

Family Partnership & Parent Concerns Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe our family partnership practice and provide a transparent process for families, the child care licensee and staff to use when an issue/concern is brought forward by a parent/family member.

Family Partnership

Our family partnership statement/approach allows our organization to be proactive and responsive to parent and family needs before conflict arises.

Our commitment to provide high quality child care involves remaining knowledgeable with current research in child development, and working in partnership with our families.

YMCA educators create inclusive and respectful environments that foster positive, equitable, and collaborative relationships. When children feel safe, secure and valued they freely explore, discover, try new things, grow, learn and develop. We believe that our expertise in child care is only one part of ensuring every child has the best experience possible. We rely on our families to work side by side with us to better understand and respond to individual needs.

We encourage our families and our educators to exchange information regularly. We have an open-door policy, and encourage our families to spend time in the program with their child when possible.

We use many strategies to ensure open communication with our families, and they include:

- informal information sharing during drop-off and pick-up times
- phone calls and emails
- celebrations and family engagement events (eg. YMCA Strong Kids campaign events)
- meetings (coordinated at the request of the YMCA and/or the family)
- photographs of children at play
- posting program plans that include observations of children's interests and activities
- website updates, newsletters and e-blasts
- annual parent satisfaction survey (third party administered)

Our parent satisfaction survey is administered to our toddler, preschool, and before and after-school families on an annual basis. We encourage our families to complete the short online survey and we utilize the feedback to continuously improve the quality of our programs.

Parent Concerns Policy

All issues and concerns raised by parents/family members will be taken seriously by the YMCA and will receive follow up. Every effort will be made to address and resolve any concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/family will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to a concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 1-2 business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

All inquiries of concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to all parties involved.

Confidentiality

Each concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/families, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Our organization maintains high standards for positive interactions, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/family member, or YMCA staff member feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/family member expresses concern that a child is, or is at risk of being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact Halton Region Children's Aid Society at (905) 333-4441 directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

Procedures

Nature of Concern	Steps for Parent/Family Member to Report Concern	Steps for Centre Staff and/or YMCA Management in responding to concern
<p>Program Room Related</p> <p>(ie. schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements etc.)</p>	<p>Share/discuss your concern with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the classroom teacher directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the centre supervisor 	<p>Professionally respond to the concern at the time it is brought forward</p> <p>and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate a meeting to discuss the concern with the parent/family member within 1-2 business days. <p>Document the concern in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the date and time the concern was brought forward; - the name of the person who received the concern; - the name of the person reporting the concern; - the details of the concern; and - any steps taken to resolve the concern - information given to the parent/family member regarding next steps.
<p>Centre Operations Related</p> <p>(ie. child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.)</p>	<p>Share/discuss your concern with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the centre supervisor 	<p>If you are unable to effectively respond to the concern or it needs to be escalated further, provide the contact information of the person the parent/family member can call</p> <p>Ensure the resolution of the concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 1-2 business days, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent/family member who raised the concern.</p>
<p>Educator or Centre Support Staff Related</p>	<p>Share/discuss the concern with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the individual directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the centre supervisor <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the general manager, child care (Lorraine Pettinato; (905) 845-5597 ext. 240) <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of a YMCA staff member that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parent/family member becomes aware of the situation.</p>	<p>If you are unable to effectively respond to the concern or it needs to be escalated further, provide the contact information of the person the parent/family member can call</p> <p>Ensure the resolution of the concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 1-2 business days, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent/family member who raised the concern.</p>

Nature of Concern	Steps for Parent/Family Member to Report Concern	Steps for Centre Staff and/or YMCA Management in responding to concern
Placement Student and Volunteer Related	<p>Share/discuss the issue or concern with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the individual directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the centre supervisor <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the general manager, child care (Lorraine Pettinato; (905) 845-5597 ext. 240) <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of a placement student or volunteer that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parent/family member becomes aware of the situation.</p>	

Escalation of Concerns

Where parents/family members are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to lorrainepe@oakville.ymca.ca

Concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts:

Child Care Supervisors – please refer to family handbook for direct phone numbers

General Manager, Child Care – Lorraine Pettinato (905) 845-5597 ext. 240

Vice President, Child Care & Community Initiatives – Lisa Rankin (905) 845-5597 ext. 302

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca