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**Licensed School Age Child Care Family Handbook  
YMCA OF CENTRAL NEW YORK**

Updated February 2025

# YMCA OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

## Licensed School Age Child Care Family Handbook

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# WELCOME TO THE YMCA CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Thank you for choosing the YMCA of Central New York. We are committed to making a positive impact on the lives of the children and youth while directly supporting the schools they attend.

## OUR MISSION

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

## WHO WE SERVE

The YMCA of Central New York serves several school districts throughout the area. Please contact your local Y to find out if your school district is served by one of our programs.

## YMCA OF CENTRAL NEW YORK BRANCHES

### Downtown Branch

340 Montgomery Street, Syracuse  
(315) 474-6851

### Manlius Branch

140 W Seneca Street, Manlius  
(315) 692-4777

### Northwest Family Branch

8040 River Road, Baldwinsville  
(315) 303-5966

### East Area Family Branch

200 Towne Drive, Fayetteville  
(315) 637-2025

### North Area Family Branch

4775 Wetzel Road, Liverpool  
(315) 451-2562

### Southwest Branch at OCC

4585 W Seneca Turnpike, Syracuse  
(315) 498-2699

## OUR COMMITMENT

The YMCA is a nonprofit organization governed by a Board of Directors that is made up of concerned and interested local community leaders. The Y is supported solely by those who choose to join and take part in the many programs offered as well as those who choose to make voluntary contributions.

Joined together by a shared commitment to nurture the potential of kids, promote healthy living and foster a sense of social responsibility, members and staff believe that lasting personal and social change can come about only when we all work together to invest in our kids, our health, and our neighbors.

At the Y, we work side-by-side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

## NYS OCFS LICENSING

Our program is governed by the Office of Child and Family Services. We adhere to all the State of New York Licensing Regulations, Policies, and Procedures. If you have any questions regarding OCFS regulations, please contact your Childcare Director.

## YMCA MEMBERSHIP

Participants do not need to be a YMCA member to participate; however, YMCA Family Members receive a discounted rate for all programs. Please inquire with Member Services to begin your membership or register for additional programs.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Our YMCA Annual Campaign raises money for financial assistance so that no one is turned away due to an inability to pay. In addition to working with the Child Care Assistance Program through differing counties to subsidize childcare payments, YMCA childcare scholarships are available to families who do not qualify for CCAP subsidy. YMCA childcare scholarships are available to families who do not qualify for county subsidy. Please visit the website or childcare office for the confidential application.

## CHILDCARE PHILOSOPHY

Quality childcare isn't just the proper ratio of teachers to children or a clean program space. It's a commitment to meet the social, emotional, physical, and developmental needs of our participants. Staff provide structure, consistency, fairness, and love to every child who enters our programs.

### Goals

1. To provide quality care for all children regardless of their socio-economic background.
  - a. The YMCA provides scholarships to families who may not otherwise be able to afford childcare.
  - b. The YMCA accepts subsidized payments from the Department of Social Services.
2. To support and strengthen the family unit.
  - a. To provide a safe, healthy, & moral environment for all children.
  - b. To foster open communication with parents that allows for discussions regarding behavior, participation, illness, & attendance.
  - c. To plan & host Family Events with the goal of facilitating healthy family interactions & building a positive cooperative relationship with participant families.
3. To foster both intrapersonal & interpersonal growth with all participants.
  - a. To act as a positive role model for the children. This includes actions, speech, & attire of all staff.
  - b. To foster the growth of self-confidence & self-respect.
  - c. To foster the growth of respect for authority figures, property, & people from all cultural backgrounds.
  - d. To foster the growth of responsibility for one's own actions.
  - e. To foster the growth of caring & compassion towards others.
  - f. To foster the growth of honesty & reinforce the differences between right and wrong.
  - g. To teach healthy lifestyle choices in the form of physical activity & nutritious snacks.
  - h. To develop a sense of community responsibility through team building activities & service-learning projects.
  - i. To support educational goals & academic achievement through daily homework assistance.

It is your commitment & dedication to the YMCA and the children who participate in our programs that will enable us to achieve these goals and others by providing wholesome, quality programs. YOU can positively affect the lives of each child enrolled.

## OUR CURRICULUM

The YMCA Childcare Program reinforces our core values in a caring atmosphere. Children build confidence and trust by making friends and take part in group projects and activities where fair play, teamwork, and responsibility are emphasized.

### Y Values

Caring • Honesty • Respect • Responsibility

## OUR STAFF

Childcare staff are hired based on experience working with children and the ability to positively represent our core values. Our employees receive medical clearances, background checks, and reference checks through the YMCA and OCFS agencies. Staff receive at least 15 hours of training spanning a variety of topics within their first 6 months of employment and at least 30 hours of training every 2 years after that.

## ENROLLMENT

Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, religion, sex, ability, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, or national origin.

### Registration

Open registration begins each year on the 3rd Wednesday of February for the upcoming school year. To register online, please visit [ymcacny.org](http://ymcacny.org). A \$25 non-refundable, non-transferable registration fee per program is required at the time of registration. The Childcare office requires 3-5 business days to process your registration before your child may attend. Please inquire with the office if you plan to start program in the middle of a month.

### Access & Ability

The YMCA School Age Child Care goal is to provide safe, engaging childcare programming for all. YMCA Child Care programs are designed to follow OCFS regulations requiring a ratio of 1 staff to every 10 children (1:8 for UPK.) At no time is a YMCA staff permitted to be alone with one child. The YMCA shall accept into the program all children who are able to participate within the regular activities and guidelines as part of a group with a ratio and supervision requirements.

Families of children who receive services during the school day and/or who may not be successful in a 1:10 ratio will connect with the childcare administration and Access & Ability team to determine if and how the program can meet the child's needs. Staff will review the child's IEP or 504 plan with the family to review needs, discuss support options and develop a staff training plan.

In accordance with the requirements of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable state disability law, the YMCA will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of disability. The YMCA will consider reasonable accommodations and/or modifications to its policies and procedures as necessary to allow children with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in this program, unless the accommodations or modifications would pose an undue hardship or fundamentally alter the nature of the program. The YMCA will not exclude a child from the full and equal enjoyment of its services, unless the child poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others in the program.

## PAYMENTS

Childcare payments are due on the 1st of the month. Payments can be made through automatic payment, online using a credit card or bank account, or at the membership desk using check, cash, or credit card. A \$35 charge per occurrence will be assessed on all bad drafts, returned checks, or credit card transactions. Access your online account to schedule or modify payments. You are responsible for updating your payment method prior to the due date if you receive a new card number or expiration date. No payments are accepted at our school sites. Payments for Snow Days are due at the time of registration.

### Non-School Days

Payments for non-school days (Half-Days, Vacation Days) are due on the 1st of the month in which they occur.

### Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP) Payments

CCAP Payments are due on the 1st of the month for all weeks in the month. Before CCAP parent-pay portions can be approved, the YMCA must receive a contract from CCAP outlining the parent payment. If authorization is discontinued, the parent is responsible for the full month's payment. We understand participants cannot attend when not authorized or when parent is not working. Participants should be authorized and in attendance for at least 60% of the registered program time (ex. 3 out of 5 days) for the YMCA to bill CCAP. Absences for any registered vacation or half days will be billed in full to the family.

### Late Pick-Up

Please note your program's end time. If you are unable to pick up by the end time, please arrange for an alternate pick-up person to pick up your child and notify staff immediately. If you arrive late, a late pick-up fee will be applied as follows: \$15 for pick-ups between 6:01pm - 6:15pm; \$30 for pick-ups between 6:16pm - 6:30pm; and so on. Each additional 15-minute interval will incur an additional \$15 charge. These fees will be charged to your billing method on file and you will receive an emailed receipt. Excessive late pickups (more than 3) may result in suspension or termination of services. If your child remains at the site more than one hour after closure with no contact from the parents/guardians, the child will be turned over to the local authorities.

### **Late Payment**

A late fee of \$35 per program registered will be assessed to you after the due date (1st of the month.) Late payment fees will be charged to your billing method on file and you will receive an e-mailed receipt. If full payment has not been made by the 15th of the month, your childcare services will be suspended. Excessive late payments (3 or more) may result in termination of your services.

### **Tax Statements and FLEX Reimbursement**

You may access your full account, including record of registrations, payments, and tax statements on your online account at [ymcacny.org/myaccount](http://ymcacny.org/myaccount). Paper tax statements will not be mailed. You are responsible for maintaining your receipts for FLEX reimbursement. Please contact your childcare office if you need a reimbursement signed.

## **WITHDRAWING FROM PROGRAM**

Withdrawals from Before and After School programs, Half Days and Vacation Days must be submitted in writing via e-mail to the Childcare office by the 15th of the month in order to be removed from the next month's billing. Any cancellations received after the 15th will be processed the following month and families will be responsible for the next month's full fees. Monthly fees will not be prorated.

### **Credits/Refunds**

YMCA childcare programs do not issue refunds or credits, unless overpayment of fees occurs or the program is canceled. Refunds or prorates will not be given if your child is out of program for illness or suspended from the program or during a suspension period from school.

## **ATTENDANCE**

To keep your child safe, please call the childcare staff before the scheduled arrival time if your child is absent, won't be attending that day, or will be arriving late.

## **DROP OFF & PICK UP**

Parents or caregivers must sign their child in and out each day. The sign out sheet is a record of your child's attendance. For your child's safety, only parents or people you designate as Authorized Pick-up/Emergency Contacts may pick up your child from the program. You may add additional people by submitting their name, phone number, and full address to your site. Anyone picking up your child must be at least 16 years old. Anyone, including yourself, will be asked to present a valid photo ID before signing a child out of program. We will deny access to anyone who is not listed as an Authorized Pick-up/Emergency Contact. Please notify your site staff if any last minute changes occur.

### **Contact Information Changes**

Parents or caregivers are now able to access their child profile online and can make necessary changes to address, phone number, email, and authorized pick-ups. If any changes are made, the childcare office needs to be notified when the changes are made. You may also submit your changes in writing to the childcare office at your local branch. In the event of an emergency, it is critical that we are able to reach you.

### **Divorce/Separation**

If a non-custodial, biological parent arrives to pick up their child and they are not listed on the form (whether or not a court order is on file), we will:

1. Call the parent/guardian listed on the registration form
2. Explain to the non-custodial, biological parent that we cannot release the child to them and explain the release procedures to the non-custodial parent.
3. Call the police to release the child to the police. The police will then confirm the identity of the non-custodial, biological parent.

This scenario can place all parties in a very difficult situation. Often times, the person who will have the most difficult time is the child. Please discuss these implications with the non-custodial parent so that they will not show up at the site without prior arrangements. All court orders must be provided to the childcare office when updated to ensure appropriate information is at each site.

## Concerns for Safety

Safety is our number one priority. If we have reason for concern regarding the safety of a child's release to a parent or other adult, we may call the police. Cause for this course of action includes:

1. Parent/adult suspected to be "under the influence"
2. Parent/adult is abusive or threatening the child, our staff, or any other persons present.

If there is a concern for the safety of our program participants, please contact the Childcare Director IMMEDIATELY.

## TRANSPORTATION

There are several school districts that provide transportation to and from the YMCA after school. Please contact the transportation department to ensure transportation is arranged for your child. Please contact your local Y program in order to find out more about transportation services.

YMCA staff are not permitted to transport children in their personal vehicles. .

## NO SCHOOL

Some branches are able to offer care for an additional fee on most scheduled full and half days off from school. These days are not included in your monthly fee. Payments for Non- School Days (Half Days & Vacation Days) are due on the 1st of the month in which they occur. Families will be responsible for the full fees if cancellations are received after the 15th of the month prior to the half day or vacation days. Snow Day payments are due at the time of registration. Please email your childcare office to any unneeded dates prior to the deadline. A \$5 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit per day is due at the time of registration. The remainder of the fees are due on the 1st of the month of care. Families will be responsible for the full fees if cancellations are received after the 15th of the month prior to the vacation or half days. Please e-mail your childcare office to cancel any unneeded dates prior to the deadline.

### Vacation Days

Vacation Day program hours are from **7am – 6pm** during most full days off during the school year. Registration for each day needed is required. Childcare participants receive priority registration for Vacation Days. Vacation Days are offered for Pre-K participants based on location, please reach out to your childcare team for additional information.

### Half Days

The Half Day program will operate from the time school dismisses until the typical closing time at the child's typical program location. Childcare participants receive priority registration for Half Days.

### What to bring on Half or Vacation Days

Your child will need a healthy, nut-free, bagged lunch, sneakers, a water bottle, and weather appropriate clothing. Some sites offer swim time during their day off programs. If this is the case for your local program, please pack a bathing suit and towel in a separate bag, if your child chooses to swim. Please label everything!

### School Delays and Snow Days

Some locations are able to provide care on days when school is canceled due to inclement weather. On a delayed school day, before school programs will open at **8:30am** at the regular site for enrolled AM participants. Registration for Snow Day programs will be open online by 6:30am. Snow Day programs are open **8:30am – 6pm** at the YMCA branch. Additional fees for snow days may apply. Due to the quick turnaround, we are unable to offer credits if you choose not to attend after registering. Please note that programs may be delayed additionally based on YMCA branch delays.

### Non-Participant Registration

Vacation and Half Days may be available at some branches for non-participants (children not currently enrolled in before or after school care). Please inquire with the childcare office at your branch prior to registration.

### Emergency Closing Procedures

Depending on your school district and after school site, care may be available when schools close early due to an emergency or weather. Many, but not all, YMCA after school programs are able to remain open when only district after school activities are canceled. Please check your site's inclement weather plan for specific details.

## Program Holiday Closures

The YMCA Childcare program runs from the first day of school until the last day of school. Child Care is NOT available on the following days:

- Indigenous Peoples'/Columbus Day (closed for professional development)
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- New Years Eve
- Memorial Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- New Years Day
- Juneteenth

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our childcare programs follow New York State OCFS and local Department of Health guidelines regarding all health and safety guidelines. Throughout the year, specific guidelines may need to go into effect. Schools may require additional physical distancing or masking guidelines. While in school buildings, YMCA programs will follow physical distancing and supply sharing requirements as required by the schools. In these circumstances, please be kind to our team as we continue to support the health and safety of your children and our community.

### Illness

Sick staff and children should remain at home, both for their health and that of the other staff and children in the program. Children who become ill may not remain in the program and will be isolated from other program participants until their parent arrives to take them home. Pick up by an authorized person shall be within 30 minutes.

### Monitoring & Supervising Sick Children

Children who become ill will be directly & actively supervised at all times. The isolation location and child must remain in the line of site, visible by all staff at all times. Staff will frequently check-in with the ill child. Staff will position themselves in a way that they can supervise/monitor all children within the program space and will refrain from having their back to children at all times. Staff will never leave children in the room unsupervised. Staff/Child ratios will be maintained at all times.

### Medications During Program

If your child is required to take a medication during program, a written medication consent (OCFS document) must be completed by the child's physician and parent prior to starting program. We also are required to have the medication in the original box with the original prescription label. Medication forms and medications must match exactly and be provided prior to the start date of the program.

### Allergy Action Plans

An Individual Allergy Action Plan is required to be completed for any child with ANY known allergy (including a medication or seasonal allergy.) The childcare program must work with the parent(s)/guardian (s) and the child's health care provider to develop written instructions outlining what the child is allergic to and the prevention strategies and steps that must be taken if the child is exposed to a known allergen or is showing symptoms of exposure. This plan must be reviewed upon admission, annually thereafter, and anytime there are staff or volunteer changes, and/or anytime information regarding the child's allergy or treatment changes. This plan must be attached to the child's Individual Health Care Plan.

### Medical Emergencies

If your child is injured during program hours, the staff member in charge will take all steps necessary to obtain emergency medical care as warranted.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, staff will provide first aid, contact parent/guardian immediately, contact emergency contacts if necessary and call 911.



## **Child Abuse Prevention**

All YMCA staff are mandated reporters and required by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. The Y provides all youth with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for youth that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success. Outside of the Y, staff members may not have relationships or be alone with youth whom they meet in Y programs. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving or riding in cars, and inviting youth to their homes.

## **Monitoring & Supervising Quiet Time**

Children must be directly & actively supervised at all times. During downtime or quiet time, participants must remain in the line of sight of staff at all times. Staff will position themselves in a way that they can supervise/monitor all children within the program space. Staff should refrain from having their back to children at all times. Staff/Child ratios will be maintained at all times.

## **Emergency Drills**

Each program will conduct monthly evacuation drills, along with semi-annual shelter-in-place drills. Drop-off and pick-up during these drills are restricted. In the event a situation arises that is not a drill, families will be notified immediately of any change in location or situation.

Please check your site's posted emergency plan for specific relocation sites.

## **Nutrition Guidelines**

YMCA childcare programs participate in the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) programs and adhere to Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. We provide a healthy snack during our programs which represents a minimum of 2 food groups—including a fruit or vegetable daily and a whole grain, lean meat, or dairy option. Water is served with each meal. If your child would like to bring a snack from home, we encourage a similar healthy option and it must be a peanut/tree nut free. During days off, we ask that you send a nutritious lunch that does not need to be refrigerated or re-heated.

If your child has any food allergies or special dietary needs please let us know on your child's registration form and inform us if any changes arise through the school year.

## **Dress for Weather and Play**

Please dress your child in washable clothes that are appropriate for weather and daily activities. For the safety of all participants, sneakers are required to be worn for physical activities in the gym, field, or playground.

## **HOMEWORK**

Each day during after school care, children are provided an opportunity to do schoolwork. While we do encourage children to do their homework, it is not mandatory. If desired, please encourage or impress upon your child that homework must get done during program hours. You are welcome to send your child with a list of expected tasks. Our staff will encourage your child in accomplishing this during the scheduled homework time. We are there to help, but we are not able to provide 1:1 tutoring.

If in a school setting, YMCA staff are not permitted to escort children back to their classroom during the program time to pick up left items.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Participants may use Chromebooks, iPads, or Kindles ONLY during specific times on regular before or after school days to complete assigned schoolwork. There will not be time for homework during vacation days. Cell phones, smart watches, or gaming devices are highly discouraged; however, if they bring it to program, to adhere to OCFS licensing policies, the device must be turned off and stored away. If your child requires use of a specific device per physician or IEP, please contact the Childcare Director. Please be sure any devices needed for schoolwork are fully charged. Your child is solely responsible for the storage and safekeeping of all devices. The YMCA is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.

## **TOYS AND ITEMS FROM HOME**

To prevent the spread of illness, toys or other items from home are not permitted, unless it is a part of your child's specific learning or behavior plan. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items brought to the childcare program. Please connect with your Site Coordinator or Childcare Director if your child requires a comfort item or fidget toy to be successful in program.

## BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

All children are entitled to a pleasant and harmonious environment in our childcare programs. Our first step in behavior guidance is prevention. Our staff are trained to be proactive to prevent behaviors.

Chronically disruptive behavior may include but is not limited to, verbal or physical actions that requires constant attention from staff, inflicts physical or emotional harm to others, is inappropriate and/or ignores or disobeys group behavior and safety rules.

Reasonable efforts will be made to assist children in adjusting to the program setting by using positive reinforcement. In cases of continued negative or inappropriate behavior, the following consequences may occur; staff reminders, warnings, time away from activities, parent notification, discipline reports, and meetings with the Childcare Director. Childcare Directors will work with parents or caregivers to develop an action plan to assist with ways to manage behaviors. If a child receives 3 related discipline reports, the child may be suspended from the program for a period of time to be determined on by the Childcare Director. Childcare payments will not be refunded due to suspension from the program. The above steps may vary based on what is developmentally appropriate for the age of the child. In addition, the above steps can be bypassed based on severity of the actions and behavior.

The following may result in the child's immediate dismissal from the program:

- Repeated refusal to stay within the program space
- Repeated prejudice/racist speech, writing, actions, etc.
- Possession of a weapon, drugs, or alcohol
- Repeated physical aggression directed toward another child or a staff member

A child that has been dismissed from the program must wait at least 12 months before they may register for another YMCA childcare program or summer camp run by the YMCA of Central New York, which is comprised of the Northwest Family YMCA, the Downtown YMCA, the Hal Welsh East Area Family YMCA, the North Area Family YMCA, the Southwest Family YMCA, and the Manlius YMCA. Upon re-admittance, the first 90 days of participation will be considered probationary and any recurring behavior challenges may result in immediate & final dismissal from the program. After a child successfully participates in the program for 90 days without incident, they will return to the standard behavior policy.

## FAMILY/CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT

Parent support is critical to the success of the program. We have an open door policy and our families are encouraged to visit our program at any time. Please be respectful of the children's routines and program activities, as well as our staff's need to be with the children. We encourage you to schedule a time with your site coordinator/director to discuss your child's progress.

### Newsletters

You will receive a monthly newsletter outlining important information about the YMCA before and after school programs, including upcoming special activities and days off.

### Family Events

Family events are held throughout the school year and provide an opportunity for families to spend time together, meet new friends, and have fun.

**Please review all policies with your family and address any questions with your Child Care office. All policies in this handbook are subject to change at the discretion of the YMCA Administration.**