

Family Partnership & Family Concerns Policy

Family Partnership

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.

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

Our commitment to providing 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, 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 campaign events)
- 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 import 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 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/family 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.

Resolving Concerns and Issues

We hope that families have developed a collaborative, trusting relationship with their child's educators and centre supervisors 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.

Summary of Procedures for Family Concerns

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>(i.e. schedule, sleep arrangement medical needs/medication or allergies, toilet training, indoor/ outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements etc.)</p>	<p>Families are encouraged to speak directly with the educator about any questions, issues or concerns with in person, by phone or by email.</p>	<p>Staff will listen and seek to understand the family member’s issue/concern and may attempt to resolve it immediately. If follow-up is required or if the staff is involved in supervising children the staff will record the contact information including name, phone number, and email address (if any) and inform the family member of the best time for a follow-up discussion (e.g. set up a phone call or meeting).</p> <p>If the staff receiving the issue/ concern thinks they are not the appropriate person to address the issue/concern they will refer the family member to the correct person; typically the supervisor, and provide contact information.</p> <p>Staff will record all issues/ concerns and the resolution in the Daily Written Record/ Log Book.</p> <p>If issue/concern is unresolved:</p> <p>Families are encouraged to speak directly with the supervisor if the educator is unable to resolve their issue/ 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
<p>Centre Operations Related</p> <p>(I.e. child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, cleanliness, etc.)</p>	<p>Families are encouraged to speak directly with the supervisor about any questions, issues or concerns in person, by phone or email.</p>	<p>The supervisor will listen and seek to understand the family member’s issue/concern and may attempt to resolve it immediately. If follow-up is required or if the supervisor is involved in supervising children the supervisor will record the contact information including name, phone number, and email address (if any) and inform the family member of the best time for a follow-up discussion (e.g. set up a phone call or meeting).</p> <p>Supervisors will record all issues/ concerns and the resolution in the Daily Written Record/Log Book.</p> <p>If issue/concern is unresolved:</p> <p>In most cases, talking with 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 responsible for the centre.</p>

<p>Conduct of staff/student/volunteer or supervisor</p>	<p>Family members are encouraged to speak directly with the supervisor about any questions, issues or concerns in person, by phone to by email.</p> <p>If the family member is concerned about the conduct of the supervisor, they are encouraged to speak directly to YMCA Management.</p>	<p>If there is an allegation/suspicion of child abuse, the supervisor will inform the family member of his/her duty to report suspected child abuse to a child protection agency and will provide the contact information</p> <p>Supervisors will:</p> <p>Make a report to the same child protection agency. Record all suspicions of abuse using the YMCA Child Abuse Reporting Kit. File a Serious Occurrence Report to the Ministry of Education within 24 hours of receiving the report from the family member.</p> <p>Supervisors will share the outcome (founded/unfounded) of any investigation by a child protection agency when completed with the family member. Disciplinary information will not be shared.</p>
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Escalation of Concerns

Where parents/family members are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, through the informal process described above, a formal complaint may be made in writing (by mail or email) to: Mailing address:

YMCA of Oakville
 410 Rebecca Street, Oakville, Ontario L6k 1K7
 Email Address: customerservice@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 Directors – please refer to Child Care Directory Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca