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Child Watch Program Handbook

WELCOME!

This handbook is designed to provide you with information about our program and procedures. During your visit to the YMCA, our Child Watch staff will provide fun and safe, age-appropriate activities for your child.

VISIT TIME LIMIT: Parents/guardians may not leave their child with us for more than 2 hours at any one time (maximum of 12 hours per week, Sunday through Saturday).

Members receive complimentary 90 minutes each visit (not to exceed 12 hours per week). For a fee of \$5 per child; able to add up to 30 minutes of additional time.

For late pickups, there will be a \$1 fee per child per minute late.

Please refer to the Child Watch Program Schedule for available hours throughout the week.

AGES & RATIOS:

The child watch center room is available for 6 weeks through 6 years old. Staff with this age range can have up to 7 children in their care, and no more than 21 children in the room. Infants (less than 1 year old) count as “2 children” in the ratio to add up to 7 that a staff can care for.

AGE	STAFF TO CHILD RATIO
Infants less than 1 year	1:2
Toddlers 1-2 years	1:6
Preschoolers 3-7 years	1:12
School Age 8-11 years	1:15

ACCOMODATIONS: The YMCA strives to meet the needs of all children and families in our programs. If your child needs any accommodations, we ask that you speak with the Director of the program to ensure that you and your child have a great experience in our program.

REGISTRATION FOR CHILD WATCH PROGRAM: Each child who participates in our Child Watch program must complete the Registration process at the front desk. Staff will process information to add to family's membership account, and registrations will only be required on an annual basis. The final step is to have a photo taken of the parent and child/children. Photos will be individual head shots. Each visit, family will need to check into the facility first prior to dropping of children in the Child Watch Center.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE POLICY: When dropping your child off, you are welcome to stay for a few minutes to get your child acclimated, however, for safety reasons, we cannot allow parents/guardians to stay in the room. Children will be grouped according to their age and older siblings will participate with their age group. Parents/guardians must remain on the premises at all times or participate in a YMCA program to ensure they are easily and readily accessible in case of emergency.

After you complete your visit to the YMCA, our friendly Child Watch staff will check your child out of our program. Children are never released to an individual who did not sign the child in unless the pickup person is on the approved pick up list as shows up on the child's account. Guardians can update the authorized pick-up list in written form (email preferred) and can have up to two additional pickups (outside of guardians). Children that are guests of the facility need to go through the same Child Watch Center Entry Process to participate in the program.

DAILY ATTIRE: Children should be dressed for active play. Toddlers and infants need a change of clothes. Close toed shoes are recommended. Please refrain from sending your child with jewelry or items that may pose a choking hazard.

Play Areas:

Infant – 12 Months

Exploration/Sensory Zone: In the exploration zone, children ages eight weeks to 12 months will be able to participate in play that engages all senses. They will be able to explore all senses by touching different objects and surfaces, listening to discrete sounds, and observing a variation of colors. In addition, the toys centrally located in the exploration zone will encourage infants to learn more about the world around them. An example of an activity in the exploration zone is a Magic Tissue Box that obtains crinkled fabric; infants will discover different textures and colors as they use their fine motor skills to pull along the material from the box.

Reading Zone: The reading zone will encourage early reading for ages eight weeks to twelve months. All books in the reading zone are designed for infants to explore illustrations and sounds using soft books and board books. In addition, the reading zone will promote language development as staff eagerly read to the children.

Discovery/Educational Zone: In the discovery zone, infants will have the opportunity to develop problem-solving and fine motor skills. In addition, the toys centrally located in the discovery zone will encourage shape and color recognition, sorting, stacking, and facial awareness. An example of an activity in this zone is a geometric shape puzzle. Infants can lift the configuration with a knob and view



themselves in the mirror, hidden under the different shapes.

1 year – 6 Years Old

Dramatic Play Zone: In the dramatic play zone, preschool and school-aged children will be encouraged to transform into different characters and imagine different settings while being provided with costumes and a kitchen area. The dramatic play zone will introduce children to relationship building, language development, and self-empowerment as they work alongside their peers, perform a variety of scenarios, and act out their feelings.

Imagination Zone: In the imagination zone, children ages one to six can enhance their imagination through play. The imagination zone will provide figurines and animals where children can create their own world; children will have the opportunity to share their ideas with peers as they build various settings.

Strong Minds Zone: In the strong mind zone, children ages one to six can participate in activities that will develop their memory and problem-solving skills and test their ideas. In addition, the toys centrally located in the strong minds zone will promote shape and color recognition, sorting, and building. Age-appropriate toys will section off the strong minds zone. However, all children are welcome to explore the different activities available. Specific toys will require more skill than others. An example of a toddler and preschool activity located in the strong mind zone is a buckle toy; children will use their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination to buckle and zip various clasps. Puzzles and Magna-tiles are examples of school-aged activities in the strong mind zone. Children will be encouraged to use their problem-solving skills as they decipher an illustration and use their creativity to build.

Arts and Crafts Zone: In the arts and craft zone, all ages will have the opportunity to make artwork that they can take home. There will be a craft of the week that children can participate in, but they can also create their own artwork using different supplies. In addition, the arts and craft zone will provide coloring sheets for children to zone in or encourage self-expression.

Book Nook: The book nook will have various age-appropriate books for toddlers, preschool, and school-aged children. The book nook is where children can get comfortable and enjoy reading independently, with peers, or with staff. In addition, children are invited to join us on the weekend for a read-aloud with puppets.

Snack Area: There will be a designated area for children to enjoy a small snack provided by their guardians.

CONDUCT & GUIDANCE: Our program uses positive guidance methods including redirection, distraction, reminders, and logical consequences. Self-management skills are taught using consistent

rules that are clearly stated so that children are expected to play within known limits. Behavior expected of children is age appropriate according to developmental stages. The YMCA reserves the right to restrict children's activities, have parents pick up immediately, suspend or terminate care when children are displaying behavior that is dangerous to themselves or others, or for repeatedly being disruptive or failing to follow program rules.

Our staff make every effort to keep your child happy and content within our Child Watch program. In the event that your child is not able to be consoled and has consistent crying for a period of over 15 minutes, we will seek you out, as the parent/guardian and ask for your assistance in soothing the child.

BABYSITTING: We are pleased that you feel comfortable and confident in our employees and that you may want them to babysit or transport children after hours; however, it is against the YMCA's policy and could be grounds for employee termination.

FOOD: In order to keep our Child Watch area safe for all children, including those with food allergies, food will only be allowed at the snack table, and will limit 1-2 children at a time. No nuts in the child watch room, and no sharing of food.

If your infant will need a bottle, please make sure that the bottle is clearly labeled with your child's name. Additional guidelines include:

- Formula and water must be provided by the parent or guardian. Staff may add the water provided, but the formula must be measured by the parent or guardian.
- Staff are not permitted to heat bottles.
- If a bottle is needed for a child that walks, the child must remain in the baby area until the bottle is finished.
- If your family prefers to breastfeed and would like privacy, there is a mother's privacy area in the spa level, girl's locker room.

ILLNESS: In an effort to maintain everyone's health and well-being, the following guidelines MUST be strictly followed. Please respect the health of the other children in our care by cooperating with us. An ill child will not be admitted and children who become ill may not remain in Child Watch. For the safety of your child as well as the other children in Child Watch, you may not bring a child to our program for one business day after having any of the following symptoms:

- A fever
- A productive cough (cough with phlegm or deep chest coughing)
- A sore throat or strep throat
- Intestinal disturbance accompanied by diarrhea or vomiting.
- Any undiagnosed rash or contagious rash such as poison ivy, poison oak, etc.
- Sore or discharged eyes or ears/ an eye infection such as pink eye.
- Profuse, colored nasal discharge/ a runny nose with infectious mucus (green or yellow color)
- Communicable diseases such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, ringworm, etc.

Children must be free of all of the above symptoms and show no signs of illness when entering the program. All children must be able to participate in the normal daily schedule (outdoor play included). Caregivers cannot administer medication.



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ITEMS FROM HOME: We provide activities for the children and ask that you not bring toys or electronics from home. All bottles, cups, pacifiers and other infant items must be labeled. Diapers and wipes are to be provided by the parents or guardians. We are not responsible for any lost, stolen, or broken belongings.

SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES: research that impacts the care of children in Y Child Watch programs include swaddling and children sleeping in car seats or swings. It is recommended that infants sleep on their backs in a crib or on another firm surface. YMCA Child Watch programs will practice recommended safe sleep practices by not allowing infants to be swaddled or left sleeping in their car seats. Please also note that the child watch center is not intended to offer nap times and will not be providing cribs.

INJURY/ACCIDENTS: Although precautions are in place to ensure the safety of all our children, there are times when typical childhood accidents do occur. Thus, in the event that your child is injured while in the care of our Child Watch program the following steps will be followed:

- Y staff will assess the injury and provide the necessary first aid
- If immediate medical attention is needed, we will call 911
- Parent/guardian will be notified (major concern: immediate notification or minor concern: notified at sign out)
- The appropriate reporting documents will be completed.
- Additional follow up with the family will be made

The YMCA takes head injuries seriously. Suspected head injuries will require a 911 call. Bumps, jolts or blows that cause the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth can be serious, even if it appears to be minor.