

# PARENT HANDBOOK

YMCA of Cape Breton  
Early Learning Centre



Shine On

**Guysborough**

March 2025

## YMCA of Cape Breton Early Learning Child Care Center Parent Handbook

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## Welcome Families!

We warmly welcome you to the YMCA of Cape Breton Early Learning Centre. At the YMCA of Cape Breton, we believe that open communication between the staff and the families we serve is essential to our success in caring for and supporting your child's development. We operate high-quality, home-like early learning programs where your child's happiness, security, and development are top priorities.

This Parent Handbook has been designed to introduce new families to our program. It contains information on our curriculum as well as the policies and procedures of the Centre. Please read this handbook and keep it for future reference.

If you have any questions, concerns, ideas to share, or comments, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you.

## YMCA of Cape Breton

### *We Build Strong Kids, Strong Families, Strong Communities*

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.

### Our Values

The YMCA of Cape Breton is committed to practicing and demonstrating the core values of respect, honesty, responsibility, inclusiveness, and caring in all aspects of the organization.

### Our Vision

Thriving communities where everyone can shine and feel they belong.

### Our Mission

Connect and ignite the potential in people, helping them grow and give back to our communities.

### YMCA Etiquette Statement

The YMCA of Cape Breton is a shared experience for everyone. Each of us can make it a better experience for all by being considerate of others. YMCA participants, volunteers, and staff pledge to treat one another with caring, honesty, inclusiveness, respect, and responsibility.

## YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department Mission Statement

The mission of the YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department is to provide support to families and to promote the development of *the whole child* by providing a carefully planned, age-appropriate, stimulating, and child-centered play environment.

Our goal is to promote the importance of

- Social acceptance by developing an understanding of other's needs and feelings.
- Emotional health by developing positive self-image, self-regulation skills, 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 and hygiene.

The YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department uses the "YMCA Playing to Learn" curriculum which addresses the training and continuing education of early childhood educators employed by the YMCA and delivers on our promise to continuously improve the quality of programs and services provided to children.

## Inclusion Statement

The YMCA of Cape Breton Early Learning Centre, in keeping with our mission and vision, believes in the development of healthy, confident children. We're committed to treating all 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 a quality program that is safe, warm, loving, challenging, and stimulating. Our program is open to all children regardless of their abilities.

Central to our work at the YMCA is diversity 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. We view every child as a unique individual that will add value to our program.
- Parents and families are involved, consulted, and informed partners with YMCA staff and volunteers.
- YMCA staff and volunteers will strive to ensure the environment and programs are adapted to meet the needs of all children.
- YMCA staff and volunteers will seek out community partners to enhance our ability to support children with diverse needs through training, extra supports, and consultation.

## Philosophy Statement

The YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department believes in a Family-Centered Approach. We believe that each child is unique, capable, confident, curious, and deserving of a quality program in a learning environment that is safe, warm, challenging, and stimulating.

Our Centre believes that child development and early childhood experiences set the foundation for lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles. Our program promotes the growth and development of the whole child; physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. We believe that the YMCA Playing To Learn Curriculum is the best approach to ensure a child's continued enthusiasm and capacity for life-long learning. This curriculum provides an understanding of how play provides the foundation for learning, emphasizing that children learn through natural play and that play provides adults with insight into how best to support a child's development.

At the YMCA of Cape Breton, we believe that partnerships are an integral part of our program. Through relationships with families and communities, we are able to strengthen our ability to meet the needs of young children. Our job is to support families by providing a safe, nurturing and consistent environment for their children. Through a team approach, we can ensure that each child has the best opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential.

## Strategies to Support Our Philosophy

The YMCA of Cape Breton's 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, confident, curious, 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 entire day. All arrival and departure times are accurately documented and there is written verification after all transitions.

- Developing Individualized plans for children requiring additional support in our programs, allowing us to ensure that ALL children are able to participate.

**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, capable of complex thinking, and rich in potential, therefore the staff act as co-learners and play partners to deliver a program that builds on strengths and abilities through an 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 (when developmentally appropriate).
- Activities and interactions 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 and scaffold 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, developmental profiles, 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 surrounding community.
- We can enhance the children's learning by providing opportunities to explore their community through various walking trips and/or special guests.

## 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 a volunteer Board of Directors. The following is our administrative structure:

### **YMCA of Cape Breton**

Board of Directors

Chief Executive Officer

Senior Manager of Childcare

Director of Child Care Centre

Early Childhood Educators

In the event of the Director's absence, a senior staff member will become the site designate.

Please visit our website [capebreton.ymca.ca](http://capebreton.ymca.ca) to learn more about the team.

## Wait List Policy

Once your child is registered on the wait list and a space becomes available, you will be contacted. If we are unable to contact you directly, we will leave a message and wait two days before we move on to the next person on the list. Priority is given to siblings of children currently enrolled in our childcare centre. When a space becomes available in our program, if there are no siblings on our waitlist, the space will be offered to the child from that age category that was put on our waitlist at the earliest date.

## Registration Procedure for Early Learning Center

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 6 steps are completed:**

- Registration form completed and submitted
- Method of payment submitted
- Signed parent forms and agreements submitted
  - ✓ Registration Form
  - ✓ Immunization and Medical Records
  - ✓ Outings and Emergency Medical Attention Form
  - ✓ Consent to Photograph or Video Tape Form
  - ✓ Parent Policy Agreement
  - ✓ Behaviour Guidance Form
  - ✓ Infant feeding forms (if applicable)
  - ✓ Custodial arrangements are on file (if applicable)
  - ✓ Individual Support Plan (if applicable)

## Hours of Operation

Our Centre is open year-round from 8am – 5:30pm. We are closed on all statutory holidays.

### Holidays

New Year's Day

Thanksgiving

Good Friday

Remembrance Day

Easter Monday

Christmas Day

Victoria Day

Boxing Day

Canada Day	Christmas Eve (½ day closed at 12:30 p.m.)
Civic Holiday	New Year's Eve (½ day closed at 12:30 p.m.)
Labour Day	National Day For Truth And Reconciliation

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the Centre will be closed on the Monday immediately following the holiday.

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

**Full Fee will apply to all holidays.**

## Sick Days

A child must be well enough to participate fully in the Centre's daily program, including outdoor play. Parents are responsible to call the Centre if their child will not be attending due to illness. It is pertinent that parents call the Centre to let the staff know when the child will not be attending.

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

## Storm Days

The decision to close the Centre is a consultative process involving a number of individuals and factors including: weather, road conditions, weather forecasts, and above all the safety of the children. Weather conditions can be different in various areas and can change greatly within a few hours. This increases the difficulty in making the best decision for the children. The decision to close the Centre is rarely favourable by all, however, such a decision will always be made with the safety of the children in mind. To ensure the health and safety of the children within our care, we ask that when families are phoned and made aware of a situation (weather, power outage, fire, flood, etc.), it is important to make the appropriate arrangements to retrieve your child(ren) in a timely manner.

In the event that the Centre will need to close due to weather conditions, an announcement will be made through our Weemarkable APP to all families. You may also check our website [capebreton.ymca.ca](http://capebreton.ymca.ca), our **Facebook Page for the YMCA of Cape Breton**, or call us to check on cancellation status. We do not necessarily cancel our program when the public school system is closed and may remain open during school storm days; however, we may be operating on limited staffing. If you decide to keep your child home during storm days please call and notify the Centre.

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

## Weather Statement

The YMCA believes that outdoor play opportunities are essential to high-quality childcare programs. It is for this reason that we utilize outdoor play spaces in a variety of weather conditions and in all four seasons. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that children come to the Centre prepared to spend significant time in the outdoor environment. We encourage families to monitor their children's extra clothes and ensure they are relevant to the current outdoor weather conditions.

In the event of extreme weather, children will have the opportunity for active play indoors.

## Vacation Days

Please notify us if your child will not be attending on their scheduled days due to vacation or alternate plans. If vacations are known in advance, please communicate with staff as soon as you are able to, as this information assists us in our scheduling needs.

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

## Attendance

To ensure the constant safety of your children, all parents must accompany their children to their classrooms upon arrival. Parents are not to leave children alone in foyers, hallways, or classrooms. Please inform anyone involved in transporting your child of these procedures. We ask that each child/family greets the teacher upon arrival and says goodbye when leaving. This allows staff to sign them in and out of the attendance book. The attendance book also allows our staff to know who is in the building at all times, which is especially important during emergency procedures and evacuations.

*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 Early Learning Centre. Withdrawal without notice will result in the family being billed for a two-week period as we work to fill the available space in our program. Please inform us as soon as possible, of your intent to withdraw your child. This helps us in our ability to inform families of upcoming vacant spots in our program.

## Withdrawal of Service

If a child is absent for 5 consecutive days and there has been no communication with the director 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 January 2024 are:

\$34 per day Toddler/Preschool Room

\$45 per day Infant Room

\*Please note that these rates are not reflective of the Province of Nova Scotia's parent fee reduction.

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.

We will no longer be providing a yearly childcare tax receipt. Please save all childcare payment receipts for your income tax purposes.

Payment receipts are automatically emailed from Active Net on the date of payment and can be printed by the front desk for in-house payments, or printed/saved during online registration for day camps.

**All accounts must be up to date by the end of each month in order to maintain your child's spot in the Early Learning Centre.**

## Financial Help

You or someone you know may qualify for financial support from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. We accept all approved Subsidy funding and can help you with the application process if needed.

## 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 director 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 Centre immediately. Parents who pick up their child after 5:30 p.m. will be charged an additional fee of \$10.00 for 5 minutes your child is late which will be invoiced to you. We ask that parents adhere to our hours of operation and recognize that our staff also has 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.

Prescription Medication- 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 or cubby. All medication should 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 the full time Early Learning Centre will be provided with a nutritious lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. Our menus are posted on the information board, and adhere to Canada's Food Guide and the Nova Scotia Manual for Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings. During the summer, the Centre may have picnic days where sandwiches, salads, etc., will be provided so groups can go on outdoor picnics.

Our Child Care Department staff will be responsive to the children's cues around hunger and provide snacks and the children's meals 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. In keeping with our Playing To Learn Curriculum, 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. Our 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, sections 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 Sensitivities/Special Considerations

We are a peanut-free facility.

If your child has an allergy to food or any special dietary concerns, please inform the YMCA Child Care staff when enrolling your child. Please fill out the section on your child's form as it pertains to your child's situation. Additional completed forms may be required. There are a variety of reasons for this, including life threatening food allergies and other medical conditions may require special considerations to be implemented.

It is important that staff, the cook, and parents demonstrate openness and a 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, which is posted in the kitchen and in the classroom.

We are sensitive to the needs of children with allergies and food restrictions, therefore, do not allow food from home in our Centre.

A child requires an individual emergency plan if they have a life threatening allergy or condition. This plan must be created collaboratively with parents/guardians and the childcare director with the advice of the child's doctor. All staff will be trained on this plan prior to working in the Centre.

If a child requires the administration of a puffer or epinephrine, as stated on their emergency plan, the families must provide this medication to be kept at the Centre. This medication must be kept in packaging with original prescription label and cannot be expired. Staff must have this medication readily available at all times.

## Adapting the Menu for Infants

Upon enrollment, Infant Feeding Plans are created for children between the ages of 6 months and 17 months, at the request of the parents/guardians or when there is a provision of food from home.

Infant feeding Plans (when created are used for the ongoing communication between the infant's parent/guardian and the care provider or the staff, including the cook. The Infant Feeding Plan is used to record and communicate the infant's progress during the transition to solid foods and indicates, when requested by the parent, how menu items are prepared to accommodate the infant's developmental stage.

The Infant Feeding Plan will allow for a contingency plan on the chance that milk supply may run out or spoil. Parents are asked to ensure that the Infant Feeding Plan is updated regularly to provide the proper information for if this situation arises.

Unless otherwise identified on the Infant Feeding Plan, children who are six months of age or older will receive daily meals and snacks that are based on the menu. (Parents may bring food from home during their child's transition to solid food; however this is not required and must be

identified on an Infant Feeding Plan. Staff will allow infants to explore their food, feed themselves, and respond to hunger and fullness cues. All food for infants will be pureed or diced small to prevent choking.

Bottles and food from home need to have a label with the child's name, date it was prepared, date it was received, the ingredients, and storage instructions. If your child is eating bottled baby food, the parents are responsible to supply this for the Centre. **If formula is being used, bottles must be prepared at home and brought to the Centre.**

The YMCA will not introduce new foods to infants. Parents can add to the Infant Feeding Plan when new foods are introduced at home and the YMCA will then begin incorporating these foods into the infant's diet. Parents are encouraged to view the menu regularly and let staff know what foods the child has been introduced to.

## Breastfeeding

The YMCA of Cape Breton is a shared experience for everyone. Each of us can make it better for all by being considerate of others. YMCA participants, volunteers, and staff all pledge to treat one another with caring, honesty, inclusiveness, respect, and responsibility. In keeping with these values the YMCA of Cape Breton is a breastfeeding friendly organization.

Breastfeeding has long been recognized as a normal and safe way to feed infants and toddlers and is the first step in a lifetime of healthy eating.

In addition to the Provincial Breastfeeding Policy, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has a breastfeeding policy that affirms a woman's right to breastfeed in public. The policy states that women cannot be told or made to feel compelled to move to a more discrete area to breastfeed.

When requested, a YMCA Child Care Centre will work with families to develop an Infant Feeding Plan to address storage and feeding of breast milk. This may also include a plan to follow when the supply runs out and a 'transition' plan to other milks if/when necessary. The Infant Feeding Plan is available for review and information regarding the proper storage of breast milk can be found in the Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control.

## Individualized Support Plan/Routine Based Plan Policy

The YMCA of Nova Scotia will ensure that an updated Individualized Support Plan (ISP)/Routine Based Plan (RBP) is in place for each child with enhanced needs that requires additional classroom support. We ensure that our programs are structured so that they accommodate the Individualized Support Plan/Routine Based Plan of each child. This demonstrates our commitment to providing a program that is inclusive of all children.

### Procedure

1. A child with enhanced needs is a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional and/or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development are of such a nature that additional supports are required for the child.
2. If an enhanced need is identified during the course of enrollment or during the child's tenure with the Centre, the parent/guardian will be informed about the Individualized Support Plan (ISP)/ Routine Based Plan (RBP) policy of the Centre.
3. With the parent/guardian's verbal agreement, the ISP/RBP process will be initiated.
4. In preparation for the development Meeting, the designated staff and Supervisor and/or Program Director will review available records, program observations, and/or documentation to identify the child's strengths and needs. This information will be shared with the development team at the meeting.
5. A meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian. An invitation to attend the meeting (with parental consent) will be provided to any person who works with the child in a capacity that would allow the person to help inform the plan.
6. The parent/guardian, in conjunction with staff, will complete the initial ISP/RBP form.
7. The plan will include:
  - A) A description of how the Centre will support the child to function and participate in a meaningful and purposeful manner.
  - B) A description of any support, aids, adaptations, or other modifications to the physical, social, and learning environment that are necessary to achieve the clause.
  - C) Instructions relating to the child's use of the supports or aids referred to in clause
8. The plan will be signed by the parent/guardian of the child to indicate their participation in the plan.
9. The strategies identified in the plan will be implemented into the room programming.
10. The plan will be reviewed at one (1) month and six (6) months from the date of the ISP/RBP creation for every child that is 0 – 3.8 years in age. These plans will be renewed annually thereafter.

## Health and Wellness

The promotion of healthy development is fundamental to the YMCA. We know this is important to parents, therefore, **please do not bring a sick child to the child care program.** A parent or emergency contact will be called to pick the child up should a child become unwell or develop symptoms while in program. 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 these guidelines when returning your child to our care. *See chart below.*

### 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 is well enough to 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 can participate in all parts of the program.
FLU	Sore throats, muscular aches, fever, chills, vomiting, and diarrhea can be involved.	When the child can 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	24 hours after antibiotics have started
PINK EYE	Tears, redness of the eye lining, irritation, followed by swelling and puss discharge.	24 hours after antibiotics have 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	24 hours after antibiotics have started
CHICKENPOX	Very itchy rash starts with pink bumps. Watery discharge.	5-6 days after rash appears. When chickenpox have 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 all 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.

## Staff

The YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department provides quality child care by employing qualified **Early Childhood Educators** who fulfill our high expectations for program delivery. Early childhood educators are supported and guided by the Director and together we work as a team to ensure that the standards and services are consistent and appropriate. All YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department staff have the appropriate training and/or experience. Our staff are certified by a variety of Early Childhood Education training facilities and have 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, students and volunteers complete mandatory child safeguarding training annually. All staff are encouraged and supported in continuing their education through courses, workshops, conferences, and various forms of continuous professional development.

## Practicum Students and Volunteers

The YMCA recognizes the value of inviting students into our program. They arrive with knowledge of childhood development and the ability to enhance our program through the provision of new activities and opportunities for children to participate in. The YMCA is committed to advocating for early learning and believe it is essential to take every opportunity to influence and mentor new professionals to the child care field. All students have the required paper work in order for them to come into the centre.

When a student starts their placement, they will be assigned to work with a particular staff and/or in a particular room. They will be under the direct supervision of a staff member at all times. The student is never left alone with children and never counted in adult to child ratios.

## Arrival

To ensure the constant safety of your children, all parents must accompany their children to their classrooms upon arrival. We ask that each child greets the teacher upon arrival. Parents are

asked to call by **9:00 a.m.** to let Centre staff know if their child will be arriving late or will be absent.

Please discuss special circumstances where the child will be late with the Director. Special circumstances are defined as appointments and not an everyday occurrence.

## Departure

You must inform child care staff if anyone other than those listed on registration forms will be picking up your child. Only the people listed on the registration form (other than the child's parents or guardians) will be allowed to pick the child up from the centre. If someone other than those listed are to pick up your child, parents must notify the centre of any changes. Staff will request identification from individuals who come to pick up the children and a child release form will be filled out. We ask that families and children ensure that staff acknowledge their departure before leaving.

If you are late (**after 5:30 p.m.**) picking up your child, a late fee will be charged for all time outside of program hours. The late fee will be invoiced to your account. The following are the steps staff will take if a parent or guardian has not picked up their child after 5:30 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 even 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 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**

In the event of a closure due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e. flood, pandemic, structural issues, ect), the YMCA will follow any directives given by government officials and make plans accordingly.

## Fire Procedures

Fire drills are performed and recorded on a monthly basis. 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.

Fire Drills will be conducted on a monthly basis. All records of Fire drills are kept on file.

## Safety & Security

In order to enter the centre, each family will have a security code. No one will be able to access the classrooms without a security code unless they are let in by a staff member. All visitors to the Centre are required to show ID and sign in to the Centre's visitor log book.

## 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.

## Parent Involvement

Parents are responsible for monitoring the **Parent Information Boards** in the foyer of your child's classroom. You will find menus, daily schedules, planning sheets detailing program activities, and the YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department policies and procedures.

**Parent Meetings** are held two times a year for the purpose of discussing policies and procedures, having guest speakers and reviewing children's progress. Notices for when the meeting will take place are sent to parents two weeks prior to the meeting and notices are also posted in our main entrances.

### **Child Care Department Parent Committee**

The purpose of this committee is to provide a forum in which parents provide input and receive notice of any matters of interest or concern to the parents. The meetings are held at least 2 times a year. All parents are welcome to attend these meetings and can add items to the agenda.

It is also important to view the **documentation** that is located in your child's classroom. The staff prepares photos of the children as a communication tool for the parents. These documentations allow the parents to see their child's play throughout the day and the documentation explains their play and supports the learning experience that is taking place.

Families are encouraged to actively participate in the program. To find out the various ways that you can participate, please speak with the centre director. We value our relationships with the families in our programs.

## **Family Communication Plan**

The YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Department believes that **parent-teacher communication** is important for the creation of a healthy child care environment. We actively encourage our families to take advantage of our open door policy. We understand that your time is valuable and that pick up and drop off times may not always be the best time for discussions to take place.

Below we have a number of options for parents and staff to communicate with one another.

- **Daily Journals/Records** – Each child in the center has a Weemarkable account. Staff record observations daily to let families know how the child's day was and any important information. There is space for parents to write in as well if they choose to communicate with the staff anything they wish to share.
- **Phone** – This is our preferred method of contact when we are not able to meet face to face for a discussion. Parents are encouraged to phone the child care center at any time. Phone calls give the opportunity for parents and staff to communicate and discuss a variety of topics. Someone may not always be in the office, but if a message is left it will be recorded in our log book and someone will get back to you as quickly as possible.
- **Email** – Another great form of communication is email. Emails can be sent individually or as a group. The email is checked multiple times a day and documents can be easily shared and received. Please ensure that your email is correct and up to date so that you do not miss out on important information.
- **Parent Meetings** – These are held twice a year at the YMCA. We love to see parents come to these meetings as they provide an opportunity for parent and staff communication, an opportunity for parents to see where the children are in their learning, view the program plan, view documentations and discuss your child's progress report. Light snacks and refreshments are served.

- **Program Plans** – Each classroom does a weekly program sheet with activities that pertain to your child’s interest. Parents are encouraged to come into the classroom and view this living document at any time to see what your child is doing and discuss activities with staff.
- **Progress Reports**- Progress reports are done twice a year. These reports give you an overview of where your child is developmentally and also let you know what skills we are working on with your child. Meetings can be set up to discuss your child’s progress with your child’s teacher.
- **Meetings** – There are times when parents and caregivers may need to arrange a meeting to speak regarding a variety of topics. We encourage parents to phone the daycare to arrange a meeting at a time that works best for all parties involved.
- **Urgent Matters**- If something arises that needs urgent attention, the best way to reach us is by phone. We can discuss the matter over the phone or arrange a meeting to discuss the matter in person.
- **Surveys**-Parents will also be given the opportunity to participate in feedback surveys twice per calendar year. These surveys help inform our program and how we deliver it to best suit the needs of our families.

Should concerns be identified or issues arise, parents are responsible to bring their concerns to the attention of the staff in the Centre. Parents are discouraged from addressing concerns or issues directly to the facility (i.e school board, principal).

If parents are not satisfied with the response of the program staff to their identified concerns/issues, they are to bring their concerns to the Designate, Supervisor, and/or Centre Director. All concerns will be taken seriously. A meeting will be arranged to identify appropriate actions to take place in an effort to quickly rectify the concern and/or issue. All Centre policies and procedures will be used to determine the best course of action for reconciliation.

## Parent Bulletin Board

This bulletin board contains pertinent information about our centre. It is important that you read this information and become familiar with its contents. The following items are also available to you for your viewing. They are located in a binder in the foyer of the Early Learning Centre.

- Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations (also found online at <http://novascotia.ca/coms/families/index.html>)
- Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection – Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Programs (also found online at [http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/documents/Guidelines\\_for\\_Communicable\\_Disease\\_Prevention.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/documents/Guidelines_for_Communicable_Disease_Prevention.pdf))
- Parent Handbook
- Behaviour Guidance Policy

- Parent Committee Minutes
- Parent newsletters
- Enrollment and Attendance Criteria
- License for Facility
- A copy of the report of the most recent inspection of the facility
- Current Menu
- Notification of funding provided by the Minister
- Staff / Child Ratios
- Staff Qualifications (located in each classroom)
- Fire Procedures (located in each classroom)
- Funding provided by the Minister of Community Services

We also encourage you to view the bulletin boards that are located in each classroom as they are there to help you see how your child is learning through play. They include the daily routine, program plans, and program documentations.

## 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 work to undermine this principle in the eyes of the children and we ask for understanding on this issue.

## Custody Arrangements

Parents are asked to explain custodial arrangements when enrolling their children in the YMCA Early Learning Center and 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.

## YMCA Statement on Play- Our Playing to Learn Curriculum

Each child can reach their full potential through play. Our intention is to provide the best possible environment that allows the best possible play for all children in our care. We are dedicated to meet the play needs of all children and must do whatever possible to support the natural play.

Play helps the child make learning meaningful. It ensures involvement, focus, enjoyment, and various forms of success. Play can be powerful or profound, but it is always purposeful. Play propels learning and development, which are interrelated. All domains of development are supported and play has the additional benefit of being self-initiated and therefore enjoyable. Play allows for discovery, innovation, and building connections. Play provides a way for children to be healthy in body, mind and spirit.

Play fosters **skill** development. It offers opportunities for gaining new skills as well as refining existing ones.

Play is directly linked to **cognitive** development and future academic success.

Play is **physical** and increases activity levels, fitness, balance, gross motor skills, and fine motor actions.

Play is **social** and promotes **language** development. Self-concepts and emotions are better understood through play. Important **self-regulatory** skills are reinforced through play.

Play builds **resilience** and can help children **manage stress**.

## Approach to Program Planning - Playing To Learn Curriculum

Our Programs promote the importance of...

- Social acceptance by developing an understanding of each other's needs and feelings.
- Emotional health by developing a positive self-image, self regulation skills, 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 and hygiene.

Taking the knowledge of child development, knowledge of how children learn, and a well-grounded understanding of children's play, Early Childhood Educators can construct a living curriculum that truly reflects the interests and needs of the children in their care, based on the following...

- Curriculum is Interactive – Curriculum is not pre-packaged documents or a series of activities planned months in advance. It is an on-going series of decisions made by the early educator in response to expressed interest.
- Curriculum is created around both implicit and explicit goals – The living curriculum will emerge out of day-to-day events in the classroom. However, early educators must be aware of the goals and outcomes they should use when deciding what to provide and how to support learning.
- Curriculum experiences represent occasions for “having wonderful ideas” – Free from the restrictions of set activities, the early educator and the children are free to explore exciting occasions for discovery. Whether these become significant moments of learning depends upon the educator's knowledge and skill. This requires professionals who are flexible, imaginative and well organized.

Educators use recorded observations of the children engaged in play to inform the development of program plans that are meaningful to the children and reflective to the interests, skills, and development of the children in the program. All activities are inclusive and provided for ALL children to participate in.

## Rest / Nap / Quiet Activities

Rest periods are important to the healthy development of all children. Centre rest period lasts from ½ hour to 2 hours depending on the children's age and developmental needs. Staff will make a needs assessment based on the physical activity level and the emotional development of the child, to determine the length of his/her rest time. Your child will need a blanket for nap time and a small pillow if preferred.

The children are not required to sleep but are given the opportunity for some quiet time in their day. Parents can discuss their child's rest needs with the Director and/or the child's educator. The rest / nap period is meant as a rejuvenation time to prevent fatigue and the development of illness.

## 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 few changes of clothes, consisting of a shirt, pants, socks and underwear and **inside shoes** to be left at the centre. Preferably non-marking sneakers as we utilize various spaces within the building. Clearly label all items with your child's name.

For the children who are in diapers please supply enough for the day (as well as wipes) or you can bring them in bulk. Staff will leave a note on your cubby when the supply is getting low. Be sure to restock items as quickly as possible to ensure that your child has ample supplies on hand.

Please keep in mind the changing weather i.e. during spring / fall it is a good idea to have rain gear because staff utilize our outdoor environments in most weather conditions. During the winter months it is especially important to have snow pants, extra hat and mittens (they may get wet during the morning and not dry in time for afternoon play). During the summer 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 cannot be responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen toys. This is particularly important as well because it may be too difficult for the younger children to share their toys or keep them in their cubbies.

Your child's possessions will be stored in their cubby or back packs. Please check on a daily basis and take home notices, artwork, soiled clothing, etc.

## Your Child's First Day/Family Orientation

Our goal is for your child to have a comfortable transition to child care. This can be achieved through the following:

- Both you and your child should visit the centre prior to the first day.
- For the first week parents should make arrangements for their child's day to be shorter. Each day the child's day should be gradually increased with the goal of the child attending for the full day at the end of the week.
- Parents should speak to the director and teachers so that they know how to best help you and your child transition.
- Parents should be prepared to stay a little longer on those first few days.

When a child is registered in the program, families will be given our parent handbook, forms to fill out, and centre information. Families are invited to contact the Centre at any time if they have questions and/or concerns.

Parents are encouraged to arrange a convenient time to meet/call staff to discuss their child's needs prior to their first day/visit. This allows staff to implement a variety of strategies in an effort to make the child's transition into child care a positive experience.

## Behaviour Guidance

The staff of the YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Centre 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 respond appropriately in various situations.

The YMCA of Cape Breton Child Care Centre recognizes that a well-planned program with a variety of interesting and developmentally appropriate activities helps to prevent many inappropriate behaviours. Through our Playing To Learn Program Curriculum our experienced Early Childhood Educators help the children in our care develop and grow by using play as a way to teach appropriate behaviours.

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

**Acceptable Alternatives** - the teacher 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 teacher 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 “Do you want to clean up?” which will invite a “No” response from the child.

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

**Setting Limits** - The teacher 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/what alternate practices are necessary, the child’s team, including parents and or guardians will meet and collaborate to create an Individualized Support 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. If the licensee chooses to add this practice to their existing behavior guidance policy, it must be submitted to the early Childhood Development Consultant for consideration and approval. 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 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.

## Our Commitment to Child Safeguarding

Our goal is for YMCAs to be safe places for children and young people in our communities.

Since 2012, YMCAs in Canada have collectively committed to the safety and protection of all children and young people participating in all aspects of our programs. The National Child Safety and Protection Initiative is the YMCA's coordinated effort to improve safety standards in our programs through ongoing policy, training, supervision requirements, reporting protocols, and facility controls. At the YMCA, safeguarding children and young people is our highest priority. We want children and young people to feel safe and be safe at the YMCA, in their families, and in their communities.

If you have concerns about a child, please contact your local child protection agency. All of our staff, volunteers, and students have an obligation to immediately report any suspicion of child abuse. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, please call 1-877-424-1177.

For more information about child safeguarding practices at the YMCA of Cape Breton, please contact our Child Safeguarding Lead, Nicole MacDonald at [nicole.macdonald@cb.ymca.ca](mailto:nicole.macdonald@cb.ymca.ca) or 902-270-3359



Shine On