitable to the season and activities at the Early Learning Center. Sneakers or close toed shoes should be worn at all times. Flip-flops, crocs, or open toed shoes are not permitted. A spare set of clothing is helpful to be left in the classroom in case of a mishap or accident. Please write your child's name in side all backpacks, raincoats, and jackets, etc. Children should wear play clothes. We enjoy painting, water and sand play, cooking, etc. This can be very messy work. We take precautions to remain clean; but will not guarantee it.

We go outside every day, year round. Please be sure to dress your child appropriately according to the weather.

The YMCA and staff are not responsible for any articles of clothing, jewelry or other valuables that the child brings to the center.

Our program does not allow any screen time. Please do not allow your child to bring tablets, laptops, cell phones, electronic devices or any other digital devices to the program.



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LUNCH AND SNACKS

The YMCA promotes healthy eating. All foods served in the Early Learning Centers are healthy and follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines.

Any foods brought from home, if applicable, must also be healthy (see staff for recommended food items). Any foods that come from home, for special events, to be shared among the children, must be cleared by the staff, and must be either whole fruits/vegetables or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers. Children under the age of four will never be offered hotdogs (whole or sliced), whole grapes, popcorn or hard pretzels, raw carrots/peas or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. We are no longer allowing fried foods in our programs.

Safe drinking water will be available at all times and will be offered at intervals based on activities and individual needs to the children.

VACATION

Tuition is due regardless. Please let us know if you plan to be out. Please check with the Site Coordinator/ Office Administrator if you plan on going on vacation for an extended period, as there may be restrictions based upon the site.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Most problems within an Early Learning Center are non-life threatening and can be resolved by:

1. Discussing the problem with the classroom teacher.
2. Discussing the problem with the program site coordinator
3. If the problem is not resolved you may contact the Program Director
4. If the problem is still not resolved, you may contact branch Executive Director

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Early Learning Center will provide programs appropriate for children with special needs within the main stream of the existing programs whenever possible. Referrals to outside agencies will be made with the permission of parents. In conjunction with the public system and/or state agency, an individual educational plan will be designed and implemented with an interdisciplinary approach.

It is required by our state licensing for all participants in our center who have special needs have an individualized care plan on file.

In the event special education services are needed for a child, depending on the services, these services may be conducted on or off site. Accommodations for space and scheduling will be made if services are to be provided on site. The Early Learning Centers work collaboratively with outside agencies to ensure a consistency, continuity and carryover between special education services and the program.



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WEATHER AND RELATED EMERGENCIES

The YMCA reserves the right to close the Early Learning Centers due to inclement weather, other emergencies or the inability to maintain State of Connecticut required staff to student ratio. If severe weather develops during the school day, parents will be called and are expected to pick up their children within one half hour of notification. If you cannot pick up your child, please arrange for them to be picked up by someone on the child's authorized pick-up list. We will call persons on the child's authorized pick-up list if we are unable to contact the parent or guardian.

HEALTH

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

The Office of Early Childhood requires that each child enrolled in the Early Learning Center have an up-to-date ED 191 medical form signed and dated by a Physician (MD or DO), Physician Assistant (PA) or an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (ARNP), with the date of the last exam. This will be kept on file at the Early Learning Center. A new form will be required each year on the date of the last physical for preschool children. Children under 3 years of age must provide documentation from the physician regarding their required immunizations. We cannot accept a child without the proper medical forms/immunizations. If your child does not have a physician or health insurance, the staff at intake will help you locate those services.

All students must have a signed "Authorization for Medical Attention" form on file to participate in the program that gives staff trained in first aid permission to administer aid or obtain care from a licensed physician or dentist if an emergency should arise. This form also gives permission to the staff to have a child transported to a medical facility by police or ambulance.

CONTAGEOUS ILLNESS, RASHES, AND PARASITES

For everyone's safety, parents are required to notify the teacher whenever a child has been exposed to a contagious disease. This includes but may not be limited to: strep throat, pink eye, fifth's disease, meningitis, hepatitis, ringworm, impetigo, lice, etc. If an outbreak occurs, the Program will notify the parents via a posting on your child's classroom door. Any child contracting a contagious illness must have a doctor's note stating that the child may return to the program.



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SICK CHILD

If a child is sick with any illness that requires the child to be removed from the center during the program hours the child will be immediately removed from the group and brought to a supervised area away from the group. A staff member will make the child comfortable.

A staff member will call a parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached the staff will call people on the emergency list to pick up the child. The child must be picked up from the center within one half hour of parent notification.

Parents must advise staff of any physical or emotional conditions for which their child is being treated, particularly when the child is using mood-altering medications. Other physical conditions that staff should be made aware of would be, but is not limited to, allergies, asthma, or any restriction of activities.

Parent should notify staff of any medications taken at home prior to arriving at center so that in case of an emergency the staff is aware of any medication.

Child may not attend if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees or above, with or without accompanying symptoms
- Too sick to participate normally in the day's activities, including going outside
- Any diarrhea
- Any vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Unexplained rash
- Excessive cold symptoms- cough, sneeze, constant runny nose
- Other unexplained pain or discomfort or listlessness
- Lice/ringworm/scabies

Your child may return when:

- Fever: less than 100 degrees for 24 hours without fever reducing medications
- Chicken pox (varicella): when all lesions have scabbed over (usually 7-10 days)
- Bacterial Conjunctivitis (Pink eye): 24 hours after treatment starts
- Strep throat/scarlet fever: 24 hours after treatment starts
- Ear infection: when child is on medication 24 hours and drinking/eating/sleeping normally
- Impetigo: 24 hours after treatment starts
- Diarrhea: 24 hours diarrhea free
- Vomiting: 24 hours vomit free
- Lice: treated and deemed nit-free by Health Consultant, MD, PA, or ARPN
- Ringworm/scabies: please consult us about proper treatment and then child may return the day after the child starts treatment. If the ringworm can be covered by a bandage, the child may return immediately after treatment has started



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EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Emergency numbers must be kept up to date, to insure that we can contact you immediately in case of an emergency. Please let your child's teacher know when there is a change, especially phone numbers.

INJURED CHILD

If a child is injured during the program hours, the following steps will be taken: If the injury is minor the child will be made comfortable and a staff member certified in first aid will treat. If injury is of a serious nature and emergency medical care is needed, EMS will be called and parents will be contacted immediately. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, the staff will take the necessary steps to obtain an ambulance and emergency treatment at a hospital. An emergency permission slip, previously signed by the parents or guardians will be kept on file.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

In compliance with Public Act 02-84, the Early Learning Centers may not deny services to a child who has an allergy or a prescription for an automatic prefilled cartridge injector (such as an epi-pen). The YMCA will provide staff trained in the administration of medications, including the use of automatic prefilled cartridge injectors with a written order from a physician and signed by the parent or guardian. A parent/guardian has the option and is welcome to come to the center to administer medication personally.

We request, however, that whenever possible, medication be administered to your child outside the hours your child attends the center. Only those prescription medications that are critical for your child's wellbeing should be administered during program hours.

PRESCRIPTION

An Authorization for the Administration of Medication by Child Care Personnel for all types of medication prescription to be administered must be filled out and signed by the physician and by the parent. One form is required per medication.

The medication **must be unopened** and have the **original bottle or packaging and prescription label** including:

- Child's name
- Dosage/route of administration (mouth, inhalation)
- Specific time/intervals to be given
- Current date of order
- Physician's name and telephone number
- Individual measuring spoon as may be required with medication

At least one dose must have been administered outside the center without adverse side effects. Even if taken before for another illness.

Any unused medication will be promptly returned to parent after completion of treatment or will be destroyed within one week of termination of the order if not picked up.



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NON-PRESCRIPTION-TOPICAL

The teachers will administer sunscreen, SPF 15 or higher and insect repellent (if containing DEET, it will be 10% or less concentration of DEET) with a completed Authorization for Non-Prescription Topical Ointment form signed by the parent or guardian. Sun block, insect repellent and lip balms must be labeled with your child's name.

MEDICATION EXCLUSION

The Early Learning Center reserves the right to deny application of certain medications unless the medications are those needed for an emergency. Medications that are not applied topically, taken orally, inhaled, intranasal or intra-aurally (in the ear) must be discussed with the director and the health consultant before the child comes to the program. The health consultant is responsible for obtaining special permission from the Office of Early Childhood. The child will not be able to attend the program until the staff is appropriately trained in the medical care of the child unless a parent or guardian is willing to stay in the Early Learning Center building while the child is in attendance.

TUITION

PAYMENTS

Monthly tuition payments are due and must be paid no later than the 1st of the next month. If accounts are not paid by the first of the month, a \$25 late payment fee will be charged. Accounts must be kept current. If payment is not received by the 1st of every month you may not leave your child at the center. If payment is not received by the 5th of the month your child's slot in the program will be forfeited. No refunds or credit will be given for closing due to inclement weather, personal family vacation or child's sickness or suspension or expulsion from the program.

No refunds will be given for partial month; if your child does not attend the entire month.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Y's Open Door Financial Assistance Program provides funds for families where tuition is not based on sliding fee scale. These funds are based on families need. See the Director of the site for specifics.

CARE 4 KIDS

To help with the overall cost of care for each child we strongly recommend all families to apply to the Care 4 Kids Program and remain on the program if accepted. We have applications on site, in English and Spanish. We will assist families in completing the application if needed. The application can be faxed to Care 4 Kids from the Early Learning Center office.

Once accepted in Care 4 Kids Program the family fee determined by Care 4 Kids will be the monthly tuition accepted by the center. If you have more than one child in the program, you will be charged a monthly family tuition fee rather than a per child fee. Families who are accepted into the Care 4 Kids program may see a reduction in their child's monthly tuition fee



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LATE PICK-UP

The center closes promptly at the time of closing. Late pick up fees begin 1 minute after closing. Late pick up fees accrue at \$25.00 per quarter hour. If there is a discrepancy as to the time you are picking up your child, we will go by the time displayed on a cell phone. Even if you call and notify the center you will be late, a late pick up fee will be charged. After three late pick-ups the Y reserves the right to discontinue care for your child (ren) enrolled in the program. Regardless if parent/guardian has called the center or emergency contact has been reached, child must be picked up within 1 hour after closing.

The State of CT has an "Abandon Child Policy". If a child is not picked up within 1 hour of the Center's closing, and all efforts have been made to contact the parents/guardian or emergency people, The Early Learning Center is to assume the child has been abandoned, and providers must contact Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the police to have the child picked up and brought to the local DCF.

DISCIPLINE

GUIDANCE

We believe that developing a good relationship and really getting to know each child and family will instill a feeling of trust and respect from children. The staff will help children develop self-discipline. When children misbehave we will use this as a teaching opportunity, a chance to model self-discipline and character.

For all age groups, when a child behaves inappropriately, a teacher will go to the child to talk to him/her.

If the conflict involves two or more children, the teacher will guide each child through a series of steps, leading to a mutually agreeable solution.

For inappropriate behavior the following procedures will take place:

1. The child will be given a verbal warning and redirected to another activity.
2. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child will be removed from the group for a determined period of time. Whenever there is a serious concern about a behavior or discipline problem, the staffs will inform the parents.
3. The staff and family will meet to develop plans to resolve the problem and daily reports will be given to the family.
4. The method and a schedule for continual monitoring of the child's growth and development will be determined by the appropriate Program Director, Coordinator and staff members.
5. If the problem persists, a consultant, with parental consent, will be brought in to assess the situation and an additional plan of action may be put into place. Parents will be advised of the recommendations of the consultant.



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No staff member may physically or verbally abuse a child, nor may a child be physically restrained except when it might be necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or others. Staff members are prohibited to use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment.

Disrespect toward staff or property or repeatedly injuring other children or staff will not be tolerated. If a child is out of control and is unable to listen to staff, this creates an unsafe environment for all the children including the misbehaving child. The staff will inform the Site Coordinator, or charge person, of this behavior, and if deemed unsafe behavior, a parent or guardian will be called to remove the child from the program. To ensure safety, the parents must remove the child from the program within one half hour of notification. The teachers and parents together will develop a plan to prevent future harmful behavior. It is the responsibility of the parent to work with the teachers to resolve unacceptable behaviors.

In the event that a recommendation is made for the child to receive an assessment from local health education or mental health services, the parent must agree to these services for the child to remain in the program. In extreme situations it may become necessary for the parent to permanently remove the child from the center.

SUPERVISION

Children are under staff supervision at all times the child is under their care during the day. It is the parent's responsibility to supervise their child while entering and exiting the building before and after they are signed into their classrooms. If the fire alarm is pulled by your child while under parent/guardian supervision, the parent will be charged a fee of \$100.00 for false alarm.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All YMCA employees are considered mandated reporters and shall make a report to DCF when a situation arises where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, neglected or in imminent risk of abuse. The staff has a responsibility to prevent any child enrolled in the center from being abused or neglected. To help ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, and in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes, the staff shall make a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), when we learn of a situation where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, neglected or at imminent risk of abuse. No staff member is allowed to have any contact, including, but not limited to, babysitting, phone, or email, with any Y participants under 18 years of age outside of Y programs and activities.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is practiced all times. Information about children in the programs will not be discussed among staff or other parents or in front of child/children. We hold any information you share with us to enable us to better meet your child/children's needs in the strictest confidence. This applies to information you share in written or verbally.

Staff and volunteers must be professional and protect the rights and privacy of the children and families in regards to confidential matters.

All financial information will be kept confidential between the program administration and the families. Information verifying your eligibility for this program may be released to funding sources upon their request.



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PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND CONTACT

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The Early Learning Centers encourages parents to participate in activities. Please contact your child's teacher regarding your ability to come in to read a story, make an arts and crafts project, cooking, talk about your culture or your occupation to the children in the classroom.

In addition, we strive to incorporate a multicultural learning experience. In the event that the Early Learning Center is not parallel with the family's values and practices, please feel free to speak to your child's teachers or the Site Coordinator at any time. Parent participation will enhance the program and provide balance in the lives of each child.



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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA EARLY LEARNING CENTERS

We pledge to nurture the healthy development of children, to support families and to improve the quality of life in our communities. Please check with your local Y branch for Early Learning program specifics.

BRIDGEPORT YMCA

850 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604
P 203 334 5551 W bridgeportymca.org

FAIRFIELD YMCA

841 Old Post Road, Fairfield, CT 06824
P 203 255 2834 W fairfielddy.org

NEW HAVEN YMCA YOUTH CENTER

50 Howe Street, New Haven, CT 06511
P 203 776 9622 W newhavenymca.org

STRATFORD YMCA

3045 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06614
P 203 375 5844 W stratfordymca.org

VALLEY YMCA

12 State Street, Ansonia, CT 06401
P 203 736 9622 W valleyy.org

WOODRUFF FAMILY YMCA

631 Orange Avenue, Milford, CT 06461
P 203 878 6501 W woodruffymca.org