



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA OF GREATER ERIE

Early Care & School-Age

Enrichment Program

PARENT HANDBOOK



www.ymcaerie.org or find us on facebook –
YMCAofGreaterErie

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WHO WE ARE

At the Y, we are committed to nurturing the potential of every child and teen, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

The Y provides services to all families without regard to race, religion, or national origin. Financial assistance is available.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

We welcome, value, celebrate and respect individuals of all races, ethnicity, gender identity, disability and religion. We are committed to treating all persons with dignity and respect in an honest, open, fair and friendly manner. We are committed to the highest standards of civility and decency toward all. We are committed to promoting and supporting a learning community where all people can learn and work together in safe and secure atmosphere free of fear, bias, discrimination and other negative treatment.

OUR MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

OUR FOCUS

Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility

OUR CAUSE

At the Y, strengthening community is our cause.



CHILDREN are like sponges – they watch and absorb knowledge, skills, and values from everyone and everything around them. At the Y, we believe the values and skills learned early on are the building blocks for quality life and future success.

Babies develop trust and security, preschoolers experience early literacy, and learn about their world, and school-age kids make friends, learn new skills and do homework.

YMCA character values – caring, honesty, respect and responsibility help kids – even our youngest- discover who they are and what they can achieve.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Children will benefit from experiences that encourage:

- Self-esteem & positive self-image: Provide experiences that enhance each child's sense of identity, independence and support his/her group identification
- Social interaction: Provide opportunities for each child to interact with both peers and adults. Develop a sense of responsibility and respect for self and others
- Self-expression and communication skills: Provide activities that enhance and develop language skills. Learn to give as well as receive affection
- Creative expression: Provide opportunities for each child to be original
- Large and small muscle development: Provide opportunities for each child to participate in activities to enhance muscle development
- Intellectual growth: Provide opportunities and resources for each child to develop cognitive skills for more effective communication and interaction
- To support children and their families in being successful in our environment, the classroom teacher will research commonly expected interactions and practices that are dominant from the child's culture. In addition, the YMCA will contact an outside agency with any specific questions or support for a translator.
- Consistency for Children: Each year when a child enrolls in our program we will place the child with the same teacher, if possible. We try to retain our staff and center directors every year as well. When a teacher is absent from our centers, we replace them by substitutes. These substitutes will remain constant. By doing so, we are supporting the relationships between your child and the teachers.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The YMCA of Greater Erie is an inclusive organization open to all. We welcome all people regardless of ability, age, background, ethnicity/race, faith, gender, self-reported gender identity and/or expression or sexual orientation. We understand that creating a diverse and accepting community also means working to educate ourselves and one another, without bias, and apply critical analysis to our curriculum and materials. Together we will learn and work to use inclusive language, challenge discrimination and stereotypes and advocate for positive change. Our goal is to create a community of learners who feel safe to express themselves, explore the world around them and grow.

PENNSYLVANIA KEYSTONE STARS AND PRE-K COUNTS

KEYSTONE STARS

Y programs are licensed by the Department of Human Services and meet YMCA of the USA Quality Check Standards. Like a hotel rating system, Y programs are accredited by the Pennsylvania Keystone Stars program. That's important to you as a parent because you can be sure your kids are thriving in the highest quality learning environment with qualified, certified teachers who annually seek continuing education and certifications in CPR/First Aid, Water Safety, Fire Safety & Child Development.



All Y programs participate in Keystone STARS. Each stars designation has its own research-based performance standards. These standards support areas of safety and education.

What you can expect from the quality rating is:

- Professional development and training for our teachers; half to two-thirds of the staff have completed or are enrolled in credentials or degrees
- Literacy activities including reading, story-telling and encouraging written and verbal communication
- Parent and community resources are used effectively in the quality delivery of the program
- Business, organizational and staff compensation practices are maximized
- A review of the program center by a nationally recognized environment rating scale that indicates a high quality score

PRE-K COUNTS

The Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program makes quality pre-kindergarten programs available to Pennsylvania residents at no cost to qualifying families. It is funded through a grant from the State of Pennsylvania. Full day program instructional time is 5 hours and part-day instructional time is 2.5 hours. The Y offers a number of Pre-K Counts classrooms throughout Erie County.



A Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts application must be filled out completely and submitted for consideration.

PRE-K COUNTS ATTENDANCE POLICY

Pre-K Counts classrooms observe a traditional school district calendar in which the program center is located and runs Monday-Friday. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning require regular attendance in Pre-K Counts classrooms. Accepted excuses include: quarantine, personal illness, religious reasons, death in the immediate family, natural disaster/severe weather, educational trips (approval required by teacher) and reasons agreed upon by classroom teacher. Excessive absences may result in an immediate loss of funding and removal from the classroom.

INFANT/TODDLER CONTRACTED SLOTS (ITCS)

The Infant/Toddler Contracted Slots program makes quality care affordable to Pennsylvania Child Care Works (CCW) subsidized families. This high-quality program provides for a smooth transition from infant/toddler classrooms to Pre-K Counts classrooms. There is no fee for qualified families while enrolled in ITCS. Spots are limited so please speak to your Childcare Director.

INFANT/TODDLER CONTRACTED SLOTS ATTENDANCE POLICY

All families are encouraged to maintain regular attendance in the Infant Toddler Contracted Slots. Staff will support families in identifying barriers to regular attendance and will initiate supports as appropriate. The program keeps track of absenteeism in order to ensure maximum benefits to children. If the monthly average daily attendance rate falls, the program will analyze the causes of absenteeism. The analysis will include a study of the pattern of absences for each child, including the reasons for absences as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days.

LET'S GET STARTED

EASING FIRST DAY JITTERS

We encourage parents to schedule an appointment with your Program's Director and/or classroom teacher prior to their first day so that you and your child can ease those first day jitters, have any last minute questions answered and ensure that all of your paperwork is complete for a smooth start.

FOR ALL – SPECIAL NEEDS PLAN

We welcome children with all abilities and in order to provide the best experience for children and families, we require a one-on-one appointment prior to their first day. No child will be discriminated against no matter the gender, age, race, disability, or ethnicity. It is essential that we have all pertinent information about the child's needs from the outset of enrollment. If services have been received from an outside agency such as Sarah Reed, Achievement Center, Barber National Institute or the IU5, or local school, please notify us. Our enrollment process includes:

- Observation of the child in a classroom setting
- Assessment of the staff's ability to handle various special needs and consider whether additional training, the cost of which is not unreasonable, would assist the staff in confidently handling needs and behavior circumstances.
- Observation of the child's adaption to the group of children
- Discussion of child needs with staff person
- Trial enrollment – not to exceed two weeks
- Discussion with family of possible and necessary accommodations that are reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the group atmosphere of the program
- Notification to the family if the Y is not able to accommodate the child's needs because of unreasonable modifications or somehow alters the group's dynamic in the program. If a proposed accommodation is prohibitively costly or would fundamentally alter the nature of the group, the Y may propose an additional cost or propose the presence of a teaching aide at the family's expense at which point the child may enroll for a trial period to determine whether the child will thrive in the classroom environment

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLANS

We acknowledge and work with families that have children with an IEP. The following steps are taken to ensure that the child's needs are being met:

- Families that turn in an IEP will meet with the director and teacher before the child's first day
- The classroom teacher will do informal observation and individualize for the child on the lesson plan
- The teacher will meet with everyone included in the child's IEP team, as stated on the IEP
- Updated goals will be made for the child based on new IEP goals and the child's assessment
- This process is ongoing as the child continues with their IEP plan

REDUCTION OF SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION PLAN

Align With Federal Policies

Individuals with Disabilities Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, and the Civil Rights Act are all federal and state laws that we embrace and comply with. Any family, at any time can enroll their children at a YMCA of Greater Erie facility that best suits their family's needs. We have an open door policy. Enrollment or continued enrollment is based on the interests and needs of the family. The following are layers of quality that are in place to ensure suspension and expulsion are reduced to only rare instances that occur due to factors outside of the YMCA of Greater Erie's control.

DON'T FORGET!

1. Completed application form
2. Fee services agreement
3. Child's immunization record
4. Child's health assessment (physical form signed by doctor)
5. Application for Food Program
6. Special Needs Plan (if needed)

Incomplete forms will be returned for completion prior to the child's first day of attendance.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

An open and respectful relationship between all people who interact with our program is important to the wellbeing and safety of all children. It is essential, that at all times, parents adhere to standards of interaction with children, staff and other program participants. These standards of interaction are:

- Treat others, including your child, the way you want to be treated; by treating children with respect and consideration, you are setting a good example for them on how to treat others
- Should you have a concern, address your concern in the privacy of an office rather than out in the open. For your child's development, it's essential that we present a united front; it's important to avoid discussion in front of "listening ears" until a resolution is reached
- Parents should direct disciplinary or policy concerns to the Childcare Director or Assistant Director. We will work together on a resolution
- Parents are asked to model appropriate language and behavior at all times
- Parents are responsible for reading materials that are sent home and communicating changes to your child's emergency contact information, health and medical care. This includes maintaining proper immunization status and current physicals at 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 and 24 months and then yearly thereafter
- We will not tolerate behavior that endangers the wellbeing or safety of anyone in the program or visiting the program. Keeping with the Y's character values, families and children will be asked to leave the program should they be unable to treat others in a caring, honest, respectful and responsible manner
- We have an open-door policy for visiting your child during the day. Check with your Childcare Director for what times are best to visit. We believe it is very important to have open communication between staff and parents given the shared responsibility of caring for your child. Communication and cooperation between parents and caregivers are important for the wellbeing of your child
- Questions, suggestions and discussions regarding any concerns you may have are highly welcomed by every staff member. Sometimes a few words at drop off or pick up may be sufficient. Otherwise, you are welcome to arrange for a meeting with your child's teacher regarding your concerns

STRONG FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

To support teacher-family relationships, the YMCA has developed multiple processes to intake parent input and align it with Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) goals. The following are examples of how we strive to have strong teacher-family relationships:

- parent meetings at enrollment with tours of the facilities
- family open house events
- infant and toddler information shared daily through the ProCare Connect digital app
- parent satisfaction questionnaires in which data is electronically collected and reviewed by a committee of professionals
- family educational workshop nights two per year/per site that are based on the needs of the families in each center's community
- family getting to know you forms at time of enrollment
- parent-teacher conferences offered 2 times per year at parent's request
- ProCare: Childcare app is used exclusively for communication. Upon enrollment you will be invited via email to establish your ProCare account. Please download the app and sign in prior to your child's first day. At some facilities, this app is used for clocking your child in and out.
- family fun events that are offered association-wide

SETTING GOALS AND TRACKING DATA

Data about the effectiveness of the policy and its procedures will be collected through our staff and parent survey questionnaire. The results are electronically gathered as participants respond online and it is reviewed by a panel of professionals in order to create CQI goals to improve our practices.

CHILDCARE PROVIDER RIGHTS

It is the intent of the YMCA of Greater Erie to support the overall development of all children in our programs by utilizing the criteria described in the above sections. With that commitment, we ask that our parents/guardians participate in the process and are willing to work with our staff to set and attain child goals. We retain the right to suspend or expel a child if the parent/guardian is not willing to support these efforts.



INCLEMENT WEATHER

If weather conditions warrant, our program centers may close without prior notice. If there is any doubt to attendance, listen to the radio, TV news, visit ymcaerie.org or our Facebook page – [ymcaofgreatererie](https://www.facebook.com/ymcaofgreatererie). Parents will be notified via ProCare as soon as possible so you may make arrangements for your child.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS/EVACUATIONS

The Y has a detailed emergency operation plan in accordance with the Department of Public Welfare and PEMA. Programs located at locations other than a YMCA Membership Branch will follow the emergency plan as determined by their host location. This plan is available at every location. Should a Childcare Center be forced to close early or evacuate, the staff will follow the emergency operations plan. Parents will be notified via ProCare as soon as possible so you may make arrangements for your child.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Please be sure that your Childcare Director has your current work, home and mobile phone numbers. Please be sure that the people you have named as “In Case of Emergency” are available during the Program’s hours, have transportation and be willing to pick up your child in the event of illness or emergency. Our Emergency Operations Plan provides for responses to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- Immediate evacuation: students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc.
- In-place sheltering: sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous material related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building
- Evacuation: total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility (see branch specific information)
- Modified operation: may include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a hazardous weather condition or building problems that make it unsafe for students (such as utility disruptions) but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Please listen to local radio or TV stations for announcements relating to any of the emergency actions listed above. We ask that you not call during the emergency. This will keep the main line free to make emergency calls and relay any information. We will attempt to let you know that we have taken one of these protective actions. The ProCare app will be the primary means of communication in emergencies.

The form designating persons to pick up your child is included in the enrollment packet. Please be sure this form is accurate at all times. This form will be used every time your child is released. Please ensure that only the persons you list on the form attempt to pick up your child. We specifically urge you not to attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties.

In order to assure the safety of your child and our staff, we ask your understanding and cooperation. Should you have additional questions or if you wish to receive a copy of our Emergency Operational Procedures, please contact the Childcare Director.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

From Pennsylvania Keystone STARS quality to NAEYC Accreditation, your YMCA Early Care and School-Age Enrichment Center programs support families with additional services and amenities that help ensure that your child can learn, grow and thrive.

CARING AND WELL-TRAINED STAFF

Our staff nurtures the healthy, successful growth of every child by emphasizing values such as caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Annually staff continues their education with courses in child development, first aid, water and fire safety and CPR. All classroom lead teachers hold post secondary education degrees or Child Development Associate Credential, the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STANDARDS

The Y has committed to adopting new standards for nutrition and physical activity in our Early Learning and School-Age Enrichment programs. The standards:

- Establish a minimum of expected physical activity for children of different ages enrolled in our program
- Define food and beverages offerings, including designating water as the primary beverage during snack times and offering fruits and vegetables as snack options
- Limit the amount of screen time (watching TV, playing video games, using computers)
- Encourage breastfeeding of infants in our care
- Commit to conducting parent education to encourage healthy behaviors at home



MEALS AND SNACKS

The Y participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which enables us to provide breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack for toddlers and above at no additional charge to your family. The meals and snacks follow the Federal Nutrition Guidelines. A monthly menu is available at each Childcare Center. Additional information on the CACFP program can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program-cacfp>. Parents may also choose to send meals for their child.

Food Allergies: Any child who has a food allergy must have a written note from your physician on file. This note is due within 30 days from the time of enrollment or from the diagnosis. The Y will provide a food substitution, if agreeable by the parent, and is allowable by the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Infant Meal Plans: The Y offers age-appropriate meals to all infants including formula, and table foods. We ask parents of infants to complete infant meals and schedule forms. You may choose between the following infant formulas: Gerber Good Start Gentle and Soy.

FAMILY EVENTS

Family is important to us! All of our program centers provide special opportunities for families to get together from picnics to family fun nights. These events are offered at little or no cost to you. Watch your child's newsletter and ProCare for dates and times.

We offer a minimum of two conferences a year to discuss your child's strengths, progress, behavioral, social, and physical needs, and to incorporate the family's goals for their child.

FIELD TRIPS

Children of all ages attending our Y Early Care & School-Age Enrichment and Summer Camp programs will attend field trips throughout the year. Some of these trips include the Erie Zoo, local parks and playgrounds, swimming and the movies. During the school year field trips usually tie into the curriculum and area of study. Safety precautions used while on field trips include having a cell phone, first aid supplies and emergency books with all emergency information and an alternate plan for transportation. Before leaving for field trips, children are broken into small groups and assigned a teacher for the entire trip allowing for a more personal and enriching experience for the child. Please be aware that there may be a small fee for certain field trips. If so, the trip will be billed through ProCare billing.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

We connect families to appropriate services within the community through providing the Success By 6 booklet, called Children Do Come with Directions. The book contains a table of contents for the organizations in our county that provide services to families with contact information. Each of our centers have these booklets that will be distributed as needed or upon request. Our Reduction of Suspension and Expulsion policy includes all of the steps we take to refer families to appropriate services.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHAT TO BRING

While we provide most everything for your child, there are a few items you'll want to bring from home. These items may vary based on your child's age and classroom, so please talk with your child's teacher for an exact list. Suggested items include:

- A set of extra clothes, labeled with their name
- Crib sheet
- Small blanket
- Diapers/pull-ups
- Wipes
- Other comfort items such as pacifier, special blanket or stuffed animal



YOUR CHILD'S ROUTINE

Maintaining a routine for your child to include regularly scheduled naps helps your child thrive in our educational environment. Children, preschool and younger will have a daily rest time. Children in the Infant Room sleep in their own crib, spaced three feet apart on all sides (linens are changed and washed weekly). Toddlers, preschool and Pre-K children rest/sleep on individualized and labeled cots. The cot is covered with a bottom cover (provided by parents) and may use a blanket from home. All linens/blankets are washed weekly or when soiled. Cots are spaced three feet apart on all sides. Children who do not fall asleep are provided with a quiet activity on their cot such as books or puzzles.

DIAPERING

According to the Department of Human Services, our state licensing agency, children must have a diaper inspection hourly and changed every two hours, minimum. Please make sure that you have an adequate supply of diapers (provided by the parent) and wipes for your child weekly.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

All children will go outside daily unless we are experiencing severe weather – defined as a wind chill of 25 degrees or less and a heat index of 90 degrees or higher. Please send your child appropriately dressed for the weather (hats, gloves, boots etc.).

SUNSCREEN

Soaking up the sun's rays used to be considered healthy before we learned about the dangers of ultraviolet rays. Protecting young people from the sun is especially important as most of our lifetime exposure comes before the age of 20. Y participants spend time outdoors and are thereby exposed to the sun's harmful rays. Since it is our commitment to promote healthy spirits, minds and bodies for all, we have the following sunscreen policies:

- All participants will wear sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 on all exposed skin, including lips, even on cloudy days.
- Parent or legal guardians will be responsible for applying the first layer of sunscreen prior to morning dropoff.
- Parents or guardians will be responsible for providing sunscreen if they do not wish to use the sunscreen provided by the Y. Sunscreen may not be shared between siblings. Label the bottle(s) and hand them directly to staff. The bottle will remain on-site with the child's name on it.
- Staff will be responsible for ensuring thorough follow-up applications after one-hour in the water, after two-hours of activity in the sun (due to perspiration) and/or any other times as needed. Please note, this will mean your child will have sunscreen applied to them by staff. Please explain this to your child before their first day.

- Approved swim shirts are permitted when swimming outdoors.
- Sunscreen must be worn and provided year-round, not just in the summer months.
- The Y reserves the right to disallow anyone to participate in outdoor activities for failure to comply with this policy.

Please note that this is a requirement of the Department of Health and Human Services and this requirement was made to protect your child. Our staff members have been trained on this subject and understand their responsibilities and the consequences for failure to follow this policy.

CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

We look forward to celebrating your child's birthday with their friends. Parents may send in "healthy" snacks to be served during snack time. Please review the Healthy Eating & Physical Nutrition Standards in this handbook for guidance. Please notify your classroom teacher of your plans.

BABYSITTING

We view babysitting children enrolled in our programs as a conflict of interest for our staff. Please honor this policy and do not invite any of our staff to privately babysit.

ILLNESS

The YMCA of Greater Erie uses Caring for our Child to establish policies and practices regarding care plans for children with special needs, asthma, medical needs, food allergies, and medication administration. Templates are given to parents at time of enrollment or as needed to ensure we are following the necessary steps in keeping their child safe.

The Department of Public Welfare authorizes the Y to deny attendance at Y programs for an ill child. Children thrive in a healthy environment so we ask that you keep your child home if they are exhibiting any of the following symptoms: fever of 100.4 or higher, persistent cough, contagious rash, vomiting or diarrhea, or too ill to participate in activities. Report all symptoms to Y staff. A visit to the child's Primary Care Physician (PCP) may be required to return to care.

All communicable diseases **MUST BE** reported to Y staff; these include but not limited to COVID-19, chicken pox, ringworm, strep throat, scarlet fever, pink eye, impetigo, and scabies. All notifications will be posted anonymously in order to alert other parents of a diagnosis of a communicable disease in the childcare center. The child may not return until the child has been seen by a physician and the parent presents a note that the child is not contagious and may return to the program.

Head lice is a nuisance that parents dread but can occur in a group care setting since head lice is present in all socioeconomic groups and does not represent poor hygiene. If your child is discovered to have head lice, which is spread through head-to-head contact or using a shared object (hat, helmet, hair brush), notify your Childcare Director immediately so the staff can quickly control the spread. If your child is discovered to have head lice while they are at the childcare center, parents will be notified and can pick up their child at normal pick up time. The child can return to the childcare center once they have received treatment recommended by their PCP.

Parents will be called when a child becomes ill during the program day. If the Childcare Director determines the child is too ill to remain at the program, parents will be asked to pick their child up within one-hour of the call.

Medications: Medications given during the day must be prescribed by a doctor and must be in its original, child-resistant container, be labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, name and strength of medication, the date of the prescription, name of physician who wrote the prescription, medication's expiration date, administration/storage/disposal instructions. Medication will be given at EXACT times as instructed on the prescription.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY

It is the goal of the YMCA to develop the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility in the children enrolled in our programs through positive, non-threatening teaching techniques. Support and teaching missing skills is the standard method of discipline. There will be no harsh, cruel, or unusual punishments.

Parents will be contacted when serious safety problems occur with their child.

Children will receive the appropriate step stated in our policy for the following behaviors:

- a. Physical harm to staff or other program participants; this includes hitting, kicking, biting, scratching, or pinching with intent to harm
- b. Destruction of personal, school, other childcare participant property, or YMCA property
- c. Leaving space assigned as licensed by Department of Welfare or his/her assigned group
- d. The child is a safety threat to themselves, other children or the staff
- e. Possession of weapons, fire arms, ammunition and/or explosives
- f. Possession of drugs, tobacco, and/or alcohol
- g. Creating an unsafe bus/walking environment
- h. Leaving school grounds while waiting for bus or Y staff to arrive

Should any child exhibit any of the previously mentioned behaviors the following steps will be taken:

- 1st Infraction – the child will be sent home for the remainder of the day. The child may return to the Y the following day. However, the child's parent/legal guardian must have signed the behavior report.
- 2nd Infraction – the child will be sent home and receive a 2-day suspension. The parent/guardian will be required to have a meeting with the Director and classroom teacher. The child will not be allowed to return to the program after the 2-day suspension until the meeting has been held. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the child's behavior and set-up a plan to help the child be successful in the Y's program.
- 3rd infraction – The child will be sent home and receive a 3 day suspension from care. The child may return after the 3rd day only if the parent has signed the behavior report.
- 4th infraction – The child will be sent home and terminated from the program.

The YMCA reserves the right to remove the child from the program without completing the 4 step process if the seriousness or the incident so warrants. The YMCA also reserves the right to remove a child from the program for any one of the following reasons:

- Failure to submit a physical as mandated by law
- Failure of a parent or guardian to maintain payment schedule
- The child's needs are not being met by the YMCA program
- Unsafe or unkind actions towards another participant or staff

In the event of repeated inappropriate behavior by a child, the following action steps will be taken:

- Immediate parental written notification at the end of the day so that the incident can be discussed
- Conference with the parent/ guardian
- Removal from the program

It is the intent of the YMCA to work together with parents/ guardians for the best care of each child. Working as a team is a necessary step to correct repeated inappropriate behavior. Your patience, support, and follow-through are not only appreciated, but necessary.

The YMCA is dedicated to providing a safe and caring environment for all children. We pledge to exhaust all behavior management techniques before resorting to the discipline policy.

Biting

Biting is a behavioral stage that some young children pass through. The staff and Childcare Director will track behaviors during this stage and give recommendations to classroom teachers as needed.

EASING THE TRANSITION

COMMUNICATION

We believe communication between parents and our staff is crucial in assuring a positive, enjoyable experience for the child. The Y provides notice regarding changes in policy, scheduling or special events via the ProCare app. It is the responsibility of the parent to check for communication daily. You may also use these communication centers to give specific instruction/notes about your own child.

Included in the ProCare app is the sharing of daily activities. Infant and toddler classrooms also share diaper changing, diet nap times and diapering information within the app.

CHILD OBSERVATIONS AND SCREENING

Children will be formally observed for milestones by classroom teachers three times annually with the first observation and screening called Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) completed within 45 days of enrollment or classroom transition. Parents are encouraged to also assess milestones using the screening tool and share their results with classroom teachers; all observations and screening results are confidential and seen by teachers, early intervention staff, directors and parents. Assessments help our teachers to write and adapt lesson plans, ensuring they meet all children's needs and abilities. Copies of the screening tool are kept on file.

CLASSROOM AND PROGRAM TRANSITION

Transitions are a celebration of your child's development! Alongside with parents, we begin the transition slowly with small time periods in the new classroom everyday to adjust to the new setting; we allow the child to dictate the length of time needed to move to the room so that the child is most comfortable. All transitions are discussed well in advance with parents.

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

Staff works hard to prepare all children for kindergarten and school success. We follow the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for kindergarten readiness. We have established links to our local school districts and participate in the United Way's Success by Six and Erie Together programs ensuring that all children have competencies in 50 identified skills for kindergarten readiness.

SELF CARE TRANSITION

We want your family to know that as your child is transitioning from our school age program to self-care, that you are not alone. Our staff have access to tools that they can provide your family with to ensure that your child is ready for self-care. Kids in Control is a packet that teaches about responsibility which can be sent home as well as a family questionnaire. These packets are available at each center and will be offered to parents in the self-care transition letter as tool to prepare their children for the transition.

Involvement in and out of the classroom is important to us at the Y. Throughout the year, you'll be presented with opportunities to volunteer in the classroom as well as family opportunities for giving back. We invite you to consider volunteering in our Parent Advisory Committee which helps guide decisions in our Program Centers, staff development and community collaborations.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PLAN

To ensure your child's safety, parents are required to check their child in and out each day. Children must also be escorted in and out of the building in the presence of a responsible adult. Your child will only be released to persons listed on the child's application form as authorized release persons. We will ask for photo ID to verify the pick-up person. All release persons must be at least 16 years old. Anyone under 18 years may require written permission from the parent in advance. Anyone not listed on the application for service, as a release person may not pick up the child.



The Y requires all parents to be listed on the application. Should you not want the child's mother/father to be an authorized release person, you must provide the Y with a court order stating the custody arrangement and/or a protection from abuse (PFA). The Y is required by law to follow the court ordered arrangement. Should you have questions about this policy and law, please see your Childcare Director or call the Vice President of Youth Development at 452-1432 ext. 244.

Upon arrival and departure, please check your child in/out in ProCare (our electronic attendance record) touchscreen/keypad. You'll be given a unique user ID and password for ProCare.

It is the responsibility of the parent or caretaker to provide transportation for the enrolled child to and from the Y's program. Persons designated or authorized to pick up an enrolled child must be listed by name, address and phone number on the child's application form. Each parent or caretaker must provide at least one designated person authorized to pick up an enrolled child.

It is the responsibility of the parent or caretaker to assure that whoever picks up the child is mentally and physically competent to do so and is not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Any violation of this policy may, at the sole discretion of the Y, result in immediate dismissal of the child from the Y's program. The Y assumes no liability for negligence or otherwise for the release of the child to a parent or caretaker authorized to pick-up an enrolled child.

In the event that a pick-up person arrives who appears to be mentally or physically incompetent and/or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the Y staff shall have the right to take any one or more of the following steps:

1. To contact others on the child's application form regarding pick-up
2. To arrange alternative transportation at the parent's expense
3. To notify the police

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED AS PART OF THE CHILD CARE FEE: The YMCA of Greater Erie Childcare Center will provide care and developmentally appropriate activities for the age group during Childcare Center operating hours. These will include, but not be limited to, feeding, care, supervision, planning, and implementation of developmentally and age appropriate activities.

ENROLLMENT FEE

The enrollment fee is \$20/child or \$30/family and is due upon enrollment and is nonrefundable. If your child transfers Childcare Centers, you are not required to pay the enrollment fee. If your child has withdrawn and returns to the program after 6 or more months, you will be required to pay the enrollment fee again.

UNDERSTANDING OUR TUITION

Our weekly rate is based on a 4-day week, receiving the 5th day free. Parents complete a fee agreement upon enrollment stating days and time of care needed. Finance directors determine the weekly contracted fee. This fee will be charged on a weekly basis.

VACATION LEAVE FOR CHILDREN

These days may be used individually or in weekly increments. Once these days are used, payment will be expected for any absence. Vacation days will run from January to December; days may not carry over from year to year. No credit is available for unused days. The number of vacation days your child shall receive is based on the number of contracted days weekly. *This policy does not apply to families receiving ELRC funding or sliding fee discounts.*

Days contracted weekly	Vacation days per year
5	10
4	8
3	6
2	4
1	2

Families wishing to take vacation should complete a Vacation Request Form on the YMCA website. The form is located on the Childcare page. Choose "Enroll Today" and then click "additional forms".

HOLIDAYS

YMCA of Greater Erie Early Care & School-Age Enrichment Centers observe the following public holidays and will be closed in observance: New Year's Eve Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve Day, and Christmas Day
Additional closings are site/program specific and the intent to close will be posted for all closings a minimum of one month in advance.

NO SCHOOL DAYS

We offer our School-Age Enrichment Program on days the children do not have school during the regular school year (1st grade & up). There is an additional charge that is due with your weekly fee. Please ask your Childcare Director for the rate as it varies by location. **You must sign your child up in advance for all No School Days.** We staff according to the number of children enrolled each day; if your child is not signed-up in advance, your child will not be able to stay for the program.

EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS

We offer our School-Age Enrichment Program on days that the school district dismisses prior to their ordinary dismissal time. An additional fee is charged for this service and is due with your weekly payment. Advance sign-up is required for this service too.

PRE-K COUNTS WRAP ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Children enrolled in our Pre-K Counts program may also be enrolled in our Pre-K Counts Wrap Enrichment Program. This program is NOT covered by the Pre-K Counts grant and payment for this program should be received on Friday for the upcoming week.

SIBLING RATE

The Y offers a \$1/day/child sibling discount program. Ask your Childcare Director for more information.

Y MEMBER DISCOUNT

One of the many benefits of Y membership is a generous discount on Y programs. Youth memberships (\$25.32/month) for enrolled children qualify for the membership discount.

PAYMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Parents are responsible for the full cost of the program. Should you receive any funding through ELRC, the Y's Sliding Fee and Scholarship Program or any other source, you must comply with the funding sources guidelines including timely reporting of wages, employment schedules, child support, payment of weekly fees/copays and deposit.

Should you run into difficulty meeting your payment responsibility, please contact your Childcare Director BEFORE becoming delinquent. Because Y programs are for everyone, the Y offers many different types of financial assistance. Financial assistance is available for working families needing help through Pennsylvania Child Care Information Services (ELRC) - call (814) 836-5898.



It is the **policy of the Y that no person be denied membership or program participation because of inability to pay fees.** Funds made available for scholarships are provided by the Y's Annual Campaign fund, which was generously donated by staff, members and the community. Additional financial aid is available through Erie's Futures Fund and Pre-K Counts.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Our program is set-up on a weekly rate system with payment due on Friday for the upcoming week. All payments must be check or money order and placed in a locked box at the Program Center or made in person at a YMCA of Greater Erie Membership Desk. Families wishing to pay with MasterCard, Visa and Discover may only do so at a YMCA of Greater Erie Membership Desk. Payments may also be made through automatic bank draft using Tuition Express or online through the parent's ProCare account at myprocare.com. Receipts will be given only to those making payment in person at a YMCA Membership Desk.



LATE PICK-UP FEE

It is important that your child is picked up on-time. If you are late past our closing time, we will charge \$1/minute per child in a late fee due at the time of pick-up for any child picked up after our closing times - 6p.m. for traditional programs and 10 p.m. for extended programs. If you will be later than your normal pick-up time, please call.

RETURNED CHECKS

There is up to a \$30 handling fee for any Non-Sufficient Fund check. After 2 returned checks per calendar year, checks will not be accepted.

RECEIPTS & STATEMENTS

Each family will receive a monthly statement detailing your account activity. Families needing documentation should retain their receipts and/or monthly statements for this purpose.

WITHDRAWAL

If you wish to withdraw your child from a Y program, a written notice must be given to the Childcare Director within two-weeks of the child's last day. You are responsible for fees during the notice period. We also request written notice in order to obtain copies of your child's records.

If the Y deems it necessary to withdraw your child, we would consider the following grounds for withdrawal:

- Delinquent fees & failure to maintain the contracted payment schedule
- Failure to comply with Department of Public Welfare regulations
- Failure to comply with the policies in this handbook
- Behavioral challenges (refer to discipline policy)
- Failure to submit a physical exam within the approved timeframes
- Child's needs not being met by the Y

GRIEVANCE

Even in the highest quality program, you may have questions or concerns about your child and the program. Here at the Y, we believe that communication is essential. If you have an issue or concern, please take the following steps:

- Talk with your child's lead teacher
- Talk with the Assistant Childcare Director/Childcare Director
- Talk with the Branch Executive Director or call the Vice President of Youth Development Services at 452-1432 ext. 244
- Talk with the CEO at 452-1432 ext. 230

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Because Y programs are for everyone, the Y offers many different types of financial assistance. Financial assistance is available for working families needing help through Pennsylvania Child Care Information Services (ELRC) – call (814) 836-5898. ELRC shares the concern of parents that programs and centers in Pennsylvania meet health and safety standards. Through their Certification Services Bureau, they certify and register facilities to make sure they meet specific standards. In Erie, our ELRC office is located at:

Early Learning Resource Center
Crawford/Erie/Mercer/Venango
3823 W. 12th St.
Erie, PA 16505-3381
Phone: (814) 836-5898
Toll-Free: 1-800-860-2281
Fax: (814) 836-9615

It is the policy of the Y that no person be denied membership or program participation by reason of inability to pay fees. Funds made available for scholarships are provided by the Y's Annual Campaign fund, which was generously donated by staff, members and the community. Additional financial aid is available through Erie's Futures Fund and Pre-K Counts. Speak to your YMCA Early Care & School-Age Enrichment Center Director for more information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

- I have reviewed and understand that the YMCA of Greater Erie has an **Emergency Preparedness Plan** for all childcare centers.
- I have reviewed and understand the YMCA **Childcare Discipline Policy** and the consequences of unsafe behavior.
- I have reviewed and understand the YMCA **Sunscreen Policy**. If I choose not to comply, my child may not participate in the Y childcare program.

We, the undersigned parents and/or legal guardians, hereby release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless, the Greater Erie Young Men's Christian Association from any and all liability which might result from the release of a child to the parent or legal guardian or anyone designated or authorized to pick up an enrolled child.

I HAVE READ THE YMCA FAMILY HANDBOOK AND, BY CONTINUING ENROLLMENT, I CONSENT AND AGREE TO THE POLICIES WITHIN.