



YMCA Child Care 2024-25 Family Handbook

August 2024

Welcome to YMCA Child Care!

Choosing a child care provider is a big decision and we thank you for putting your trust in us. As one of the most trusted providers of licensed child care for infants 6 weeks to 12 years in Oakville, we offer all children opportunities to learn, grow, thrive and lead. Our positive, safe and nurturing environments help provide children with the tools and resources they need to reach their full potential!

Our *YMCA Playing to Learn* curriculum guides our work with our infant, toddler and preschool children. This nationally recognized curriculum is based on the widely accepted philosophy that young children learn best through play. Our qualified early childhood educators facilitate play experiences that will help your child develop foundational skills in language and literacy, mathematics, science and technology and the arts. These foundational skills help to foster a life-long appreciation for learning that will ultimately assist your child in achieving future academic success.

Our before and after-school programs are guided by our YMCA Place to Connect curriculum. Our educators observe the interests of your child and plan an active, engaging play-based program centred around those interests. Our before and after-school programs are designed to develop and enhance social skills like leadership, teamwork, problem solving and conflict resolution. They provide ample opportunity for choice and are designed to help children form meaningful relationships with their peers and feel connected to their community.

The YMCA of Oakville is also a charity with deep roots in our community. For the past 55 years, we have been responding to the needs of Oakville with a variety of programs and services focused on improving the health and well-being of people in our community. Through programs like child care, we help young people learn values and positive behaviours in an environment where they truly belong. By doing this, we help them become confident kids today and contributing, engaged adults in the future.

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"I was so happy to have the YMCA after care program available to us at my daughter's school. My child is safe and happy and I never have to worry about her."



Program Statement

At the YMCA of Oakville, we know that access to high quality child care is critical for families. We provide a positive safe and nurturing environment, where children have the tools and resources to enhance their social, intellectual, physical and emotional development. Our educators believe that every child is competent, capable of complex thinking and curious and rich in potential.

Our YMCA creates rich learning environments where all children can reach their full potential. Our program philosophy aligns with the four foundational conditions that are outlined in the Ministry of Education's, "How Does Learning Happen?" Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years.

We appreciate each child's uniqueness and view the child's growth and development in a holistic manner. We know that children thrive in quality programs that provide choice, opportunities for leadership, focus on strengths, promote the development of skills and foster positive relationships.

As a values-based organization, we work to incorporate the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, health and inclusiveness into everything we do.

YMCA Curriculum

Infant, Toddler and Preschool Program

YMCA Playing to Learn is a research-based early childhood education curriculum. It is a unique and forward thinking approach to early learning that recognizes play as the primary way children learn and develop. We know that when child's play is supported by caring, responsive professionals their innate competence, capacity, curiosity and potential will be realized.

Our early childhood educators possess the training, values and skills required to care for children and their families. Our educators support your family by;

- Observing, documenting and communicating regularly about your child's progress
- Planning activities based on the observed interests, reactions and cues of the children
- Fostering healthy social connections among children

School Age Program

YMCA Place to Connect curriculum brings a standard, high-quality approach to our before and after school child care programs. Research shows that children flourish in programs that are structured to let them shape the program, by providing opportunities for choice and designed to develop and enhance social skills like leadership, team work, problem solving and conflict resolution.

Children will have the opportunity to engage in physical activities, games and outdoor play, as well as planned activities driven by their interest to allow them to explore arts and crafts, science, math, reading and more.

As part of our curriculum our programs follow the guiding principles of play, relationships and health.

Play allows children to:

- improve and maintain physical, mental and spiritual health
- release stress and build resiliency skills
- have fun

Relationships allow children to:

- build positive connections with peers
- learn how to effectively problem solve and appreciate varying perspectives
- develop their ability to express empathy

A focus on health allows children to:

- learn how to eat healthy and be physically active
- develop healthy relationships with others
- foster a healthy spirit

Our planning is based on the interests of the children and may include, but is not limited to:

- board games, arts and crafts
- dramatic play, block play and construction
- science and discovery
- low organized games and sports
- outdoor play
- quieter areas for reading, homework completion

A nutritious snack is offered every morning and afternoon.

Weemarkable™

Connecting you to the small moments and big milestones

Weemarkable is the window into your little one's day - from wherever you are. It's the app YMCA families love to get notifications from as they receive messages and photos sharing in their child's excitement and fun. Built with YMCA educators and families, this educator to parent communication app enhances the child care family's understanding about their child's learning, development and centre activities while establishing strong, transparent relationships with educators. Built to support YMCA educator documentations observations, Weemarkable streamlines information and provides an overview of each child at just a tap. Weemarkable is built with the privacy and security of families in mind. It is easy to use and available as a free download for Apple and Android devices.

Weemarkable™ is a trademark of the YMCA of Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford.



Incorporating Indoor, Outdoor, Active, Rest & Quiet Activities

YMCA educators design a daily schedule that meets the needs of the children and provides for a balance of activities throughout the day. Consideration is given to each child's individual age, developmental level, energy level and their interests.

Generous opportunities for children to explore, play and inquire are included both indoors and outdoors. Active and quiet play are interwoven throughout the day. The daily schedule is flexible however young children thrive on regular schedules and feel secure when they can predict what will occur throughout the day. Therefore, snacks and mealtimes are consistent as is the rest period in the afternoon for young children.

Child Initiated and Adult Supported Experiences

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

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

There are no expectations imposed by the educator or curriculum on where children play, or whom they play with, or how long they play at one activity. That is for the child to choose based on their interests.

You may overhear a small group of children in the dramatic play centre dressed in costumes acting out a scene of "family members and baby at the doctor". The educator has been assigned the role of the "doctor" by the children and takes this opportunity to ask the children questions that expand their understanding of what happens at a check-up.

The following day, the educator supports the children's interest by adding books about doctors and hospitals to the dramatic play centre hoping to build on the children's interest and spark more questions and play – resulting in more learning.

Fostering Exploration Play and Inquiry

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

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

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

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

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

Encouraging Children to Interact and Communicate in a Positive Way and Support Their Ability to Self-Regulate

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

Generally self-regulation involves gaining a degree of control over one's bodily functions and impulses, managing one's emotions, changing one's behaviours and maintaining focus or attention on something or someone.

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

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

Planning and Creating Positive Learning Environments to Support Every Child's Learning and Experiences

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

The YMCA's unique approach to planning and creating learning environments supports children's play so that early learning and healthy development is maximized. All children will be supported and is inclusive of children with individualized plans.

In our child care centres we have created home like environments that include calming colours, soft furnishings, items from nature like plants and pets, family photographs, and accessories that are intended to make children feel comfortable and safe.

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

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



Involving Community Partners

While our range of community partners is broad, many of our centres are located in schools, so relationships with principals, faculty and staff are critical. The YMCA works closely with local community agencies and partners in order to support the children and families in our programs.

YMCA Educators

YMCA child care educators go through a comprehensive interview and selection process. They are required to submit three employment references, plus a current police records check with vulnerable sector screening prior to starting with us.

Our team is selected based on their maturity, education, experience working with children and families, and their ability to role model YMCA values. Our educators have many opportunities for ongoing professional development through internal and external training sessions and our annual before and after-school conference.

All educators are required to adhere to a number of YMCA policies and procedures, as well as Ministry of Education requirements. An annual review of our policies and procedures ensures that our team is knowledgeable and prepared to handle any situation.

College of Early Childhood Educators

The College of Early Childhood Educators is the professional self-regulatory body for early childhood educators (ECE's) in Ontario. The College mandate is to protect the public's interest and ensure quality and standards of practice of early childhood educators. YMCA educators with an Early Childhood Education diploma or degree must hold a current, clear membership with the College. Memberships must be renewed on an annual basis.

Volunteers and Students

At times, YMCA programs are enhanced by the involvement of volunteers and placement students. Volunteers and placement students also go through a formal interview process and are required to provide the YMCA with professional references. Additionally, they provide the YMCA with a current police records check with vulnerable sector screening prior to being placed in our programs.

Volunteers and placement students are oriented to the centre they will be placed at, and review and sign-off on all YMCA policies and procedures. They are also required to adhere to the Ministry of Education requirements for licensed child care.

Our volunteers and placement students are not responsible for and are never left alone with children. They are always under the supervision of a paid YMCA educator.

Ministry of Education

Our partners from the Ministry of Education help us to deliver on our promise to ensure high quality programs that support the healthy growth and development of children. We work with our Halton school administrators, principals and teachers to ensure every child has a positive, safe school community.

Additionally, all YMCA licensed child care centres adhere to the criteria set out by the Ministry of Education, and we are inspected annually to confirm compliance with the regulations. As you enter your child's centre you will see the current license issued by the Ministry of Education. If you have any questions about the license of the centre, you are encouraged to speak directly with the child care supervisor.

As a licensed child care provider, YMCA educators have the responsibility to report serious occurrence incidents to the Ministry of Education, Quality Assurance and Licensing within 24 hours. To support transparency and access to information, a "serious occurrence notification form" will be posted at the centre for 10 days following an incident. This posting provides our families with a brief overview of what happened and what kind of follow-up will happen, while protecting the privacy of individuals involved.

Many factors lead to a serious occurrence report. A serious occurrence does not necessarily mean that an operator is not complying with licensing requirements, or that children are at risk. The policy supports the government's efforts to increase access to information about licensed child care programs in Ontario.

Quality First

Our YMCA partners with Quality First to ensure a consistent level of high quality programs. Quality First is an initiative that provides all licensed child care programs in the Halton region with the opportunity to participate in a developmental model for quality improvement. It is designed to facilitate positive, meaningful and sustained change in the delivery of quality care and learning in Halton region. Our partners at Quality First support the professional development of our educators by providing training and in-centre support.



Family Partnership

The YMCA supports positive and responsive interactions among children, parents, and educators.

Our commitment to provide high quality child care involves remaining knowledgeable with current research in child development and working in partnership with our families. At the YMCA we understand that young children flourish in all areas of development when they are in positive and responsive relationships with adults. YMCA educators build a foundation of trust with children by being sensitive, responsive and caring.

YMCA educators create an inclusive and respectful environment to foster positive, equitable, and collaborative relationships. When children feel safe, secure, valued and contributing members of their world they're able to 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 in order 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 a number of strategies to foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with families about the program and their children:

- informal information sharing during drop-off and pick-up times
- phone calls and emails
- celebrations and family engagement events (e.g. YMCA Strong Community campaign events)
- meetings
- photographs of children at play
- posting program plans that include observations of children's interests and activities
- website updates and e-blasts
- annual parent satisfaction survey (third party administered)
- Weemarkable – a YMCA app used to enhance family's understanding about their child's learning and development and provide access to important child care information (Infant, Toddler and Preschool programs).

Our parent satisfaction survey is administered to our infant, toddler, preschool, and before and after-school families on an annual basis. We encourage all of our families to complete the short online survey as it is used as a tool to get feedback and gain insight into how we can continuously improve the quality of our programs. The feedback offered on these surveys helps guide our decisions and helps us to develop plans to address any gaps in quality.

Family Concerns

Family Concerns and/or Complaints Process

The YMCA is committed to service excellence in the delivery of programs, services and supporting our charitable mandate. We do recognize that from time to time, there may be concerns/complaints that may arise.

While it is our hope that families can resolve any complaints at the centre level, we do have a process in place that outlines how concerns can be escalated and resolved:

- 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.
- 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, Children's Aid Society or a law enforcement agency).
- 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.

Resolving Concerns and Issues

We hope that families have developed a collaborative, trusting relationship with their child's educators and centre supervisor and have full confidence in reaching out to resolve issues at the centre level. Families are encouraged to speak directly with the supervisor, if the educator is unable to resolve the issue/concern.

Child Care Directors

Please refer to the directory found on our website ymcaofoakville.org

In most cases, talking to the supervisor will resolve all issues/concerns. If for some reason a resolution cannot be reached, the supervisor will provide contact information for the YMCA Manager.

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.

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

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/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

Inclusion & Child Guidance

Inclusion

The YMCA of Oakville is dedicated to fostering the growth and development of healthy, confident children within an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment. Upholding our mission and core values, we treat all children with dignity and respect, helping them reach their full potential. We believe an inclusive environment allows children to take risks, challenge themselves, develop skills, and find a sense of belonging. Benefits of this approach include:

- Developing a better understanding and appreciation of differences
- Learning to show respect for oneself and others
- Learning from and with their peers
- Participating more fully in the community and transitioning smoothly into school

Our full-day and before and after-school programs are designed for children who can safely engage in group care experiences. We adhere to staff-to-child ratios as legislated by the Ministry of Education – Child Care and Early Years Act.

• Infant (6 weeks – 18 months)	1:3
• Toddler (18 months – 2.5 years)	1:5
• Preschool (2.5 years – 3.8 years)	1:8
• Kindergarten (3.8 years – 6 years)	1:13
• Primary/Junior School Age (6 years – 12 years)	1:15
• Junior School Age (9 years – 12 years)	1:20

There will be times when children require additional support to succeed in our programs. To meet the individual needs within our program we:

- Consult with families to learn about their child's needs and explore ways to ensure consistency between home and school
- Strive to adapt the environment and programs to meet the child's needs (where possible)
- Work with community partners, including School Boards to enhance our support through training, consultation, and strategies.
- Where possible provide additional in centre supports

Assessment Needs

It is essential that all relevant information about a child's needs is shared with educators during the initial registration inquiry. This will allow YMCA staff and parents to discuss the necessary resources to support the child's success and safety in the program. The child's plan will be reviewed annually or as required. Occasionally, despite our best efforts, we may not be able to meet a child's unique needs. If this is determined, we will work with the family to find alternate solutions that may better support the child.

Child Guidance

Our educators are trained to support children to make good decisions, to help them become more independent, and to take personal responsibility for their behaviour. As a values-based organization, we encourage children to show respect for themselves, others and their environment. Our educators help children develop these important life-skills by setting limits, creating boundaries and establishing standards for appropriate behaviour.

Any practice based on harmful disciplinary methods that affect the emotional or physical well-being of a child are not permitted in any YMCA child care programs. A copy of the YMCA Child Care Guidance Policy is available from the child care director upon request.

These prohibited practices include the following:

- Corporal punishment of the child (which may include but is not limited to hitting, spanking, slapping, pinching);
- Physical restraint of the children, including but not limited to confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- Locking the exits of the child care centre premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as a part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;

- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children, including making children eat or drink against their will.

No educator, volunteer or student who is on an educational placement, shall engage in any of the prohibited practices with respect to a child receiving child care.

Respectful Environment

The YMCA of Oakville is dedicated to the physical, mental and social development of people. It is committed to providing a friendly, safe and respectful environment that does not tolerate abusive behaviour and reinforces socially responsible behaviour.

This means that educators, volunteers, program participants, parents/guardians, and others using YMCA facilities are expected to treat others, including children and vulnerable adults, with courtesy and respect.

The YMCA is a shared experience for everyone to enjoy. The YMCA's core values of equity, kindness, integrity, responsibility, well-being are the basis of our interactions with our members and families.

We believe:

- People are responsible for their actions
- We respect each other and the environment
- Honesty will be the basis for all relationships and interactions
- We will care for ourselves and those around us.
- Fostering healthy inclusive communities
- Adults will act as positive role models

Our staff and volunteer teams have the responsibility to interact with our community in a positive, professional manner. Our staff and volunteer teams also have the right to work in an environment that is safe and respectful.

Participation within the YMCA community will be based on an expectation that all will be treated with dignity and respect. The YMCA will not tolerate any verbal or physical abuse directed toward a staff member. The YMCA values excellence in the delivery of quality child care services guided by shared responsibility and embraces diversity and belonging. However, there may be circumstances that arise from time to time where it may be necessary for the YMCA of Oakville to withdraw and/or suspend child care services for a child and/or their family.

We approach these decisions with careful consideration to ensure a thorough assessment of the situation, child's needs, community supports available, and the YMCA programs ability to support the child and/or their family have been undertaken before withdrawing services.

Safe Schools Act

The Safe Schools Act 2000 requires all schools in Ontario provide a safe and welcoming school, develop a code of conduct and consequences for infractions, and implement a program of bullying and harassment prevention.

The YMCA of Oakville is a partner with school boards and is required to report to the school principal any student involved in an incident of bullying, harassment, violence, suspected child abuse or neglect or infraction of the code of conduct.

In the event that your child receives a 'mandatory' suspension or expulsion from school then your child cannot attend the YMCA Before and After School Program for the duration. If your child is receiving a 'discretionary' suspension, then the principal will determine if your child can continue to attend the YMCA during the period of the suspension.

Monitoring Procedures

The YMCA recognizes that how adults interact with children impacts their overall learning, development health and well-being.

The following measures will be implemented to ensure that educators understand and follow through with supporting positive interactions between children, families and educators.

All educators, students and volunteers are expected to comply with the YMCA's stated policy and procedures, and the association's Child Care Program statement.

Annually, educators will receive training on the Associations Policies and Procedures, including Child Protection and Prohibited Practices.

All educators will acknowledge that they have reviewed and understand these policies and procedures by completing a Policy and Procedure Checklist that is dated annually, including the educator's signature and the signature of their immediate supervisor.

YMCA educators are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in our care. Educators recognize their responsibility to promote safe practices and to protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation. Our educators are trained in the identification and reporting requirements of suspected abuse, as outlined in the Child and Family Services Act.

In some cases, group care does not meet the needs of every child. If a child's behaviour threatens the safety of other children, staff or volunteers and/or poses an ongoing disruption to the program, the child may be suspended and/or removed from the program. Removal from the program is considered in more extreme situations and is at the discretion of the YMCA.

The following additional situations may be considered cause for withdrawal of care at the discretion of the YMCA:

- non-payment of child care fees
- chronic late pick-up of child
- situations that require specialized services that the YMCA is unable to provide
- parents or other family members who exhibit abusive and/or disrespectful behaviour toward YMCA educators, volunteers, other children and other families
- refusal by the parent/guardian to meet with YMCA educators and/or consent to the use of support services for their child

Promoting Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well-being

The YMCA of Oakville provides a vital service to families ensuring that children are in a safe, nurturing environment that fosters independence and well-being. We believe that a healthy lifestyle begins at an early age.

Sleep Supervision and Position Requirements

YMCA educators are required to follow the guidelines set out in the Joint Statement on Safe Sleep from the Public Health Agency of Canada which states that infants under 12 months of age are to be placed on their backs to sleep until such time that they can independently flip over onto their stomachs. Your physician may recommend otherwise in writing. The Joint Statement also sets out that infants under 12 months should not have blankets or toys in the crib. Families will be consulted respecting their child's sleeping arrangements at the time the child is enrolled and at any other appropriate time, such as at transitions between programs or rooms or upon a parent's/guardian's request. YMCA educators routinely perform direct visual checks of sleeping children that are documented on a chart. Direct visual checks of infants are performed every 15 minutes. For toddlers and preschool children, programs will establish (2) times for visual checks. Anytime a staff observes a significant change in a child's sleeping patterns or health during sleep it will be communicated to parents/guardians.

Nutrition

For the convenience of busy working families, all of our licensed child care programs offer a food service. Food is prepared through a catering company or by an on-site YMCA staff member, who is trained in food handling.

Our full day infant, toddler and preschool programs offer two nutritious snacks and a variety of fresh fruit, as well as a nutritious lunch every day. Our before and after- school programs offer two nutritious snacks (morning & afternoon) and a variety of fresh fruit and non-perishable snacks each day.

Our snack menu follows the legislated requirements outlined in the Child Care and Early Years Act. Additionally, we follow the Canada's Food Guide. Every snack or meal incorporates a minimum of 2 of the food groups. Our snack menus are posted at each location for your information.

Due to the number of children with allergies and food restrictions, our YMCA discourages food from home in our program. We do recognize that there will be times in our before and after-school programs when children are expected to bring their own lunch (i.e. PA days and holiday program). In these instances, we ask for your cooperation in not sending any snacks/lunches that contain nuts, peanut or peanut products

Health and Illness

The health and safety of the children in our programs is our primary concern. As partners in your child's care it is important that we work together to prevent infectious diseases and illness from spreading. Please ensure that you have made arrangements for your child in the event of illness.

If your child becomes ill while in our care, he/she will be supervised away from other children and you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child. If we are unable to reach you, we will call your emergency contact as indicated on your registration form, to pick up your child.

Children should not return to the program until they are able to fully participate in all aspects of our program, including outdoor activities. Children should remain at home anytime they have the following signs and symptoms of communicable illness until symptoms have stopped for at least 24 hours or a doctor has determined the child is able to return to the centre.

Exclusion Period

Gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., vomiting, diarrhea)	Gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., vomiting, diarrhea) can be an indication of both enteric and other illnesses, including COVID-19. If no specific pathogen is identified, children and staff with new or worsening symptoms of gastroenteritis must be free of vomiting and diarrhea for at least 48 hours before returning to child care.
Fever	Above 100.4 Fahrenheit/38 Degrees Celsius. Symptoms have been improving and Fever free at least 24 hours.
Pink Eye Bacterial	Until one full day of antibiotic treatment
Head Lice	Until child has been treated for head lice and no nits remain
Strep Throat	Until 24 hours after antibiotics are started
Hand Foot and Mouth	Fever free 24 hours and child is feeling well enough to take part in activities and does not have a fever. It is recommended children with mouth sores and/or open blisters on their body should be excluded until symptoms resolve, to reduce the spread of infection to others.

Other Illness Periods of Exclusion Followed by the Halton Health Department

For some illnesses, there is a specific program exclusion period that we ask families to adhere to. For more detailed information, please speak directly with the child care supervisor

All children must have an updated immunization record or provide a letter of exemption prior to participation in Infant, Toddler and Preschool child care programs.

Medication

Our educators can administer prescription medication in the original container. The medication must be affixed with the original pharmacist's label and must include the following information: name of the child, medication prescribed, dosage, duration, expiry date. Over the counter medication will only be administered to your child when it is sealed in the original container and labelled with the following information: name of child, medication prescribed (ie. children's Tylenol), dosage, duration, expiry date, reason for administering.

In each case, we ask our parents to complete a YMCA medication form that authorizes the administration of medication. Educators can only administer dosage that is on the label. If a different dosage is suggested, a doctor's note must be provided. If you would like our educators to apply creams (i.e., sunscreen, diaper cream, moisturizer), you will be asked to complete a YMCA Permission to Apply form.

Allergies/Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. This allergy can include, but is not limited to, food, insect bites, medicine and environmental conditions. We have many children in our care who have a life-threatening allergy and we take every measure to ensure their safety.

Protecting children with life-threatening allergies is a shared responsibility. Parents who have children who have been diagnosed with an anaphylactic allergy must provide a detailed individual emergency plan for their child and are required to train/orient all centre staff and volunteers on their child's emergency plan prior to the first day of care. It is the parent's responsibility to inform centre staff of a child's allergy at the time of registration and provide an annual update of any allergy changes.

Exception of bringing food into the Child Care Centre due to severe Allergies/Food Restrictions

Procedure if parent/guardian brings in own food:

- The lunch bag and containers are labeled with child's full name
- Each container is also labeled with the food inside and when it is to be served (lunch, snack)
- No Nuts/peanuts in the ingredients
- A list of all food ingredients must be emailed to the Onsite Supervisor/Director, prior to food being brought into the centre, including special instructions example: heating time, storage.
- Bottles/sip cups, formula (labelled with your child's full name, the date prepared) or expressed milk labelled with your child's full name, the mother's full name, date milk expressed) and written instructions for feeding (baby foods and whole milk or 2% milk will be provided by the YMCA).

Additional Steps:

- All containers are to arrive to the centre in one bag that is wipeable with disinfectant wipe
 - * **To eliminate daily transferring of food; if possible, please supply a week's worth plus a day of food.**
- Once containers are brought into the centre all individual containers will be wiped down
- Containers will be appropriately stored (fridge/freezer/cupboard).
- Return containers to parents at the end of the week in the same bag that was provided at the beginning of the week.

YMCA educators are certified in Standard First Aid and infant and child CPR and have been trained to effectively use an auto-injector in the event of a severe allergic reaction. We will inform families within our programs of any anaphylactic allergies and will request that the causative agents are not brought into the program. An information sheet indicating the type of anaphylactic allergy will be placed in the child's file and each child's individual emergency plan will be posted in all classrooms and food service areas.

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

Our Safe Arrival & Dismissal Policy is designed to ensure the secure arrival and departure of all children participating in YMCA Child Care programs. Our commitment is to ensure that any child receiving care within our child care programs is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual to whom the parent/guardian has provided authorization. Designated persons are required to provide photo identification. The centre will not release any child(ren) from care without supervision.

In case a child does not arrive as expected or is not picked up as scheduled, our educators are required to follow the established safe arrival and dismissal procedures outlined in the Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy to maintain a consistent and thorough approach to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care.

For more information, visit ymcaoakville.org/programs/child-care/safe-arrival/

Extra Curricular Activities

An extracurricular activity is anything that a child participates in before or after-school outside of the licensed child care program (i.e. homework club, basketball). In some cases, this may also be one of our YMCA community-based programs. There must be a completed extra curricular activity consent document, signed by the parent/guardian, which specifies the program, the day and time of the program, and the duration of the program.

Outdoors

An important component of all of our licensed child care programs is outdoor play. Daily, children will participate in outdoor activities and it is important that our families send their children with appropriate clothing for the weather conditions. Clothing should be comfortable enough for children to fully participate, and your child's belongings should be clearly labeled with their name.

Field Trips and Community Walks

Field trips and community walks provide valuable experiences for children and allow staff the opportunity to extend program activities outside of the classroom. When field trips are planned, parents/guardians will be required to complete a permission form giving consent for their child to participate in the activity. Community walks may be part of the regular program and as such do not require a permission form.

Inclement Weather

During extreme weather alerts including heat, smog and wind chill advisories children will not participate in outdoor activities, and an alternate in-centre program will be implemented.

Smoke Free

In accordance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, no person shall smoke or vape in or around the child care centre at all times. This includes playgrounds, school property and surrounding areas.

Impaired Parents/Guardians

The safety of the children in our care is our top priority. As such, our educators have been instructed to follow specific procedures should a parent or guardian who is impaired comes to pick up their child. Educators will request that the parent or guardian arrange for a taxi service or contact an alternate person who can be responsible for driving them home safely. If this practice is not followed, our educators have been instructed to contact Halton Police Services.

Emergency Management

The safety and protection of children at the YMCA is of paramount importance. To ensure the well-being of children in our care, the YMCA has developed a detailed emergency management plan which provides critical response instructions for YMCA educators in the event of an emergency in our child care centre.

Our Emergency Management Plan includes:

- The roles and responsibilities of YMCA educators in the event of an emergency
- Clear instructions on key action steps required in the event of an emergency
- Expectations regarding communications with parents and caregivers
- Expectations on required emergency contact to local response agencies
- Instructions on the documentation and post-emergency action steps for educators following resolution on an emergency

In the event of an emergency, parent will be called, and a notification will be placed on the main entrance of the centre. A statement will also be pushed out through YMCA social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter). YMCA Educators review all emergency management procedures on an annual basis.

YMCA Guidelines For Child Care Program Closures

In cases of severe weather conditions, many schools adjust their school hours and close earlier than the regular dismissal time. Schools generally close before the school day begins in the morning.

YMCA programs operating out of those schools will also be closed (no refunds will be issued for these days).

In cases of severe weather conditions, parents are asked to listen to local radio/TV announcements, check YMCA website, YMCA App and social media for information on school closures.

If schools remain open and severe weather conditions progress throughout the day, YMCA educators will call parents to encourage early pick up. A message will also be placed on the Child Care Centre's voice mail advising of closures.

If the school building is closed during the YMCA program, due to an emergency, the educators and children will move to the emergency evacuation location. Parents will be notified and asked to pick-up their child immediately.

In the case of an emergency or centre closure, fees will not be refunded for all closures (e.g. snow storm, centre without heat/hydro, job action/strike). This means that should a centre need to close, parents will be expected to pay for care.

Our full day child care centres not located in schools will also follow the above policies.

Program Cancellations

The YMCA will endeavor to keep programs operating which meet the needs of the community. The YMCA reserves the right to limit program components and/or locations based on enrollment.

Program Information

The YMCA of Oakville will be participating in the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC). This will be implemented in phases over the next number of years to reduce the cost of child care to an average rate of \$10.00 per day by 2025 for Ontario families. *Please note;* The CWELCC system is for children 5 years of age and younger.

CWELCC funding is to be used to support reductions in base fees charged to parents/caregivers. Non-base fees are ineligible for CWELCC funding. Base fee items are mandatory costs families must pay to receive child care. This includes anything a licensed child care operator is required to provide under the CCEYA, and any items or services that are part of the fee outlined in the Family Handbook. Base fee items are such as Registration Fees, Play Materials, Equipment/ Furnishings, Food, etc. Non-base fee items are ineligible for CWELCC funding such as Late Pick Up Fees, Field Trips, Not Sufficient Funds Fees. Non-base fees cannot impact the ability of a family to access child care

Hours of Operation

Our full-day child care programs operate 12 months of the year, while our before and after-school programs operate from September to June. Please see below for PA Day & School Break information.

	Ages	Days	Times
Full Day Child Care	Infant (6 weeks - 18 months) Toddler & Preschool (18 months - 3.8 years)	Monday-Friday	7:00 am – 6:00 pm
Before School	3.8 - 12 years	Monday-Friday	7:00 am - School Starts
After School	3.8 - 12 years	Monday-Friday	School Dismissal - 6:00 pm

Age Requirement

Children between the ages of six weeks to 12 years are eligible to participate in YMCA of Oakville licensed child care. YMCA of Oakville licensed child care programs are specifically designed to accommodate the needs of children up to age 12. However, we understand the importance of supporting families during transitional periods. Therefore, children currently in our program who turn 13 can continue to remain in the program until the next logical school break. For example, if your child turns 13 in November, your child may remain in the program until the next school break which is the Winter Break. If your child turns 13 in February, your child may remain in the program until the school scheduled Spring Break. If extended care is required, parents have the option to submit a YMCA of Oakville Request for Accommodation form signed by their health professional for YMCA of Oakville's consideration to continue in the program until the end of the school year.

Dropping Off and Picking Up Your Child

It is important that all children are under the supervision of an adult always. To ensure this practice, we require all parents to drop off and pick up their child directly in the YMCA program space. Upon arrival and departure, a YMCA educator will greet you and your child and indicate the time of arrival and the time of departure on our attendance.

YMCA educators will only release your child to those who are indicated on the registration form as people who are authorized to pick up your child. This includes parents/ guardians and emergency contact people. It is very important that we have updated contact information. If your contact information changes, please notify the child care supervisor.

There will be times when you would like to have someone different pick up your child from care. If this happens, you are required to provide either written and/or verbal consent to a YMCA staff member.

If this person is unknown to the staff, they will be required to show photo identification. Please ensure the person you ask to pick up your child is aware of this expectation, so they come prepared.

Late Picking up your Child?

To accommodate the needs of busy working families, all of our child care centres open at 7:00 am and close at 6:00 pm. It is very important to ensure that your child is picked up at the centre every day no later than 6:00 pm. If you anticipate being late, please plan for an alternate pick up.

To respect the schedules of our YMCA staff educators, our YMCA has a late fee policy in effect. Families who arrive after 6:00 pm will be required to make payment directly to the staff on duty within 48 hours. Our late fee is levied at a rate of \$15.00 for every 15-minute increment, starting at 1 minute past the program time.

For example:

6:01 pm – 6:15 pm \$15.00
6:16 pm – 6:30 pm \$30.00

Please note: we do not issue receipts for late payments.

Should you be late, every effort will be made to reach you and your emergency contact person. If we have not been able to contact someone to pick up your child by 7:00 pm, a call will be placed to Halton Children's Aid Society for consultation.

Families who are late more than three times will be asked to find alternate child care for their child.

Parental Access Procedure

The YMCA of Oakville does not have the legal right to deny a parent or authorized pick-up person access to his or her child if we have proper notification and written notice of release.

If parents have legal joint custody of a child, then the child may be released to either parent provided both names are listed on the registration form and the YMCA educator is familiar with the individual.

Custody and Related Court Orders

The child care educators cannot become involved in custody issues of the families that we serve. If a custody or court order exists, a copy of the order needs to be placed in the child's file. The guardian is responsible for providing up to date and accurate information concerning the legal guardianship of the child. Without a custody or court order on file, the educator cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent. If the non-enrolling parent is not listed on the pick up list, the policy on unauthorized persons will be implemented. The guardian will provide all consents.

If Your Child Will be Away

To ensure the safety of the children in our programs, we ask all parents to notify their child's centre if he/she will be absent for the day. Each of our child care locations has a direct phone line, and email address where you can either speak directly with a YMCA educator or leave a message.

For a complete phone and email listing of our child care centres please visit our website at ymcaoakville.org. If you have a child enrolled in our Infant, Toddler or Preschool programs, you may notify absenteeism using the Weemarkable App.

PA Days and School Breaks

We recognize the needs of busy working families, and therefore our YMCA offers full day programs for children (who are registered in one of our YMCA of Oakville child care programs) 3.8 to 12 on all professional activity days and school breaks. Please visit our website at ymcaoakville.org to see a listing of program locations and to register your child. If your child care fees are subsidized through Halton region, you will need to register your child for PA days directly by selecting the regional subsidy registration section located on the website. Our full-day programs offer children many activities and opportunities to be active and creative. We also offer a full-day program during the Holiday Break and throughout the March Break.

If you are looking for a program during the summer for your child, our YMCA offers a wide variety of programs

Children ages 3.8 to 5 years our YMCA offers Licensed Summer Programs during 8 weeks in the summer. Children ages 5 to 12 years our YMCA offers Summer Day Camp with extended hours and bus transportation.

For more information, please visit our website at ymcaoakville.org

Statutory Holidays

YMCA Child Care programs are closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Civic Holiday
- Thanksgiving Day
- Boxing Day
- Family Day
- Easter Monday
- Canada Day
- Labour Day
- Christmas Day

Please note: Fee payment is required for all statutory holidays. All child care programs will close early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

YMCA as a Charitable Association

We believe that every child deserves to be nurtured to reach their full potential and thanks to caring donors, we're here to help.

Electronic Devices

The YMCA program is a time to learn new things, make new friends and disconnect from screen time. We discourage electronic devices such as cell phones, ipads/tablets, handheld gaming devices etc. the YMCA of Oakville will not be held responsible for lost or damaged devices.

Photography and Video

For safety, security and privacy concerns participants are not authorized to take photographs or videos. Photos and videos are taken at times during the program outlining highlights and from time-to-time professional photographers will be contracted to take pictures and/or videos for promotion, social media etc. Families will be provided with consent forms upon registration confirming their permission to take photos or videos for these mentioned purposes. Employees and participants may not post, publish, or release any information or photographs and videos that are considered confidential or not public or engage in any social media networks that threaten or become antagonistic or may have a detrimental effect on the image or reputation of the association or the safety, privacy and security of others.

Megathon

In early June, children in YMCA child care and before and after-school programs are focused on healthy activity and the importance of giving back to help those in need by raising funds for the YMCA through Megathon events. The children decide on the activities and help plan the fundraisers. Please consider supporting your community by donating to your child's Megathon event!

Your support changes lives

Make your gift to YMCA Strong Community and help create more opportunities for people in our community to become healthier, stronger, more confident and reach their potential. You can donate online anytime by visiting our website at ymcafoakville.org/donate



Registration Information

Registration in our child care programs is perpetual. This means that you will only be asked to complete your registration forms at the time of registration. Please note: Full Time care - Monday to Friday Registration takes priority from Part Time care. Part Time care is available on a limited basis.

Changes to Your Registration Withdrawal

You will continue to be registered in your YMCA child care program until we receive two-weeks written notification of a change or withdrawal. Your child care payments will continue to be automatically withdrawn monthly and will reflect the current child care fee schedule.

While we want to meet the needs of our families, please speak with your centre supervisor before submitting your written request to ensure that we are able to accommodate you.

Transfers or Program Changes

If you need to transfer from one YMCA location to another, simply contact your child care supervisor to make your request.

Method of Payment

We know some families would prefer to pay their child care fees directly from their credit card monthly, so switching from bank account withdrawals to credit card withdrawals is easy! Please contact the child care supervisor.

Transportation

Due to licensing requirements, we are unable to accommodate children in before or after school programs who are being bussed to or from other locations.

Waiting List Policy

To begin the registration process for licensed YMCA Child Care programs, complete the online inquiry form. <https://ymcafoakville.org/programs/child-care/inquiry/>

To align with our mission and values, the YMCA of Oakville strives to accommodate all registration requests. However, if space is unavailable, families can place their child on our waiting list. There is no fee for this. The procedures for the waiting list are as follows:

1. Requesting and Adding a Child to the Waiting List

- Families submit their waiting list request by completing the Inquiry Form on the YMCA of Oakville website.
- The child's name and enrollment status are added to the centre's waiting list based on the request's date and time.

2. Determining Placement When a Space Becomes Available

- Available child care spaces are filled based on the order of which requests are received and the following criteria are taken into consideration:
 - When currently enrolled children move to the next age group and spaces become available
 - The ages of children on the waiting list
 - The length of time each child will be in an age group before transitioning
 - The centre's ability to meet the needs of each child
- Exceptions affecting placement include requests from child protection agencies, children needing full-time care, siblings of currently registered children, transfers from other YMCA of Oakville Child Care programs, children of YMCA of Oakville employees, and children living within the school boundaries.

3. Offering an Available Space

- Children on the waiting list will be prioritized based on program room availability.
- Families on the waiting list will be contacted via phone or email when a space becomes available.
- Families have 48 hours to confirm acceptance of the space. If they do not respond or decline, the next person on the list will be contacted.

Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of children and families, confirmation and information that a child is on the wait list will only be shared with the child's parent/guardian.

Child Care Fees

Child care fees are paid on a monthly basis and can be paid by VISA, AMEX, MasterCard or by pre-authorized bank withdrawal. If you are paying by credit card, payments will be processed on the 22nd of each month and if you are paying directly from your bank account, payments will be processed on the 15th of each month.

Please be advised that an NSF fee of \$20.00 will be applied to your account in the event your child care payment is declined. Should child care fees continue to be in arrears, child care services may be withdrawn at the discretion of the YMCA. The amounts of the Pre-Authorized Debit/Credit Card will be variable based on the number of child care days in the month. **Pre-Authorized Debit/Credit Card includes a one-time \$25 administrative fee for new families registering. This does not apply to subsidized families.**

Payment is required for absenteeism, sick days, vacation days, centre closures due to inclement weather, emergency closures (i.e. job action/strike, centre without heat/hydro) and for statutory holidays. This means that should a centre need to close, parents will be expected to pay for care.

Please refer to the most current fees schedule found on our website for more information.

Subsidized Child Care Fees – Halton Region

The YMCA of Oakville holds a Purchase of Service Agreement with Halton Region. This partnership allows us to meet the needs of families in our community who are unable to pay the full cost of licensed child care. To learn more about how you can apply for child care fee subsidy please contact Halton Region at (905) 825-6000.

YMCA Financial Assistance

Today, child care is a significant factor in the way many Canadian children live, learn and grow. For families who are struggling, the cost of high-quality child care can be beyond reach. Halton Region helps struggling families afford the cost of child care, but there are times when this support is not enough. We believe that every child deserves to be cared for by compassionate professionals in a safe, nurturing environment.

If your family needs financial support, please speak directly with the child care supervisor to learn more.

Thanks to our donors, affordable high-quality child care is within reach for families in need.

Tax Receipts

The YMCA of Oakville issues official tax receipts to families on February 28th of each year. Tax receipts can be found online at ymcaofaokville.org.

If you have any problems accessing your child care tax receipt, please contact us directly at (905) 845-3417.





Our Mission

The YMCA of Oakville is a charity that connects people and builds health and well-being for the community.

Our Vision

A stronger, healthier and more resilient community.

Our Values

*Equity
Kindness
Integrity
Responsibility
Well-being*

Get Involved!

As a new member of our family, we also invite you to get involved in our YMCA community. You can make a difference by volunteering or donating to the YMCA to help children, youth and families in need access much needed programs and services.

Visit us anytime to learn more, or attend one of our free community events like Family Day and YMCA Healthy Kids Day.

Stay Connected!

Visit our website at ymcaofOakville.org or follow us on social media to learn more about the YMCA and stay up to date all year long:

 facebook.com/ymcaofOakville
 twitter.com/ymcaofOakville
 instagram.com/ymcaofOakville



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