



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# YMCA of Greenwich Early Learning Center Family Handbook



Y Early Learning Center  
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## A GREAT PLACE TO GROW...

Welcome to the YMCA of Greenwich Early Learning Center! We are very excited that your family is now a part of our Y family. The early years of your child's life are full of noteworthy and essential milestones. Rapid brain development occurs during the first five years of life, which makes quality early childhood education an essential component of your child's early learning and development.

The Y Early Learning Center is a state and locally licensed high-quality childcare and early childhood education center committed to making your child's first care and educational experience full of learning, happiness, love, trust, skill-building, adventure, creativity, exploration, and fun! This handbook has been prepared to inform you of center policies, procedures, protocols, and guidelines established in order to keep your child safe, healthy, and happy. It includes general center information, program descriptions, tuition and billing information, and ways to be involved in your child's experience at the Y Early Learning Center. This handbook also includes health and safety procedures, so you can rest assured that your child will be well taken care of with the utmost attention and care.



Please refer to this handbook to find the answers to many frequently asked questions. If you need further clarification or additional information regarding items in this handbook, please contact your child's Teacher or the center Director. Please note that this handbook is subject to change at any time. Families will be notified in writing of any changes in center policies and procedures with thirty (30) days notice. We look forward to serving your family and providing your child with a plethora of developmentally appropriate and diverse learning experiences at our center.

## SECTION I: PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS

### 1-a. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The YMCA of Greenwich Early Learning Center's ("Y ELC" thereafter) purpose is to provide high quality, professional childcare and early childhood education for young children ages six weeks to five years old and academically enriching after school programming for children in grades K-5 (5-11 years). The Y ELC provides programs for four age groups: infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children (after school). The center provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, socioemotional, creative, and cognitive development of young children. In addition, the center acts as an educational resource for parents and provides assistance in meeting the needs of the families served.

### 1-b. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

We believe children learn best in an environment which respects their unique pattern of growth and development. Careful observation, evaluation, and positive, individual attention are important components of our program.

We believe children enjoy and benefit from interactions with others. We encourage the development of social skills by arranging opportunities for small and large group activities and allowing time for conversation and play between children and adults. We provide children with opportunities to develop conflict resolution skills with peers and help them learn to identify and respond productively to their emotions.

We believe the environment must be physically and emotionally safe if children are to develop trust in their world. We remain alert to potential dangers, guide children in safe behaviors and treat both children and adults with care. We believe children thrive when they have safe, predictable, and trustworthy relationships with professional and responsive caregivers.

We believe children's natural curiosity motivates them to learn about the world around them. We prepare the materials and environments to be stimulating and developmentally appropriate for natural learning. Through guided activities, we encourage children to explore and reach their fullest potential in the areas of cognitive, social, emotional, creative, and physical development.

We believe children should be provided with many opportunities to see how reading and writing are useful before they are instructed in letter names and sounds. We teach children how useful letters and numbers are through daily experiences.

We believe in children's desire for independence. We provide an environment to help children develop a positive self-concept. We help children develop problem solving skills, self-help skills, self-control, and socioemotional awareness. Children learn to care for materials and equipment. They learn to take responsibility for many aspects of their classroom.

We believe in community. We provide opportunities for children to provide service to others and to share with their peers. We help children build empathy and compassion through daily experiences. We provide events and activities for children, their families, and YMCA staff to grow together as a community through trust, understanding, and kindness.

We believe in families. We see ourselves as an extended family, working with families to provide the very best care and education for children. We believe parent involvement and engagement in their child's education even at the youngest age sets a strong foundation for lifelong learning and academic and socioemotional success for children. We are responsive to the concerns and ideas of families and encourage family involvement in all aspects of our program.

### 1-c. GOALS FOR THE PROGRAM

- To provide families with the assurance of safe, affordable, quality and nurturing childcare and education.
- To work in partnership with families, school personnel, and the community to support children's emotional, social, physical, creative, and intellectual growth and development.
- To intentionally plan and facilitate learning and developmental experiences in accordance with the most up to date knowledge and research of Early Childhood best practices.
- To educate families about the community resources available to them and to work as partners to help each child reach their fullest potential and a healthy lifestyle.
- To provide children with a safe, nurturing, and caring environment that meets their physical, socioemotional, and intellectual needs. To provide opportunities for children to learn through socialization, exploration, choice, and creative play.
- To provide opportunities for cognitive development by:
  - Providing an intellectually stimulating environment with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials, supplies, and activities.
  - Planning intentional and purposeful individual, small group, and large group activities that provide opportunities for children to practice and master new skills and objectives.
- To provide opportunities for creative development by:
  - Providing a variety of enrichment activities for children to express themselves through art, music, pretend play, dance, language, and culture.
  - Encouraging children to problem solve and think both independently and in a group setting.
- To provide opportunities for socioemotional development by:
  - Providing opportunities for children to play together as a group, in pairs, and as individuals.
  - Providing forums for discussion on values and beliefs, conflict resolutions, positive communication, cultural awareness, and respect for individual differences.
  - Providing opportunities for leadership, decision making, and responsibility.
  - Providing qualified leadership that demonstrates a positive attitude, patience, acceptance, and caring for others.
  - Guiding children through positive discipline, reflective listening, natural and logical consequences, and peaceful alternatives to make responsible decisions.
  - Promoting the goals of the YMCA of Greenwich and incorporating values such as caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.
- To promote physical health and personal wellbeing by:
  - Providing opportunities for group and individual physical activity aimed at developing gross motor skills.
  - Offering nutritious snacks daily and encouraging children to try new, healthy foods.
  - Facilitating conversations and learning experiences promoting health and wellness.
  - Teaching and encouraging proper personal hygiene and cleanliness.

- Strengthening relationships with family through center family events and activities and communication between parents and children.

#### 1-d. GOALS FOR THE CHILDREN

- To feel safe, comfortable and respected as an individual.
- To learn, grow, have fun, and have a foundation for a healthy life style.
- To develop a positive sense of self, one's accomplishments, abilities, and individual differences.
- To develop a love for learning, reading, and school.
- To develop healthy, positive, and trusting relationships with adults and peers.
- To acquire the skills of conflict resolution, positive communication, and awareness/respect for individual differences.
- To develop self-help skills, socioemotional skills, independence, and a sense of responsibility for one's actions and behavior.



## SECTION II: GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

### 2-a. LOCATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The Y ELC is located at 2 St. Roch Avenue in Greenwich, CT. It is in a separate location from the YMCA of Greenwich which is located at 50 East Putnam Ave, but is part of the organization. The Y ELC the brown brick building is on the corner of Hamilton Avenue and St. Roch Avenue next to St. Roch's church. The entrance to the building is a one way on St Roch's Avenue, and the exit is located on Hamilton Avenue. The parking lot and main entrance are both located behind the building.

#### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Y ELC Phone Number: 203.869.3381

Y ELC Fax Number: 203.869.1008

L.E.A.P - YMCA After School Program at Hamilton Avenue School Phone Number: 203.399.3683

Family First in Education After School Program at Y ELC Phone Number: 203.525.5119

#### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & CONTACT

**Administrative Assistant:** Milly Rende P. 203.869.3381 E. [mrende@qwymca.org](mailto:mrende@qwymca.org)

Office Hours: 7am-3pm. Contact for questions related to billing/tuition for both early childhood and after school programs, invoices, statements, receipts, key-card/entry, pizza Friday payments, late fees, and submitting center or health forms.

**Director of Educational Programs:** Carly Adames P. 203.869.3381 ext. 222 E. [cadames@qwymca.org](mailto:cadames@qwymca.org)

Office Hours: Varies between 7am-6pm. Contact for questions related to Infant, Toddler, and Preschool programs, center tours, enrollment, tuition, curriculum, enrichment programs, center schedule/calendar, developmental questions, schedule changes, children's medications, children's illnesses, teaching staff, special events and general feedback or concerns regarding any YMCA educational programs.

**Director of After School Programs:** Michele Czarnecki P. 203.564.4600 E. [mczarnecki@qwymca.org](mailto:mczarnecki@qwymca.org)

Office Hours: 10am-6pm. Contact for all questions related to Family First in Education After School Program including enrollment, tours, scheduling, special events, children's medications, children's illnesses, Family First teaching staff, and general feedback or concerns related to the Family First program.

**Assistant Director:** Brandon Yarborough P. 203.399.3683 E. [byarborough@qwymca.org](mailto:byarborough@qwymca.org)

Office Hours: 8:30am-4:30pm (at Hamilton Avenue School 2pm - 4:30pm). Contact for all questions related to Learning and Enrichment After School Program (L.E.A.P.) at Hamilton Avenue School for grades K-5 including enrollment, tours,

tuition, scheduling, children's medications, children's illnesses, After School teaching staff, and general feedback or concerns related to this program.

To meet with an administrator, you may stop by the office or schedule an appointment by phone or email. Families are encouraged to have open, ongoing communication with program administrators.

## **2-b. PARKING**

The center's parking lot is located behind the building. The parking lot is a one way driveway; the entrance is located on St. Roch Avenue and the exit on Hamilton Avenue. Please drive slowly and carefully when entering and exiting the parking lot. The speed limit is 5 mph and the lot is a one way entrance and exit. As parking spaces are limited, parking can sometimes be a challenge. We appreciate if persons dropping off can be considerate of others and refrain from double parking or blocking other cars when dropping off or picking up your child. Additional street parking is available on Hamilton Avenue and Stone Avenue. Please do not leave your engine running while you are dropping off your child. Children should never be left alone in a car. As mandated reporters, Y staff are required to report unattended children to the Department of Children and Families.

## **2-c. HOURS OF OPERATION**

The center is open year round Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Children who are enrolled in full-day programs are welcome to be dropped off/picked up at any time. Generally, most children are dropped off between 7:00am-9:30am and picked up between 3:00pm-6:00pm. While it is not required, we strongly recommend your child arrive to the center by 9:00 am in order to fully benefit from the enriching and educational components of the program. Children who are enrolled in our half-day preschool program may attend from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm. Our half-day preschool program is year round as well. Our after school programs run immediately after school (about 2:45pm) until 6:00pm during the school year.

## **2-d. CENTER CALENDAR**

The Y ELC operates year round except for the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4<sup>th</sup>)
- 1 Week in August (St. Roch's Annual Festival, TBD)
- 1-2 Days in late August for Teacher Professional Development (exact dates to be determined annually)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day & the day after
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
- 2-3 Additional Teacher Professional Development Days throughout the year – (exact dates to be determined annually)

Dates the center is closed may vary slightly from year to year. The Director will issue a center calendar annually to enrolled families and will notify families at least 30 days in advance in writing of any additional center closings throughout the year. Our Early Childhood programs do not operate according to the Greenwich Public Schools calendar. The center has its own calendar that is shared with families enrolled in our program. Infant, Toddler, and Preschool programs operate year round, including summers. The year is divided into two sessions – the school year (August 29<sup>th</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>) and the summer (July 1<sup>st</sup> through August 28<sup>th</sup>). Families may enroll for both sessions or a single session. (see Section 3-a. Enrollment/Admissions for more information regarding program sessions).

All YMCA After School Programs operate according to the Greenwich Public Schools (GPS) calendar and are not in session during the summer months, GPS holidays, or GPS school vacations. The YMCA of Greenwich offers Vacation Camp for School-Age children at 50 East Putnam Avenue during some school holidays and vacations to assist families with childcare on these days. The YMCA of Greenwich also offers summer camp located at 50 East Putnam Avenue.

## **2-e. PROCEDURES FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER**

### **SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS**

#### **Early Childhood Programs**

The Y ELC Early Childhood Programs (Infant, Toddler, Preschool) do not follow the same school closing and delay schedule

as Greenwich Public Schools. The decision to have a delayed opening or close the center due to inclement weather will be made by the YMCA of Greenwich CEO. Every effort will be made to make a decision as far in advance as possible in order to give families notice to arrange for other childcare options. The Y ELC strives to stay open regular hours as much as possible, but staff safety and the safety of children is paramount and leads the decision making process.

### **After School Programs**

After school programs, L.E.A.P (Learning and Enrichment Afterschool Program) and Family First in Education, will be canceled when Greenwich Public School close. The Y ELC does not offer full day childcare for after school participants when GPS are closed.

## **EARLY DISMISSALS**

### **Early Childhood Programs**

In the event the center will dismiss early due to inclement weather, families will be notified via email and are requested to confirm the message was received. The center will make phone calls to the remaining families who did not confirm via email. Every effort will be made to give at least a 2-hour notification period to pick up your child before the center closes. For example, if the center will close at 3pm, families will be notified by 1pm. It is important to arrange for pick up options for your child before the center's closing time in consideration of staff (many of whom commute from far away) to arrive home safely. Late fees will apply at a rate of \$1 per minute per child from the center's announced early dismissal closing time.

### **After School Programs**

All after school programs, including Preschool After School, L.E.A.P, and Family First in Education, will be canceled when Greenwich Public Schools have an early dismissal.

## **NOTIFICATION**

### **Early Childhood Programs**

The Director will send an email notifying families of center closings, delays, or early dismissals. Please check your email frequently to stay up to date. If you would like any additional family members or authorized pick up persons to be added to the email distribution list, please email a request to the Director and your child's teacher. The notification will also be posted on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/571370083068658/>).

### **After School Programs**

The leading administrator of L.E.A.P. and Family First in Education will send an email notifying families of program cancelations. If you would like any additional family members or authorized pick up persons to be added to the email distribution list, please email a request to the Director of your child's program.

## **2-f. ENTRANCE TO THE CENTER AND SECURITY**

All outside doors to the Y ELC are locked and alarmed. The only entrance to be used is the main entrance located behind the building. Upon enrollment, all families will receive two key cards that will allow access to the center through the main door located behind the building from the parking lot. In order to unlock the door to enter, hold the key card in front of the magnetic box until it beeps and the red light turns green.

In order to ensure a secure environment and to be aware of all persons who enter the building, parents/guardians may not let in other people into the building. Each parent/guardian must use their own key card to enter. If you forget your key card or if an alternative authorized person without a card is picking up your child, they may ring the doorbell. After properly identifying themselves by stating their name and purpose, office administration will unlock the door to provide entry. We are required to ask for picture identification in the event that we are unfamiliar with a person entering the building.

If you lose your key card, please notify office administration immediately so it may be deactivated. This is a safety precaution so no one who may potentially find the key card can have access to the building. You may request additional or replacement key cards in the office. There is a \$20 charge for each additional key card or replacement. This fee may be charged by the family's payment method on file (bank account or credit/debit card) or by cash/check.

Authorized pick up persons who regularly pick up your child should have a key card to enter the building. Administration is not always available to allow entry into the building. Therefore, it is the families' responsibility to purchase additional key cards for such persons. Key cards cost \$20 and may be purchased in the office through the Administrative Assistant.



## 2-g. OPEN DOOR POLICY

The Y ELC offers an open door to parent/guardians at all times. This means that parents/guardians can enter the center at any time during center hours to see how their child is doing or visit their child's classroom. While no advance notice is required, it is beneficial for both the child and Teachers if Y staff know ahead of time.

It is important for parents/guardians to consider their child's temperament and ease of transition when family members may visit during the day. Please consult the center Director or your child's teacher to discuss this matter in greater detail.

## 2-h. TRANSPORTATION

The Y ELC does not provide transportation for children to and from the center. Mode of transportation to and from the center is the parent or caregiver's responsibility. Please be sure to follow State of Connecticut Laws regarding vehicle safety. For more information on CT Child safety laws, please visit [www.ct.gov](http://www.ct.gov).

The Y ELC has a bus used to transport children to and from activities held during center hours including, but not limited to, weekly swimming lessons and gym enrichment classes at the YMCA of Greenwich and field trips. Families will be notified by their classroom teacher in the event their child will be transported to a location other than the YMCA of Greenwich and written permission from the parent/guardian shall be obtained. The bus has a capacity of 20 people and has seatbelts so that children may ride safely. The center has a licensed bus driver who performs a daily inspection check prior to each drive. Teacher to child ratios shall be maintained on the bus. For the safety of young children, only children who are 32 months of age or older and enrolled in our preschool program will ride the bus.

The bus is also used to transport children from schools to the Y ELC or Hamilton Avenue School for after school programs. Please contact the Director of After School Programs for information on which schools the Y provides transportation for. Schools are subject to change from school-year to school-year.

## SECTION III: ENROLLING IN THE CENTER

### 3-a. ENROLLMENT/ADMISSIONS

The center accepts all children ages 6 weeks – 5 years (3-11 years for after school) regardless of ethnic, religious, gender, economic, special needs, disabilities, or racial backgrounds. We accept and support the uniqueness of each child and family we serve. We try to make children aware of the many cultures present in our community and the world through dynamic learning experiences. We also try to build confidence in our children by reflecting their culture in our program. We appreciate input from parent/guardians to increase our awareness of the cultures present in our program and community. If at any time a parent/guardian has a language barrier, the center Director will attempt to find a translator to facilitate between the parent/guardian and the center so that all may feel welcome and part of our community. If a child has special needs, the Director will make every effort to connect families to community resources and partner with them to provide support for the child and family. Please see section 7-t. for more information on how we support children with special needs and/or disabilities.



### OPEN ENROLLMENT

As the Y Early Learning Center is a year-round program, families are welcome to enroll their child(ren) in the program all year round at any entry point.

### START DATE

Upon enrollment, once the deposit is given, families are required to commit to a start date. For families who enroll several months in advance, a start date must be given three months before the child's start date. The family is committed to this date. If space is available earlier, the child may be able to start in the program earlier by request. However, families may not delay their start date as the child's spot has been reserved for that date. Should families push back their start date, they will still be charged from the original start date given upon enrollment.

## CHILD'S SCHEDULE

When enrolling a child in the program, once the deposit is given, families are required to provide the child's schedule in advance, i.e. 5 days, M/W/F, T/TH, etc. and are committed to those days. Between the time of enrollment and the child's start date, families may not modify the child's schedule by reducing the number of days, as the days have already been reserved for my child. Families may modify their child's schedule by requesting to add additional days, if space is available.

Once children are enrolled in the program, families must provide 30 days' notice of any schedule changes and may add days if space is available but may not reduce days during a session. Families will be charged tuition for the number of days registered for at the time of enrollment or at the start of the session.

At the end of a session, families may request to change schedules (adding days, changing days, or reducing days). Every effort will be made to accommodate families' schedule requests for a new session depending on space available in the program. Families must still provide 30 days notice for requested schedule changes prior to the start of a new session.

## CONTRACT SESSIONS

The Y ELC offers two contracted sessions throughout the year. The first session is a 10-month, school year program from August 29, 2019 through June 30, 2020. The second session is a 2-month, summer program from July 1, 2020 through August 28, 2020. Families are committed to tuition payments which are withdrawn automatically the entire session for which the child is enrolled. If families enroll at a later date throughout the year, the same session will apply from their start date through the end of the session date. Families are responsible for tuition payment throughout the entire session and for the schedule they registered for. In the event that a child is withdrawn before the end of a session, the YMCA of Greenwich reserves the right to charge for full services through the end of the session and the family's deposit will be forfeited.

### 3-b. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

In order to enroll in the center, the following documents must be completed in full and submitted to administration:

DOCUMENT	NOTE
1. Y ELC Enrollment Agreement	<i>All sections must be completed entirely in compliance with state licensing regulations.</i>
2. Early Childhood Health Assessment Record and Immunizations (for Early Childhood Programs) or Health Assessment Record and Immunizations (for children in grades K-5.)	<i>Please note this is a specific form for childcare centers that must be completed by your child's doctor. The form is available at the Y ELC or online at <a href="http://www.ct.gov/oec">www.ct.gov/oec</a>. We will not accept physicals submitted on a different form. See Section 5-b for more information.</i>
3. YMCA of Greenwich Membership Application	<i>All children enrolled must have a current Youth Membership at the YMCA of Greenwich. Adult/Family membership is optional.</i>
4. Credit Card or Bank Draft Authorization form	<i>Tuition must be paid via debit/credit card or bank draft and will be drafted the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month by the center. Bank Draft forms must be submitted with a voided check. Cash/check payments are not permitted. Please see Section VI for more information on billing and tuition procedures.</i>
5. A Deposit (\$500 for Early Childhood Programs; \$100 for After School Programs)	<i>Deposit may be submitted by check or drafted by the center from the debit/credit card account on file. Deposits secure your child's spot and are non-refundable should you decide not to enroll your child. Deposits will be returned within 30 days of child's withdrawal at the end of a session in the form of a check given 30 days written notice from parent/guardian.</i>
<b>The following documents may or may not be required depending on circumstances:</b>	

<p>6. Authorization for Administration of Medication by Day Care Personnel form (if child will need Y staff to administer medications during program hours)</p>	<p><i>This form needs to be completed by your child’s Doctor, the parent/guardian, and Y ELC staff. It must be submitted along with the child’s medication in the original container with the original prescription on it. We are unable to hold onto medications without this form. See Section 5-d for more information on medications.</i></p>
<p>7. IEP/Special Needs Release</p>	<p><i>When a child has an IEP or 504 plan, all relevant parties must work together to ensure the child is supported. This is best done through open and productive communication among all parties.</i></p>
<p>8. Individual Plan of Care</p>	<p><i>Required for children who have special needs including but not limited to: dietary needs, allergies, health conditions, disabilities, behavioral needs, chronic illness, history of contagious disease, dental problems, or hearing/visual impairments.</i></p>
<p>9. Consent to Participate in Program Evaluation</p>	<p><i>Required for School-Age children enrolled in After School Programs only.</i></p>

**3-c. CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHILDREN’S FILES**

All information in children’s files shall be considered privileged and confidential. This information will be accessible only to appropriate staff, personnel from the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, the center’s consultants, program funders and child care professionals for collaborating and reporting purposes. Any family wishing to see their child’s file may do so by contacting the Director. While original documents must be kept on file at the center, families are welcome to request a copy of their child’s file.

**INTERNET POLICY**

The center has a Facebook page and regularly posts photos and videos of children’s learning experiences at the center as well as center announcements. It is a fun way for families to be engaged and see the exciting happenings at school throughout the day. Children’s names shall not be included in the posts. When children are participating in an off-site activity, such as a preschool field trip, the children’s whereabouts shall not be posted for security purposes. If any parent/guardian does not want photos/videos of their child posted on the page, they may note it on their child’s enrollment agreement under the photo release section and should bring it to the Director’s attention.

**3-d. ITEMS TO BRING**

Below is a list of items to bring for your child upon and throughout enrollment. Please be sure to label all of your child’s belongings including wipes, diapers, containers, bottles, cups, and clothing (initials on the tag with a sharpie.) Be sure to replace items as needed, i.e. if your child has an accident and changes into spare clothes, please bring another change of clothes the following day. Teachers will notify families as to additional items your child may need depending on their program and classroom. For special activities such as field trips or certain enrichment activities, your child’s teacher will notify you via email and/or in person of items to bring for your child.



## ITEMS TO BRING FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS

- Diapers, wipes, ointments\* (as needed)
- Box of wipes (as needed)
- 2 changes of clothing (underwear, socks, pants, shirt)
- Bibs and burp cloths
- Pacifiers (if used)
- Bottles, breast milk or formula and/or food prepared as you wish
- Sippy cups for toddlers
- Plastic bags for soiled items (ziploc or grocery bags)
- Bedding – crib sheet (infants), cot sheet (toddlers), Blanket (toddlers only), a small soft comfort item (toddlers only)
- Appropriate outdoor clothing
- Medications\* (if needed)
- Parents must complete an Infant Daily Schedule form for feedings and naps (infants only)

*\*Ointments require a signed topical medication form.*

*\*Medications require an authorization form; see section 3-c.*

## ITEMS TO BRING FOR PRESCHOOLERS

- 2 changes of clothing (underwear, socks, pants, shirt)
- Lunch in a labeled bag or lunchbox
- Bedding – cot sheet, blanket, small pillow, a small soft comfort item (optional)
- Appropriate outdoor clothing
- Ointments\* (if needed)
- Medications\* (if needed)

*\*Ointments require a signed topical medication form.*

*\*Medications require an authorization form; see section 3-c.*



## TOYS FROM HOME

We supply our center with plenty of developmentally appropriate toys and materials. Toys from home can be a source of conflict between children and may result in the toy being lost or damaged. We ask for parent/guardians support our decision to prohibit toys from home being brought to the center, with the exception of a soft naptime toy or items brought in for "Show and Tell." We ask that you do not bring in play weapons, violent action figures, or war toys. The center will not be responsible for any toys or personal items that are lost or broken.

## CLOTHING

- Children should wear clothes to school that are comfortable, appropriate for the weather, and easily laundered. Art smocks will be provided for messy activities, but accidents will happen. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child each day.
- It is important to always have extra clothing for your child in his/her cubby that is appropriate for the season. Several changes of clothing are recommended for infants. Families should supply extra clothing worn from the waist down for children who are recently toilet trained and may have frequent accidents.
- Girls wanting to wear dresses or skirts may do so, but please put shorts on over the underwear.
- Footwear must be appropriate for active play such as running and climbing on play equipment. Please do not send children in shoes with no backs or dress shoes without rubberized soles.
- When the weather is cooler, children should always have a jacket available to go outside. When it snows, children must wear hats, mittens, snow pants, and boots for outside play. We go outside even in winter weather for shorter periods of time to allow the children fresh air and outdoor play.

## MEDICATIONS

Please see section 5-d. Administration of Medications for information on bringing medications to the center.



## NONMEDICATED OINTMENTS

Parents/Guardians must complete authorization forms in order to bring any diaper ointments, creams, lip balm, sun screen, or insect repellent to be administered at the center. Please see section 5-d. Administration of Medications: Non-Prescription Medications and Ointments for more information.

## FOOD GUIDELINES

The foods children eat have a substantial impact on their health, wellbeing, learning, and development. Therefore, the Y ELC serves healthy and nutritious food and encourages families to send nutritious lunches.

We believe children will try new foods not familiar to them if they see their friends and teachers eating it too. Teachers encourage children to try all foods served but children will not be forced to eat things they do not want.

**BREAKFAST:** The center does not provide breakfast for children. Families are welcome to bring breakfast for their child to eat upon arrival any time before 9:00am as to not interfere with other scheduled classroom activities. Children who arrive later than 9:00am during a scheduled classroom activity may eat their breakfast at morning snack time.

**SNACK:** Morning and afternoon snack are provided by the Y ELC for Early Childhood Programs. We provide nutritious items such as fresh fruit, yogurt, wholegrains, milk, veggies, and cereals. Snack menus are posted in each classroom and are distributed monthly via email. Families are welcome to pack a snack for their child if preferred. Snacks sent in from home should be healthy and nutritious. Snacks are also provided for students in Family First in Education. Students enrolled in L.E.A.P. should bring a snack from home to eat after school as snacks are not provided by the Y.

**LUNCH:** Parents are required to pack a lunch for their child. Milk is provided by the center (whole milk for infants/toddlers and 2% milk for preschoolers.) Each classroom is equipped with refrigerators and microwaves for your convenience so that food may be stored properly and reheated if needed. Food that needs to be heated in the microwave should be sent in a microwave safe container. Please be mindful when packing food for your child, keeping in mind foods that are potential choking hazards for children. Foods such as grapes, hot dogs, and carrots should be cut into small pieces which are safer for children to consume. It is the responsibility of the family – not the Teachers – to cut children’s food into small, bitesize and safe pieces. On Fridays, families have the option to provide pizza for their child for lunch, which the center orders and serves. The cost is \$8 or \$10 per month (\$2 for each Friday in the month). “Pizza Friday” money must be paid in advance (cash only) monthly to the Administrative Assistant.

**SPECIAL OCCASIONS:** Birthdays and other celebrations are special days at the center and we enjoy celebrating them with the children. Birthdays are celebrated at snack time and families should speak with their child’s teacher in advance to make arrangements for their child’s special day. Families are welcome to send in a special treat for the party. Treats should be small (i.e. “mini cupcakes” instead of regular sized cupcakes). Families are encouraged to send foods such as fruit or frozen yogurt or other creative/healthy snacks. Families must provide all nutritional labels so teachers may check the ingredients for children who may have allergies.



**ALLERGIES/NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT:** If your child has any food allergies, please notify the Director as well as the child’s Teachers. Food allergies should also be noted by the child’s Doctor on the child’s health assessment record submitted at the time of enrollment. An Individual Plan of Care must be developed by the child’s parent/caregiver, the child’s physician, the Director, and/or the center’s consultants for all children who have allergies. Each classroom has a “Health Alert” posted on the classroom refrigerator containing information on children who have allergies or chronic illnesses. The “Health Alert” has the child’s name, any allergies or health conditions they have, medications they have at the center, and the child’s photo so that all staff who may be supervising children in each classroom are aware of all children’s allergies and health needs. All staff receive certification in EpiPen administration and medication administration training in order to provide quality and attentive care for children with allergies. While our center is not a nut-free center, classrooms that have children with a severe nut allergy may be a nut-free classrooms. Please check with your child’s Teacher to find out if your child’s classroom is nut-free. For classrooms that are nut-free or that may have children with severe nut allergies, there are many “peanut-free” peanut butter substitutes such as soy nut butter, sunflower seed butter, etc.

### 3-e. TRANSITIONS/ORIENTATION OF NEW CHILDREN

The Director and classroom Teachers will meet with parent/guardians for orientation. At the time of the orientation, the Director will review policies and procedures, assist families with the enrollment packet, discuss program philosophy, the curriculum used, child assessments, daily schedules, and answer any questions the parents/guardians may have regarding the program. Much of this information may be covered during the initial tour. Families should notify the Director and child's Teacher of any special needs or requests, allergies, medications, behaviors, health conditions, or any other information that may be important for teachers to know. The Director will introduce the family to their child's Teacher and connect them via email. Classroom Teachers will send new families a welcome letter that contains information about the child's classroom and schedule and notes specific items that children should bring if additional items are needed other than what is listed in this handbook.

To introduce children to the program, families schedule a visit to bring their child with them to see the center. Once a child is enrolled, the Director and families arrange for a one or two hour visit for their child at the center. The purpose of the visit is for the child and family to have a brief introduction to the center, meet their primary teacher and the other teaching staff in the room, and get a feel for what they will encounter during a typical day before they attend for a full day. Parents/Guardians also have the option to leave for the visit, as long as all of the child's required enrollment forms and physical are completed and submitted and center ratios allow. The visit should occur just prior (usually within one week) of the child's first day of care. Depending on a child's temperament, personality, and previous social experiences, additional visit days may be scheduled in order to help the child transition into the program as smoothly and comfortably as possible. There is no additional fee for visit days.

It can be difficult for parent/guardians to let children have the space they need in order to become independent. For some children who are experiencing separation for the first time, the transition from home to school can be a difficult one. Your child's adjustment and transition into the program will vary depending a variety of factors such as his/her age, temperament, and previous experience of being in the care of someone else other than parents. Furthermore, children who are enrolled four or five days a week typically adjust to school more quickly than those enrolled less frequently. Although it may seem counterintuitive, when family members stay for a long time during morning drop off, it typically makes the separation more difficult for a child who is experiencing separation anxiety. A quick and predictable drop off routine tends to allow for a smoother home-to-school transition for the child. Your positive and loving words of encouragement, a hug and kiss goodbye, and a quick exit can often be the best approach. The teachers will comfort your child and engage them in an activity. The teaching staff has been trained to handle separation anxiety. Families are encouraged to accept assistance from teachers in handling this issue and feel free to ask for additional assistance if needed. The common goal for both families and staff is to make the child's transition into the center as smooth as possible for everyone involved. If your departure has been especially difficult and you feel you need additional support, please contact the Director and share your concerns to discuss a collaborative solution.

#### SEPARATION ANXIETY

It is natural for children to feel a range of different emotions when they are separating from their family, such as sadness, anger, anxiety, and confusion. Children tend to show separation anxiety more severely when they are separating for the first time or when their routine varies from the norm such as after the weekend, returning after a vacation, when there are changes in teaching staff such as a substitute or new Teacher, or when they transition to a different classroom. Depending on the child's personality and temperament, different approaches may be used by Teachers to help children adjust. Generally, during drop off time, establishing a short, predictable routine and sticking to it is best for the children, i.e. a hug, a kiss, and "have a good day" and a quick exit. Out of feelings of guilt, many parents/guardians feel the child will better adjust if they linger for a while at drop off when they are upset. Although the child may initially become upset when their family member departs, children tend to adjust more quickly and engage in an activity when the family member exits quickly and sticks to the routine as opposed to staying in the classroom for a long time. When the parent/guardian finally leaves, the child tends to be upset for a longer time as opposed to a quick drop off. When children know and come to expect/predict the routine without variation, they adjust more easily and quickly. Teachers will comfort children struggling with separation anxiety and engage them in another activity. We welcome families to call or email throughout the day to check in on your child, especially after a tough drop off. Should you have any concerns about separation anxiety and your child, we encourage you to speak with your child's Teacher and/or the Director to share your concerns and work together towards a solution.

#### PROVISIONAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD

The first 30 days will be regarded as a trial period, in which case either party may terminate the contract without notice. If a Teacher has concerns about a child and believes that our center may not be the best environment for the child, the teacher is

encouraged to speak with the Director about their concerns as early on as possible. Depending on the situation, the Director may opt to meet with the child's parents to discuss potential solutions or to discuss if the center is the best environment for the child. The family may be recommended to another facility or environment that can better meet the child's needs.

Should a family choose to disenroll during the 30 day trial period without notice, the family's tuition for that month will not be refunded. The family's deposit will not be refunded as the child's spot was planned to be reserved for the school year.

Following the provision enrollment period (30 days), a child will remain enrolled at the center through the session for which he/she was enrolled. (Please see Section 3-a. under "Contract Sessions" for withdrawal procedures.)

## SECTION IV: DAILY PROCEDURES

### 4-a. ARRIVAL

When arriving at the center, parents/guardians (or parent/guardian designate) must accompany the child into the center and the child's classroom. Y ELC staff are not permitted to bring children from the parking lot to their classroom.



Upon arrival, parents/guardians (or parent/guardian designate) should:

- Sign your child in, including the time and your initials or signature. (Sign in/out sheets are located in every classroom.)
- Complete the Daily Health Check for your child located by the Sign in/out sheet.
- Ensure your child's belongings are hung in their assigned space. Older toddler and preschool-age children should perform this task to encourage independence.
- Place items needing refrigeration in the fridge. Older toddler and preschool-age children should perform this task.
- Ensure your child washes their hands upon entering the classroom.
- Advise teachers of any special instructions for the day or any concerns, news, or changes that may affect the child's behaviors and wellbeing.
- Inform teachers and administration if someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up the child from the center; ensure the alternate pick-up person has been authorized by the parent/guardian in writing to pick up.
- Inform teachers and administration if the child's pick up/drop off schedule is drastically different than usual.
- Inform teachers of any medication administered to your child prior to attending the center.
- Inform teachers and administration of any medications your child may need during the day (see Section 5-d for information regarding procedures for administering medications at the center).
- Leave a phone number where you can be reached during the day if it differs from the number on file.

### 4-b. DEPARTURE

When picking up your child from the center, parents/guardians or an authorized pick up person must sign the child out of the center each day by noting the time and their initials or signature. Parents/Guardians or authorized pickup persons must enter the center in order to pick up their children. Teachers are not permitted to walk children out to the parking lot for pickup in order to maintain supervision of other children in the classroom. Daily, families are encouraged to read the board outside the child's classroom for any updates or news and should check the child's cubby or mailbox for important notices, flyers, newsletters, projects/artwork to be taken home, clothes to be laundered, incident/accident reports, etc. If your child is not in his/her classroom upon pick up time, the teacher will leave a note on the classroom door notifying you of their whereabouts (i.e. outside, gymnasium, on a walk, etc.)

Your child's teacher will become very familiar with your child's family and/or regular authorized pickup persons. However, in the event that a new or substitute teacher is supervising your child, the teacher is required to ask to see a photo ID of the parent/guardian or authorized pickup person in order to release the child. Although parents/guardians or regular authorized pickups may have picked up in the center many times, there may be a situation where a new or substitute teacher has never met the person picking up and will ask to see a photo ID. We ask that you please understand and cooperate with this process should it occur as this is in an effort to keep all children in our care safe and ensure they are being picked up by authorized persons. This is a mandatory security measure that teachers are required to do.

#### 4-c. AUTHORIZED PICKS-UPS OTHER THAN PARENT/GUARDIAN

Families may designate additional authorized persons to pick up their children on the enrollment application. There is no limit to the number of authorized persons a parent/guardian may list, and families may add or remove persons from the authorized list at any time throughout the year.

In order to keep all children in our care safe, children may not be picked up from the center by anyone other than the parent/guardian unless they are authorized **in writing** to do so. In the event of an emergency or last minute situation, a parent/guardian may add another authorized person to the pickup list. However, the parent must notify the center **in writing** of the change. Parents may send an email notifying the child's teacher and administration, fax a note, write in the person's name/phone number at drop off on the child's enrollment form, or send the child with a note to school. Even if the child recognizes or knows the adult, Teachers are not permitted to release the child without parent/guardian written authorization. If such a situation occurs, the child will remain in the care of the center until an authorized person arrives or parent authorization is received in writing. Authorized persons must present **photo** identification (such as a driver's license) to the teachers before they will be allowed to pick up the child from the center. It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to let authorized pick up people know that they will be asked to present a **photo ID** in order for staff to release their child into their care.

#### 4-d. LATE PICK-UP AFTER 6PM

##### PROCEDURES

As the center closes at 6:00pm, parents/guardians should pick up children early enough to have time to gather their child's belongings, talk to the child's teacher, etc. so they may *exit* the center *by 6:00pm*.

We realize unavoidable situations may arise such as emergencies or unexpected traffic. In the event you will be late picking up your child, we ask that you call and notify the center with as much notice as possible. At least two staff 18 years or older will remain onsite in the event of a late pickup.

If the parent/guardian has not called by 6:00pm, Teachers will attempt to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s). If we are unable to reach anyone, Teachers will call the child's emergency contacts and other authorized pickups at 6:05. If the family and emergency contacts cannot be reached by 7:00pm, Teachers will contact the local police department and the Department of Children and Families. If the child is removed from the center by anyone other than the parent/guardian, a note will be left at the entrance of the Y ELC to notify families of the child's location (i.e. authorized pick up person, police station, etc.)

Families who consistently pick up their child late from the center will receive a letter reminding them of the late policy. If parents/guardians have difficulty in picking up their child on time on a consistent basis, it may be helpful to make other pick up arrangements for your child such as carpooling with another family or arranging a family member, neighbor, or back-up babysitter to pick up your child. When children are often picked up late, it requires extra staff members to stay late and can cause conflicts for staff and their own personal obligations after 6:00pm. If late pickups continue even after a policy reminder is sent and/or other arrangements are made, parents may be asked to disenroll their child and find other childcare options that better meet the needs of the family's schedule.

##### LATE PICK-UP FEES

Families who pick up after 6:00pm will be allowed one late pickup without being charged a late fee. After this one time courtesy, families who pick up after 6:00pm will incur a late fee of \$1 per minute per child. The late pick up time will be determined by the teacher's cell phone. The parent/guardian or authorized pick up person will be notified of the late pickup time/amount to be charged and will be asked to sign a late pickup form. The late pickup fee will be automatically drafted from the bank account/credit card on file the next business day.

#### 4-e. ABSENCES/SCHEDULE CHANGES

If you are dropping off or pickup up your child significantly later/earlier than usual, or if your child will be absent for the day, we ask that you please notify administration as well as your child's teacher. This will help us in scheduling and staffing the center appropriately. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. When children will be absent for an extended period of time (ie vacation), families are asked to give at least two weeks notice.



When children are absent, regardless of the reason (including when the center is closed), tuition will not be credited or deducted from the child's tuition. When children who are enrolled part time are absent, they are not able to "makeup" or switch days or receive tuition credit. Please refer to Section 6-b. Tuition for more information on tuition fees.

#### 4-f. DROP-IN CARE

For the convenience of the families in our program, the center offers drop in care for children who are enrolled less than five days a week and would like to occasionally add an additional day. Drop in care availability is based on the number of spaces open in the classroom on a particular day so that the class maintains teacher/child ratios and center staffing. To check whether space is available on a certain day other than your child's regularly scheduled days, please contact the Director. Even in the case of a last minute request, the center will try our best to accommodate families' schedules. However, drop-in care is not guaranteed but is based on availability of space and staffing. There is an additional fee for drop-in care. Drop-in care fees will be drafted via the parent/guardian's credit card the day of drop-in care. Please speak with administration regarding drop-in care daily fees which vary per age group/program.

Drop-in care should be occasionally used as a back-up emergency care. Families who request excessive added days for drop-in care will be requested to permanently add requested days to their child's schedule or may be denied drop in care at the discretion of the Director.

## SECTION V: HEALTH AND SAFETY

### 5-a. GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Our center is continuously monitored for health and safety standards. Weekly, the center's Health and Safety Consultant conducts a walk-through of the center and addresses any health or safety concerns with Teachers and/or the Director. Annually, the local and state Department of Public Health visit the center for an inspection and to assist the center in meeting all state and local health and safety requirements. In order to prevent illness of Teachers and children, we engage in the following recommended childcare hygiene practices:

- Children are taught and assisted with proper hand-washing techniques.
- Teachers and children wash their hands when they enter the room, after toileting, nose blowing, coughing in their hand, touching any bodily fluids, before and after they play in a sensory table, after any contact with an animal, after touching garbage, and before eating and serving meals and snacks.
- Tables are sanitized before meals and snacks.
- Toys and equipment are cleaned and disinfected weekly and as needed.
- Toilets and sinks are disinfected daily and as needed.
- Liquid antibacterial soap is provided for hand washing.



### UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Y ELC staff use universal precautions when exposed to blood and blood-containing body fluids and injury discharges of all children. All persons exposed to blood or blood-containing body fluids and tissue discharges shall wash their hands immediately with soap and warm running water. Single use disposable gloves shall be worn if there is contact with blood-containing body fluids or tissue discharges. Hands shall be washed with soap and water after removal of gloves. Gloves shall be discarded in plastic bags. For spills of vomits, urine, feces, blood or other body fluids, Y ELC staff shall clean and disinfect the affected area. If running water is not immediately available when outdoors or on field trips, soap and water based wet wipes may be used. When running water becomes available, hands must be washed immediately with soap and running water. Disinfecting hand sanitizers may not replace the use of soap and water when washing hands.

### BUILDING SAFETY

Any and all renovations to the center such as painting, carpeting, tiling, or renovations that result in dust flying about will be done while there are no children nor adults present. These types of renovations will be conducted over a weekend, an evening

after closing, or during extended center holiday closings or shutdowns so that windows can be opened and proper ventilation and clean up has been achieved prior to children and adults entering the space.

## 5-b. REQUIRED HEALTH RECORDS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

### CHILD PHYSICALS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

All children are required to have a current (ED 191) physical form on file conducted within the last year per Connecticut State Department of Public Health regulations. All immunizations and physicals must be kept up to date (conducted within the last year.) Families will be sent a reminder notice 30 days in advance of the expiration of a child's current physical by the center's Health Consultant. Children who do not have current physicals on file or up to date immunizations will be excluded from the center after 30 days from the date of the physical's expiration and will not be able to return until the center has documentation that medical attention has been obtained. A blank physical form (ED191) will be attached to the reminder notice from the nurse consultant, and a parent/guardian can always obtain a form from the Director. This policy will be strictly adhered to as required by both state and local health licensors.

### FLU IMMUNIZATION

All children who are 7 months of age and older are required to have a flu shot administered annually between the dates of July 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year per Connecticut State Department of Public Health (DPH) and Office of Early Childhood (OEC) regulations. Families must submit a statement to the center from the doctor that documents the date the child received the immunization. Families who do not want their child to receive a flu shot immunization must complete a Religious Exemption Statement and have it notarized before submitting it to the center. This form is available on the Connecticut DPH website and at the center. Children who do not receive a flu shot immunization or whose families do not submit an exemption statement by December 31<sup>st</sup> will be excluded from the center. There is no grace period and this policy is strictly adhered to as mandated by the CT DPH.

## 5-c. HEALTH CONSULTANT

The center's Health Consultant reviews health and safety policies on an annual basis. Weekly, the Health Consultant reviews and assures both children and staff's health records are up to date and consults with the Director and Teachers to address any concerns or questions they may have in regards to health and safety. The Health Consultant also assures that the classroom and center as a whole are meeting state and local health guidelines and observes children's health and wellbeing in the center. If an outbreak of a contagious illness should occur, the Health Consultant will be contacted for review.

## 5-d. ILLNESS/EXCLUSION POLICY

The first time that a child is enrolled in an early learning center, it is common to become ill often as they adjust to being around groups of children. Although staff make much effort to disinfect all areas and encourage handwashing often, children in group childcare settings often become ill. It is not uncommon for children to have 8 – 10 illnesses a year. Parent/guardians are strongly encouraged to arrange backup childcare for those inevitable days when their child will be too ill to attend the center.

Should the child become too ill to participate in regular center activities or if the child's condition is suspected to be contagious, the parent/guardians will be called to pick the child up within one hour. If the parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child. If possible, the child will be isolated from the group until he/she is picked up so he/she may rest in a comfortable, quiet area. Teachers will complete an illness/incident report for any children who are sent home due to illness. Parents/Guardians or designated pickup person will be asked to review and sign the illness/incident report at pickup. Families are required to have someone available to contact by phone/email and be able to pick up their child in the event of an illness or emergency. For example, for parents who are often away on business trips or work in the city, a backup sitter, nanny, grandparent, or neighbor should be available to call and pick up in the event that such circumstances arise. If the child is suspected to have something contagious, the child is required to visit their pediatrician. If it turns out not to be contagious, the parent must provide a note from the doctor stating that the child does *not* have a case of (*illness/disease*) and is free to return to school.

Our Health Policy is based on State Licensing Regulations and will be enforced by the staff and Greenwich Department of Health in efforts to keep all children, staff, and families at the center healthy and to control the spread of illness. Children with fevers, vomiting, or diarrhea may not return to the center until they have been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or other medications. In the event a child may be feeling better or a doctor's clearance note has been received,

the child still must refrain from attending the center for 24 hours as they may still be contagious. Any child who has been prescribed medication from a physician will be required to be on the medication for 24 hours before returning to school, so the child may be monitored for side effects. Children enrolled in after school programs who were sent home from school or did not attend school due to illness may not attend YMCA after school programs. We appreciate your cooperation in following these guidelines in the best interest of both the ill child and the other children and staff in the center.

Children will be excluded from center for at least 24 hours if they exhibit one or more of the following symptoms:

- Fever greater than 100.5 degrees or has had one during the previous 24 hours
- Undiagnosed rash\*
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Serious pain
- Green or yellow discharge from eyes
- Severe nasal congestion
- Persistent chest or bronchial coughs
- Other obvious signs of communicable illness such as head lice\*\*, chicken pox, conjunctivitis (pink eye), coxsackie, strep throat, etc.

*\*An undiagnosed rash must be examined by a doctor and a diagnosis should be provided. The doctor must provide a clearance note stating the diagnosis and clearance that the rash is not/no longer contagious. The doctor should also note when the child may return to the center and fully participate in center activities without putting other children at risk of the spread of rash, illness, or infection.*

*\*\*Children with lice will be excluded from the program until treatment has begun. All knits must be removed from a child's head. Hair with knits can fall off and onto another child, although the child has been treated. Children may return once the lice have been treated and there are no knits on their head.*



In addition to the aforementioned symptoms, the center reserves the right to exclude children from the program if they are observed to be not well by the child's Teacher, the Director, and/or the Health Consultant. It is important that the child have time to rest and recover if they are not feeling well. The center is not equipped to care for ill children. Likewise, it is also the center's responsibility to prevent the spread of illness to other children and Teachers.

If a child is diagnosed with something contagious or if a child is absent three or more days due to illness or other health reasons, a doctor's note to return to school must accompany with the child when they return to the center. The doctor's note must provide not only a return date to school, but also a diagnosis. If a doctor's clearance note is not received, the child will be unable to attend the program. Similarly, if a child has not waited the required number of days following diagnosis and treatment, the child will be unable to remain at the center. If your child is not well enough to participate in the regular daily activities (outside play, playing in groups, enrichment classes, swimming lessons etc.), he/she is not well enough to be at school. The child should stay at home until he/she is well enough to fully participate in the regular daily schedule and activities. Accommodations to exclude children from specific activities that the rest of the class is participating in will not be made.

If your child is diagnosed with something contagious, we ask that you notify office personnel immediately so other families can be notified. The name of the child who was diagnosed will remain anonymous to other families. The center will send out a "Health Alert" to families via email or memo when other children in our center are diagnosed with something contagious. Signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transportation, period of communicability, and control measures for the center and home will be made available. The center will obtain advice from local health authorities for health information, or contact our Health Consultant, if needed.

#### **5-e. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS**

In an effort to facilitate the wellness of your child, we will administer certain medication to your child at your request, following the guidelines of the Public Health Code (Section 19A-79-9). When your child returns to the center with prescription and/or non-prescription oral medication after an illness, an authorization form signed by you and the child's physician must be

fully completed. Please note even over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol or Benadryl, require an authorization form completed by you and the child's physician. The center is unable to administer medication without proper documentation.

Only staff members who have been certified in administration of medication and injectable medications will be allowed to administer medication to children. Staff are trained in the "5 R's of medication administration, ensuring: Right Medication, Right Child, Right Time, Right Route, and Right Dosage. Only oral, topical, and emergency or epinephrine injectable medication will be administered in the program. In order for us to administer medication to your child, the following are required:

- A completed "Administration of Medication by Daycare Personnel" form completed and signed by a physician, parent/guardian, Director, and Health Consultant. This form can be obtained at the center, online on the CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC) website, and most Connecticut physicians' offices. The OEC requires the form that states administration by "Daycare Personnel" and not by "School Personnel," which is used for school-age children.
- Medication must be administered at home for the first 24 hours. Y ELC staff may not administer the first dose of medication, with the exception of emergency epinephrine injectable medication.
- Medication *must* be sent in the original pharmacy container (including the box, if applicable) labeled with your child's name, the name of the medication, and directions for the administration of the medication. This applies to non-medicated items related to administering medication such as air chambers used for the administration of asthma medication.
- All medications and medication forms should be brought to the main office first to be reviewed by the Director and/or Health Consultant before being stored in your child's classroom.

All medications shall be locked in the classroom with the exception of emergency medications, which shall be stored out of the reach of children but easily accessible by Y ELC staff. Controlled medications must be double locked. Teachers shall bring medications with them for any off-site activities including outside play.

Medications for chronic illnesses and medical conditions such as asthma or food allergies must remain at the center and may not be passed back and forth between home and school. Parents/Guardians should obtain a second prescription to remain at the center. For example, if the child requires an Epipen or inhaler, the parent/guardian must provide an Epipen or inhaler and air chamber to remain at the center in addition to the ones kept at the child's home. For children enrolled in After School Programs, families must provide medication that remains with YMCA staff in addition to medication they may have at the child's school; the YMCA does not have access to the medications kept at the school. Medications should never be transported via a child's backpack. If a child's doctor requires medications on site, the child may not attend the program without the medication and proper authorization forms.

All unused medication will be returned to the parent/guardian or destroyed if not picked up within one week following the termination of the order. Families are responsible for replacing expired medications with a current prescription and authorization form. The expiration of the medication order is noted by the child's physician on the authorization form and is usually one year. If a child's medication and authorization forms expire, the child will be excluded from attending the program until a current prescription and authorization is obtained.

Policies regarding medication administration are mandated by state and local licensing authorities and are strictly adhered to.

#### **NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS/OINTMENTS**

An authorization form is required for topical, nonprescription items such as sunscreen, diaper ointment (free of antibiotic, antifungal, or steroidal components), insect repellent, lip balm, lotion, petroleum jelly, and teething medications. Please see your child's teacher to provide written permission for staff to apply these items. Such items should be labeled with the child's first and last name by the parent/guardian with a permanent marker. In order for the center to administer any non-prescription medications that have the wording "medicated" on it (aside from over-the-counter teething medications and medicated powder), the family must obtain an Administration of Medication by Day Care Personnel form completed by the child's physician, parent/guardian, Director, and Health Consultant.

#### **5-f. SERIOUS ILLNESS/INJURY PROTOCOL**

All illnesses and both major and minor injuries are reported to the Director and are treated at the center by the Director or Teachers. We strive to have all teachers be trained and certified in Pediatric CPR/AED/First Aid. There is always a teacher trained in CPR and First Aid on duty at the center. Teachers who are certified will handle minor medical injuries and administer First Aid as needed. Depending on the nature of the injury or illness, families will be notified by phone or at pick-up time. The center may attempt to consult with the child's physician for guidance if deemed necessary. An incident report will be

completed for all injuries and illnesses and signed by the Director and the parent/guardian at pick up. Families may request a copy of the incident report if desired; the original report will remain in the child's file at the center.

In the event of a medical emergency or major injury, if necessary, emergency medical care will be arranged and the child will be transported to Greenwich Hospital by police or ambulance. If ratio allows, the child will be accompanied by a staff member. A teacher will simultaneously notify parents by phone. If parents cannot be contacted, other emergency contacts will be called. Families are responsible for all medical costs and emergency ambulance transportation.

## **5-g. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROTOCOL**

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will attend to first aid as needed. Another staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician/dentist. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital as long as ratios permit. The child's Emergency Medical Treatment permission form will be brought with them (page 3 of the Enrollment Agreement). A staff member will notify the family or alternate pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency room.

In the event a child becomes ill while at the center, parents will be notified and the child will be moved to a designated area where the child will be comfortable. A staff person will remain with the child at all times.

### **BUILDING EVACUATION PROTOCOL**

If for any reason the Y ELC building at 2 St. Roch Ave is deemed unsafe, the children will move to the St. Roch Church basement, which is the building next to the Y ELC. If for any reason the church building is deemed unsafe, the children will be transported to the main YMCA Facility at 50 East Putnam Avenue. A note will be left on the main doors of the Y ELC as to the children's whereabouts and families will be notified by email and phone.

### **WEATHER/NATURAL DISASTERS PROTOCOL**

When severe inclement weather arises during the day, families will be called to request prompt pick up of their child. In the event of a tornado or hurricane, children will be moved to the center hallways away from windows and doors or to the center basement. In the event of snow, sleet, or other severe winter weather conditions, please see section 2-e. In the event of a natural disaster, we will follow instructions given by the local town officials. If children need to be removed from the building due to unsafe building conditions due to storm, fallen wires, etc., the center will follow the "Building Evacuation Procedures" described above. If any loss of power or heat occurs for more than an hour, families will be contacted and asked to pick up their children immediately.

### **FIRE EMERGENCY PROTOCOL**

In case of a fire, children and staff will exit the building from the nearest door and will gather in the playground area behind the building. Fire drills are held on a regular basis so that all staff and older children are aware of procedures. Depending on the extent and location of the fire, children may be moved to a safer location. Families will be notified by email and phone as soon as possible.

### **INTRUDOR IN THE BUILDING PROTOCOL**

In the event there is an intruder in the building that could potentially cause harm to anyone, an announcement will be made over the loudspeaker to alert all staff of the intruder's whereabouts specifically in the building. Teachers will immediately lock their classrooms, shut off the lights, and get out of view from the door. Teachers will attempt to immediately and rapidly move children outside of the building via the nearest door or window and will follow evacuation procedures or flee to the nearest, safest place. Teachers who are unable to do so will hide children in the classroom and protect the children to the best of their ability. Teachers have been trained in how to handle these situations and are to attack and throw heavy objects at the intruder aggressively should the intruder gain access to a classroom. The police will be notified immediately.

Please see the center's Crisis and Disaster handbook for more detailed information regarding Emergency Procedures.

## **5-h. PICK-UP SAFETY**

It is crucial all children are properly restrained in a car seat as mandated by the Connecticut DMV. If a staff member notices that a parent/guardian or authorized pickup person is not properly restraining a child per State of Connecticut laws in

vehicles, documentation of a verbal conversation to the person will be completed by staff. If the parent/guardian or authorized pickup person continues to improperly restrain the child according to State of Connecticut laws, staff are required as mandated reporters to report the incident to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Some families have different drop off/pick up persons for their child. It is recommended to have more than one car seat so that each car is properly equipped to transport your child. In the event that a pick up person does not have a car seat in their vehicle for the child, families are welcome to leave the car seat at the Y ELC so that pick up persons may properly restrain the child while driving. If a staff member notices the absence of a car seat, he/she will not release the child until an authorized pick-up arrives with proper equipment.

State law prohibits staff from releasing a child to an adult that is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If a person arrives to pick up a child and staff believes that there is cause for reasonable concern, the person will be asked to call someone else to pick up the child. If the person becomes uncooperative, the police will be called.

### 5-i. SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Keeping children safe is our number one priority. Adequate and attentive supervision is essential in order to keep children safe. A ratio of no more than 1 Teacher per 10 children 32 months of age and older or 1 Teacher per 4 children under the age of 32 months shall be maintained at all times (this includes indoors, outdoors, and naptime). At least 2 staff members will be present at all times at the center. The group size for children shall not exceed 20 for children over 32 months and 8 for children under 32 months unless they are separated by a visible barrier or divider. Children are carefully supervised in all areas, whether inside the classroom, outside at play, in the bathroom, or in another area of the center. Teachers station themselves and rotate among areas in the classroom or play area so they are able to visually supervise all children in the classroom. When a child goes inside to use the restrooms from outdoors, a Teacher will accompany him/her. Children are never allowed to travel from the outside to inside by themselves. During naptime, regular supervision is required. Lights will be shut off to allow for adequate rest, but windows shall give sufficient light to the classroom for supervision purposes. When all children are asleep in a classroom and two Teachers present, one staff may leave the class and the room shall still be considered "in ratio." If a child awakes, the second Teacher must return to the classroom and regular ratios must be maintained. Teachers must be available to return to the classroom as soon as a child wakes. For example, he/she may leave the classroom to make copies or work on lesson plans, but may not leave the site to take a lunch break. If at any time you have a concern about adequate or safe supervision, please bring your concerns to the Director.



### 5-j. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Children need a safe, nurturing environment to grow and learn at both home and school. If children's minimum needs for good nutrition, medical care, clean and appropriate clothing, shelter, appropriate discipline, intellectual stimulation, and feeling of importance are not met, they cannot grow and develop appropriately. Should a family have difficulty meeting those needs, they are encouraged to ask for help. The center serves as a bridge for families between other community organizations, and can help connect the family to community resources that can offer assistance. In instances in which a child's needs are not being met consistently, the child's Teacher and/or the Director will talk to the parents/guardians about helping them meet the child's minimal needs. Despite these efforts, if the child's needs are not being met, staff are required as mandated reporters by Connecticut state law to file a report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

All of our staff have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our center. If the child's physical safety is endangered or staff suspect any type of abuse or neglect, whether it be physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, or educational, staff are required to file a report with DCF as mandated by Connecticut state law.

#### DEFINITION

Child Abuse includes:

- Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning)
- Any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation)

- Neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)
- Emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth)
- At risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

Child Abuse is defined as:

A child who has had

- Non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him
- Injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
- Is in a condition, which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

Child neglect is defined as:

A child who has been:

- Abandoned
- Denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally
- Allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well-being (CT statutes 46b-120)

## STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

As childcare providers we are mandated by law to report **any suspicion** that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk. Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF – 136) to DCF. Staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e). All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the Center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

The management of this program supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child. The administration will protect the child, including immediate notification of a parent or guardian via phone and/or email, once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program. Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF's investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the employee would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed to return to work.

## SECTION VI: TUITION, BILLING, AND PAYMENTS

### 6-a. REGISTRATION FEES

#### DEPOSIT

A \$500 deposit for Early Childhood Programs and \$100 deposit for After School Programs is due upon registration in order to secure your child's enrollment. The deposit may be paid via check or credit/debit card; cash is not accepted. Families who wish to reserve a spot several months or longer in advance are required to submit a deposit to reserve a spot for their child.

#### REFUNDS

Deposits are nonrefundable should a family decide not to enroll their child in Y ELC programs as it is used to hold the space for the child and prevents other families from enrolling. In the event a family submits a deposit and there is no space available for the child within six months of being on the wait list, the full deposit will be refunded at the family's request.

The full deposit will be refunded at the end of the child's enrollment under the condition that family provides a thirty (30) day written notice of the child's withdrawal from the program at the end of a school year session or summer session. The deposit will be returned in the form of a check and mailed within thirty (30) days of the child's last day. In the event that a parent/guardian disenrolls a child from the center without giving at least thirty (30) days notice **in writing** or before the end of a session, the deposit will be forfeited and not refunded.

## 6-b. TUITION

Tuition fees vary according to the program your child enrolls in: Infant/Toddler, Preschool, Part-Day Preschool, or After School. It also varies based on the number of days per week your child attends the center. Current tuition rates are included in your registration packet and are available at the Y ELC. Tuition rates are subject to change on an annual basis. Families will be given a thirty (30) days notice of any tuition increases. Tuition fees are calculated on an annual basis and billed monthly on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month. Payment is drafted automatically by debit or credit card (Mastercard, VISA, or AMEX) or in the form of an EFT bank draft. If the automatic payment is declined, an automatic \$20 fee will be applied when an attempt to redraft fees is made.

### LATE FEES

If tuition fees are not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, tuition will be considered not paid. A late payment charge of \$50 will be applied in addition to the \$20 declined fee, if applicable. Payment must be received immediately by check, bank draft or credit/debit card. Cash payments are not accepted. If tuition fees are not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, the child may be unable to attend the center until payment is made. The Administrative Assistant or Director will notify families whose balance is past due. If you are having trouble making payment, please speak with the Director in order to create a payment plan. Payment plans are only used in exceptional circumstances as determined by the discretion of the Director and YMCA finance department.

If a family has a balance due at the YMCA of Greenwich or Y Early Learning Center, the family will be unable to enroll in any other Y programs, including the Early Learning Center, After School Programs, and/or programs and classes at the YMCA of Greenwich until the balance has been paid. This includes Care 4 Kids payment balances (if applicable).

### SIBLING DISCOUNT

Families who have two children enrolled in Early Childhood programs at the center are eligible to receive a 10% sibling discount off the lower tuition. For example, if a family has one child enrolled full time in our Preschool program and another child enrolled full time in our Infant program, they will receive a discount off the Preschool tuition. If the costs for each child are the same, families will receive a 10% discount off one of the child's tuition. Sibling discounts do not apply to After School Programs or to families who receive scholarship or other discounts.



### ABSENCES

When your child enrolls in the center, you are reserving the time, space, staffing, and provisions for your child whether the child attends or not. Your tuition pays only for direct operating costs such as staff, snacks, and materials which all must be available for your child whether or not they are in attendance. Therefore, we regret that we are not able to deduct tuition fees due to absences for any reason, included illnesses.

### VACATIONS

Families will not receive tuition reimbursement or credit for vacations or when the child is absent for an extended period of time for any reason. Tuition is still due while a child is on vacation/absent as the child's spot is still being reserved. Families may not disenroll and reenroll their child due to vacation or traveling unless it is at the end of a session.

### SUMMER VACATION

The Y Early Learning Center is a year-round program and runs normal hours during the summer. However, families may opt to enroll for the school year (10 month) program only and withdrawal their child during the summer. The school year session ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. Refunds will not be made should the child withdraw or not attend earlier than June 30<sup>th</sup>. Families may choose not to enroll their child during the summer session (July and August) and may reenroll for the school year session in September. If a child is enrolled during the summer session, vacation credits will not be given for days the child may be absent or on vacation.

### SCHOOL CLOSINGS/HOLIDAYS

Tuition is calculated on an annual basis. Therefore, when the center is closed due to inclement weather, emergencies, professional development days, holidays/holiday breaks, or other center closings, tuition fees will not be refunded or credited. This includes one week that the center is closed in August every year due to the St. Roch's annual festival. Children who



attend part time (between one to four days per week) are not permitted to switch and “make up” days if their regularly scheduled days fall on a holiday or center closing for any reason.

### 6-c. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

While the Y is a charitable organization, tuition fees are essential for running our high quality early learning program. The Y ELC endeavors to serve all families, regardless of ability to pay. We will be happy to help you in the process of applying for financial assistance through the YMCA of Greenwich, which comes from the Greenwich United Way and generous donors in the community, as well as Care4Kids, a state-funded program to support families with childcare costs. Scholarships are not necessarily guaranteed for all applicants. If you find you are faced with financial hardship, please contact the Director to find out if your child can qualify for a scholarship.

## SECTION VII: PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The Y ELC offers a variety of educational programs and enrichment activities for children in all age groups and programs. Daily activities include indoor and outdoor activities providing fine and gross motor development. Infant schedules are individualized, and general daily schedules for toddler and preschool classes are posted outside each classroom and are flexible depending on the needs and flow of the classroom. Learning experiences include both child-initiated and Teacher-initiated activities. Below is an overview of the various programs available at the Y ELC.

### 7-a. INFANT PROGRAM (6 WEEKS – 18 MONTHS)

The Y ELC has three infant classrooms which have areas for play and napping rooms. Infants’ schedules are determined by the individual needs of the babies in our care. Regular feeding and napping schedules are established in collaboration with families. Infant classrooms offer a variety of swings, bouncers, and boppy pillows, developmentally appropriate play equipment, mats, cribs, books and toys. Tummy time is important for infants’ physical development and is given whenever possible. Teachers frequently sing, dance, and read books with the children. When the weather is nice, infants enjoy walks outside in our 4-seat stroller or spending time in the Tumble Room. Infants have music class weekly and participate in different developmentally appropriate activities such as water play and safe finger painting. The center provides healthy snacks for infants when they begin eating solid foods as well as whole milk. Parents are welcome to bring their own snacks for their infant if preferred. Daily, parents/guardians are provided with a Daily Information Sheet completed by their child’s Teachers which provides a detailed summary their child’s daily activities, including feeding, napping, and diaper changing schedules. Generally, when infants reach 18 months of age, they begin transitioning to our Toddler program. Under certain circumstances, a transition may occur a little earlier or later.



### 7-b. TODDLER PROGRAM (18 MONTHS – 2 YEARS)

The Y ELC has three toddler classrooms. Our toddler program offers a variety of activities to foster young children’s growth, learning and development. Toddler classrooms are equipped with various learning centers such as sensory table, art, library, dramatic play, music, manipulatives, easels, block area, and science areas. Teachers intentionally plan a variety of learning experiences for children based on a unique theme each week. Teachers utilize Teaching Strategies Gold Objectives as a planning guide in order to plan activities that will help children develop and master new skills. Lesson plans are posted weekly outside the classroom for parents to view. Children in our toddler program participate in a brief circle time each day and in both structured and free choice activities, such as coloring with crayons, pretend play, learning to cut with scissors, art projects, manipulatives, painting, sensory play (i.e. water, sand, playdough, rice), and reading stories. Weekly, children participate in a variety of enrichment activities including music class, Zumba class, and yoga class. Toddlers enjoy taking neighborhood walks in a 6-seater wagon when the weather is nice. They pick vegetables from our center garden located in the playground area when they are ripe and use them to cook/bake creative and healthy snacks in their classroom. Toddlers strengthen their gross motor muscles daily outside on the toddler playground and in the Tumble Room which is arrayed with a variety of mat equipment and a climber. The center provides a healthy snack in the morning and afternoon and whole milk for toddlers while parents/guardians provide lunch. Toddlers take a nap daily from approximately 1:00pm-3:00pm. Daily, parents/guardians are provided with a Daily Information Sheet completed by their child’s Teachers which details their child’s

daily activities, including feeding, napping, and diaper changing schedules/bathroom visits. Generally, at 3 years of age, toddlers transition to our Preschool program.

### SAMPLE TODDLER DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00-8:45	Arrival and free choice; children choose a variety of quiet activities so they can ease into their busy day. Activities include but not limited to puzzles, coloring, manipulatives, easel painting, and books. Some children eat breakfast upon arrival.
8:45-9:00	Circle Time
9:00-9:15	Diaper changes / Bathroom visits / Hand washing
9:15-9:30	Morning Snack
9:30-10:00	Enrichment Activity: Music, Yoga, or Zumba
10:00-10:30	Art Activity
10:30-11:00	Center Activities (Art/Creative Expression, Science, Sensory Table, Small Group Activity, Dramatic Play, Math & Manipulatives, Library, Blocks & Building, etc.)
11:00-11:15	Diaper changes / Bathroom visits / Hand washing
11:15-12:00	Outside Play / Gross Motor Activities in Gym
12:00-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:00	Diaper Changes / Bathroom visits / Hand washing
1:00-3:00	Nap / Rest Time
3:00-3:15	Diaper changes / Bathroom visits / Hand washing
3:15-3:30	Afternoon Snack
3:30-3:45	Story Time / Read Aloud
3:45-4:15	Outside Play / Gross Motor Activities in Gym
4:15-5:00	Group Activity / Center Time
5:00-5:15	Diaper changes / Bathroom visits / Hand washing
5:15-6:00	Free choice / Clean up / Departure

### 7-c. PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (3 TO 5 YEARS)

The Y ELC has two preschool classrooms. Preschool classes are mixed age groups within a two-year span, which allows opportunities for leadership development in older children, motivation for younger children, a sense of security, and consistency with teachers for an extended period of time. Generally, children begin preschool on the first of the month after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. If a child turns 3 years old between September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> of any given year, children will generally transition to preschool on September 1<sup>st</sup>. If the child is not yet potty trained and not developmentally ready for preschool, the child may remain enrolled in the toddler program for a determined period of time. Children as young as 32 months of age may transition to preschool in some circumstances during other times throughout the year if it is developmentally appropriate. This is to be determined using a preschool-ready developmental checklist along with the child's Teachers, the Director, and the family. The child must also be potty trained in order to transition to preschool. Both the Director and the family must give written authorization for a child between the ages of 32 months to 36 months to transition to preschool (please speak with the Director to see the policy/form).

Our preschool classrooms are equipped with a variety of learning centers such as art, easel painting, math, science, library, manipulatives, blocks, sensory table, writing, library, and dramatic play areas. Teachers intentionally plan a variety of learning experiences for children based on a unique theme each week. Teachers utilize Teaching Strategies Gold Objectives as a planning guide in order to plan activities that will help children develop and master new skills. Lesson plans are posted weekly outside the classroom for parents to view. Preschoolers participate in circle time daily and both small and large group activities, as well as both structured and free choice activities aimed to allow them to develop a variety of skills, such as sorting, making patterns, learning letter sounds, writing their name, learning shapes and colors, rote counting, learning the

alphabet, art projects, developing problem solving skills, vocabulary development, sequencing, developing empathy and cooperation skills, following directions, and cause and effect concepts. Weekly, children participate in a variety of enrichment activities, such as Zumba, Yoga, Music, Bootcamp/Fitness, and Swimming Lessons. Children in preschool play outside each morning and afternoon on the playground, weather permitting. They also tend to the center garden located in the playground

area and learn about the plant cycle, while picking ripe vegetables and using them to cook/bake creative and healthy snacks in their classroom. They develop their gross motor muscles through group activities and free play in the gymnasium located on the second floor of the center. The Y ELC provides a healthy snack in the morning and afternoon and 2% milk for preschoolers, while parents/guardians provide lunch. Preschoolers take a nap/rest on a cot quietly daily from 1:00pm-3:00pm. Throughout the year, the children take several engaging field trips related to their current unit, allowing for reinforced and unique learning experiences. Please see section 7-p for more information regarding preschool field trips. When children reach kindergarten age, they transition into elementary school.

### **PRESCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL COACH**

The Y Early Learning Center is a partner in the Greenwich United Way's ECAGS Program (Early Childhood Achievement Gap Solutions). This program provides a Preschool Instructional Coach and Early Childhood Consultant Expert as resources for the center's preschool program. Research shows that coaching is up to eight times more effective in developing educators as opposed to traditional, workshop or lecture-style trainings. This enables Preschool Teachers at the Y ELC to receive guidance, coaching, and ongoing support in classroom management, curriculum, documentation and assessments, intentional teaching, lesson planning, behavior management of children, classroom climate, and the most current, effective methods of instruction in Early Childhood. The Preschool Instructional Coach visits the center for coaching weekly.

### **SAMPLE PRESCHOOL DAILY SCHEDULE**

7:00-8:45	Arrival and free choice; children choose a variety of quiet activities so they can ease into their busy day. Activities include but not limited to puzzles, coloring, manipulatives, easel painting, small group activities, writing, and books. Some children eat breakfast upon arrival.
8:45-9:15	Bathroom visit / Hand washing
9:15-9:30	Morning Snack
9:30-9:45	Circle Time
9:45-10:45	Enrichment Activity: Music, Yoga, Zumba, Boot Camp, or Swimming Lessons
10:45-11:15	Center Activities (Art/Creative Expression, Science, Sensory Table, Small Group Activity, Dramatic Play, Math & Manipulatives, Library, Blocks & Building, etc.)
11:15-12:00	Outside Play / Gross Motor Activities in Gym
12:00-12:15	Bathroom visit / Hand washing
12:15-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:00	Bathroom visit / Quiet reading
1:00-3:00	Nap/Rest Time
3:00-3:15	Bathroom visit / Hand washing
3:15-3:30	Afternoon Snack
3:30-3:45	Afternoon Circle Time
3:45-4:15	Outside Play / Gross Motor Activities in the Gym
4:15-5:30	Center Time & Small Group Activities
5:30-6:00	Free Choice / Clean Up / Departure

### **7-d. LEARNING & ENRICHMENT AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (L.E.A.P.) (PRESCHOOL & SCHOOL-AGE)**

The Y ELC runs an academically enriching after school program at Hamilton Avenue School located across the street from the center. The program runs according to the Greenwich Public Schools calendar during the school year and does not include programming during school vacations, holidays, or the summer. Preschool and School-age children from New Lebanon, Julian Curtiss, and Glenville Schools are bussed to Hamilton Avenue School immediately after school. After school participants must attend one of the four mentioned schools to enroll in the program. The L.E.A.P. curriculum is that of the YMCA of the USA's signature after school program model which provides homework help, tutoring, and a variety of fun academic and

enrichment activities based on nine different components such as Health & Wellness, Global Learning, Arts Education, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. The model is researched based and proven to positively impact children's academic and socioemotional growth. Children have the opportunity to visit the YMCA of Greenwich for swimming and participate in outreach programs throughout the year. For more information regarding L.E.A.P., please contact the Program Coordinator.



### 7-e. FAMILY FIRST IN EDUCATION AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (SCHOOL-AGE)

Family First in Education is a new collaborative between the YMCA of Greenwich and Family Centers designed to tackle Greenwich's growing achievement gap. Family First in Education is a multi-year program made possible by a private donor that aims to improve education and family outcomes for participating elementary and middle school students enrolled at Hamilton Avenue School, New Lebanon Elementary, Julian Curtiss, and Western Middle School. The program follows the same after school model used at L.E.A.P. provided by the YMCA of the USA. Students and families participate in monthly weekend enrichment trips. This initiative aims to cause a measureable reduction of disparities in public school success, thereby impacting key causes of the achievement gap. Family Centers provides wraparound services for participating families under the philosophy that when families are stable and strong, children and youth have the best chances of enjoying healthy development. These factors also give children the best chance to learn and achieve at school. For more information regarding Family First in Education, please contact the Director of After School Programs.

### 7-f. PROGRAM TRANSITIONS

When children become the appropriate age and are developmentally ready, they will transition into the next chronological program. Transitions may take place immediately when the child is of age or at the start of a specific month or week depending on classroom space and availability. The Director will notify parents/guardians of the transition and the child's new classroom approximately thirty (30) days before the child's transition. Due to classroom enrollment, staffing, and ratios, the center is not able to accommodate requests for specific classrooms or Teachers but will make every effort to do so when possible and appropriate in the best interest of the child. Typically, the child's Teachers make recommendations to the Director as to which classroom and Teachers may be the best fit and environment for the child to thrive at the next level, taking into account the child's learning style, socioemotional needs, age, and personality. The Director will tour the parents/guardians of the new classroom (if necessary), introduce them to the child's new classroom Teachers, and share the classroom's contact information. The child's new Teacher will send a "Welcome email" to the parent including general classroom information, class schedule, and supplies to bring.

In order to acclimate the child to the new environment, the child's former Teacher and new Teacher will work together and coordinate times for the child to visit the new classroom; first in short increments and gradually increasing the length of the visit. The length of time that it takes a child to transition will vary from child to child, and both the Teachers and the Director will work collaboratively with families to ensure the smoothest possible transition for the child.

Transitions can be very challenging for young children. Quite often they may feel confused, scared, angry, or sad when they move to another classroom. This is quite natural and both families and Teachers should be understanding and supportive of the child's needs and emotions as they adjust. Some children may take several weeks or months to adjust to a new environment and new Teachers based upon a variety of factors such as attachment, comfort, temperament, personality, etc. This can sometimes cause families to worry, but it is very commonly seen in early childhood programs. Should families have concerns about their child's transition, they are welcome and encouraged to meet with the Director or with the child's Teacher.

### 7-g. CURRICULUM

The Creative Curriculum is a research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning. The center uses "The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos" and "The Creative Curriculum for Preschool" as a guide for creating lesson plans and learning experiences for Early Childhood Programs. Teachers also intentionally plan using the Emergent Curriculum Philosophy, based on the Reggio Emilia approach. Activities are child-driven and units/themes are chosen based on the interest and developmental needs of the children. Our curriculum enables children to develop confidence,

creativity, lifelong critical thinking skills, and promotes positive outcomes. Various components of the curriculum assist teachers in planning and managing every moment of the day, creating a high quality learning environment, and ensuring a thorough understanding of best practices in early childhood.



#### 7-h. LESSON PLANS

Using the Creative Curriculum and Emergent Curriculum Philosophy as a guide, Teachers create weekly lesson plans and post them outside their classroom for families to view. Lesson plans include a weekly theme and display daily activities and projects your child will engage in during that week. Lesson plans are submitted to the Director for review on a weekly basis. The Director and Teachers work together to ensure a high quality learning environment for children in all programs.

#### 7-i. ASSESSMENTS

The center uses Teaching Strategies Gold as a partner resource to the Creative Curriculum. Teaching Strategies Gold is a research-based online assessment tool used by teachers to observe, document, and assess children's growth and development. Assessment is an important tool for the teaching staff. It allows Teachers both formal and informal ways of assessing the needs of the children in their class. Each child is unique, growing and learning at their own pace. Using this system, teachers are able to find out what the children's interests, strengths, and needs are. As they obtain this information, they plan developmentally appropriate activities based on each child's development, allowing children to practice emerging skills and concepts. Teachers also use this tool to adapt their teaching practices and strategies to meet the individual needs of each child in the classroom. Assessments also provide concrete documentation of developmental learning and progress the child is making while enrolled at the center. Assessment checkpoints are completed by Teachers in the Fall, Winter, and Spring and are shared with families at Parent/Teacher Conferences held in the Fall and Spring.

#### 7-j. PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teachers Conferences are held twice a year typically in November and May. Teachers will post a schedule of available time slots for families to sign up for a time that is convenient for them. Teachers will try to accommodate each family's availability and schedule as much as possible. Conferences typically last 20-30 minutes.

Parent/Teacher conferences provide families the opportunity to be an active participant in the education of their child by reviewing progress, learning and development and setting goals together. Teachers will provide families with a progress report using Teaching Strategies Gold which summarizes their child's progress and development alongside targeted developmental milestones for their age range. Teachers will assist families in interpreting the report and will also provide anecdotal notes illustrating their child's interests, learning, development, and growth.

Parents/Guardians who have concerns about their child's development, progress, learning, behavior, etc. are encouraged to bring up such concerns to the child's Teacher and/or the Director at any time—it is not necessary to wait until Parent/Teacher Conferences. Supplemental Parent/Teachers Conferences may be held in some circumstances in pursuit of the best care, development, and education for the child per request of the child's family, Teacher, or Director.

#### 7-k. TEACHERS

The Y ELC strives to provide a safe, happy, playful, nurturing, and stable environment for children. Y ELC takes pride in having experienced, nurturing, passionate, caring, and qualified Teachers. The Teachers establish continuity of relationships, respect the child's sense of self, and guide children to develop and grow through natural curiosity, exploration, and learning through play and socialization. We carefully screen all staff with extensive character and police background checks. Experience, education, personality, interest, and knowledge are considered as a person's ability to nurture and respect children. All staff must meet YMCA and state licensing qualifications. In addition, Teachers engage in ongoing Professional Development in various forms, which include but are not limited to trainings and workshops facilitated by the Board of Education, the Greenwich School Readiness Council, consultants or other Early Childhood professionals, classes in Early Childhood at the collegiate level, community trainings held locally for Greenwich Early Childhood providers, and other relevant and useful opportunities hosted by educational or Early Childhood institutions.

## TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

All newly hired Teachers must complete the following requirements in order to teach at the Y ELC:

- Two interviews, including a working portion in the classroom with the children
- Three reference checks
- Extensive background check
- Fingerprints submitted to the Department of Public Health (upon hire and every 5 years)
- State background check conducted by the Office of Early Childhood (includes DCF screening)
- A Medical Statement (Physical) completed by a Physician ensuring the Teacher does not have a medical or emotional illness or disorder that would interfere with or jeopardize a Teacher's ability to render proper care for children
- A Negative Tuberculosis test
- Complete National YMCA Child Abuse Prevention training
- Complete DCF Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Training (upon hire and annually)
- First Aid certification (completed every 2 years)
- Pediatric CPR certification (completed every 2 years)
- Medication & Injectable Administration certification (completed every 3 years)
- At least 20 hours of ongoing Professional Development annually
- Annual review of program and emergency policies and procedures



## HEAD TEACHERS

Each classroom has a designated Head Teacher. Each Head Teacher must meet the following requirements according to the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood regulations:

- Be 20 years of age or older
- Have the personal qualifications needed to supervise people
- Have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate
- Completed at least 1,080 hours of documented supervised experience over a 9-month span of time
- Have a current Child Development Associate (CDA) or 12 credits in Early Childhood Education or Child Development from an accredited institution of higher education

We take pride in having a quality teaching staff with passionate, caring, and talented individuals. If at any time families have feedback regarding our teaching staff, whether it be a compliment, suggestion, or concern, you are welcome and encouraged to bring it up to the Teacher or the Director.

## 7-I. CONSULTANTS

The center has consultants in the following areas in accordance with Connecticut licensing requirements:

- **Health and Safety** – provides guidance on health and safety in the center and the children's health and wellbeing
- **Education** – provides guidance on the educational content of the program and children's development, education, and behavior
- **Nutrition** – provides guidance on nutrition and food served in the center
- **Dental** – provides guidance on integrating dental health in the program and the dental health of the children
- **Social Services** – provides guidance on socioemotional needs of children and support of staff, as well as social services available to families

The consultants review the center's policies and procedures annually and are available in person, by phone, and by email to consult with Teachers/administration as needed. The center's consultants assure that all children are being cared for and educated with the utmost safe, healthy, and developmentally appropriate care in each of their respective areas of expertise.



## 7-m. DIAPERING AND TOILETING

### DIAPERING PROCEDURES

Families must provide all diapers, wipes, and ointments for their child. Children in diapers are changed every two hours or when noticeably soiled. Teachers wash their hands before and after changing diapers as well as the child's hands. Teachers wear a new pair of gloves to change each child, clean/disinfect the changing table, and replace changing paper in between diaper changes. Due to health and safety reasons, cloth diapers are not allowed at the center.

### TOILET LEARNING

Toilet Learning can be a stressful time for both parents/guardians and children. As with any learning event, toilet learning takes a great deal of patience, perseverance, and understanding. Children experience a great sense of accomplishment when they have successfully used the bathroom by themselves. The Y ELC is happy to work with families as partners, communicating with parents/guardians and working for the good of each individual child. Efforts at both home and school should be similar and consistent among all parties in order to best support the child in this process.

Signs that your child is ready to begin the toilet learning process typically include:

- He/She is at least 18 months old and thus physically developed enough to have some bladder/bowel control (some children show signs between 18-24 months, while most show signs between 20 and 30 months)
- Child has sufficient verbal and non-verbal skills to be able to tell you that he/she needs to use the bathroom.
- Child recognizes or expresses that he/she is wet, has a dirty diaper, and/or seems to be uncomfortable, wanting to be changed.
- Child asks to use the bathroom and shows interest in what happens in the bathroom.
- Child demonstrates that he/she has the ability to undress him/herself quickly and redress when dressed in simple clothing.
- Child is typically dry after nap or goes 2-3 hours dry between diaper changes.
- Child demonstrate that he/she has the ability to follow simple verbal instructions.
- Child seems willing and cooperative, and doesn't show signs of fear of the toilet.



When parents/guardians notice their child exhibiting these signs and believe their child is ready to begin the toilet learning process, please speak with your child's Teacher. Families will receive a toilet learning contract which outlines the collaborative efforts we will make at the center in order to support your child while he/she is at school as well as guidance for families to refer to while training at home.

To support your child while toilet learning, the Teachers will:

- Take your child to the bathroom often.
- Take your child to the toilet at consistent intervals during the day
- Verbally offering the toilet every two hours
- Accompanying and assisting the child
- Reinforcing the importance of hand washing
- Praise and encouragement with or without success

We do not use pull-ups for children because they confuse the child and they cannot sense when they are wet or dry. Children also learn that pull-ups feel like underwear, yet accidents are so messy, and therefore is it ok to use these as they would a diaper. Pull-ups are also difficult to pull up and down; children may have an accident while taking the time to pull down the pull-up.

If you are unsure if your child is ready for toilet learning, please feel free to speak with your child's Teacher or the Director.

## BATHROOM POLICY

Teachers will take children to the bathroom periodically and as needed. Teachers will assist children who request help in using the bathroom by coaching the child through the process verbally. If a child needs additional assistance cleaning him/herself, teachers will use gloves. If you think your child needs additional support in cleaning him/herself after using the bathroom, please notify your child's Teacher.

Please be sure to leave at least two changes of clothes in your child's cubby in case of an accident. Teachers will send home the soiled clothing in a plastic bag in your child's cubby. Please note that the Department of Public Health recommends that clothing soiled by feces not be handled or rinsed due to risk of contamination. Therefore, although it is not pleasant, soiled clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag without removing or cleaning feces from the clothing.

## 7-n. NAP/REST TIME

### INFANTS

The center follows the most up to date Safe Sleep guidelines as provided by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. Babies need a safe place to sleep with a firm surface. Infants sleep in an individual crib in his/her classroom. Infants are now allowed to sleep in swings or bouncy seats. Parents/Guardians must provide a fitted crib sheet for their child. Babies up to one year of age should always be placed on their backs to sleep, both during naps and at night. Although tummy time is encouraged and beneficial for babies when they are awake and at play, they should never be placed on their tummy to sleep. According to Safe Sleep guidelines, no objects other than the crib sheet may be placed in the crib. Blankets, pillows, soft or hard toys, or other objects may not be placed in the crib, although they may be comfort objects for the child. Safe Sleep should be practiced both at home and at the center. Allowing blankets or soft toys in a crib at home is not only unsafe but also makes it more difficult for the child to sleep at the center when these objects are taken away from them. Sleep sacs are an acceptable substitute for blankets according to Safe Sleep guidelines. For full Safe Sleep guidelines, please visit <http://www.ctoec.org/safe-sleep/learn-more/>.

### TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

All children need quiet time to rest and relax during their busy day. All toddlers and preschoolers are expected to rest quietly on an assigned cot placed throughout the classroom. Teachers will work with children to adjust to this routine if necessary. Cots are separated by at least three feet or by a vertical barrier. Parents/guardians provide bedding, including a sheet, blanket, and pillow/soft toy (if desired). Children are provided with a darkened room and soothing music to relax. Children are encouraged but not forced to sleep during this time. Children who are unable to sleep will rest for a period of time determined by the Teacher and able to rest quietly on their cot or engage in a quiet activity on their cot until nap/rest time is over.

## 7-o. OUTSIDE TIME

Taking children outdoors is a healthy, integral part of our daily schedule and curriculum. Children benefit from active outdoor play by releasing energy, exercising for a healthy lifestyle and developing large muscle coordination. The center has a preschool playground and toddler playground which are enclosed by a fence. The center also has a garden located in the preschool playground which the children are able to tend to and grow their own vegetables to eat for snack or use during cooking activities. (Teachers will never plant poisonous or hazardous plants in the garden and chemicals will not be used.) Infants and Toddlers enjoy taking neighborhood walks in four-seat carriages and six-seat wagons when weather is nice. Administration is always notified when a classroom is going outside. The Teacher/child ratio outside is the same as indoors. Teachers will always bring a first aid kit and cell phone in case of an emergency when the group goes outside.

Generally, children participate in routine outdoor play when the temperature is above 32 degrees. When the temperature is below 32 degrees and the conditions are not extreme, outdoor activity will be limited to about 20 minutes. Even during winter months, it is important for the children to get fresh air outside. Cold air does not cause illness; illnesses are more common in the winter because people are more apt to congregate indoors making the spread of viruses/germs more likely to occur. If the temperature is extremely hot, cold, humid, etc., outside time may be shortened or eliminated for the day in the best interest of the children's health and wellbeing. This decision will be made at the discretion of the Director and/or the Teachers after checking the weather.

If the weather service or public health authorities issue an alert and deem the air quality is unhealthy or warn of a hazardous situation, children and Teachers will not be allowed outside to play that day. In the event of inclement weather, Teachers will take children to the gymnasium or Tumble Room so they may still participate in active play and experiences aimed at



strengthening their gross motor skills and exercise. When it snows, children will usually still go outside; families should prepare proper outdoor clothing for snowy days.

Families who wish for their children to wear sunblock and/or bug spray outside during warmer months should apply it on in the morning before dropping off their child to the center. Teachers will reapply sunblock before going outside in the afternoon. Parents/Guardians must complete an authorization form for center staff to apply non-medicated topical ointments (see Section 5-e.) The child's Teacher will have this form in the classroom available to families. Sunblock/Bug spray should be labeled with a permanent marker and kept at the center.

Children must come to school with the appropriate clothing for the seasons:

**WINTER MONTHS:** Children must have a heavy jacket, snow pants, snow boots, hat, and mittens/gloves.

**SUMMER MONTHS:** Children should wear comfortable, light clothing and sneakers and should bring a bathing suit, towel, a hat, and water shoes for sprinkler play on hot days.

**SPRING AND FALL MONTHS:** Children should wear weather-appropriate clothing and have a light jacket or sweatshirt to be prepared for cool mornings and warmer afternoons.



## 7-p. ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

One of the components that makes the Y ELC an exceptional program is the variety of enrichment activities offered at the center. Various extracurricular activities are integrated into daily schedules at no additional cost. All children are able to participate in enrichment activities. These activities allow the children to develop many different skills such as balancing, self-awareness, self-control, rhythm and coordination, listening and following directions, gross and fine motor skills, mindfulness, and the ability to swim. The following is an example of the enrichment activities offered at Y ELC on a weekly basis\*:

**INFANTS:** Music

**TODDLERS:** Music, Yoga, and Zumba

**PRESCHOOL:** Music, Yoga, Zumba, Fitness/Boot Camp, and Swimming Lessons\*\*

*\*Enrichment activities may vary or change over time depending on a variety of factors including interest, instructor/program availability, etc.*

*\*\*Fitness/Boot Camp and Swimming Lessons are held at the YMCA of Greenwich located at 50 East Putnam Ave.*

With the exception of Boot Camp and swimming lessons, all enrichment activities are held at the center in the classrooms or gymnasium. Teachers can provide families with information regarding the class's schedule for enrichment classes. Children who are not regularly scheduled to attend the center on a particular day that an enrichment activity is held are unable to switch days or attend the center during the portion of the enrichment activity only. In addition to scheduled enrichment activities, the center has a kitchen and various appliances through which children can participate in cooking or baking activities with their class. Through cooking/baking activities, children are able to learn not only about health and nutrition, but also strengthen their fine motor skills and develop early math concepts such as weight, measuring, and counting.

## ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AT THE MAIN Y

For swimming lessons, children should have a swimsuit, towel, and water shoes. For Boot Camp, children should have comfortable clothing and sneakers. Children who arrive late to the center and who miss their class's bus to go to the YMCA for Boot Camp or swimming lessons may not be dropped off at the YMCA but may visit in another classroom at the center until their class returns. Exceptions will not be made. The best way to prevent this from happening so that children do not miss their enrichment activity is to arrive early enough to the center prior to the class's departure time.



## 7-q. FIELD TRIPS

Children who are preschool-age and older may participate in center field trips. Field trips are an excellent way for children to learn and explore outside of the classroom setting and to reinforce skills and knowledge they have learned in the classroom through hands on experiences. Field trips are typically local (Fairfield county) but occasionally may be farther away. Field trips may be taken by all children in the program or only the child's class. Generally, preschoolers take trips to the farm or orchard in the fall, trips to the beach in the summer, and trips to local museums, zoos, and aquariums. Teachers often plan field trips that reinforce the skills and/or a unit that the children are learning in the classroom which are related to the theme or area of study being taught. Preschool classrooms usually take between 8-12 field trips per year. Parents/Guardians are welcome to share any field trip ideas they may have with the child's Teacher. All parents/guardians are notified in writing prior to any field trip. This will include where the child will be going, the time the trip will start and end, and the mode of transportation being used (walking or school bus.) Parents/guardians must give written permission for their child to attend a field trip on a permission slip provided by the center in order for him/her to participate.

When a field trip falls on a day that a child is not regularly scheduled to attend, the child may attend the field trip portion of the day as long as an adult over the age 18 accompanies the child during the trip. The child will not be included in the classroom's ratio for the trip and therefore must be supervised by the accompanying chaperone. The child and accompanying adult may ride the bus together with the group given there is sufficient space; if not enough space is available, the adult may need to transport the child in his/her own vehicle.

Parents/Guardians must sign up their child to attend field trips by a deadline that will be given by the child's Teacher. Field trip transportation and entry fees must be paid by the given deadline as well. At times, the Y ELC may cover the cost of field trip entry and transportation fees. In this case, children must be signed up to attend by the deadline in order for the Y to make payment based on accurate attendees in advance. If you sign up your child and/or as a chaperone past this deadline, you will be required to pay for your and/or your child's entry fee separately and directly to the field trip location, which may be more expensive than a group/field trip rate. Additionally, if your child or a chaperone are signed up to attend the field trip but do not attend the day of the trip, parents/guardians will be required to cover the cost of the field trip fees for their child and/or the chaperone despite their absence, when it was paid for in advance by the Y ELC. This amount may be paid by check or may be drafted automatically by the credit card or bank account on file.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to volunteer as chaperones on their child's field trips. Field trips are an exciting time for the children and a great opportunity for parent involvement. Chaperones are required to stay with the group at all times during the trip or must notify teachers if they are to leave the group for any amount of time. Chaperones are able to assist with supervision during the trip but are not permitted to leave the group with children or take other children to the bathroom other than their own.

If a parent/guardian does not want their child to attend a field trip, the child may visit in another classroom until the class returns, only under the conditions that there is enough space to maintain ratios, it does not interfere with the other classroom's schedule, and when only the child's classroom is taking a field trip. In the event that all preschool classrooms are participating, or the classroom doesn't have enough space, the parent/guardian may opt to not bring their child to school that day or to drop them off after the group returns to the center after the field trip. Refunds will not be provided for voluntary absences due to field trips as they are a component in our program.

### FIELD TRIP SAFETY

Teachers bring children's emergency contact information, permission slips, cell phones, and a first aid kit along with them on all field trips. They also bring children's medication and health information with them for children who have allergies, asthma, or other health conditions. Teachers assume regular, attentive supervision of children on field trips. Head counts are taken prior to, during, and returning from all field trips based on attendance for that day. Regular center ratios are maintained. When possible, an extra staff member will accompany those going on a field trip for added supervision and in case of an emergency. Teachers review safety expectations with children prior to the field trip. It is appreciated if families can also remind their children of the importance of staying with their class and following directions prior to the field trip.

In the event that a problem or emergency arises, a Teacher will call the center and alert the Director or a designee and will follow regular center emergency procedures. Teachers carry a first aid kit with them should the child obtain a minor injury on the trip. An accident report will be completed following the injury. If a child sustains a major injury during the trip, Teachers will call 911 and the center Director or designee, who will in turn notify the child's parents. If ratio allows, a Teacher will accompany the child to the hospital. In the event that a child goes missing during the trip, a Teacher will coordinate a search

for the missing child, and the police will be called to assist if needed. Another Teacher and the other children will converge on the bus while those assisting with the search look for the missing child. Teachers will notify the Director or a designee so that the parents/guardians will be notified of the situation. Following the situation, DCF will be contacted by the center to self-report the incident. While safety precautions and emergency procedures are established, it is the center's hope that they will never have to be implemented. Teachers are trained on emergency procedures upon hire and annually each year in an effort to keep children safe in our care at all times.

### 7-r. PET POLICY

In order to enhance the program experience for children, some classrooms may have pets. Pets shall be limited to small caged animals such as gerbils, guinea pigs, and hamsters or those that can be kept in an aquarium such as fish, hermit crabs, or frogs. The Teachers will clean cages and tanks at least weekly. Animal droppings will be disposed of properly in a closed receptacle. Food and water will be given to pets as needed. Children shall handle pets only when closely supervised by the staff. Children and Teachers must wash their hands after handling the pets. If any pet appears ill, a veterinarian will be called.



### 7-s. GUIDANCE AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Socioemotional learning and development in young children is as essential as academic and physical development. During early childhood, children are establishing a foundation of important skills and development such as self-awareness, showing empathy, communication skills, self-regulation, moral concepts, self-control, conflict resolution, self-expression, developing relationships, and learning to identify and verbally express emotions and feelings.

The Y ELC implements positive discipline to guide children's socioemotional development. The center aims to teach children skills that enable them to learn and understand appropriate and positive behavior. Teachers establish clear expectations for children that are developmentally appropriate given the child's age and development. The three general expectations that the Y ELC adheres to center-wide are: 1. Take care of yourself; 2. Take care of your friends; and 3. Take care of your environment. When children meet these expectations and practice positive behavior, Teachers positively reinforce the behavior such as giving verbal praise or intangible/tangible rewards.

### GUIDANCE AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE FOR TODDLERS

In our toddler program, Teachers establish a few, simple expectations for the children in the classroom. Teachers spend time teaching children positive behaviors, practicing and positively reinforce the behavior when exhibited by children. Teachers emphasize the desired behavior in order to teach toddlers appropriate behavior, rather than only telling children what not to do. For example, if a child is climbing on a table, a teacher will instruct the child saying, "Our feet belong on the floor, not on the table. We sit in chairs at the table to eat. I know you like climbing – we can climb in the tumble room on the climber or on the playground outside." This would be an appropriate response, in contrast to "Don't climb on the table!" When children practice positive behavior, Teachers will encourage and reinforce the behavior by praising the child. Praises are specific so the child understands why he/she is being praised. For example, "Thank you, (Name)! Good job. You cleaned up all of the blocks and put them back on the shelf after you played with them!"

Toddlers are very egocentric and are often unaware of how their actions can harm others. Empathy typically begins to develop during a child's preschool years. Teachers will guide younger toddlers with a brief explanation when children exhibit aggressive or physical behavior and will redirect them to another activity. For example, if an older infant or younger toddler bites another child, the Teacher will say "Ouch! Biting hurts. No biting." For an older toddler, a Teacher will further teach the child – i.e. "Teeth are for chewing food. Teeth are not for biting our friends. No biting," and will model appropriate behavior.

Teachers model expression of emotions so older toddlers may begin understanding these concepts. A Teacher may make a sad face and say, "I feel sad because you took Nicholas' toy away. Look at Nicholas – he is frowning with his mouth, and he is crying. He looks sad too. When Nicholas finishes using that toy, you can use it next."

Depending on a child's temperament and personality, Teachers will handle challenging behaviors accordingly. When children are upset, they may need a hug or to sit on a Teachers lap, while others may need some space and time doing a quiet activity by themselves until they calm down.

## GUIDANCE AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE FOR PRESCHOOLERS



In our preschool program, Teachers establish clear, simple expectations for children in their classroom. Some Teachers may establish these expectations collaboratively with children so they have a voice, a chance to contribute, and develop an understanding of why the expectations exist.

Teachers establish regular routines and allow children the opportunity to practice expectations. Positive reinforcement, such as verbal praise, is provided when children display positive behavior. As the center has mixed age preschool classrooms, older children tend to assist younger children with expectations and reminding them of classroom routines. This peer-led collaborative effort develops leadership skills in children.

Positive discipline begins with positive relationships. Teachers make it a priority to establish positive relationships with children and to foster positive relationships with their peers. Listening to and learning from Teachers is significantly easier when children have respect, love and attachment to the adult. Children need to feel loved and respected by trusted adults. Teachers diligently work to establish a positive classroom climate and positive relationships based on these characteristics.

Preschoolers are in the midst of developing social skills – including learning how to share, how to make friends, interactive play (rather than parallel play at the toddler level), how to enter play, listening skills, conflict resolution, communication skills, expressing their feelings, self-control, and self-regulation. Instruction in these areas are infused throughout the child's day and are naturally occurring. Staff are teaching and reinforcing these skills constantly as it overlaps during other academic, physical, and enrichment activities.

When a child displays aggressive behavior towards another child or Teacher, the Teacher will have a conversation with the child encouraging them to identify how they were feeling that resulted in their being aggressive, what words they could've used to express him/herself instead of using physical aggression, and encouraging empathy by talking about how it made the other child feel. When children become very upset, angry, or aggressive, Teachers may ask that they sit in a quiet area for a few minutes until they calm down and regain their composure. Teachers encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation and offer guidance towards constructive play, positive behaviors, and social skills.

When conflicts between peers arise, Teachers facilitate a problem-solving process rather than simply making the decision for the children in order to develop these skills. Take an example of two children having a difficult time sharing a toy. Instead of solving the problem for the children – "Johnny, you can use the toy for five minutes. After that, give it to Carlos," – Teachers will guide children to come up with a fair solution themselves. Teachers encourage children to brainstorm possible solutions and will provide examples of solutions if needed. They help children label and express their emotions and encourage them to communicate that feeling and their opinion to their peer. Through this process, children are able to develop social skills and, with practice, come to solve these conflicts with their peers independently.

The center implements natural and logical consequences when children are not practicing positive behavior. For example, if a child – out of frustration – throws a bucket of Legos on the ground, the natural consequence would be that the child needs to clean up the Legos once the child has calmed down, before moving on to another activity. Teaching preschoolers to be responsible for their own actions is an important early concept for them to begin to develop.

Depending on the circumstance, personality, and development of the child, Teachers implement various strategies to best aid the child's socioemotional development. Not all strategies and consequences work successfully with each child. Teachers also engage in professional development and coaching in order to expand their knowledge, skills and ability in managing challenging behaviors and implementing positive discipline.

Parents are encouraged to use Teachers and the Director as a resource for positive discipline techniques. As Teachers have much experience working with countless children over the years, they serve as a helpful resource to families who may be struggling with challenging behaviors at home.

## UNACCEPTABLE FORMS OF DISCIPLINE

Teachers will never use any type of physical or harsh type of punishment to discipline a child, including hitting, spanking, pinching, hair pulling, pushing, or any other measure that produces physical pain, nor will Teachers threaten to use physical punishment. Any instance of such discipline is grounds for immediate termination. There is a zero tolerance policy in regards to child abuse and neglect. Staff will not use physical restraint, unless such restraint is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people.

While Teachers may at times take away certain classroom objects, activities, or privileges as a consequence if the child is exhibiting unsafe, harmful, or inappropriate behavior, Teachers will never threaten or withdraw children's needs such as food or drink, rest, or bathroom privileges. Inappropriate language including cursing, profanity, or derogatory language will not be used by the teaching staff. Teachers will provide continuous supervision during disciplinary action; at no time shall a child be unsupervised. Teachers will not use humiliating, corporal, neglectful, or frightening punishment. Similarly, if any of the aforementioned disciplinary actions are exhibited by parents/guardians in the center or staff are made aware of these actions used in the home, all staff in the center are mandated reports and as such, are required to notify DCF of any abuse, neglect, or suspected abuse/neglect of a child. All staff participate in an annual DCF Abuse and Neglect Prevention training as well as an annual review of center policies and procedures, including discipline guidelines.

## BITING POLICY

Our biting policy was developed using **NAEYC's (the National Association for the Education of Young Children)** guidelines for understanding and responding to children who bite. While not uncommon, biting can be an upsetting and potentially harmful behavior. When children are bitten by another child, it is natural that families feel upset and worried about their child. However, it is important to realize that biting is a typical behavior often seen in infants, toddlers, and 2-year olds. As children mature, gain self-control, and develop problem-solving skills, they usually outgrow this behavior. Families should understand that the center works hard to actively and appropriately prevent and address these behaviors while understanding that biting incidents may still happen and are common at this age.

Some children bite instinctively, because they have not developed self-control. For example, when 3-year-old Marcus grabs a doll from his 2-year-old sister Gina, her first response is to bite him and grab the doll. She doesn't stop to think about other ways to act or the result of her actions. But there are many other reasons why children may bite.

A child might bite to:

- Relieve pain from teething.
- Explore cause and effect ("What happens when I bite?").
- Experience the sensation of biting.
- Satisfy a need for oral-motor stimulation.
- Imitate other children and adults.
- Feel strong and in control.
- Get attention.
- Act in self-defense.
- Communicate needs and desires, such as hunger or fatigue.
- Communicate or express difficult feelings, such as frustration, anger, confusion, or fear ("There are too many people here and I feel cramped").

## Preventing Biting

There are a variety of things that families and Teachers can do to prevent biting. It helps to:

- Have age-appropriate expectations for your child's behavior based on his or her current skills and abilities.
- Make sure the child's schedule, routines, and transitions are predictable and consistent. At meal and bedtimes, try to do things in the same way and at the same times. Young children thrive when they know what will happen next.
- Offer activities and materials that allow your child to relax and release tension. Some children like yoga or deep breathing. Offer playdough, foam balls, bubbles, soft music, and other stress-reducing items.
- Use positive guidance strategies to help your child develop self-control. For example, offer gentle reminders, phrased in a way that tells them what behaviors are expected. "Be sure to hang up your coat on the hook." "You can each have a bucket to use in the sandbox." "Put a small dot of toothpaste on your brush. You won't need much to get your teeth clean."
- Provide items to bite, such as teething rings or clean, wet, cold washcloths stored in the refrigerator. This helps children learn what they can bite safely, without hurting anyone else.

## Responding to Biting Incidents

It's best to discourage it from the very first episode. While every situation is different, here are some general guidelines for responding when a child bites.

### Infants

Infants learn about the world around them by exploring it with their hands, eyes, and mouths. But infants often need help to learn what they should and shouldn't bite.

If your infant takes an experimental bite on another child, stay calm and use clear signals to communicate that it is not okay for one person to bite another. A firm "no" or "no biting!" is an appropriate response. Teachers practice the same response.

### Toddlers and Preschoolers

Toddlers have many strong emotions that they are just learning to manage. Toddlers may bite to express anger or frustration or because they lack the language skills needed to express their feelings.

Biting is less common in preschoolers than toddlers. When a preschooler bites, it may be due to something at home or at their child care program that is causing the child to be upset, frustrated, confused, or afraid. A preschooler may also bite to get attention or to act in self-defense.

### Teachers follow the steps below with both toddlers and preschoolers.

1. If a Teacher sees the biting incident, they move quickly to the scene and get down to children's level. First, he/she responds to the child who did the biting. In a serious, firm tone, he/she makes a strong statement: "No biting. Biting hurts. I can't let you hurt Josie or anyone else." Next, Teachers offer a choice: "You can help make Josie feel better, or you can sit quietly until I can talk with you." Teachers help the child follow through on the choice if necessary.
2. Teachers respond to the child who was hurt by offering comfort through words and actions: "I'm sorry you are hurting. Let's get some ice." He/she performs first aid if necessary. The child who did the biting can help comfort the bitten child—if both parties agree.
3. Finally, Teachers talk to the child who did the biting. He/she maintains eye contact and speaks in simple words using a calm, firm tone of voice. He/she tries to find out what happened that led to the incident. Teachers restate the rule, "Biting is not allowed," and model the use of words that describe feelings: "Kim took your ball. You felt angry. You bit Kim. I can't let you hurt Kim. No biting."

### Strategies for addressing a child's biting habit for both Teachers and families:

- Observe the child to learn where, when, and in what situations biting occurs. Sometimes a staff member/adult may need to stay close to the child to prevent biting.
- Pay attention to signals. Stay close and step in if the child seems ready to bite.
- Suggest acceptable ways to express strong feelings. Help the child learn to communicate his/her wants and needs ("Amy, tell your friend you were still playing with the truck").
- Use a reminder system to help the child learn to express strong feelings with appropriate words and actions ("Tell Manuel that you don't like it when he gets that close to you").
- Reinforce positive behavior by acknowledging child's appropriate words and actions ("You didn't like being tickled so you used your words to ask me to stop").
- Provide opportunities for the child to make choices and feel empowered.
- Be sure behavior expectations are age-appropriate and individually appropriate for your child. Expecting a child to do something he or she is not able to do can cause children to feel stress. Stress can lead to biting.
- Offer foods with a variety of textures to meet the child's sensory needs.
- Teach your child words for setting limits, such as "no," "stop," or "that's mine."

### Strategies that are not used and are not helpful:

- Avoid labeling a child as a "biter." Negative labels can affect how one views a child, and even affect the child's feelings about him- or herself.
- Never bite a child back to punish or show him how it feels to be bitten. Biting a child sends the message that using violence is an acceptable behavior that can be used to solve problems.
- Avoid getting angry, yelling, or shaming a child.
- Avoid giving too much attention to a child who bites after an incident. While this is usually negative attention, it can still reinforce the behavior and cause a child to repeat it.

- Do not force a child who bit and the child who was hurt to play together.

As biting is a typical stage in young child developmental, it is a rare that a child would be removed from the program due to repeated biting incidents. In exceptionally rare, extreme cases, after all possible solutions, resources and strategies have been exhausted, the family may be asked to withdraw their child from the center until the issue is resolved, in order to protect the other children being injured at the center due to the biting. This decision will be made at the discretion of the Director of Educational Programs and YMCA of Greenwich CEO.

## CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

If a child in the program harms another child, the Teacher will first attend to the child is hurt, and then proceed with the other child. The Teacher will inform both families of the incident. Sometimes, when a child gets hurt several times during a short period of time, families may request to know the name of the child and/or the child's parent/guardian involved in the incident. However, because confidentiality is a keystone of our program, we will not disclose another child's name or information to the other family. Both the State Office of Early Childhood and the National Association for the Education of Young Children recommend this practice. Accident/Incident reports are completed for every incident that involves first aid or other care or for serious behavior incidents. Families review and sign incident reports and may have a copy at their request.

The Y ELC defines unacceptable behavior as:

- Inflicting physical or emotional harm on another child or staff member (hitting, punching, biting, kicking, etc.)
- Using abusive language or threatening the wellbeing of another child or staff member.
- Throwing or pushing furniture or equipment that can cause harm to self or others.
- Purposefully leaving an area and adult supervision.
- Consistently not following the program's rules and expectations of appropriate behavior.

When children exhibit unacceptable behaviors, Teachers will use the aforementioned techniques of positive discipline. Teachers will communicate concerns regarding a child's behavior with the child's family and seek to align strategies at school and home. For consistency, it is important for families to reinforce positive behavior with their child (when developmentally appropriate) so that the child is receiving the same guidance at home and at school. If inappropriate behaviors continue despite efforts and various strategies, Teachers will consult with the Director, Education Consultant, Instructional Coach, Health Consultant, and/or other resources. If the challenging behaviors continue, the Director will meet with the child's family to discuss the issue and develop an Individual Plan of Care (ICP). The ICP will address the behaviors and what techniques and strategies the Teachers and family will implement in attempts to modify the child's behavior. If needed, the Education Consultant, Health Consultant, Instructional Coach, other Y staff, or other resourceful consultants may attend the meeting in the best interest of the child. The Y ELC will make every effort to support the child and the family. This may include referring the family to the Board of Education for an evaluation or other community agencies.

## TERMINATION OF CARE

If a child continues to harm him/herself or others and/or consistently does not follow the program's expectations of appropriate behavior despite interventions, support, referrals to other agencies, and creating and implementing an ICP, the family may be required to withdraw the child from the program. Likewise, a child whose needs cannot be met in a group setting; who has needs which the center cannot provide for; who has health problems that can jeopardize the health/safety of other children in the program; or, when the center does not have the specialized staff who can best support the child; the child may be required to withdraw from the center. The program is responsible for the safety of all staff and children in the program. If a child is exhibiting harmful behaviors continuously towards others, we are neglecting our duty to the other children and staff. The Y ELC wants the best quality care and education possible for all children; if this cannot be provided by our center for a particular child, or if the safety or quality of care and education of other children are consistently in jeopardy due to the child's behavior, the center will support the family in finding a program that can best support the child's needs. When possible, families will be given a two-week notice to make other child care arrangements. In exceptional cases, the parents/guardians may be required to remove the child from the program immediately at the discretion of the Director of Educational Programs and the YMCA of Greenwich CEO.

## 7-t. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Y ELC welcomes children with all abilities and provides an inclusive educational environment. Families must communicate the needs of their children with the Director and Teachers so that we may provide the best, individualized care and education for your child. Specific health or behavioral concerns, conditions, special diets, or allergies must be recorded in the child's health history upon enrollment and brought to the attention of the Director and child's Teachers.

If a child has an Individualized Education Plans (IEP's), it must be shared with the child's Teachers and Director. They will be active participants in the transition plan and IEP process to assure that a coordinated effort is made to continue services for the child once the child is enrolled in the program. The center will coordinate services with the Board of Education (BOE) and will form linkage with service providers to ensure that services are being provided both on site and off site per the individual needs of the child. If the center is unable to meet the needs of a child enrolled at the center for any reason, the center will assist the family in finding a facility that will better serve and meet the child's needs.

Teachers observe, assess, and record child's growth and development via Teaching Strategies Gold assessment system and through general observation and interactions. When a child is showing signs of developmental delay and/or socioemotional maladjustment, a meeting will be held with the child's family and the Teacher/Director to determine what steps are appropriate to address the concerns. Families will be asked to sign a release of information if referral services will be made to Birth to Three (children under age 3) or the Greenwich Board of Education (children over age 3) or the BOE in the school district in which the child lives. If a child is eligible for Birth to Three services, therapists/service workers are able to provide sessions for the child during the day at the Y ELC. If a referral is made to the Board of Education, the center staff will assist in the coordination and follow through of services. The BOE will then conduct an observation and if needed, an evaluation or screening. Both the center staff and the child's family will be involved in this process and have frequent contact with BOE personnel. The BOE will recommend next steps going forward, which may include teaching strategies, techniques, or additional supports for the child, referral to an outside agency, or support services provided by the BOE. If the child is eligible for support services, appropriate personnel may be delivered during the school day.

### DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS

If families believe their child may have a developmental delay, developmental disability, or have any other concerns regarding their child's development, they are encouraged to bring the issue up to the Teacher and/or Director. Although families may feel worrisome, emotional or uncomfortable in bringing up the concern, ignoring or minimizing signs that you or the teaching staff may have about your child only results in a disservice to the child in our collaborative effort to help them.

The purpose of the Y ELC is to facilitate children's learning and provide the best possible care and education for each individual child. Our Teachers have much experience in working with children and are trained in a variety of topics in the field of Early Childhood including signs of various developmental delays and conditions. Although it can be uncomfortable for Teachers, they may bring up concerns they may notice regarding your child's development with good intentions of helping the child with early intervention services. The earlier these needs may be addressed, the better the outcome for the child. There is a plethora of research indicating that early intervention has the most effective impact on children who has developmental delays, special needs or disabilities, both in the immediate future and in the years ahead. Unattended concerns during early childhood years can end up causing larger issues during the child's elementary school years. Hesitation in addressing concerns can prohibit the child from learning and developing to his/her fullest potential. Keeping in mind the best interest of the child, we encourage you to bring forth any developmental concerns and/or be open to feedback from center staff regarding your child's development. The center is fully supportive of all children in our care and will assist you with resources and next steps.

## SECTION VIII: FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The YMCA of Greenwich is a family oriented organization. The Y ELC believes family involvement in their child's education from a young age sets a foundation for both educational and socioemotional success. Therefore, we encourage family involvement as much as possible and in a variety of creative ways. Family involvement is an extremely important component in a child's success and education. Children tend to have less behavioral problems, better academic performance, and are more likely to complete higher levels of education when their family is engaged and present in their school and education. The Y ELC recognizes this fact and seeks to provide many opportunities for family members to be involved in various center activities, advocacy, and events. The following are ways to be engaged and involved:





## 8-a. PARENT COMMUNICATION

### COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS

The following are means of effective communication with Teachers:

- Parents/Guardians are asked to speak to their child's Teacher every day. At drop off time, parents/guardians should be sure to note any changes or noteworthy happenings, such as changes in the child's health or sleep, any changes to their routines, any new bumps or bruises the child may have, changes to their schedule such as an early pick up for an appointment or someone new picking up the child, and any other information that may affect the child's wellbeing or day. Teachers will in turn communicate noteworthy information to families including any changes in the child's health or wellbeing, their temperament throughout the day, any special activities they participated in, items the child may need to bring in, and reminders about upcoming center events, activities, schedule changes, etc.
- Each classroom has its own email address through which families may communicate with Teachers and vice versa. Furthermore, families may call the center and ask to speak with their child's teacher and an administrator will transfer the call to the child's classroom. A message will be taken if the teacher is unavailable/not in the classroom and he/she will return the call as soon as possible. Families are encouraged to call during naptime (1:00pm-3:00pm) if it is not an urgent matter as Teachers need to focus their full attention on supervising and engaging the children. If something urgent arises, families should let an administrator know when they call and request coverage for the Teacher so they may step out of the room for the phone call.
- When a child sustains more than a minor injury during the day, teachers will call or email families to notify them of the incident. Smaller/minor injuries shall be emailed while more serious incidents shared via phone.
- Classroom weekly lesson plans are posted outside each classroom for families to view. It is encouraged to take time to read lesson plans so families may be aware what their children are learning and the activities they are participating in that week. This can also bridge the gap from home to school and families may have discussions with their child about the topic they are learning about during the week.
- Children in our infant and toddler programs will have a Daily Information Sheet sent home every day with the child completed by the child's Teachers. These sheets detail the child's day including diaper changes/bathroom visits, nap times, feeding times, and other notes about the child's day.
- Families are encouraged to use Teachers as a resource who have much experience working with many children in a particular age group. They are able to offer valuable suggestions, advice, and explanations in regards to your child's development.
- Some classrooms have a Shutterfly account that provides families access to the classroom's webpage. The webpage contains photos of the children engaged in daily activities and special center activities, as well as information and announcements about the child's classroom.

### COMMUNICATION WITH ADMINISTRATORS

The following are means of effective communication with administration:

- Families should have an open and productive relationship with the Director and Administrative Assistant. Families are welcome to stop by the Director's and/or Administrative Assistant's office any time to speak with him/her. The Director's office hours vary in order to be available for families at different times during the day, therefore parents/guardians wishing to meet with the Director are encouraged to email him/her and set up an appointment. Families are welcome to set up meetings at any time for any reason; the Director's door is always open to hear feedback - both positive and negative, suggestions, ideas for programs/events/improvement, and concerns about your child and/or anything related to the center.
- Families are frequently notified of important center happenings via email. It is important for families to include your email address on your child's enrollment form as this is the primary form of communication from center administration. If you do not receive emails from administration or if your email address has changed, please notify the Director and your child's Teacher of the change so you may be added to the email distribution list. If your phone number or any of the authorized person's phone numbers change, please notify administration and your child's Teacher of the changes so we are able to contact you as needed.

- Center newsletters are distributed via email several times throughout the year to share center news and upcoming events. Families are welcome to add their ideas or request topics to be added to the newsletter as well.
- The center has a Parent Connection Facebook page. Pictures of the children participating in various activities at the center during the day are posted, as well as photos from special events held by Y ELC. To request to be added to the Parent Facebook group, please email the Director who will respond to your request and add you to the group.
- Annually, families are also asked to fill out a program evaluation. This will help the Y ELC to use the results of the findings to make improvements to the center going forward and to better serve the children and families in the program.
- Attending Parent Advisory Board meetings are a great way to advocate for your child and the center and to meet with the Director and other YMCA of Greenwich personnel. Please see Section 8-c. below for more information.

### 8-b. FAMILY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Several times throughout the year, the Y ELC hosts special events for children and their families. We encourage family members to join as many events as they can. Families will be notified via email and/or a flyer of upcoming family events. At times, we will request parents/guardians to RSVP/sign up so we may account for all attendees and plan accordingly. Generally, the following events are held throughout the year:

September - Open House  
 October - Costume Parade  
 November - Friendship Feast  
 May - Art Rocks Fundraiser (Adults only)  
 May - Mother's Day Breakfast  
 May - Family Gardening Day  
 June - Father's Day Breakfast  
 June - Preschool Graduation  
 June - Field Day

Events are expected to vary from year to year and may change and/or evolve over time. These are great opportunities to engage with your child's school, build relationships with Y staff, and form special bonds and memories with your child.



### 8-c. PARENT ADVISORY BOARD

The Parent Advisory Board (PAB) is a group of parents/guardians who meet with Director and YMCA administrators to give their input into the center's operation. The PAB plans creative ways to improve and contribute to the program, including (but not limited to) parent engagement, community service opportunities, parent/guardian workshops, family/Teacher communication, program quality and facility improvements, fundraising ideas, feedback and suggestions on center operations, programming, improvements, and family/Teacher events. It also gives families an opportunity to connect with other families at the Y ELC. This board does not make center policies but provides validating feedback and suggestions for improvement which will be taken into consideration when making improvements in the center. The purpose of the PAB is to allow families the opportunity to voice their feedback, participate directly in a range of initiatives and to facilitate parent/Teacher/administration communication. Such efforts and involvement can only enhance the quality of the program and experience, learning, and overall development of the children in our care.

All parents/guardians are members of the Parent Advisory Board upon enrolling. Families will receive email reminders of upcoming meetings. Meetings are usually held the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00am in the gymnasium located on the second floor of the Y Early Learning Center. Breakfast and coffee are provided. All parents/guardians are encouraged to join meetings and share their ideas to help better their child's experience and the center as a whole.

### GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS

1. Meetings are a "Safe Zone." Everyone should have a chance to share without interruption or judgement. All ideas should be encouraged and listened to without any "put downs."

2. While slight variations are expected, try to keep discussions in line with the agenda. Suggestions for agenda topics for future meetings are appreciated.
3. All members should respect the confidentiality of others. Individual problems should be discussed with your child's teacher/administration privately. All members should avoid making negative comments about any individuals – parents, children, teachers, or Y personnel. The Y ELC aims to build community, and respect, confidentiality, trust, and kindness are essential for this. Meetings should be positive and productive; serious complaints or concerns should be communicated to the Director privately.

#### 8-d. OTHER WAYS FOR FAMILIES TO BE INVOLVED

- Attend parent/Teacher conferences.
- Share a special talent or skill with the children in the program (i.e. playing an instrument, doing a presentation on a certain occupation, etc.)
- Donate recycled items for art projects and other activities (large yogurt or other plastic containers, jars, toilet/papertowel rolls, clothespins, plastic bottles, tissue boxes, magazines, catalogs, etc.)
- Make a new family friend by introducing yourself to other parents in the program.
- Donate used items that your children have outgrown (toys, games, dress-up clothes, supplies for creative art projects, clothes, equipment, diapers, etc). If you are unsure if an item would be appropriate/useful to donate to the center, please feel free to check with the Director.
- Volunteering at the center in any capacity that you are comfortable with.
- Attend Parent Advisory Board meetings.
- Join the Y ELC Parent Connection Facebook page.
- Read posted notices and newsletters as well as distribution emails.
- Donate to fund a particular center project or make a general donation to the center (i.e. fund a family event, fund the cost of new equipment, etc.)
- Be a "Guest Reader" in your child's classroom.
- Be a chaperone on your child's field trip.
- Conduct a Parent/Guardian Workshop in an area of expertise you may have knowledge in.
- Plan or coordinate an event at the Y ELC, such as a book drive, fundraiser, or community service activity.



#### 8-e. FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

The Parent Resource Center is located in the main corridor of the Y ELC. Two display shelves contain various reading materials related to early childhood development, center forms, community health and wellness resources, current newsletters, etc. which families are welcome to use/access at their freewill. Parents/Guardians are also welcome to share reading materials or community resources that are relevant and helpful to other families in the program. The center also has a community board which families may use to share resources/services in the area.

#### 8-f. FAMILY SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The Y ELC works in collaboration with a number of community agencies to support the diverse needs of families in the program. While the day-to-day emphasis is on the positive growth and development of the child, the program also serves to support and nurture the wellbeing of the family. Our linkage with community agencies provides families with easy access to resources such as parenting support services, adult education and job training, child nutrition, and health and wellness. The Y ELC serves as a bridge for families with community resources.

Families are encouraged to request assistance for community services or resources at any time. Program staff will also suggest services to families who are struggling with issues that have a negative effect on the family or child's wellbeing. If a referral for services is requested to be made, a family will be referred only with written consent of the parent. All information shared between agencies is confidential. Referrals will be made in respect to the families cultural or language needs. To request more information, please speak to the center Director or your child's Teacher.

The Y ELC can provide families with information regarding the following:

- Social Services and Parent Support Programs
- Health and Wellness Services to include (medical insurance, a medical home, ongoing well child care, immunizations, and health, dental, and nutritional screenings)
- Developmental Delays and Disabilities (Therapists, O.T., P.T., Behavior specialists, relevant professionals)
- Emergency Food Banks and Nutrition Education
- Behavior Intervention and Specialists and Mental Health Services
- Adult Education, Job Training, and Public Library Services

**8-g. FAMILY AND TEACHER CODE OF CONDUCT**

At times, emotional or upsetting situations may arise for various reasons. In order to maintain a positive and professional environment at our center, all family and staff are asked to adhere to the following guidelines:

Y staff and families are expected to:

- always address each other in a calm and respectful manner
- contact the Director immediately if a situation becomes difficult to manage
- refrain from the use of threatening, cursing, insulting, inappropriate, or abusive behavior or language

If a family member is having trouble controlling their behavior, they will be asked to leave the center. If the behavior escalates and the staff or others feel threatened or in danger, it is the absolute last resort to call the authorities. A meeting will be set up with the Director and all parties involved to discuss and find a resolution for the issue at hand. If the issue is not resolved, the center reserves the right to ask the family to withdrawal the child from the program at the discretion of the Director. Additionally, the family may also have their membership to the YMCA of Greenwich revoked at the discretion of the YMCA CEO.

**8-h. BABYSITTING POLICY**

In order to protect both YMCA employees and families, the National YMCA of the USA prohibits YMCA staff from babysitting children currently enrolled at the Y ELC.

**8-i. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

We take pride in providing children with a safe, healthy, and educational environment. If you have any concerns regarding your child, a Teacher, the classroom, or any other issue, please speak with your child’s Head Teacher. If you do not feel that your concerns are resolved after talking with the Teacher, please contact the center Director. If you continue to have concerns and feel your concerns are still not resolved, you may contact YMCA of Greenwich CEO. If after following these steps, should you feel your concern is still not resolved, you may contact the Greenwich Public Health Department or the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Licensing Specialists. We will make every effort to resolve any concerns you may have regarding the care of your child within our regulations. We will also make sure that a translator is present if needed.

**PHONE NUMBERS**

Teachers:	203.869.3381 (admin will transfer)
Director of Educational Programs:	203.869.3381 x222
Director of After School Programs:	203.399.3683
Director of Human Resources:	203.869.1621 x521
CEO, YMCA of Greenwich:	203.869.1621 x506
Greenwich Public Health Department:	203.622.6488
CT Office of Early Childhood, Licensing Specialists:	860.500.4412



**Thank you for being a part of the  
YMCA of Greenwich Early Learning  
Center. Our FAMIL<sup>Y</sup> looks forward to  
serving your family!**



**YMCA OF GREENWICH  
EARLY LEARNING CENTER**  
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES SINCE 1988