

# PARENT HANDBOOK

YMCA of Cape Breton  
After School Program

January 2024









## After School Mission Statement

The mission of the YMCA of Cape Breton After School Programs (BAP) is to provide high quality care and to promote the development of *the whole child* by providing a carefully planned, age appropriate, stimulating, and child-centered play environment. Our programs are based on outdoor and active play, promoting the importance of early physical literacy.

Our goal is to promote the importance of...

- Social acceptance by developing an understanding of others needs and feelings.
- Emotional health by developing a positive self-image, sense of belonging, and respect for individual differences.
- Intellectual ability by developing each person's enthusiasm for learning and testing their own abilities.
- Physical health by developing a positive attitude toward physical activity, hygiene, and confidence in ability.

## Inclusion Statement

The YMCA of Cape Breton, in keeping with our mission and vision, believes in the development of healthy confident children. We're committed to treating children with respect and dignity and helping them grow and develop to their full potential. We believe that each child is special, unique and deserving of quality programs that are safe, warm, loving, challenging and stimulating. Our program is inclusive to all children regardless of their abilities.

Central to our work at the YMCA is diversity, belonging, and inclusion. We believe that all children and families should have an inclusive and respectful experience in our programs.

- YMCA programs are designed to develop children in spirit, mind and body. Every child is a unique individual and will add value to our program.
- Parents and families are involved, consulted and informed partners with YMCA staff and volunteers.
- YMCA staff and volunteers (where appropriate) will strive to ensure the environment and programs are adapted to meet the needs of all children.
- YMCA staff and volunteers (where appropriate) will seek out community partners to enhance our ability to support children with special needs through training and consultation.

## Philosophy Statement

The YMCA of Cape Breton believes that each child is special, capable, unique, and deserving of a quality program in a learning environment that is safe, warm, challenging and stimulating.

We believe that child development and early experiences set the foundations for lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles. Our program supports the growth and development of the whole child: physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

Families and communities are an integral part of our program. These partnerships allow us to strengthen our ability to meet the needs of young children, respect culture and diversity in all aspects of our program, and provide meaningful experiences for children to engage in. Through a team approach we can ensure that each child has the maximum opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential.

We believe in a purposeful approach to developing physical literacy. Children learn through play. When children are given opportunities to build physical skills, they gain confidence in their abilities and are more inclined to enjoy active lifestyles.

We are committed to building healthy communities!

## Strategies to Support Our Philosophy

The YMCA of Cape Breton BAP plans of action are listed below and are a means to facilitate the key strategies required to support our philosophy statement.

### **1) Each child is special, capable, unique, and deserving of a quality program in a learning environment that is safe, warm, challenging, and stimulating.**

GOAL – Our goal is to provide an inclusive, safe and secure environment that is responsive to a child's individual needs and sets the foundations for lifelong learning.

APPROACH –

- Providing a safe environment that offers consistency and support for children's independence and self-care enables children to problem solve and explore ways to cope with manageable levels of stress.
- Ensure awareness at all times of the number and names of children that are in care and the supervision of the environment. Ensure documentation on the Attendance Record accurately reflects the number of children in care throughout the afternoon. All arrival and departure times are accurately documented and there is written verification after all transitions.

### **2) Child Development and early experiences set the foundations for lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles. Our program supports the growth of the whole child.**

GOAL – Staff will support each child by providing a developmentally appropriate framework for

children to communicate in a positive manner and promote self-regulation. We recognize each child's natural desire and ability to learn.

APPROACH –

- Staff view children as confident, curious and capable of complex thinking and rich in potential, therefore the staff act as co-learners to deliver a program that builds on strengths and abilities through emergent curriculum.
- Staff will show awareness of the individual child's cues, as each child is developing their self-regulation and self-help skills at these times.
- Model and promote positive interactions with children and each other to provide a supportive learning environment.
- Support peer to peer positive interactions/problem solving strategies to help children negotiate, collaborate and communicate in an atmosphere where children feel comfortable expressing themselves.
- Activities within the program emphasize the development of: self-esteem, confidence, self-regulation, and respect for others.
- Staff use observations and the cues of the children to extend learning and encourage opportunities to support individual learning.
- Provide access to loose part materials which children can use to build, create, explore concepts, develop spatial awareness, manipulate, and problem solve.

**3) Families and communities are an integral part of our program.**

GOAL – YMCA of CB promotes a culture of family involvement by engaging families in partnerships with our staff and program. All children, families and staff will be treated equally with respect, and be given the support and opportunities needed within our environment. Our respect for diversity and inclusion encourages each child and staff to feel a sense of belonging.

APPROACH –

- We understand the importance of engaging families in our program and working on partnerships with the families to help foster children's learning
- Staff strive to encourage parental/family involvement by communicating daily with families and providing a family communication plan.
- Staff will keep communication open via short discussions at pick-up or drop off times, and longer dialogue is available with staff over the course of the day, via the telephone or in person meetings
- Parents/Families are updated on important information pertaining to their child/ren and the program through newsletters, emails, and/or daily communication with staff.
- Staff provide parents/families with the opportunity to discuss their child's progress through ongoing discussions, and parent/family meetings if necessary or requested. If there are concerns regarding a child, the staff will discuss it with parents/families so that we are all working together.



- Parents to be given 2 opportunities a year to complete parent feedback surveys which staff will use to reflect on the program and make changes/improvements.
- Work in partnership with the school and surrounding community to best promote smooth transitions for the children.
- We strive to work with all in the school community, especially in the classrooms that we share, through open communication with all involved.
- We can enhance the children's learning by providing opportunities to explore their community through various walking trips.

**4) We take a purposeful approach to developing physical literacy and providing an abundance of opportunities for outdoor and active play. We are committed to building healthy communities.**

GOAL – Promote healthy lifestyles by helping children develop confidence in their own abilities and want to engage in active experiences.

APPROACH –

- The foundation of our program is to provide an inclusive environment where children are given the opportunity to engage in planned, as well as spontaneous activities that cover a wide variety of domains and skills.
- Skill development is delivered through fun and engaging cooperative games
- Children spend 90 minutes each day in active play.
- We promote physical play as it contributes to children's well-being through the development of physical literacy. Breaking down large combined movements or sports into smaller skills to be developed, allows children to gain confidence and be successful in active experiences.
- Children learn turn taking, communication, sharing, good sportsmanship as well as gross motor skills.

## YMCA Administrative Structure

Established in 1886, the YMCA of Cape Breton is the oldest, most diverse charity on Cape Breton Island. The YMCA is a volunteer driven, charitable organization serving all areas of Cape Breton Island. We are governed by volunteer Board of Directors. The following is our administrative structure:

**YMCA of Cape Breton**

Board of Directors

Chief Executive Officer

Senior Manager of Childcare

After School Program Coordinator  
BAP Staff Team Lead  
BAP Program Staff

Visit the YMCA of Cape Breton website for contact information: [capebreton.ymca.ca](http://capebreton.ymca.ca)

## Wait List Policy

Once your child is put on the wait list and a space becomes available, you will be contacted. Priority is placed on pre-primary children, children or siblings of children previously enrolled in a YMCA CB childcare or BAAP program, and all other school age children. If we are unable to contact you directly we will leave a message for you. If we have not heard a response from you after two days, we will move on to our next child on the list and your name will be removed from the wait list.

## Registration Procedure

When a space becomes available you will be contacted. In order to complete the registration process the following steps need to be completed.

**A child is officially registered when the following steps are completed:**

- registration form completed and submitted
- method of payment submitted
- signed parent forms and agreements submitted
  - ✓ Registration Form
  - ✓ Immunization and Medical Records Information
  - ✓ Outings and Emergency Medical Attention Form
  - ✓ Consent to Photograph or Video Tape Form
  - ✓ Parent Policy Agreement
  - ✓ Behaviour Guidance Policy
- custodial arrangements are on file where applicable

## New Family Orientation Procedure

The YMCA of Cape Breton recognizes the importance of providing children and their families with an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment. We are committed to fostering a sense of belonging. To set the foundations for healthy, cooperative relationships we have established a procedure for introducing new families to our program and ensuring families feel prepared, comfortable, and knowledgeable about the quality of care their children will receive in our BAP programs.

The purpose of this plan is to ensure a consistent, thorough, and inclusive orientation for all new families utilizing our NS BAP program.

After registering and completing required paper work, families will be given our Parent Handbook and supporting documents which outline our policies and procedures including:

- Welcome message and important contact information
- Mission statement, Inclusion statement, and Philosophy statement
- Strategies to support our philosophy which includes information on our program plan
- New family orientation policy and family communication plan
- Registration policy, Waitlist policy, Withdrawal policy, Attendance policy, and Arrival/Departure procedures
- Hours of operation, Sick days/ Storm days/ Holidays, Fees, and items children need to bring
- Policies on: Medication, Nutrition, Allergies, Health and Wellness, and Privacy and Media.
- Childhood common diseases chart and guidelines
- Duty to Report and emergency procedures
- Behaviour guidance policy

Families are given an opportunity to ask any questions and provide any information about their child that they feel would encourage/assist their child in participating in the program. Families have the ability to meet the staff of the program and are given information on classroom and playgrounds we use.

## Hours of Operation

- The hours of operation are **afternoon bell time-5:30 pm. Monday-Friday.**
- **The After School program will be open only on the days there is school.** In-service days, Storm days, Holidays, Christmas and March Break there will be no after school program available. If there is an unforeseen closure with the school there will be no After School Program. There is no charge for Holidays or in-service days, however full day fee applies for storm days and unforeseen closures.

### **Holidays**

New Year's Day

Nova Scotia Heritage Day

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Victoria Day

Canada Day

Civic Holiday

Labour Day

National Day For Truth And Reconciliation

Thanksgiving

Remembrance Day

Christmas Day

Boxing Day

If Halloween falls on a day through the week the after school program will close early for Halloween at 4:30p.m.

### **Sick Days**

A child must be well enough to participate fully in the program, including outdoor play and gym play. Parents are asked to call the program if their child will not be attending due to illness. If they are not well enough to participate in school, then they are not well enough to participate in our program. It is pertinent that parents call the program to let the staff know if the child will not be attending.

**Full Fee will apply to all sick days.**

### **Storm Days**

There will be no After School Program if school is cancelled due to a storm day. If school is cancelled in the middle of the day, there will be no after school program.

**Full Fee will apply to all storm days**

## Attendance

We ask that each child greets the staff upon arrival and says goodbye when leaving. This allows staff to sign them in and out of the attendance book and allows our staff to know who is in the building at all times which is especially important during emergency procedures and evacuations.

**It is extremely important for parents of the After School Program to call the program at the phone number provided to let the staff know that your child will not be attending for that day. It is not the child's teachers responsibility to let the after school program know. If your child leaves school due to sickness then you must also contact the YMCA to let the staff know your child will not be at the after school program.**

Staff carry attendance forms with them at all times and record the number of children in the program before each transition, to ensure all children are always accounted for.

*Please note that children who have a subsidized space are permitted 15 vacation days per year, 5 sick days and 3 absent days per month. If your child exceeds the allowable sick days you must provide a doctor's note. If you require any further information on this please speak to the director or contact the Department of Community Services.*

## Withdrawing Your Child from Care

A two week written notice is required when withdrawing from the YMCA of Cape Breton BAP. Withdrawal without notice will result in the family being billed for a two-week period. If a child is enrolled in the BAP program, it is assumed they are returning the following year unless parents give notice of withdrawal at the end of the school year or the child is no longer eligible for the program (finished Grade 5). If notice is not communicated and the child does not wish to return the following school year, the final two week notice and fee billed will begin on the first day of the school year.

## Withdrawal of Service

If a child is absent for 5 consecutive registered days and there has been no communication with the Manager of Programs in regards to the child's absence, the child will be removed from the attendance list and the parent will be billed for an additional 2 weeks of child care.

The following additional situations may be considered cause for terminating care:

- Non-payment of program fees
- Chronic late pick-up
- Parents or children who exhibit abusive behaviour towards staff, volunteers, other children and families
- Refusal by parent/guardian to meet with the YMCA staff and/or consent to the use of support services for children

## Fee Structure

Our current rates as of September 2024 are:

- \$12.75 per day for the After School Program

Payment arrangements must be made prior to your child starting.

Any child who is receiving a subsidy or third party billing must have those arrangements made prior to enrolling their child.

All accounts must be up to date by the end of each month in order to maintain your child's spot in the After School Program.

## Financial Help

You or someone you know may qualify for financial support from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.

For further information on either please contact the Manager of Childcare

## Insufficient Funds

A supplementary fee of \$20 will be charged to your account for any payment returned to us from the bank (i.e. NSF). After an NSF charge has occurred it is the parent's responsibility to provide the YMCA with cash or certified cheque to cover the account balance that was returned plus the NSF fee. If payment has not been made or the parent has not made mention of the problem to the manager on the outstanding balance within 5 business days the child will not be permitted to continue in the program until the account is paid in full.

## Late Departure Fee

If you or the person designated to pick up your child(ren) are going to be late, please notify the program staff immediately. Parents who pick up their child after 5:30 p.m. will be charged an additional fee of \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$1/minute for every minute after that your child is late. This money will be paid directly to the staff person who must stay late with the child. We ask that parents adhere to our hours of operation and recognize that our staff may also have family commitments. Parents who are consistently late may have their space terminated.

## Withholding Service

The YMCA of Cape Breton can withhold child care services for accounts that are 30 days in arrears. If necessary, all unpaid accounts will be recovered through the appropriate agencies.

The YMCA of Cape Breton can also withhold child care services to families who do not conduct themselves according to our policies.

## Medication

*From the NS Day Care Act and Regulations*

Child Care staff is authorized to dispense medication only after the necessary forms are completed and signed by the parents.

- Prescription Drugs - may be administered as ordered by the physician, and as stated on the original (readable) prescription container for the child, once a YMCA Medication Permission Form has been filled in by the parent.
- Non-prescription Drugs – may only be administered by YMCA staff if the medicine is supplied in the original container and the parent fills in and signs the YMCA Medication Permission Form to be kept on file.

- Parents must send dispenser/measuring utensils along with any medication.
- Medication of any kind is not to be left in a child's backpack! All medication needs to be given to the child's teacher. All medication and medical supplies must be properly stored in a locked cupboard or locked box in refrigerator.

## Nutrition

Children attending BAP will be provided with a nutritious afternoon snack. Our snacks adhere to Canada's Food Guide and the Nova Scotia Manual for Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings.

Staff will be responsive to the children's cues around hunger and provide snacks outside of the regular schedule when required. Staff will have an understanding of the children's food intake by observing and recognizing other factors that may influence their appetite and interest in food. Our staff will create a home like environment during meal times where the children eat in small groups and are encouraged to serve themselves in order to become more independent. Staff will eat with the children and provide social role-modeling. Our snack times are open so that the children can choose to eat when they are hungry.

## Donated or Purchased Food

In accordance with the Nova Scotia Manual for Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings, section 5.4 and 5.6:

"Child care facilities that hold a Food Establishment Permit can only purchase or receive donations of food or beverages in accordance with the Department of Agriculture Food Safety Regulations."

"Some foods may be donated to or purchased for regulated child care settings under the following circumstances:

- The food is considered to be a low risk food by the department of agriculture, including whole fruits and vegetables that have not been cut except for the purpose of harvesting and dry non-potentially hazardous baked goods (ie. Those that do not contain cream, custard, cream cheese, meat, or any other potentially hazardous food as a filling or a topping; and the food brought into the program is acceptable to the licensee.

## Allergies/Food Restrictions

We are peanut free.

If your child has an allergy to food or special dietary concerns, please inform the YMCA BAP staff when enrolling your child. Please fill out the section on your child's form as it pertains to your child's situation. Additional forms may be required. It is imperative that we are aware of allergies



and sensitivities including life threatening food allergies and other medical conditions that require special dietary considerations to be implemented.

It is important that staff and parents demonstrate openness and non-judgmental approach toward children’s dietary requirements to ensure that all children receive the nourishment they need in a supportive environment. All special dietary concerns are posted on an allergy list. This list is posted in classrooms and all staff must review this list prior to working with the children.

We are sensitive to the needs of children with allergies and food restrictions and therefore do not allow food from home in our programs. If children require the use of epi-pens on their emergency anaphylaxis plan, they are required to carry their epi pen with prescription label on it, at all times. All staff will be trained on each child’s anaphylaxis plan.

## Health and Wellness

The promotion of healthy development is fundamental to YMCA programs. We know this is important to parents and guardians, therefore, please do not bring a sick child to any of our programs. A parent or emergency contact will be called to pick the child up should a child become unwell or develop symptoms while in our care. We ask that your child be kept at home until all symptoms of the sickness disappear. We may ask for a doctor’s note before re-admitting a child to our program. Children must be well enough to participate in all of our daily routine.

It is necessary that parents develop a back- up plan for the care of their child in the event of illness. This plan should be communicated with the Centre.

Our Common Childhood Diseases Chart has been created in association with our YMCA Canada Child Care medical advisors. Should your child develop any of these symptoms/diseases, please adhere to this guidelines for returning the child to the program.

### Common Childhood Disease Chart

DISEASE	SYMPTOMS	RETURN DATE
FEVER	The degree of fever is not as important as the child’s behaviour (cranky, fussy, irritable, sleepy, lethargic) Look for a rash or other signs of illness. If the fever exceeds 39C or 102F, the child should see a doctor.	When the child can participate fully in all parts of the program.
VOMITING	Vomiting/upset stomach	24hours after vomiting has stopped and child can participate in all parts of the program.

COLDS	Stuffy or runny noses, sneezing, watery eyes. Thick greenish discharge usually indicates an infection	When the child participate in all parts of the program.
FLU	Sore throats, muscular aches, fever, chills, vomiting, and diarrhea can be involved.	When the child participate in all parts of the program.
DIARRREAL DISEASES	Abnormal loose stool	Diarrhea can be infectious. Children should be kept at home until diarrhea stops (24hours)
STREP THROAT	Red and painful throat, fever, swollen neck glands, white patches on tonsils	48 hours after antibiotics have been started
PINK EYE	Tears, redness of the eye lining, irritation, followed by swelling and puss discharge.	48 hours after antibiotics have been started
IMPETIGO	Spreading sores which can develop golden colour crusty area. Little dot like sores spread around the original sores. Can appear on the face, hands, legs and buttocks	48 hours after antibiotics have been started
CHICKENPOX	Very itchy rash starts with pink bumps. Watery discharge.	5-6 days after rash appears. When all chicken pocks are scabbed over.
PERTUSSIS (whooping cough)	Intermittent spasms of coughing: leads to choking and or vomiting causing reddening in the face.	After 5 days of treatment.
HEAD LICE	Severe itchy scalp, eggs or nits which are tiny pearly white objects that stick to the hair shafts. *check other children and family members	Day after treatment begins, and nits have been removed from hair.
MENINGITIS	Fever, headache, neck pain or stiffness, vomiting, (quick onset) Flu like symptoms	When a physician gives a clear medical report
MUMPS	Large swelling from face to neck, jaw and in front of ears. Often accompanied by cold like symptoms.	9 days after swelling begins.
GERMAN MEASELS	Fever, cold-like symptoms followed by fine red rash, swollen glands behind ear.	5 days after rash appears
RED MEASELS	Fever, cold-like symptoms followed by bright red rash, swollen glands behind ear.	5 days after rash appears
HEPATITIS	Viral infection of the intestinal tract. Causes fatigue and nausea, flu like symptoms.	One week after illness appears.

## Field Trip and Outing Procedures

The YMCA of Cape Breton believes that a strong relationship with our community is essential in delivering quality and meaningful programs to the children in our care. It is for these reasons we like to provide opportunities for children to explore the communities around them. This exploration can be achieved through community walks, small outings, and park visits.

In the event that an outing is planned, staff will communicate this plan in advance through email and remind parents through text message. Safety is a priority during outings. Attendance will be recorded prior to departure and upon arrival. The group will travel by walking with 1 staff at the front of a line and 1 staff at the end. Staff will carry emergency bags, emergency contact information, attendance forms and a program cell phone.

The group will return to the school prior to 4:30pm for regular pick-up procedures. In the event a child needs to be picked up during the outing, the guardian can call the program cell phone and the staff can confirm their location for the parent to meet them at that location.

## Staff

The YMCA of Cape Breton provides quality child care by employing qualified staff who fulfill our high expectations for program delivery. Facilitators are supported and guided by the regional coordinator and together we work as a team to ensure that the standards and services are consistent and appropriate. All YMCA of Cape Breton BAP staff have the appropriate training and/or experience. Our staff are certified by a variety of training facilities and have appropriate First Aid Training. We also strive to have our substitute teachers and program volunteers appropriately trained including an orientation to our programs, policies and procedures. All staff, substitutes and volunteers are screened through the Child Abuse Registry and have had Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks. All staff are encouraged and supported to continue their education through courses, workshops, conferences, and professional development.

## Outside Staff-Parent Relationships

The YMCA of Cape Breton asks that you respect the professional work ethics of our staff and refrain from involving your child's teacher in your family life outside of the child care program (ex. Contractual babysitting, family social events etc.) At the YMCA we feel that each and every child and family has equal importance and we seek at all times to communicate this to the children. Outside involvement can often undermine this principle in the eyes of the children and we ask for understanding on this issue.

## Arrival Procedure for the After School Program

Parents who have children in our After School Program will have to send a note at the beginning of the year to the child's teacher informing the teacher that their child/children will be going to the after school program and on which days they will be attending. Staff will communicate a meeting procedure with children and families and ensure that all children arrive to the program safely. Guardians are asked to please inform program staff if the child will be away from the program.

## Departure Time

You must inform the YMCA BAP program staff if anyone, other than yourself or those designated, will be picking up your child. We will not release your child to anyone without proper authorization. Staff and the BAAP Coordinator should know the custodial arrangements as they pertain to your family. Photo I.D. and a child release form is required when parents send an unknown person to pick up a child.

The following are the steps staff will take if a parent or guardian has not picked up their child after 5:00 pm:

1. Immediately, the teacher will try to contact the parent/guardian.
2. After 15 minutes and no response from the parent, the emergency contact will be contacted.
3. After one hour and no response from the parent or the emergency contact person, the YMCA will contact Child Welfare and the child will be taken into protective custody until a parent or guardian can be contacted.

## Under the Influence

Children will not be released from our program to accompany a parent or guardian who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In such circumstances, our staff will call the other parent/guardian, or emergency contact person, and request that he/she come to pick up the child. The police will be contacted if the child is taken from the centre despite staff concerns.

## Duty to Report

If our staff suspects that a child is being abused or neglected they will contact the local child welfare agency. Everyone has the duty to immediately report to a child welfare agency a suspicion that a child under 16 may be in need of protective services. Once a report is made, child protection staff considers the information provided to determine whether an investigation into the matter is necessary.

## Emergencies

In the case of a serious accidental injury or illness, we will make an immediate call for an ambulance, and then attempt to contact: (in order)

1. The parent(s)
2. The designated emergency contact person/back up care in event of illness
3. The child's physician

In the event of an early closure due to an emergency the staff will do everything possible to contact the parent or emergency contacts. Notifications will also be posted on our website, Facebook page and/or the local radio stations.

Please regularly update current phone numbers, address changes, special emergency numbers and contact persons for our files, custodial arrangements, schedules, and any other pertinent information. All parents or guardians must sign an **Emergency Medical Attention Form**

## Fire Procedures

Fire drills are performed and recorded twice a year. When the alarm sounds, the children will be taken out of the building in an orderly fashion to the designated meeting area. Head counts will be performed insuring everyone is safe. When it is determined that the building is safe, the children will return to their classrooms and another head count will be performed. In case of emergency you will be contacted to pick up your children and the teachers will stay with the children until they are picked up. It is very important to make sure your contact phone numbers are always current.

Records of fire drills we be kept on file.

## Privacy

At the YMCA of Cape Breton, we respect your privacy. We protect your personal information

and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. The information you provide will be used to deliver services and to keep you informed and up-to-date on the activities of the YMCA of Cape Breton, including programs, services, special events, funding needs, opportunities to volunteer or to give, open houses and more through periodic contacts. If at any time you wish to be removed from any of these contacts simply contact us by phone at 1-902-562-9622.

## Media

The YMCA receives occasional requests from the media for photographic, audio or videotape material of YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department programs and activities. When agreeing to these requests, the YMCA will attempt to notify parents, and obtain permission for specific media events, but because of the time factor, this is not always possible. We ask that you be aware that this may occur, and that you discuss with the centre's director any concerns you may have regarding your child/family and the media. A **Consent to Photograph or Video Tape Form** is enclosed with the registration package and will be kept on file.

## Custody Arrangements

Parents are asked to explain custodial arrangements when enrolling their children in the YMCA After School Program. When special circumstances apply, such as denial of access to one parent, the YMCA requests written documentation of custody and access schedules.

When parents are in the process of determining custody in the courts, we are unable to deny access to either parent, until we receive court documentation indicating the permanent arrangement.

Staff must protect themselves from being involved in marital disputes by explaining the YMCA's legal responsibilities and continuing the focus on the care and well-being of the child.

If there is a Peace Bond or an Order of Protection placed upon one party, the YMCA requests legal documentation which will be kept in the child's file.

## What Will I Need To Bring

Children should wear inexpensive, comfortable clothing so that they can participate in all aspects of the program.

Your child will need to bring a change of clothes, consisting of a shirt, pants, socks and underwear and inside shoes (Preferably non-marking sneakers as we utilize various spaces within the building). These items should be labelled with your child's name and packed daily in a back pack.

Please keep in mind the changing weather i.e. during spring / fall it is a good idea to have rain gear because the staff will take children out in most conditions. During the winter months it is especially important to have snow pants, extra hat and mittens. During the warmer months the children must have a hat, sunscreen and a water bottle in order for them to participate in our outdoor activities.

We will also ask that home toys stay at home. We can not be responsible for children's lost or stolen objects if they are brought to school. This is a screen free program. Phones, I pads, and other electronics are not be permitted to be used during the program.

## Approach to Program Planning

Our Programs promote the importance of...

- Social acceptance by developing an understanding of each other's needs, cultures, and feelings.
- Emotional health by developing a positive self-image, sense of belonging, and respect for individual differences.
- Intellectual ability by developing each person's enthusiasm for learning and testing their own abilities.
- Physical health by developing a positive attitude toward physical activity, hygiene, and confidence in ability.

Staff use children's cues and recorded observations to develop a program that reflects children's interests, abilities, and skill development. Staff are reflective in their practices and determine how their program can best support the children in their care.

## Behaviour Guidance

The staff of the YMCA of Cape Breton BAP will follow the guidelines outlined in the Behaviour Guidance Policy from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. The following policies are designed to help a child develop self-control and self-confidence so that she/he will have the ability to act appropriately in given situations.

The YMCA of Cape Breton recognizes that a well-planned program with a variety of interesting and developmentally appropriate activities helps to prevent many inappropriate behaviours.

The following Behaviour Management Techniques will be used by the staff of the YMCA of Cape Breton BAAP:

**Acceptable Alternatives** - the staff will explain why a behaviour is unacceptable and provide an alternative behaviour, ie. "When you throw sand at Johnny, it hurts his eyes. Please keep the sand in the sand box". It is done in a matter of fact way and in terms simple enough for a child to understand.

**Positive Reinforcement** - The staff will recognize when a child is displaying appropriate behaviour and reward the behaviour with praise, ie. "Kelly you helped Suzy put the blocks away, good helping".

**Positive Directions** - when speaking with the children, staff will use positive phrasing rather than the negative, ie. "Walk please" instead of "Do not run inside".

**Offer Choices** - the teacher will offer the children acceptable alternatives, ie. "Do you want to clean up the playdough or the puzzles?" instead of "You need to help clean up."

**Positive Role Modelling** - The staff will model appropriate behaviours for the children each day in all aspects of their day.

**Setting Limits** - The staff will set age appropriate limits in a positive way with occasional reminders when needed.

**Good Behaviour Management** - NEVER ridicules, insults or scares, BUT guides, respects and reinforces positive behaviour.

In the event that a child exhibits behaviours such as hitting, harming self or others, throwing objects, etc., which may impact the health and safety of the child, his/her peers or staff; interventions beyond those typically practiced in child care facilities may be implemented. To determine if alternate practices are necessary and make practices clearly defined, the child's team, including parents and/or guardians will meet and collaborate to create a Behaviour Guidance Plan. The plan will define how to support the child through difficult situations when typical behaviour strategies are not effective. All parties on the team must be given the opportunity for input and agree to the plan. The plan will be kept on the child's file until such time as it requires revision and/or the child leaves the child care facility.

**Staff Will Not:**

- Use corporal or physical punishment in any form.
- Use harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, including verbal, emotional or physical.
- Confine or isolate children.
- Deprive a child of the basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing or bedding (ie. with holding meals, snacks or desserts).



- require or force a child to repeat physical movements.
- Staff will not use food as a punishment or as a reward for behaviours.

## Forms

As part of the policies and procedures of the YMCA Child Care Department and the regulations set down by the Department of Community Services, the following forms must be completed by the parent or guardian.

- Parent Policy Information Agreement
- Registration Form
- Outings and Emergency Medical Attention
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Consent to Photograph and Video Tape

The YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department values your family's privacy; all information contained in your child's file is kept confidential.

## Family and Staff Communication Plan

Upon enrolment, families are provided with all program contact information. Please use this information to contact the appropriate staff member. This contact information includes a cell phone number specific to the school your child attends. It is the parent's responsibility to text and/or call this number to report their child away from the program for the day. Parents are encouraged to call and/or text the program cell phone number when they are picking up the child. This allows staff to provide the closest location for parents to pick up and get the children ready for pickup.

Families are encouraged to communicate with staff regularly and provide any important information about the child. Staff will share details of the child's day with parents upon pick up and communicate relevant information with families as it arises. If a longer or more sensitive conversation is needed, times throughout the day can be arranged for phone calls or meetings with families and staff.

Prior to winter break and summer break, parents will be sent out a survey in which they can fill out to provide feedback for the staff to use in the construction and implementation of the program. Any school closures and/or non instructional days will be communicated to all families through a variety of outlets including: emails, phone calls, media postings, and/or text messages.

We encourage all families to participate in our program. Please discuss with your child's staff the

various ways in which you can participate. We value our relationships with families.