



YMCA Child Care Policies

Child Guidance Policy

The YMCA is committed to helping children grow to their fullest potential in a safe, caring and nurturing environment. Educators are to practice proactive, prevention and intervention Child Guidance strategies, while avoiding prohibited practices. Any child guidance provided is reasonable in the circumstances. The YMCA communicates, verbally and in writing, child guidance methods to families, Educators and children, where developmentally appropriate.

The YMCA also focuses on providing opportunities for children to practice independence, autonomy, personal choice, empathy towards others and a sense of responsibility for their actions. Problem solving skills will help children to learn ways to cope with difficulties and frustrations. All YMCA Kinder and Out of School Care programs have program expectations developed with the children and posted.

Prior to registration, Child Care programs will meet with families to better understand their child(ren)'s needs.

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Child Guidance: Prevention:

- Plan for positive outcomes
 - Offer age appropriate programming, based on the interests of the child
 - Be organized and plan materials and equipment ahead of time to avoid unnecessary waiting
 - Provide small group experiences
- Anticipate issues and be flexible
 - Pay close attention to children who tend to require more guidance and intervene before situations arise
 - Plan and give reminders before transitions
 - Children will be given time to finish an activity they are involved in
 - Use proximity to help prevent situations from escalating
- Build positive emotional attachments and relationships
- Be present, engaged and positive with the children
- Project a cheerful, playful, professional attitude
- Treat each child as an individual
- Redirect children
- Provide safe and nurturing environments



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- Develop clear expectations with or for the children and be sure children are aware of the expectations
- Promote risky play in the spirit of learning
- Teach children about natural and logical consequences
- Communicate Clearly using words and phrases the child will understand
 - Use reminders
 - Acknowledge feelings
 - Communicate with children at their eye level
 - Allow children to respond and finish speaking and listen to the children's words
- Recognize children through specific praise, compliments and encouragement
- Role model behavior expectations
- Recognize Educators own emotions and attitude and request help to implement Child Guidance, when needed

Child Guidance: Prevention and Intervention:

- Offer safe choices mutually accepted by the educator and child
 - Include children in determining the choices, where possible
- Allow children personal space (Time Away)
 - If a child demonstrates the need for personal time to cool off, allow the opportunity to do so where they are comfortable while adhering to the Supervision Policy
- Promote discussion, problem solving and conflict resolution by allowing children to solve their own problems and intervening when required.
- Remind children of expectations
- Follow through with consequences and set limits
- Comfort children
 - Educators may use physical contact, with child's permission and consent, to calm children, when required. Educators will be sure a child wants to be comforted by asking the child and/or observing their body language.

Families as Partners

Family involvement and insight in the behavior guidance process is strongly encouraged and welcomed. YMCA Educators will provide regular feedback to families regarding their child's behavior, sharing both positive and challenging behaviours. The YMCA requires parents/guardians be available to meet with Child Care Educators, when mutually convenient, to discuss their child's behaviour or conduct, if necessary.

The YMCA will support and incorporate the guidance used at home as long as it falls within Licensing and our policies and procedures. On a day-to-day basis the YMCA requests that families share with educators any relevant information to better care and understand the children.

Information such as:

- Changes in the home
- Physical or emotional upsets
- Tired from a busy weekend
- New experiences
- Custody issues



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Should ongoing concerns be noted by either the family or program the following steps will be taken.

Guidelines for Addressing Severe Behaviours

On occasion, the YMCA understands that severe behaviours will occur. The YMCA classifies severe behaviours as those listed below:

- Severe defiance and disruption
- Verbal abuse to educators or other children, including profanity
- Destruction of YMCA property
- Physical abuse to educators or other children
- Leaving the program boundaries or group of activity without permission
- Theft of property
- Bullying or antagonizing behaviour

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In the case that a child exhibits any of the above behaviours and all the efforts have been exhausted to follow Child Guidance prevention and intervention strategies, the following guidelines will be followed.

1. Child will be redirected to a safe place and encouraged to calm down. Other children may be removed from the space, depending on the circumstances (i.e., If there are concerns for safety).
2. Educators will work with the child to assist them in calming themselves, so they can rejoin the group and follow all program expectations. This may mean speaking to them, sitting with them, or letting them have time to themselves.
3. Physical intervention and/or restraint will only occur if it is reasonable in the circumstances and all other strategies are unsuccessful and/or if the child is at risk of hurting themselves or others
 - For example, an Educator would hold a child if they are running into a busy street or step between children if they are hitting each other
 - Once the child is ready to return to program, Educators will supportively reintroduce the child, being sure to stay with the child until they have settled into an activity or task. Educators will debrief with all children, when appropriate, discussing emotions that they are seeing
4. In rare cases, parents/guardians may be contacted if a child continues to put themselves or others at risk. i.e., a child continuously running away from the program and not returning to the site or throwing chairs and tipping shelves in the room and unable to be reintroduced for 15 minutes

Follow up

- Incident will be documented on YMCA Incident Report and shared with the family
- Upon parent/guardian arrival an Educator will discuss the situation
- Child Care Management will be notified of the situation
- Suspension may be issued depending on the severity of the situation, pending a Collaborative Meeting
- The child can return to care, once a meeting has been held between the Director and the Family:
 - The Meeting will include, but is not limited to:
 - Behaviour strategies used at home and school
 - Behaviour strategies that can be used/implemented at the Y
 - Parent/guardians will be provided Behaviour Incident and Suspension Procedure



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- In all cases, the Director will meet with parents/guardians to work through a plan of action to assist the child. Termination is a last resort.
- Communication may need to be shared with other families in the program when an individual child's behaviour may have impacted all/most of the children (for example, having to clear the room due to physical outburst). This communication will not disclose personal information of the child.

The YMCA may have to modify these procedures pending the severity of the incident.

Removal of participants from programs

In the event that severe behaviours persist, the YMCA reserves the right to limit, deny or suspend a child from the program when the health and/or safety of the individual, other participants or staff are at risk.

Allegation of YMCA Child Care Employee/Volunteer Misconduct

The following practices by employees and/or volunteers are unacceptable and will incur an investigation and may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Additional practices to be avoided or never to be sanctioned are detailed in the YMCA of Northern Alberta Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Persons Policy.

Families would be notified of any situation directly involving their child:

- Inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, emotional deprivation
 - Physical abuse is any form of child discipline that employs the non-accidental application of force or an agent to a child's body. It can include: striking (directly or with an object), shaking, pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, spanking, choking, stabbing or burning a child (as defined by Licensing)
 - Verbal or physical degradation may include any harsh, belittling, or threatening or degrading response by any adult (parent, staff member, volunteer) which humiliates or undermines a child's self-respect. It may also include inappropriate exposure to sexual contact, activity or behavior; force-feeding; exposure to profanity; or exposure to violence between parents or staff members, including volunteers or other adults
 - Mental or emotional degradation may include withholding appropriate affection, comfort, or cognitive stimulation to a child
- Correcting behaviour by excessive repetition of movement (i.e. running laps or doing push-ups as punishment)
- Deny or threaten to deny any necessity to a child such as food, shelter or personal liberty (i.e. not allowing a child to use the washroom when needed)
- Use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation
- Demeaning and/or demoralizing behavior such as humiliation, threats, intimidation, swearing, yelling, sarcasm, discussion of a child or their family.
- Leaving children unattended or unsupervised.

If there is an allegation of YMCA Child Care Employee/Volunteer misconduct the employee/volunteer will be removed from the supervision of children and documentation will be requested and the YMCA Child Care Management team will be notified. Further steps may include, but are not limited to:



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- Written documentation and interviews of YMCA Employee/volunteers and/or witnesses
- YMCA Child Care Management team to contact and involved YMCA Leadership Team
- Employee/volunteer suspensions
- Contacting families
- Contacting licensing
- Performance management and/or termination of employment

See the YMCA of Northern Alberta Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Persons Policy for further Procedure for Handling an Allegation.