



Child Care Parent Handbook

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Welcome to the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka. YMCA Child Care programs put the best interests of your child as its top priority and values parents as the expert of their children. We look forward to embarking on a partnership with you to ensure your child reaches his/her full potential. This book will provide you with the information you may need to know while your child is in our care.

Our Program Statement

To obtain a full copy of our Program Statement please see **Appendix A** at the end of this document, ask your supervisor, or visit our website for an electronic version: <https://www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/programs-services/child-care-services/parent-resources/>

YMCA Staff

All YMCA staff must adhere to a number of policies and practices including the YMCA Program Statement as well as Ministry, Fire and Health Regulations. Annual review of these policies and procedures ensure our staff are knowledgeable and prepared to handle situations. The following practices are not permitted.

- Any practice based on a negative control technique
- Leaving a child unsupervised
- Interacting or relating to children or vulnerable persons outside of a YMCA program activity (e.g. home visits, baby sitting, on line chatting etc.)

Inclusion

In keeping with our mission and vision, the YMCA believes in the development of healthy, confident children. We're committed to treating children with respect and dignity and helping them grow and develop to their full potential in a safe, nurturing and learning environment.

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

- YMCA programs are designed to develop children in spirit, mind and body

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

Emergency Management

Each YMCA child care centre has emergency management policies and procedures that our staff review annually and are prepared to follow in the event of an emergency. Should an emergency occur parents will be notified by telephone, an alert through Weemarkable, centre posting or verbally upon pick up of their child.

Prohibited Practices

In accordance with the Child Care And Early Years Act, the following practices are prohibited in all licensed YMCA Programs.

- Corporal punishment of the child
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent
- Locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth

- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will
- Sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or engaging in a prescribed sexual act as defined in the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007

Minor Accident Reporting

Minor accidents and illnesses are common occurrences with children. YMCA Child Care staff have the responsibility to report minor incidents and share the YMCA Incident Report with families.

Serious Occurrence Reporting

In light of best practices serious occurrences can sometimes take place. Within 24 hours of an incident being deemed serious in accordance with the Ministry of Education, a Serious Occurrence Report will be filed on the Ontario Child Care Licensing System. A Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be posted in the child care centre or school age program in a visible area for 10 days.

Volunteers and Placement Students

Volunteers are an integral part of our programs and services. All Placement Students and Volunteers must adhere to a number of policies and procedures as well as Ministry, Fire and Health Regulations.

The roles and responsibilities of the licensee, supervising employees, the volunteers and students are reviewed with the volunteer/student as part of the orientation process.

All Placement Students and Volunteers will be supervised by YMCA Staff at all times and will not be left alone with children or have unsupervised access to children in our child care centres.

College of Early Childhood Educators

The College of Early Childhood Educators is the professional self-regulatory body for Early Childhood Educators in Ontario. The College mandate is to protect the public interest and ensure quality standards of practice of early childhood education. YMCA staff with an Early Childhood Education Diploma

or Degree must hold a current, clear membership with the College. Memberships must be renewed annually.

Duty to Report

The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka has a legal obligation to report any suspicions of child abuse to the local Children's Aid Society.

Intermediate First Aid and Level C CPR

All Child Care Staff hold current certification in Intermediate First Aid and Level C CPR (infant, child and adult) with AED.

Sleep Supervision and Position Requirements

Staff will ensure that children under 12 months old are placed for sleep in a manner consistent with the recommendations set out in the Joint Statement of Safe Sleep from the Public Health Agency of Canada, unless a child's physician recommends otherwise in writing.

Staff will periodically perform direct visual checks of sleeping children in an Infant and Toddler Age Group. Children are only permitted to sleep on an individual cot or crib that has been assigned to them. Parents will be consulted respecting their child's sleeping arrangements at the time the child is enrolled and at any other appropriate time, such as at transitions between programs or rooms or upon a parent's request.

The observance of any significant changes in a child's sleeping patterns or behaviours during sleep will be communicated to parents and will result in adjustments to the manner in which the child is supervised during sleep.

All Placement Students and Volunteers will be supervised by YMCA Staff at all times and will not be left alone with children or have unsupervised access to children in our child care centres.

YMCA Curriculum

YMCA Playing to Learn

Our YMCA Playing to Learn curriculum focuses on small group, play based, inquiry programming provided by qualified educators who engage in play with your child. Throughout the preschool years your child will be learning through developmentally appropriate play experiences that will prepare him/her for school. YMCA Playing to Learn exemplifies the Principles of the Ontario Framework for Early Learning; Early Learning for Every Child Today.

Infant (0 to 18 months)

- Ratio is 1:3
- Infants individual schedule is followed (input from family required)
- Infant daily record is documented (sleep times, eating, diapering)
- A significant play experience is written daily in each child's Continuum of Development Profile
- Parent/educator conferences available upon request
- Staff write weekly documentations highlighting learning that occurred during a play experience
- Includes opportunities for exploring indoors and outdoors, songs and stories, discovering creative and sensory materials, imitation play, and lots of time for hugs and cuddles

Toddler (18 months to 30 months)

- Ratio is 1:5
- Toddlers follow a flexible group schedule
- Daily record is documented (sleep times, eating)
- A significant play experience is written daily in each child's Continuum of Development Profile
- Parent/educator conferences available upon request
- Staff write weekly documentations highlighting learning that occurred during a play experience
- Program includes opportunities for exploring indoors and outdoors, music and movement, discovering creative and sensory materials, puzzles, stories, blocks, dramatic play and learning to play with others

Preschool (30 month to 5 years)

- Ratio is 1:8
- Preschool children follow a flexible group schedule
- A significant play experience is written daily in each child's Continuum of Development Profile
- Parent/educator conferences available upon request
- Staff write weekly documentations highlighting learning that occurred during a play experience
- Program includes opportunities for exploring indoors and outdoors, creating with the arts (visual, dramatic and music), discovering science, engaging in mathematics and literacy activities, developing social skills, gross and fine motor skills and problem solving.

Physical Contact

We're making it easier for our YMCA Preschool Child Care families to connect to the small moments and big milestones of their child's day, through our YMCA app - Weemarkable™. Weemarkable is the window into your little one's day - from wherever you are. It's the app you love to get notifications from - as you receive messages and photos sharing in their excitement and fun. It keeps your mind at ease with the ability to access important child care notices, photos, milestones, educator observations, menu information and direct to educator messaging with just a tap. And most importantly, even when you can't be with them, it's Weemarkable how connected you'll be. Please speak to your supervisor and enrol in Weemarkable today.

It's the app you love to hear from...

- Follow all your children registered in YMCA Preschool Child Care on one feed
- Direct messaging to and from your child's educators
- Review your child's weekly menu
- Daily educator observations about their play, nap and meals
- Integrated with YMCA Playing to Learn Curriculum
- Important notifications, such as centre closures due to weather, sent directly to your mobile device
- Photos of your child engaged in learning
- Add additional followers, such as grandparents, to your child's profile and customize the content they can view

- Completely safe and secure

YMCA Child Care families can access it free for Apple and Android devices.

What to Bring?

Please ensure all of your child's belongings are clearly labeled with their name. You will need to supply:

Infant/Toddler

- Complete change of clothing
- Seasonal outdoor clothing
- Lightweight, and breathable blanket for rest time
- Diapers and wipes
- Bottles/sippy cups
- Formula or expressed milk if your child has not transitioned to 2% milk

Preschool

- Complete change of clothing
- Seasonal outdoor clothing
- Blanket for rest



YMCA A Place To Connect

Our YMCA A Place to Connect curriculum focuses on children engaging in fun activities that the children help to plan and direct with a qualified educator. A major component of this program is creating a positive social environment where children engage in physical activity for a minimum of 45 min. per day.

School Age Program (3.8 to 12 years)

- Ratio is: 1:15
- If 25% or more of the group are kindergarten age then the ratio reduces to 1:13
- Children enrolled in the school age program have the option of attending before and/or after regular school hours and on non-instructional days
- Program includes opportunities for physical activities indoors and outdoors, dramatic performances, works of art, nutritious snacks, clubs and tournaments, developing leadership skills, problem solving and developing moral understanding



Location Information

Our standard hours of operation are 7:00 am to 6 pm.

Location Name	Region	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Before & After School	PA Days & School Breaks	Summer Kids Club
Admiral 15 Dey Dr, Collingwood, ON L9Y 4N9	Collingwood				✓		
Alcona Glen 1310 Innisfil Beach Rd, Innisfil, ON L9S 4B7	Innisfil				✓		
Allandale Heights 124 Bayview Dr, Barrie, ON L4N 3P4	Barrie				✓		
Angus Morrison 91 Simcoe St, Angus, ON L0M 1B5	Angus				✓		
Bayview 845 Ottawa St, Midland, ON L4R 1C9	Midland				✓		
Birchview Dunes 1315 River Rd W, Wasaga Beach, ON L9Z 2W6	Wasaga Beach		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Burkevale 39 Burke St, Penetanguishene, ON L9M 1C4	Penetanguishene				✓		
Cameron 575 Cameron St, Collingwood, ON L9Y 2J4	Collingwood				✓	✓	✓
Clearview Meadows 12 Locke Ave, Stayner, ON L0M 1S0	Stayner				✓		
Coldwater 33 Gray St, Coldwater, ON L0K 1E0	Coldwater				✓		
Connaught 300 Peel St, Collingwood, ON L9Y 3W2	Collingwood				✓		

Location Name	Region	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Before & After School	PA Days & School Breaks	Summer Kids Club
Couchiching Heights 455 Lacie Street N, Orillia, ON L3V 4P7	Orillia				✓		
Ernest Cumberland 160 Eighth Ave, Alliston, ON L9R 1A5	New Tecumseth	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Ferndale 70 Ferndale Dr S, Barrie, ON L4N 8A1	Barrie		✓	✓	✓		
Forest Hill 16 Doran Rd, Midhurst, ON L9X 1L4	Springwater				✓		
Francis Pegahmagabow ES 111 Isabella St, Parry Sound, ON P2A 1N2	Parry Sound	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Georgian Bay District SS 925 Hugel Ave, Midland, ON L4R 1X8	Midland	✓	✓				
Georgian College 1 Georgian Dr, Barrie, ON L4M 3X9	Barrie	✓	✓	✓			
Goodfellow 827 9th Line, Innisfil, ON L9S 1A6	Innisfil		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harriett Todd 11 George St, Orillia, ON L3V 2V1	Orillia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hillcrest 184 Toronto St, Barrie, ON L4N 1V5	Barrie				✓		
Holy Cross 910 Leslie Drive, Innisfil, ON L9S 2B8	Innisfil				✓		
Holy Family 180 King St S, Alliston, ON L9R 1B9	New Tecumseth			✓	✓		

Location Name	Region	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Before & After School	PA Days & School Breaks	Summer Kids Club
Honourable Earl Rowe 2516 12th Line, R.R. #2, Bradford, ON L3Z 3N9	Bradford				✓		
Horseshoe Heights 739 Horseshoe Valley Road W., Horseshoe Valley, ON L0K 1E0	Horseshoe Valley				✓		
Humphrey 120 Hwy 141, Seguin, ON P2A 2W8	Parry Sound				After School Only		
Huron Park 25 Robert St, Midland, ON L4R 2M2	Midland				✓		
Huron Centennial 28 Simcoe St, Elmvale, ON L0L 1P0	Wasaga Beach				✓		
Innisfil Central 2075 5th Line, Lefroy, ON L0L 1W0	Innisfil				✓		
James Keating 20 Lorne Ave, Penetanguishene, ON L9M 1B2	Midland				✓		
Killarney Beach 850 20th Sideroad, R.R. #1, Lefroy, ON L0L 1W0	Innisfil				✓		
Lions Oval 25 Brant St W, Orillia, ON L3V 3N6	Orillia		✓	✓	✓	PA Days Only	
Maple Grove 242 Grove St E Barrie, ON L4M 2P9	Barrie				✓		
Marchmont 902 Division Rd W, Severn, ON L3V 0X7	Orillia				✓		
Midland YMCA 560 Little Lake Park Rd, Midland, ON L4R 4L3	Midland	✓	✓	✓			

Location Name	Region	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Before & After School	PA Days & School Breaks	Summer Kids Club
Minesing 7 Huron St, Minesing, ON L9X 1J2	Springwater		✓	✓	✓		
Monsignor Clair 345 Livingstone St, Barrie, ON L4M 7B5	Barrie			✓	✓		
Monsignor Lee 14 Fittons Rd E, Orillia, ON L3V 2H9	Orillia				✓		
Monsignor Ronan 10 Lilly St E, Beeton, ON L0G 1A0	New Tecumseth				✓		
Mountain View 300 Spruce St, Collingwood, ON L9Y 3H1	Collingwood				✓		
Mundy's Bay 340 Sixth St, Midland, ON L4R 3Y4	Midland			✓	✓	✓	✓
Notre Dame 140 Atlantis Dr, Orillia, ON L3V 0A8	Orillia		✓	✓	✓		
Oakley Park 22 Davidson St, Barrie, ON L4M 3R8	Barrie			✓	✓	✓	✓
Our Lady of the Bay 160 Collins St, Collingwood, ON L9Y 4R1	Collingwood	✓	✓	✓			
Our Lady of the Bay 160 Collins St, Collingwood, ON L9Y 4R1	Collingwood	✓	✓	✓			
Parry Sound PS 21 Beatty St, Parry Sound ON, P2A 2H5	Parry Sound				✓	✓	

Location Name	Region	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Before & After School	PA Days & School Breaks	Summer Kids Club
Pine River 45 Brian Ave, Angus, ON L0M 1B3	Barrie				✓		
Regent Park 485 Regent St, Orillia, ON L3V 4E2	Orillia		✓	✓	✓		
Saint Gabriel the Archangel 130 Prince William Way, Barrie, ON L4M 7G4	Barrie			✓	✓		
Severn Shores 2746 Cumberland Rd, Cumberland Beach, ON L0K 1G0	Orillia				✓		
Shanty Bay 105 Johnson Street, Barrie, ON L4M 4R4	Shanty Bay				✓		
Sister Catherine Donnelly 123 Hanmer St E, Barrie, ON L4M 6W2	Barrie		✓	✓	✓		
St. Ann's 5 Dunlop St, Penetanguishene, ON L9M 1J2	Penetanguishene		✓	✓	✓		
St. Francis of Assisi 1067 Anna Maria Ave, Innisfil, ON L9S 1W2	Innisfil		✓	✓	✓		
St. Mary's 18 Saunders St, Collingwood, ON L9Y 0G2	Collingwood				✓		
St. Monica's 90 Steel St, Barrie, ON L4M 2E9	Barrie				✓		
St. Nicholas 100 Loughheed Rd, Barrie, ON L4N 8E1	Barrie			✓	✓		

Location Name	Region	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Before & After School	PA Days & School Breaks	Summer Kids Club
St. Noel Chabanel 425 Ramblewood Dr, Wasaga Beach, ON L9Z 1P3	Wasaga Beach				✓		
Tay Shores 125 Jephson St, Victoria Harbour, ON L0K 2A0	Midland				✓		
Terry Fox 100 Livingstone St E, Barrie, ON L4M 6X9	Barrie				✓		
Tottenham 21 Rogers Rd, Tottenham, ON L0G 1W0	New Tecumseth		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
W. H. Day 410 Maplegrove Ave, Bradford, ON L3Z 2V4	Bradford		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
W. R. Best Memorial 221 Old Barrie Rd W, R.R. #2, Shanty Bay, ON L0L 2L0	Shanty Bay				✓		
Warminster 4031 Line 13 N, Warminster, ON L0K 2G0	Warminster				✓		
Wasaga Beach PS 42 Union Boulevard Wasaga Beach, ON L9Z 2Y8	Wasaga Beach				✓		
Worsley 31-40th St S, Wasaga Beach, ON L9Z 1Z9	Wasaga Beach				✓		
Wyevale 20 Concession 5 E, Wyevale, ON L0L 2T0	Wyevale				✓		

Safe Arrival and Dismissal of Children

YMCA Child Care Staff will ensure that any child receiving child care at the child care centre is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual aged 16 years or older that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization the child care centre may release the child to.

The YMCA will only dismiss children into the care and supervision of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. Once the parent/guardian or another authorized individual has signed the child out of care on the attendance, the YMCA is no longer responsible for the care and supervision of that child.

For children attending a Before School Age Program, YMCA staff will transfer care to the school by releasing the children into the playground once it is supervised by school staff.

Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or not picked up as expected, staff will follow the Safe Arrival and Dismissal Procedures set out below.

Safe Arrival of Children (Accepting A Child Into Care)

YMCA staff will sign children into care on the weekly attendance record documenting the time the child arrived. Parents/guardians are responsible for signing their child into care on the classroom weekly attendance record documenting their initials beside the time of arrival for their child. In the event, a child will be absent, parents are encouraged to notify the program in advance. Staff will document in the Daily Written Record the child's absence and any additional information.

If a scheduled child does not arrive at the child care centre and the parent has not communicated a change in drop off, a staff will send a notification to the primary parent in the morning.

- Infant, Toddler and Preschool programs - notifications will be sent through the Weemarkable App
- School Age programs – notifications will be sent through email

Once the child's absence has been confirmed, staff will document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the Daily Written Record.

Safe Arrival of Children from School

- At the time of enrollment parents of children ages 6 to 12 years old will be advised of the designated meeting location where all children who are scheduled to attend the YMCA School Age Program are required to meet YMCA Staff after school.
- For children enrolled in Junior or Senior Kindergarten, YMCA Staff will go directly to their classroom where the school will release the children to the YMCA.
- When a child who is scheduled to attend a YMCA School Age Program does not arrive at the designated meeting place or if the Kindergarten Teacher is unable to confirm they were present, the following steps are to be taken.
 - The School Age Coordinator or Designate will contact the school office to ask the Office Staff if the child was in attendance or if they had been picked up earlier by their parents. They will in turn ask the same of the Classroom Teacher.
 - In the event that the school buses have left, School Office Staff will contact the bus company to determine if the child went home on a school bus.
 - If the school office confirms that the child was in attendance and there are no messages from the parents advising the YMCA that the child will not be attending the program, the School Age Coordinator or Designate will contact the child's parents immediately.
 - If the child is not located Police will be contacted.
 - The School Age Coordinator or designate will contact their direct Supervisor or Designate and inform them that the child has not arrived and Police have been contacted.
 - The supervisor or designate will contact their Manager of Child Development and Fiona Cascagnette, Vice President of Child Development, Family Support and Community Programs will also be notified at 705-795-9622.

- The School Age Coordinator or Designate and School Office Staff will continue to look for the child at the school.
- The School Age Coordinator or Designate will ensure that someone checks the child's home to determine if the child has walked home.

Bus Procedure

- Children enrolled in a YMCA School Age Program who are bused to school in the morning, YMCA Staff will walk all children directly to the school bus stop and will supervise children until they have all entered the school bus.
- YMCA Staff will meet children attending the YMCA School Age Program after school at the bus stop and walk them into the program.
- When a child who is scheduled to attend a YMCA School Age Program by bus does not arrive on the bus at the designated bus stop, the School Age Coordinator or Designate will contact the child's parents immediately.
- If the child is not located Police will be contacted.
- The School Age Coordinator or designate will contact their direct Supervisor or Designate and inform them that the child has not arrived and Police have been contacted.
- The supervisor or designate will contact their Manager of Child Development and Fiona Cascagnette, Vice President of Child Development, Family Support and Community Programs will also be notified at 705-795-9622.



Safe Departure of Children (Authorized Pick-ups)

YMCA staff will sign children out of care on the weekly attendance record documenting the time the child was picked up by their parent/guardian or authorized individual. Parents/guardians are responsible for signing their child out of care on the classroom weekly attendance record documenting their initials beside the time of departure for their child.

- Staff need to ensure that the parent identifies the authorized individuals for whom their child may be released to on the child care centre registration form and provides contact information.
- Staff are to ensure parents provide phone numbers where they can be contacted during the program hours and emergency contact information should the parent not be able to be contacted on the child care centre registration form.
- Staff are to advise parents that under no circumstances will children be released to unauthorized individuals (not on the “authorized pick-up list”) until verbal or written consent is obtained directly from the parent.
- Ensure parents are aware that authorized individuals will be required to show photo ID when picking up children and ask them to inform the authorized person of the same.
- Staff are required to call the parent to get consent in the event that an adult arrives to pick up a child without prior authorization. During this time, the child will be kept with a staff and not left with the individual. Explain to the individual that you have no authorization to release the child. The child will not be released until consent is verified.
- Staff are to document in the Daily Written Record any changes to a child’s pick up procedures.
- Staff will not release any children from care without supervision of the parent or an authorized individual aged 16 years or older.

Safe Departure of Children (A Child Has Not Been Picked Up)

- Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care has not arrived after the centre closes, staff will call the parent and advise the child is still in care and inquire their pick up time.
- If unable to reach the parent, staff will call all emergency contacts and advise the child is still in care and inquire their pick up time.

- The attempts to contact the parents, authorized individuals and emergency contacts including the date, time and person called and the outcome are to be recorded in the Daily Written Record.
- Where staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individuals listed on the child's registration form after one hour of the centre closing, the staff will contact CAS and follow their direction with respect to next steps.
- After contacting CAS, staff will contact Police.

Sample Parent Message

Your child has an unreported absence in our program. Please reply to this message to verify your child's absence from our program today. Thank you.



Registration Information

Admission

Child care request forms are available to families to complete wishing to register their child in a YMCA Program. To secure a child care space a complete registration package, billing information form, pre-authorized payment form and up to date immunization record is required to be submitted to the supervisor.

Part-Time Attendance

In order to staff appropriately, we must know the exact days your child will be attending. Full time participants are given priority. A full time participant is a child who is enrolled for full days, Monday to Friday in an Infant, Toddler or Preschool Room or a participant who is enrolled in Before and After School Age Care Monday to Friday. Should there be an insufficient number of full time participants then part time care will be offered to fill the available spaces. The minimum commitment of part time families is one day per week. Part time families will be offered the first right of refusal should another participant wish the available full time space.

Waiting List

Anyone interested in enrolling their child into a YMCA Child Care or School Age Care Program starts by completing a [Request for Care Form](#). Please note, Infant, Toddler and Preschool Care Waitlists are managed separate from School Age Waitlists. Parents are encouraged to place their child on a School Age Waitlist once they have confirmation of their child's school location.

Each request is timestamped, and YMCA staff will review these submissions on a regular basis, determining if space is available. When a program is at capacity, these requests are moved to a waitlist. Please note, there is no fee to place your child on a waiting list. The waiting list will be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the children and families on the list and therefore only the child's position on the waiting list will be provided to parents. Names of other children or families and/or their placement on the waiting list will not be shared with other individuals.

As children currently enrolled move to the next age group or leave the program creating an open space, YMCA staff will contact families on the waitlist, and so it is important that you keep your contact information and details of your request for care up-to-date. For assistance, please contact the YMCA Community Care team by phone at 705-792-7822 or by email at hello@sm.ymca.ca

Requests for YMCA Child Care or School Age Care are placed in sequential order on the waitlist, however, admission to the program is subject to a number of considerations including, but not limited to:

- Children currently enrolled in a YMCA of Simcoe Muskoka Child Care/School Age Program (for example, moving up to the next age group, or transferring to another YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka location)
- The ages of the children on the waiting list, and length of time each child will be in an age group before having to transition to the next age group
- Children requiring full-time care
- Children with siblings currently enrolled in a YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka Child Care/School Age Program
- Children of YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka staff in permanent positions

To determine your request's standing on the waiting list, please contact the Supervisor of your chosen location(s) using the contact information found on our website. Once a space becomes available, you will be contacted and provided with 48 hours notice to confirm that you will be accepting the space and start date that is offered. Spaces are only confirmed once we receive all required registration information, including a valid method of payment. If a family declines the space and start date offered and wishes to remain on the waitlist for a future date, their place on the waiting list will be updated to the current date and time.

*Please note: PA Days, School Breaks and Summer Kids Club Programs (Full Day School Age) are short-term self-registered programs and as such any waitlists are managed automatically/digitally. For these, families do not need to complete a request for care form. Current YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka families will receive email notice regarding locations, ages served and how to register.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedure

The safety and well-being of all children participating in YMCA Programs is of utmost importance, therefore, we expect all parents to drop off and pick up their children from their child's classroom teacher daily and to sign the attendance sheet.

Fees

Child Care Fees are paid through Visa, Mastercard or bank account Pre-authorized Payment on the 1st and the 15th of each month. Invoices,

payment history and tax receipts are available to be viewed in the YMCA Online Portal.

The amount withdrawn is calculated as follows:

Daily Fee (minus any subsidies) x Number of registered days in the month = Total Invoice

The total invoice is then split evenly between the 1st and 15th of the month.

Summer Kids Club Fees are billed on April 21st for July care and May 21st for August care through Visa, Mastercard or bank account Preauthorized Payment.

Please note: Payment is required for absenteeism, sick days, vacation days, centre closures due to inclement weather, emergency closures such as labour disruption, loss of utilities and for statutory holidays.

Families are required to keep their information and payments up-to-date. If an account falls into arrears, acceptable payment arrangements must be made, otherwise those with outstanding balances beyond 30 days may be asked to leave the program (termination of care).

The YMCA will provide a minimum of 30 days' notice before an increase in fees is made.

Refunds and Fee Credits

Child care fee refunds and credits are not applicable and **will not** be processed for any:

- Unscheduled program closures, this includes inclement weather closures.
- Absences from care related to missed days, sick days and/or vacation.
- Withdrawal notifications from the program made with less than 10 business days' notice prior to your next payment

Additional fees:

- Additional Days - If approval is granted to attend an additional day, one that your child is not registered or regularly scheduled for, the daily fee will be added to the following month's invoice and automatically be withdrawn on the 15th.
- Declined Payments - For any payment that has been returned by the account holder's financial institution (i.e. invalid or closed account,

non-sufficient funds, expired, etc.) a non-base fee administration charge of \$15 is added by the YMCA. This must be paid along with any arrears and does not include any fees charged by the account holder's bank.

- Late Pick Up Fee Policy - Currently the YMCA charges a non-base fee of five dollars for every ten minutes, or part thereof, that your child is in care after the centre's closing time. If applicable, this fee will be added to the following month's invoice and automatically withdrawn on the 15th. If there is an emergency and you are going to be late, please call your centre. Program registration may be terminated or suspended at the discretion of YMCA Management due to consistent late pick-up.
- Summer Kids Club cancellations are subject to a \$25.00 fee per cancellation.

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC)

The YMCA has opted into the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with the County of Simcoe and the District of Parry Sound to offer fee reductions to families for children ages 0 to 5.

Base fees are mandatory fees charged to all parents that are required for a child to attend a YMCA Child Care program. Non-base fees include additional charges such as late fees and bank service charges; and therefore, these will not be subject to further reductions under CWELCC.

CWELCC	Daily Base Rate (January 1, 2025)
Infant Full Time	\$22.00
Toddler Full Time	\$22.00
Preschool Full Time	\$22.00
AM (4 and 5 year olds)	\$12.00
PM (4 and 5 year olds)	\$12.00
AM and PM (4 and 5 year olds)	\$12.00
PA Day (4 and 5 year olds)	\$19.37
Summer Kids Club	\$22.00



School Age Program Base Rates

Base fees are mandatory fees charged to all parents that are required for a child to attend a YMCA School Age program. Non-base fees include additional charges such as late fees and bank service charges.

6 to 12 Year Olds	Daily Base Rate September 2026
AM (6 to 12 year olds)	\$17.98
PM (6 to 12 year olds)	\$19.15
AM and PM (6 to 12 year olds)	\$27.21
PA Day (6 to 12 year olds)	\$50.97



YMCA Staff Wellness Day

In an effort to promote health and wellbeing among YMCA employees, we will be closed on Easter Monday for an Employee Wellness Day. This is in recognition of the hard work and dedication of our staff teams throughout the year. Families will not be charged this day. Thank you for supporting our YMCA and our staff teams.

Program Information

Anaphylaxis Policy

We strive to minimize the risk of exposure to known allergens to the children in our care. In the case where a child has an Anaphylaxis Allergen it will be the responsibility of the parent to provide a detailed individual emergency plan for their child and to train the supervisor and as appropriate all centre staff and volunteers on their child's emergency plan prior to the first day of care. It is the Parent/Guardian's responsibility to inform centre staff of a child's allergy at the time of registration and provide an annual update of any allergy changes. An Anaphylaxis Alert Poster will be placed at the entrance of the building requesting that staff, families and visitors avoid bringing items containing the known Anaphylaxis Allergen(s). Please review this poster regularly as changes can occur.

Parents providing food or a bagged lunch for their child must review ingredient lists to ensure they are not bringing into the program an item that contains or may contain any of the Allergens listed on the Anaphylaxis Alert Poster. Staff will monitor the bagged lunches and all parent provided food to children to ensure that they are nutritious and that they do not contain and have not come into contact with any items listed on the Anaphylaxis Alert Poster as well as nuts and peanuts. Refer to our Bagged Lunch Policy for additional information.

Nutrition

Our full day child care programs offer a variety of nutritious morning snacks, lunches and afternoon snacks prepared by a caterer or on-site cook. School age programs receive a morning and afternoon snack. To ensure your child receives a well-balanced meal, our menus follow Canada's Food Guide and are planned in consultation with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and

the Ministry of Education. Our weekly menus are posted for your information. Infants are fed according to their individual needs. Parents of infants are required to provide written feeding instructions. Due to children with allergies and food restrictions the YMCA discourages food from home in our programs.

Special Dietary and Feeding Arrangements

In consideration of children with allergies and food restrictions, the YMCA discourages sending any food from home. However, families of children with food restrictions and/or complex allergies may be granted an exception by the supervisor to bring food from home. The supervisor and the parent will work on a written plan to implement the child's dietary arrangements. All food and beverages must be provided labelled with the child's name, date, and list of ingredients.

- Foods that contain nuts or may have come in contact with nuts are not provided.
- Foods that contain known Anaphylaxis allergens of children at the YMCA are not to be provided.

Bag Lunches

School aged children in attendance during PA Days, School Breaks or Summer Camp Programs are required to bring a nutritious lunch free of nuts and any allergen posted on the Anaphylaxis Alert Poster following the guidelines listed below.

- The bagged lunch and snacks are nutritious and follows Canada's Food Guide
- Lunch is provided in a labeled lunch bag with an ice pack
- A refillable plastic bottle labeled that they can use to drink water throughout the day

Below, please find a variety of different suggestions to create interesting, healthy and delicious snacks and lunches for your child(ren).

- Breads, Bagels, bagel crisps, bread sticks, whole wheat bread, buns, melba toast, pita pockets, whole grain crackers
- Fruit, Dried fruit, apple, banana, blueberries, pears, oranges, frozen grapes, frozen bananas, fruit salad
- Vegetables, Broccoli, carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes, vegetable juice, radishes, cucumber, celery sticks

- Milk and Dairy, Cheese slices, cottage cheese, dips, milk, yogurt, fruit smoothies, pudding
- Meats, Cold cooked chicken, hard boiled egg, tuna, turkey, roast beef, hummus, falafel
- Extras, Dried cereal, muffins, nachos and salsa, pizza, granola mix, pretzels

In the event that a child arrives to the program without a lunch staff will contact the parent by telephone and ask them to arrange for a nutritious lunch and two snacks to be brought to the program for their child(ren).

You can also access a copy of Canada's Food Guide at
<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en>

Peanuts and Tree Nuts

We are a peanut/nut reduced environment. If providing food for your children please ensure that all food does not contain nor may contain nut or nut products.

Children with Medical Needs

A child with medical needs is defined as a child who has one or more chronic or acute medical conditions and requires additional supports or accommodations. An individualized plan is to be developed for each child with medical needs who receives care in consultation with the parent and any regulated health professional who is involved in the child's health care who, in the parent's opinion, should be included in the consultation. The plan shall include the following.

- Steps to be followed to reduce the risk of the child being exposed to any causative agents or situations that may exacerbate a medical condition or cause an allergic reaction or other medical emergency;
- Description of any medical devices used by the child and any instructions related to its use;
- Description of the procedures to be followed in the event of an allergic reaction or other medical emergency;
- Description of the supports that will be made available to the child in the child care centre or premises where the licensee oversees the provision of home child care or in-home services;
- Any additional procedures to be followed when a child with a medical condition is part of an evacuation or participating in an off-site field trip

An additional individualized plan is not required for a child with an anaphylactic allergy if the child does not otherwise have a medical need as these children must already have an individual plan under the anaphylactic policy. If significant changes and updates are required to this individualized plan, a new individualized plan must be completed. All employees, students and volunteers prior to employment and annually thereafter or when substantive changes are made are to complete a dated and signed written review of the children's individual plans.

Expectations of Behaviour

At all times, staff will role model, encourage and assist children to be courteous to others, use appropriate language to express themselves, respect the ideas, property and personal wellbeing of others and use "peace-making" as the preferred method of conflict resolution. The safety of all the children is our primary concern. The provision of our service is conditional on both you and your child's demonstration of these expectations. Staff will work with children and parents to provide consistency in self-regulation techniques. Behaviour which poses a safety hazard for the other children and the staff, will not be accepted, and could result in immediate withdrawal of services.

Health and Illness

Illness in group settings is often unavoidable. If your child shows symptoms of ill health such as fever, vomiting or diarrhea, your child will not be admitted to care. In the case of discharge from eyes or ears and rashes deemed suspicious by staff, a physician's note may be required stating the nature of the illness. If your child develops symptoms of ill health while in our care, you will be contacted to pick-up your child. In order for children to attend care they must be well enough to go outside and participate in all aspects of the program. Exclusion periods vary per illness. Please speak to the supervisor to refer to the local health unit guidelines for length of exclusion to determine when your child can return to care. A copy of the YMCA's Exclusion from Child Care Policy is available upon request.

Infectious and Communicable Diseases

The YMCA follows the Ontario regulations under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Working with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit staff and the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, the YMCA has developed

guidelines for proper disinfection and follows their direction regarding reporting of Communicable Diseases and exclusion periods from program.

Medication

Only medication prescribed by a licensed physician or accompanied by a doctor's note will be administered. Parents are required to complete and sign a Medication Authorization form outlining dosage and times to be given. Over the counter medication will only be given if accompanied by a note from a licensed physician and a pharmacy label. All prescription or non-prescription medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, date of purchase, name of drug, dosage and storage instructions.

Head Lice

Throughout the year, spot checks will be conducted on children and staff. If a child has either nits or lice, contact will be made to immediately have the child picked up. The child must then be treated and all nits must be removed prior to admittance to the program. Your support and co-operation is greatly appreciated in this matter.

Safe Schools Act

The Safe Schools Act, 2000 puts into law various ways to increase safety, respect and responsibility in Ontario schools. Mandatory Suspension or expulsion includes all school-related activities, including the YMCA Program. If a Discretionary Suspension is given to the student, the principal will determine if the student is fully suspended from all school and school-related activities.

Smoke Free Policy

YMCA Child Care Programs are a Smoke Free environment. Smoking or handling lighted tobacco, lighted cannabis or an electric cigarette on YMCA premises including all indoor and outdoor areas is prohibited under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017. Failure to comply could result in a penalty of up to \$5,000.00.

Special Needs Resource Collaborative of Simcoe County (SNRC)

The Special Needs Resource Collaborative of Simcoe County (SNRC) is a multidisciplinary team dedicated to supporting Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) programs. The collaborative includes Resource Consultants and the following Therapists: Occupational Therapists; Physiotherapists; and Speech and Language Pathologists.

Together they work in partnership with ELCC programs across Simcoe County to foster inclusive environments, promote safe participation and ensure equitable access to programming for all children.

Their services are designed to be flexible and accessible, allowing them to be responsive to the evolving needs of the ELCC programs, educators, and families. Through collaboration and early intervention, we strive to empower children of all abilities to thrive in their learning environments.

Your child's program is supported by the SNRC and they are available to visit the program and provide general strategies that support inclusion of all children. General support may be provide through:

- Collaboration and consultation
- Provision of resources e.g, handouts, videos
- Professional development for educators

Educators in collaboration with Resource Consultants may find that some children would benefit from extra support with certain areas of their development. If this happens, a conversation will be initiated with you by the Resource Consultant to determine if you would like this type of support for your child.

As members of your team, all Resource Consultants and Therapists follow privacy policies. Should you have any further questions regarding the role of the Resource Consultant and/or Therapist, our Supervisor/Director, Resource Consultant or Therapist would be happy to review this program with you.

Please note that this support is funded by the County of Simcoe and provided at no extra cost.

Sun Safety

Each full day program will supply sunscreen with SPF of 30 or higher that offers UVA and UVB protection for all children over one year of age. This will be applied both morning and afternoon during the summer months.

If personal sunscreen is provided from home, it must be nut free.

Off Premises Activities

Off-site trips can provide valuable experiences for children and allow staff the opportunity to extend program activities outside of the regular program location. When these opportunities arise, parents will be required to complete a permission form giving consent for their child to participate in the activity. Community walks may be part of the regular program and as such do not require a permission form.

Outdoor Play

The Child Care and Early Years Act requires that children who are enrolled in full day care need to have two hours of outdoor play, weather permitting. Before and after school programs need to have 30 minutes of outdoor play. The YMCA strives to make outdoor play safe, adventurous and fun for all children. Please ensure that adequate clothing is available so that your child can participate comfortably in these daily outdoor activities.

Extreme Weather

During extreme weather alerts, including, heat, smog, wind chill advisories children will not participate in the outdoor program and an alternative indoor plan will be implemented.

Parent Partnership

Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in the program whenever possible. Parental involvement is a key element to the success of your child's experience in YMCA Child Care. Participation can include verbal or written feedback, sharing information about your child's development, attending meetings or events.

Parent Issues and Concerns

At the YMCA we understand that a parent is the most important person in a child's life. To support your child's care, growth and development we

encourage parents to communicate daily with YMCA educators sharing feedback, questions or comments. In the event that the parent feels the educator has not fully addressed the issues and or concerns, the parent can then contact the program supervisor. Upon receiving a concern, YMCA staff will work towards resolving the concern. If unable to resolve the concern, staff will contact families within 1 business day to confirm receipt of the concern and provide an initial response to the parent. Any parent issues or concerns that the supervisor is unable to resolve can then be forwarded by the parent to the centre manager.

Personal Belongings

Any items that are brought into a program from home must be labeled with the child's name. Please be advised that the YMCA is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Our child care staff are committed to providing quality play experiences for your child. Toys from home are not permitted in the child care centre.

Water Safety Guidelines

Sensory exploration is an integral part of the YMCA Playing to Learn curriculum. A part of sensory exploration is the use of water play tables, splash pads, sprinklers and hoses. When these items are used, a staff member must be positioned directly in the area of play. If no other outdoor play activities are taking place at the same time, all staff members are expected to supervise the water play activities. Portable wading pools are not to be used for water based activities.

The YMCA Supervisor must ensure that the following is in place when visiting a regulated public pool; a qualified lifeguard is on duty at all times, rules and regulations of the public pool are followed, children are directly supervised by an adult (18 years or older) at all times, reduced ratios are in place, parents are advised and have signed off permission for their child to participate in the field trip



West Nile Protocol

Human illness from West Nile virus is rare, even in areas where the virus has been reported. In accordance with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, the YMCA is taking this health situation seriously. From May 1st until September 31st, a YMCA staff may apply insect repellent that you have provided upon written consent.



Appendix A: YMCA Program Statement

Welcome to YMCA licensed child care. Our program statement describes how our programs support and foster early learning. It will outline our view of the child, our philosophy and pedagogy as well as the goals and approaches used to ensure healthy child development. It will also outline how we evaluate our programs to maintain quality and how we support the professionals who work with the children.

The YMCA Program Statement is reviewed annually to ensure it is aligned with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement.

Our View of the Child

Every child is special in the eyes of their parents and those who love them. The children are also special to us. As educators of young children we know that each child is an individual of great human worth and potential. Every child is different in their looks, their growth patterns, their genetic make-up, their previous experience, the way they think and in every aspect of what makes them human beings. We appreciate each child's uniqueness and view the child's growth and development occurring in a holistic manner.

At the YMCA we understand that children learn through play. Play by definition is enjoyable, spontaneous, active, and undertaken without external goals and sanctions. This means children are self-learners and do not require an adult to choose what or how they should learn. When the child's natural activity of play is supported by caring and responsive professionals in positive, developmentally appropriate learning environments, we believe, a child will flourish. The child's innate competence, capacity, curiosity and potential will be maximized.

"[YMCA Playing to Learn] is a wonderful, academically sound, and highly accessible document. At the heart is a view of children, teachers and parents as capable and competent. This is one document that will be highly valued in the field, not just sitting on a shelf."

Jean M. Clinton, BMus MD FRCP(C)
Associate Clinical Professor,
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences,
McMaster University

YMCA Curriculum

The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka has a well established, research based approach to early learning. Our curriculum “YMCA Playing to Learn” has been successfully implemented in all programs for children 0-6 since 2004. In 2006, all YMCAs across Canada adopted this curriculum.

“YMCA Playing to Learn 2nd Edition” was published in 2015. This edition incorporates new research, best practices, knowledge and experience. There is more information on infants and toddlers and it has a greater focus on the social and emotional development of the young child.

Our school age curriculum “YMCA A Place to Connect” has been successfully implemented in all programs for children 5-12 since September 2016.

The YMCA has been involved in shaping the development of the provincial early learning framework by sharing YMCA Playing to Learn and our training materials to support educators in implementing a play-based approach. The goals and approaches of the YMCA curricula align in philosophy, standards, and recommendations with the provincial frameworks below. It is gratifying to see Ministry of Education embrace play and adopt a very similar approach.

- Minister of Education’s Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy: <https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/programCCEYA.pdf>
- “How Does Learning Happen?” Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>
- Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf/>

Our Statement on Play

Each child can reach his or her full human 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 endeavour to meet the play needs of all children and must do whatever possible to support the natural urge to play.

Play helps the child to be both engaged with everyday realities and to be absorbed in an ecstatic self-forgetfulness. It ensures involvement, enjoyment, and various forms of success. Play can be powerful or profound, but it is always purposeful.

Play is a vehicle that propels learning and development. Play and development are intertwined; neither precedes the other. All domains of development are supported by play, and play has the additional benefit of being self-initiated and therefore a joy rather than a chore.

Play makes discovery pleasurable, but it also propels the child into the vast realm of learning.

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 the child's learning. His or her cognitive development and academic success are enhanced by the play experience.

Play is physical and increases activity levels, fitness, balance, gross motor skills and fine motor actions. A wide range of scientific, mathematical, perspective-taking and other cognitive processes in discovery and other types of play.

Play is social and aids in language learning while supporting social skills development. Self-concepts and emotions are better understood through play, as is the building of emotional intelligence. Important self-regulatory skills may be acquired and reinforced through play.

Play builds resilience and can help children manage stress. There are often therapeutic benefits to play. Typically children direct their play in ways that address their own socioemotional issues.

"The YMCA's Playing to Learn is a curriculum guide built on the importance and value of play for young children. The document makes, and backs up, arguments of why and how children's play is essential to the healthy social, physical and cognitive development of all children."

Martha Friendly,
Executive Director of the Childcare Resources and Research Unit

YMCA Curriculum Goals & Approaches

1. Promoting health, safety, nutrition & well-being:

Keeping children healthy and safe is a priority at the YMCA and we understand that the well-being of their child is a parent's number one concern. Therefore we have developed comprehensive, research-based procedures to support children.

Some of the procedures in place at the YMCA include:

- Safe supervision of children
- Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Training
- Safe Behaviour Agreement
- Sanitation and disinfection procedures
- Menu Planning following the Canada Food Guide
- Communicable disease prevention
- Emergency procedures
- Intermediate First Aid and Level C CPR (infant, child and adult) with AED

2. Supporting relationships:

At the YMCA we understand that young children flourish in all areas of development when they are in positive and responsive relationships with adults. YMCA educators build a foundation of trust with children by being available, sensitive, responsive, and caring. YMCA educators create an inclusive and respectful environment to foster positive, equitable, and collaborative relationships. When children feel safe, secure, valued and a contributing member of their world they are able to explore, discover, try new things, grow, learn and develop.

To support your child's care, growth and development YMCA educators interact and communicate with parents on a daily basis sharing observations, documentations, and reflections.

3. Encouraging children to interact, communicate, & self-regulate:

The YMCA believes that it is the role of the adult in a child's life to support them to learn how to interact effectively with the world around them including other children, adults, and the environment.

In simplest terms, self-regulation refers to how efficiently and effectively a child deals with a stressor and then recovers (Porges, 2011; Lillas & Turnbull, 2009; McEwen, 2002).

"The better a child can stay calmly focused and alert, the better he integrates the diverse information coming from his different senses, assimilates it and sequences his thoughts and actions." (Shanker 2012)

"Caring consistent relationships with adults, provide external supports that serve as the basis for developing self-regulation." (Gillespie & Seibel 2006)

Some of the approaches implemented by YMCA educators to set the stage for positive interactions among children include:

- Educators provide small group experiences that allow for more individualized adult attention
- Educators role model inclusive, respectful, and collaborative interactions with children and other adults
- Educators ensure the learning environment is flexible so they can respond in the moment and build on or scaffold the children's interests
- Educators ensure toys, equipment, and materials are plentiful and available to children at all times
- Children are given freedom to make choices
- By engaging as a play partner with children, educators are able to demonstrate prosocial skills including promoting discussion, problem solving when conflict arises, and understanding how their actions affect others
- Educators attend trainings that address self-regulation and resilience

4. Fostering exploration, play & inquiry:

Children are born with a natural sense of curiosity and wonder. They play naturally.

As parents and educators, we watch children explore their world through their senses, repetition of tasks, imitation, asking questions, pretending. But what are children really doing? Children are putting together all the pieces of how the world works through exploration, play and inquiry.

YMCA Educators understand the importance of play. They foster, expand and scaffold this natural talent called play by being:

- active participants
- architects of the play scape
- keen observers
- planners
- reporters
- collaborators
- reflective practitioners

Observing a day-in -the-life of a YMCA child care program, you will note that the majority of activities are directed by the children. Children decide where, when, what and how they wish to play. Their decisions are based on their interests and curiosity. The educator responds by adapting the environment by adding new toys, materials and equipment, posing questions, and being a play partner. This sets the stage for further play, inquiry, discovery and learning. The educator's role is to support play so that learning and development flourishes.

5. Providing child-initiated & adult-supported experiences:

Children and parents are warmly greeted upon arrival and after a brief check-in to share news from the evening before, the children get down to the serious business of playing.

The room is set up with a variety of activities that support the observed interests of the children. The children might join some friends at the creative art table to work collaboratively on a collage, or they might work on a Lego structure they safely stored on the counter to complete the next day.

There are no expectations imposed by the educator or curriculum on where children play, or whom they play with, or how long they play at one activity. That is for the child to choose based on their interests. You may overhear a small group of children in the dramatic play centre dressed in costumes acting out a scene of being "mama, papa, and baby at the doctor". The educator has been assigned the role of "doctor" by the children and takes this opportunity to ask the children questions that expand their understanding of what happens at a check-up.

Tomorrow the educator supports the children's interest by adding books about doctors and hospitals to the dramatic play centre hoping to build on

the children's interest and spark more questions and play – resulting in more learning.

6. Planning learning environments to support every child's learning, which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans:

YMCA Child Care programs are located in a variety of facilities including schools, community centres, and YMCA owned buildings.

At the YMCA we understand that the parent is the child's first teacher, the YMCA educator is the second teacher and the learning environment is the child's third teacher.

The YMCA's unique approach to planning and creating learning environments supports children's play so that early learning and healthy development is maximized.

YMCA learning centres are designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the children, including children with individualized plans.

We have created home like environments that include calm colours, soft furnishings, items from nature like plants and pets, family photographs, and accessories that are intended to make children feel comfortable and safe.

YMCA educators understand that children learn holistically not in one area of development at a time. We understand that riding a tricycle involves gross motor and fine motor skills but the play children engage in while riding a tricycle involves many more – communication skills, social skills, etc.

Therefore you may find books, paper and crayons in the block area because children are using these items to figure out how to build a bridge from one shelf to another. Or you may find play dough in the dramatic play area where children are making pizza. And on a beautiful day you may see indoor furniture move outdoors to take advantage of the weather.

7. Incorporating indoor, outdoor, active, rest & quiet activities:

YMCA educators design a daily schedule that meets the needs of the children and provides for a balance of activities throughout the day.

Consideration for the care requirements, age, developmental level, energy level, and interests of the children are included.

Generous blocks of time for children to explore, play, and inquire are included both indoors and outdoors.

The daily schedule is not rigid but operating in small groups is mandated. One small group of children may be on a walk in the community, while the other small group may prefer to stay indoors and bake cookies.

Periods of active and quiet play are interwoven throughout the day both indoors and outdoors.

At the YMCA we don't let the weather stop us from having fun in nature. The children love to bundle up in warm dry clothes and head out to jump in puddles or make snowballs. In very poor weather active play takes place indoors so that children get the physical activity their bodies require.

YMCA educators are trained to keep transitions from activity to activity to a minimum so children get to play more.

However, young children thrive on regular schedules and feel secure when they can predict what will occur throughout the day therefore snacks and meal times are consistent as is the rest period in the afternoon for young children.

8. Fostering engagement & communication with parents:

At the YMCA we understand that a parent is the most important person in a child's life. YMCA educators play a supporting role while parents need to be away from home. You can trust that your child is safe and in the hands of a team that cares as much as you do.

YMCA educators and parents communicate on a daily basis about children's activities and health. YMCA educators keep a record of each infant, toddler, and preschool age child's learning and development in their Daily Play Experience section on Weemarkable.

Getting to know family members is critical as an educator and including family members in program helps a child to feel a greater sense of belonging.

Other strategies to engage parents and gain input include:

- Documentations that describe play and its connection to learning
- Parent/Educator interviews

- Celebrations & events
- Parent surveys
- Displays of children's artwork, sculptures, and creations
- Photographs of children at play
- Posting planning documents that include observations of children's interests and activities introduced by YMCA educators

9. Involving community partners:

While our range of community partners is broad, the largest and most important is the education system. Many of our centres are located in schools, so relationships with principals, faculty and staff are critical.

The YMCA works closely with local community agencies and partners in order to support the children and families in our programs. We view the community as a valuable resource and our staff plan learning opportunities to engage the community in our programs.

The YMCA actively seeks out opportunities to share our knowledge and to learn from others in the community through networking opportunities, community planning tables and conferences.

10. Supporting educators' continuous professional learning:

The YMCA is committed to the ongoing professional development of all our educators.

After all, what the educator learns informs practice and the benefit is passed onto the children.

YMCA educators attend a series of YMCA curriculum training sessions throughout their career with the YMCA. Additionally the YMCA provides opportunities for educators to attend external learning events and conferences and keep legislated training requirements like Intermediate First Aid and Level C CPR (infant, child and adult) with AED up to date.

On a day-to-day basis the child care centre supervisor is responsible for the leadership, mentorship, coaching and development of educators. Based on the learning needs of the educators the supervisor may meet with staff to suggest strategies, conduct learning huddles to focus on a particular area of YMCA curriculum with the entire team, conduct regular staff meetings to reflect and plan, invite speakers from other YMCA departments or community

agencies to attend the centre, or provide materials including links, articles, and various readings to supplement educator's professional learning.

11. Documentation:

YMCA educators participate in a continuous cycle of observation;

- Documenting play and its significance
- Determining the children's interests
- Planning activities that support the interests
- Discussion with team members
- Reflection that informs the planning of activities and the learning environment.

Links are made between theory, research, YMCA curriculum, the YMCA Program Statement, government pedagogy, and children's interests to inform the planning decisions YMCA educators make.

You will see this cycle reflected in the toys, materials, and equipment provided in the play areas, the furniture arrangement, the creative work of children, the activities children are engaging in, on the planning documents posted weekly for parents to read and discuss with the educators, in individual children's' Play Experience in Weemarkable, and in photographs and written descriptions of activities.

This process of continuous program assessment is called reflective practice. Daily educators are observing and engaging with children and evaluating the effectiveness of the learning environment to build on children's interests. Weekly they are reviewing planning and discussing with their team and supervisor to ensure they are supporting children's learning and development and monthly they are meeting as a team to look back on what did and didn't work and then plan for the future.

You can also access a digital copy of the YMCA Program Statement at <http://ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/childcare/about-ymca-child-care>