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PLATTSBURGH YMCA

PARENT HANDBOOK

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE CENTER

2025 Edition

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome

Welcome to the Plattsburgh YMCA's Bright Beginnings Child Care Center. We are honored that you have chosen us to provide child care and early childhood education to your family. We truly value the trust that you have placed in us and we will continue to work hard every day to maintain it. We know, leaving your little one/s in the care of others can be a difficult adjustment and we will do our very best to give you peace of mind each day. We are looking forward to what we are confident will be a positive and rewarding experience and relationship with you and your child.

This handbook has been compiled to give you an overview of the things you might expect while your child is in our care as well as to outline our program policies and procedures. Please be sure to keep a copy of this handbook for reference. If you happen to misplace it, a copy will be shared on our website, as well. If you have any questions about or beyond what you find here, please don't hesitate to reach out to our staff team and let us know. We welcome your questions, input, suggestions, constructive criticism, and active participation - We are all in this together!

This handbook is updated yearly in December for the following calendar year. However, we do live in an ever-changing environment and may need to make a revision to a policy or procedure before the annual review of the document occurs. When or if changes are made, parents will be notified as soon as possible. Changes will typically be shared via the center's monthly newsletter.

General Administration

The Bright Beginnings Center, is a non-profit branch of the Plattsburgh YMCA organization, and operates as a service to the residents of Clinton County.

We provide developmentally appropriate child care, under the licensure of the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The Child Care Director is responsible for the implementation of all policies and procedures, staff supervision (and mentoring) and the general administration of the program. The Plattsburgh YMCA's Board of Directors is the governing body.

The Center's current licensing capacity is 72 children and participants range in age from 6 weeks to 5 years of age. All of our classrooms operate year round but we also operate an additional preschool camp during the summer months.

Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Federal and State Human Rights Law and the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), the Plattsburgh YMCA does not engage in or condone discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status or disability.

YMCA Mission & Values

Our Mission: To strengthen our community through programs that focus on youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

Our Impact: People feel hopeful, are healthier, and work together to create a positive and safe community. Families feel more secure and connected. Children are confident and have the skills they need to thrive.

Our Values: All YMCA staff, members and program participants are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with our Four Core Values of Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility.

- ***Caring:*** To demonstrate a sincere concern for others, for their needs and well-being. Related values: compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and kindness.
- ***Honesty:*** To tell the truth, to demonstrate reliability and trustworthiness through actions that are in keeping with stated positions and beliefs. Related values: integrity and fairness.
- ***Respect:*** To treat others as one would want to be treated, to value the worth of every person, including oneself. Related values: acceptance, empathy, self-respect and tolerance.
- ***Responsibility:*** To do what is right - what one ought to do, to be accountable for one's choices of behavior, actions and promises. Related values: commitment, courage, good health, service and citizenship.

Philosophy

The Bright Beginnings Child Care Center seeks to make a positive difference in the lives of working families in Plattsburgh and in neighboring communities by providing inclusive, accessible, community-based, quality child care and early childhood education.

The children who are in our care will work towards: independence, developing effective communication skills, problem-solving, creativity, cooperation, positive attitudes toward learning, good health practices, becoming good citizens, showing respect for others and an overall appreciation of life. We are responsible for supporting the development of the whole child, meaning all areas of development are considered interrelated and equally important. In our program, we value and acknowledge that children learn through active, hands-on involvement with their environment, peers and caring adults.

Bright Beginnings creates an environment that stimulates a variety of learning experiences in all areas of cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. We respect each child's unique interests, experiences, abilities and needs. Children are valued as individuals, as well as part of a group. Our program respects and supports the ideals, cultures and values of families in their task of nurturing children. We encourage parents to actively participate in their child's program to gain a perspective of their child's experience in childcare. The YMCA's mission is to help each child reach their highest potential through programs that enrich their body, mind and spirit.

Our Goals include:

- Fostering positive identity and sense of emotional well-being
- Enhancing social skills
- Encouraging children to think, reason, question and experiment
- Promoting language and literacy development
- Building physical development and skills
- Supporting sound health, safety, and nutritional practices
- Advancing creative expression, representation, and appreciation for the arts
- Appreciating and respecting cultural diversity
- Developing initiative and decision-making skills

Hours of Operation

The Bright Beginnings Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:45 am to 5:30 pm and the program is open year round. Due to our operating license we cannot accept children into care before or after our approved operating hours.

Holiday & Staff Development Closures Observed

The Center will be closed for the following holidays and staff development training dates listed below. A listing of these dates are included in the Parent Handbook, posted on classroom bulletin boards and shared as reminders in the monthly newsletter.

Holiday Closures:

- New Year's Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth National Independence Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day

- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Day After Christmas

*When the Christmas holidays (only) fall on the weekend, the holiday will be observed as follows:

- *Falls on Saturday - observed on the previous Friday*
- *Falls on Sunday - observed on the following Monday*

*Other holidays are not adjusted if they fall on the weekend.

Staff Development Training Closures:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Indigenous People’s Day
- Child Development Conference (November 21)

Staff Training

Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers are knowledgeable in early childhood education. All staff must meet minimum training and education requirements as outlined by our licensure, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). As early childhood professionals, teachers are required to meet ongoing training throughout the year and have 30 hours of annual training, including annual child abuse prevention.

ENROLLMENT

Intake Process

Parents considering applying for admission are encouraged to make an appointment to visit us. A complete tour and overview are provided at the time by the Child Care Director. Ample time will be afforded to ask questions and to see if our center is a good fit for the family and child. For a child to be considered for admission, an application form must be completed (on our website). Payment of the Application Fee guarantees placement on the active Wait List - it is not a guarantee of enrollment in the program.

Admission

Program admission is on a first come, first serve basis. However, when a vacancy occurs, YMCA staff and siblings of children already enrolled in the program are offered placement first. If there are no staff children and no siblings on the Wait List, the spot is then offered to the child at the top of the Wait List (for that age group). Once a vacancy is accepted, an Enrollment Fee is charged to hold the slot until the child’s agreed upon start date.

Once the Enrollment Fee payment is received, the intake process will follow. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete all necessary documents. The Child Care Director can assist with the completion of the forms, as needed. This will also give families further opportunity to ask questions, to meet the Teacher, to share important information about their child, to visit the classroom and to prepare for the first day.

Orientation

We request that parents visit with their child in the classroom prior to the child's actual start date. In most cases, one or two visits are best; please speak with the Child Care Director to set up those dates and times. An Enrollment Form and a Developmental History must be completed prior to a child's first visit day. The child's health care practitioner will need to complete a physical form and provide a copy of their current immunization records.

Prior to the child's first day, the teacher will tell you what you need to bring to school on the first day. This may include: diapers (if necessary), diaper cream, sunscreen, a change of clothes (appropriate for the time of year), a blanket or pillow, etc. ****Please note, all topical ointments and sunscreen need a signed Consent Form to apply them while under our care.***

During the first few weeks your child will be adjusting to a new place and many new faces. We want to make this adjustment as easy as possible for both you and your child. Please be sure to share any ideas you have that will help us during this process!

Transitions

The Center is organized and staffed to minimize the number of transitions children experience. Being mindful of the importance of the bonds that are established with Teachers and peers, every effort is made to maintain continuity of relationships between teaching staff and children and among groups of children. Every effort is made to keep age groups together with their Teachers for 9 months or longer. Developmental needs (or concerns) and the classroom environment are always considered when planning transitions for children and clear communication takes place between the staff and families.

Please note: The Center makes every effort to plan for and enact transition plans that have been discussed with families; in the event of an unforeseen change to enrollment, staffing or program operations, transition plans may need to be adjusted to ensure compliance with regulations, as well as to ensure a best practice experience for children. When transition plans must be altered, the Child Care Director will contact the families to discuss.

In addition to age requirements, children must also meet certain developmental milestones in order to transition to the next oldest age group (or classroom), unless there are extenuating circumstances. These developmental milestones are listed below.

Infant Classroom (6 weeks to 10 months):

Children must be able to drink from a bottle.

Waddlers Classroom (10-18 months):

Children must be able to crawl and pull themselves up (with the help of toys or furniture). They must be able to eat solid food on their own (with their fingers) and by 12 months of age be able to eat all menu items prepared. Children in this classroom are transitioning from a bottle to a sippy cup and are transitioning to one nap per day (after lunch).

Toddler 1 Classroom (18-24 months):

Children must be mobile (walking on their own without assistance), able to feed themselves with a spoon and fork and able to drink from an open cup. They will also start undressing and dressing themselves.

Toddler 2 Classroom (24-36 months):

Children are able to dress themselves with minimal assistance, use utensils on their own and drink from an open cup with minimal spills. They will work on potty training and not being afraid of the toilet.

Preschool Classroom (33-48 months):

Children must be fully potty trained (with minimal accidents). Children are able to dress and undress themselves with very little help and are able to feed themselves with proper utensils and drink from an open cup with no spills.

Pre-K Classroom (48 months - Kindergarten age)

Children must be fully potty trained (with very rare accidents). Children are able to dress and undress themselves with no help from adults and are able to use scissors and hold a pencil correctly.

General Information

Curriculum

At Bright Beginnings, we use the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) approach. NAEYC defines DAP as methods that promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaging learning. Educators implement developmentally appropriate practice by recognizing the multiple assets all young children bring to the early learning program as unique individuals and as members of families and communities. Building on each child's strengths, educators design and implement learning environments to help all children achieve their full potential across all domains of development and across all content areas. We believe this approach encompasses our mission and

philosophy of learning and influences how our teachers plan, observe and decide what direction to take learning opportunities for the children.

9 Principles of Child Development and Learning that Inform Practice:

1. Development and learning are dynamic processes that reflect the complex interplay between a child's biological characteristics and the environment, each shaping the other as well as future patterns of growth.
2. All domains of child development - physical, cognitive, social-emotional and linguistic, as well as approaches to learning - are important; each domain both supports and is supported by the others.
3. Play promotes joyful learning that fosters self-regulation, language, cognitive and social competencies as well as content knowledge across disciplines.
4. Although general progressions of development and learning can be identified, variations due to cultural contexts, experiences, and individual differences must also be considered.
5. Children are active learners from birth, constantly taking in and organizing information to create meaning through their relationships, their interactions with their environment, and their overall experiences.
6. Children's motivation to learn is increased when their learning environment fosters their sense of belonging, purpose and agency. Curricula and teaching methods build on each child's assets by connecting their experiences in the learning environment to their home and community settings.
7. Children learn in an integrated fashion that cuts across academic disciplines or subject areas. Because the foundations of subject area knowledge are established in early childhood. Educators need subject-area knowledge, an understanding of the learning progressions within each subject area, and pedagogical knowledge about teaching each subject area's content effectively.
8. Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery and when they have many opportunities to reflect on and practice newly acquired skills.
9. Technology and interactive media can be valuable tools for supporting children's learning when used responsibly and intentionally.

Anti-Bias Curriculum

The Plattsburgh YMCA has an ongoing commitment to integrate an anti-bias philosophy into all of our programming. Because children live in a diverse and complex world, they interact daily with people different from themselves. Anti-Bias Curriculum is a process to help children develop and strengthen their self-identity and group identities, while interacting respectfully with others in a multicultural environment. Anti-Bias Curriculum is a proactive approach to reduce bias, eliminate prejudice, and promote inclusiveness.

Respect for the center's diverse community is reflected in the curriculum, classroom materials, classroom environment, parent/staff/child interactions, staff development, hiring plans and our program goals. The overarching goal is creating a climate of positive self and group identity development, through which every child will achieve his or her fullest potential while creating an environment where differences are welcomed and valued.

Open Door Policy

We have an open door policy - you are welcome to drop in and visit your child at any time.

When you visit, we ask that visitors follow our classroom routine to avoid any disruption to the schedule or planned activities for the day. We do ask that families are considerate of the times they plan to visit, as well. Children become very excited by visitors in the room and this excitement can create a challenge in getting our little ones ready for rest time or to remain resting. You know your child best too - if they will have a hard time seeing you come for a visit and then leave without them, you might want to consider visiting towards the end of their day instead (or staying a little longer in the morning).

When you visit, please understand that the teachers must continue with their daily activities and may not be able to have a discussion with you during your visit. If you need to visit with the teacher, a private meeting can be scheduled outside of their time in the classroom and in consideration of your schedule.

From time to time, your child may show distress over separation. You can help ease the distress by being in a positive mood and making sure "the goodbye" isn't too long. One good rule of thumb is "one kiss, one hug and one goodbye." Please know, this is a perfectly normal stage of development.

Group Sizes & Ratios

Our program adheres to group size and ratio regulations as set forth by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

- Infants: 1:4 ratio, group size maximum of 8
- Waddlers (Mobile Infants): 1:4 ratio, group size maximum of 8

- Toddlers: 1:5 ratio, group size maximum of 10
- Preschool: 1:7 ratio, group size maximum of 14
- Pre-K: 1:8 ratio, group size maximum of 16

Daily Schedules

Infant/Waddlers:

6:45-8:30	Arrival/Free Play
8:30-9:00	Breakfast/Bottle Feeding/Clean Up
9:00-9:30	Diaper Changes
9:30-10:00	Nap Time/Free Play/Stroller Ride
10:00-10:30	Tummy Time/Floor Activities/Outdoor Play
10:30-11:00	Story Time/Finger Plays/Diaper Changes
11:00-11:30	Lunch/Bottle Feeding/Clean Up
11:30-12:00	Diaper Changes
12:30-1:30	Nap Time
1:30-2:00	Diaper Changes/Stroller Ride/Outdoor Play
2:00-2:30	Snack Time/Bottle Feeding
2:30-3:00	Clean Up/Floor Activities
3:00-3:30	Diaper Changes/Nap Time
3:30-4:30	Story Time/Music/Finger Plays/Floor Activities
4:30-5:30	Free Play

Toddler 1 & 2:

6:45-8:15	Arrival/Free Play
8:15-8:30	Clean Up/Wash Hands
8:30-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-9:30	Diaper Changes/ Potty/Wash Hands/Free Play
9:30-10:00	Circle Time: Calendar/Stories/Songs/Helpers
10:00-10:45	Outdoor Play/Gross Motor Activities (Big Room)
10:45-11:00	Wash Hands/Story Time
11:00-11:45	Lunch/Wash Hands/Diaper Changes
11:45-2:30	Nap Time
2:30-3:15	Wash Hands/Diaper Changes/Snack
3:15-3:30	Clean Up
3:30-4:30	Outside Play
4:30-5:00	Wash Hands/Diaper Changes/Potty/Table Toys
5:00-5:30	Books and Group Play

Preschool & Pre-K:

6:45-8:30	Arrival/Free Play (in Preschool Room)
8:30-9:00	Clean Up/Wash Hands/Breakfast
9:00-9:20	Circle Time
9:20-10:05	Project Time/Small Group/Free Play
10:05-10:15	Get Ready to go Outside
10:15-11:00	Outside Play
11:00-11:15	Storytime
11:15-11:20	Wash Hands
11:20-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:15	Bathroom/Wash Hands
12:15-12:30	Prepare for Rest Time
12:30-2:30	Rest Time
2:30-3:00	Snack
3:00-4:15	Outside Play
4:15-5:00	Table Manipulatives/Fine Motor Practice/Writing/Puzzles/Reading
5:00-5:30	Books

Arrivals & Departures

Please accompany your child into the classroom and let a teacher know that you have arrived. This is the time to discuss with the teacher any relevant information that would help your child during the day (e.g. sleeping irregularities, medication needs, mood, changes in daily routine). When picking up your child, notify a teacher that you are leaving. It is imperative that a parent makes the teacher aware they are picking up their child. Unless the teacher is engaged with a group of children, please inquire about the day your child has had or let them know if you have any concerns.

Absences & Late Arrivals

Please call the Center as early as possible on a day your child will be absent or if your arrival will be delayed so the teacher is aware and the cook knows for food preparation. If your child is absent due to health reasons, please also let the Center know. When certain illnesses occur, we are required to share notices with families.

Babysitting

The NY YMCA Alliance prohibits child care staff from interactions with children that are participants in YMCA programs outside of program activities, including babysitting for participants. The only exception to this policy is if there is a pre-existing relationship between the family and the staff member. If such a relationship exists, the staff member needs to inform the Child Care Director. Both parties will then be required to sign a form relieving the Plattsburgh YMCA of any responsibility for the action of the staff member with regard to that relationship, outside of program activities.

Special Needs

We welcome and accept children with special needs or disabilities into the program, on an individual basis. Staff collaborate and partner with parents and special service providers to help meet the needs of the child. If a child receives specialized services, we must be provided with a copy of the plan (prior to enrollment) so we are sure our program can successfully meet the needs of the child. If a child begins receiving services after already attending the program, a copy of the plan will need to be provided to ensure that accommodations can be made in the program for the child to be successful. If it is determined by the staff team that the needs of a child cannot be met successfully within the program, the Child Care Director will discuss other enrollment options for the family outside of our program and a timeline of enrollment will be established.

Behavioral Management

Discipline is considered a complex topic that is defined differently by everyone. We use discipline in positive terms, as a structure where children learn to live in a social world and to be comfortable with themselves and with others. The Center does not use corporal punishment. Redirection and positive reinforcement are used for appropriate behavior, or logical consequences. When children are given consistent age-appropriate limits, meaningful language to express their emotions, a healthy environment, support from their families and the Center, discipline is effective.

For inappropriate behavior, children are included in determining appropriate alternatives or logical consequences for their behavior. Their involvement promotes them becoming responsible for their actions towards other people and things. Younger children receive a clear message about acceptable and unacceptable behavior through redirection with words to explain the adult's actions. Through this approach children gain the confidence to express themselves and the esteem to work through difficult situations.

Disruptive Behavior

We recognize that acting out, physical aggression and disruptive behavior are all part of a child's developmental process. Cooperation between the parents and the staff is the main ingredient in the operation of the center. To prevent confusion for the child, it is essential for him/her to receive consistent messages at home and in the Center environment regarding what is expected.

When behavior concerns escalate and/or safety is a continued concern, we begin observations immediately to collect data on the frequency and cause (or trigger) of the behavior and response results to interventions used. Collaborative meetings will also take place between the staff and the child's family to share ideas on how to help the child be successful and to eliminate the behavior concern. Outside resources will also be contacted (as needed) for guidance (or evaluation) from other specialists in child development and behavior.

In extreme circumstances, when behaviors cannot be redirected or successfully managed in the classroom, a child may need to be removed from the program. When a decision is made to end a child's enrollment in the program, a family is typically given two weeks notice - however, if

safety concerns or disruption to the program is severe, the program may remove the child from the program immediately.

Biting Behavior in Young Children

We recognize that biting is a normal stage of development that some young children go through. It is something they will outgrow in time. Young children who bite, bite for several reasons - all of them normal and developmentally understood. Common reasons why children bite include teething, exploring, stress, frustration, imitating, personal space becoming violated or crowded, lack of vocabulary, to gain attention, etc.

To minimize incidents of biting, we “shadow” the child who has exhibited the biting behavior. We carefully observe the child to determine if there is a pattern of when the biting behavior occurs and help the child develop other alternatives when frustrated. We comfort the child who has been bitten and firmly let the child who bit know that “biting hurts” our friends.

When biting occurs, both sets of parents will be notified and an Incident Report will be completed for the parents to review and sign.

Personal Belongings

Please be sure to label all of your child’s items with their FIRST and LAST name.

The activities at the center can be messy. Although we use smocks and roll up our sleeves, we cannot guarantee that children’s clothing will not get stained or soiled. So, please be sure not to send your child in clothing you aren’t worried may “get ruined”.

Part of each day, weather permitting, is spent outdoors. Please dress your child accordingly. Appropriate and safe footwear is required for outdoor as well as indoor play. Flip flops lead to many trips and falls and are not permitted in the program. Children must have closed-toe shoes or sneakers for outdoor play. During the winter months, please make sure your child has boots (that slip on and off easily) for outdoor play. Children will also need a warm coat, snow pants, a hat and gloves for winter outdoor play.

Each child should keep a complete set of extra clothing (including underwear and socks) in their cubby in case their clothing becomes soiled or wet. This extra set of clothing should also be labeled.

If it will help your child feel more at home during the day, we welcome comfort items such as a blanket or stuffed animal - as long as the item does not lead to any disruption in the classroom. Just make sure the item you bring is small enough to fit within your child’s classroom cubby. Please do not bring any toys from home unless your child has been asked to bring one for Show & Tell.

Confidentiality of Children’s Records

Information kept in each child’s file is considered confidential and secured in a locked area. This includes all admission documents and annual updates, progress reports, injury reports and

any other materials specific to the individual child. This information is only for the use of the parent, teachers and administrative staff team. No information is released from a child's record without written consent from the parent or guardian.

As licensor, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is legally entitled to review any records kept at the child care center, including the individual files of the children. We cooperate fully with OCFS and will release those records to OCFS without further parental notification or consent needed. If a child is named in a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment, records will be given to Child Protective Services (CPS) in accordance with law.

We also have cameras throughout the facility and the footage from those cameras are considered confidential.

Nutrition

Bright Beginnings participates in the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), administered through the State Health Department. This program is designed to help meet the nutritional needs of children necessary for physical, intellectual, and emotional development and establish healthy food choices and eating habits.

All meals are served family style. We utilize meal times to have and encourage conversations about the foods we are eating - their color, taste, texture, likes and dislikes, etc. to help them develop interests and attitudes about food that they will carry with them throughout life. We encourage the children to try new foods, however, we do not force them to eat or drink. The children eat what they want from what is served to them. Meal times are a happy, social time together.

The Center will provide infants aged 6 weeks to 12 months of age formula (Enfamil with iron) and baby food. Children above 12 months of age will be served breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. We operate on a 4 week menu cycle in compliance with CACFP regulations and a copy will be posted on the classroom door or on the Parent Information Board.

Special diets to accommodate allergies must be verified with a letter from your child's physician. The CACFP program does not require us to make substitutions based on food preferences.

Breastfeeding & Infant Feeding

We welcome and promote breastfeeding in our program and are designated by the NYS Department of Health CACFP program as a Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Center. Breastfeeding mothers are provided with a private, quiet and comfortable room to nurse their child at the center, if the mother's schedule permits.

The Center feeds infants on demand and will coordinate with your breastfeeding schedule. Breast milk is stored in the classroom refrigerator and can be served to the child if a mother is running late for her scheduled feeding time. If you plan on breastfeeding at the Center please make sure the teacher is aware of the time so we can plan accordingly.

If a mother wishes to provide breast milk that has been pumped at home and will be kept at the Center, we will follow CDC recommended procedures for safe storage, handling, heating and disposal. When breast milk is brought to the center, it must be labeled in an individual bag with the child's name and the date that it was pumped. It will then be stored in the classroom refrigerator or freezer and then thawed or heated when needed. We cannot save breast milk - any leftover breast milk will be discarded when the baby finishes eating.

The Center has additional materials available for parents if they have further questions about breastfeeding their infant.

Parents will provide their own bottles to be used for their child while under our care as children become accustomed to a certain style of bottle and/or nipple. Please note that we cannot use glass bottles in the program for safety reasons. We also do not use the Comotomo and Nanobebe brand bottles or the Munchkin Latch style bottles at the Center as they have difficulty heating up efficiently.

Diaper Supplies

Families provide disposable diapers, wipes and any diaper rash cream (if needed) to the program. Families will be notified when supplies are getting low so ample time is given to restock the supply. Please note, that due to sanitary considerations, we are not able to accommodate the use of cloth diapers in the program.

Rest Time

Sleep is an important part of healthy growth and development. When children sleep, their brains develop, they organize information and they grow. Regular rest times (naps) provide predictable routines and help children cope with the stimulating activities provided by the center. As an early childcare center, it is our responsibility to maintain a safe sleeping environment for your child.

Children under 12 months of age are required to be placed on their back to sleep, unless medical information from the child's health care provider is presented showing that arrangement is inappropriate for the child. No child under twelve months of age can be placed in a crib containing pillows, comforters, stuffed animals or other soft, padded materials. Devices such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used, unless prescribed by a child's physician.

Older children unable to sleep during nap time shall not be confined to a sleeping surface (cot, crib, etc) but instead will be offered a supervised place for quiet play while their other friends are resting.

Safety & Security

The center entry doors are closed and locked at all times. For parents and visitors to be granted access to the building, they will buzz in at the front door. If a visitor is unknown to the staff, appropriate ID will be reviewed and verified before a child leaves the center with them. Staff remain vigilant and proactive regarding any potential or perceived safety concerns and they are reported immediately to the Child Care Director for further evaluation and guidance. If a security concern ever arises, parents/guardians will receive notice/updates ***as soon as possible*** via the Lillio app (formerly HiMama).

The center is also equipped with a 24-hour video surveillance system. Security cameras are positioned in appropriate places within and around the facility and are used in order to help promote the safety and security of our staff, participants and property. Areas where cameras are positioned include classrooms, hallways, outdoor play areas and our facility entrance. Cameras are not positioned within or in sight of private areas such as restrooms and diaper changing areas. We respect the privacy of all children, parents and staff in our child care center - footage from our cameras are stored in a secure location and will be accessed for internal purposes and by authorized personnel only.

Inclement Weather (Emergency Closings)

The Center makes every effort to remain open during inclement weather conditions. If a power outage occurs or weather conditions are poor, the Center may close for the day, delay opening or close early in response. Our goal is always to make sound decisions based on the safety of families and staff, while still meeting families' needs for child care.

In the event of any closure or delayed opening, families will receive notification via the Lillio app (formerly HiMama). As a general rule, if the Plattsburgh City School District closes for the day, The Bright Beginnings Center will also close for the day. In the event that conditions worsen while the children are in our care and an early closure is needed, families will be notified as quickly as possible and will have two hours to pick up their child.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

As professional child care providers, we are mandated by the state of New York to report any suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect immediately to the State Central Registry of Child Abuse and Maltreatment. If there is an investigation, the Plattsburgh YMCA staff cooperate fully

with the authorities. Each year, all staff received training on Child Abuse Prevention and related regulations.

Communication

Lillio App (Formerly HiMama)

Upon enrollment in the program, each family receives an invite to use the Lillio App. This communication tool can be accessed via a computer or mobile device. Through the app, families can see how their child's day was and communicate with the staff for quick notes or questions. Families will also receive urgent or high priority messages from the program through the app.

Monthly Newsletters

A Newsletter is sent from the Child Care Director each month with updates about the program, special happenings and upcoming events. The newsletter is received via the Lillio App.

In Person

In our Infant and Toddler Classrooms, parents receive a Daily Report. In our Preschool and Pre-K Classrooms, parents will receive a weekly letter and schedule of class activities. Parent/Teacher Conferences are also available upon request and if you need to speak with a teacher privately when she is able to step away from the classroom, a private call can be scheduled during Rest Time (or another time). Please don't hesitate to ask any questions or share any concerns. We welcome suggestions too.

Observations & Assessments

Parents complete a questionnaire as part of the enrollment package that discloses information about the child's development, food/feeding schedule, food allergies, preferred language, and health/safety.

We Utilize components of the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to assess the developmental milestones of each individual child. Parents will complete the questionnaire within 90 days of enrollment in the program. The teacher then completes observations in the classroom to assess your child's development and to plan the curriculum.

Complaint or Grievance

We strive for quality and excellence in our program and in the care of your child. Open communication between parents and providers is an essential part of any successful program. We want all families to feel comfortable sharing positive suggestions and to reach out if there are ever any concerns or questions needing more discussion and clarification. Our goals are the same - to provide your child with a happy, safe and nurturing environment each day.

If a concern arises, we want to make sure the teacher is available to give you their undivided attention so a solution can be worked on together, as quickly as possible. Your privacy is also important to us - please request a time to meet with the teacher when they can be away from the classroom to visit. We can arrange a time during the day, during nap time or outside of our program hours.

If you feel there is a problem or concern that is not being resolved adequately after your visit, please speak with the Child Care Director. They will make every effort to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. If a concern is brought to the Child Care Director's attention and you don't feel it has been handled adequately, a grievance can then be made with the Chief Operations Officer of the Plattsburgh YMCA. The COO will research the issue and respond to the parent in a timely manner (i.e. within 24 hours).

Health Policies

Immunizations & Physicals

The New York State Health Department mandates our health policies. All children are required to have a medical statement on file indicating up-to-date immunizations and a recent physical exam before attending the program. Likewise, immunizations and physical exams need to be kept current and on file at the center throughout a child's enrollment in the program, in order to be eligible to attend.

Daily Health Checks

As part of our licensing regulations, a daily health check will be conducted every morning for each child. This is where a staff member visits with your child to assess their overall health and makes sure they are healthy enough to attend for the day. Most children occasionally get a runny nose, cough, or mild fever. This usually causes little worry for teachers and families. However, sometimes, a child's illness may be more severe and require the child to stay at home. Children can also develop signs or symptoms of illness later in the day. At each stage, our staff will reach out to you with any questions or concerns about the health of your child.

Illness Requiring Exclusion

Reducing the potential spread of illness is all about teamwork at the center and at home. Our staff complete their daily health checks, maintain cleaning and sanitation protocols and encourage frequent handwashing throughout the day. And, parents talk with staff about any symptoms of illness before bringing their child to school and keep their children home when they are not well enough to attend.

Children that display the following signs of illness, need to stay at home:

- Illness that prevents a child from participating comfortably in the Center's activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
- A fever of 100.6 degrees or higher
- Contagious conditions
- Diarrhea
- Rashes, itchy skin or scalp (have checked out by doctor)
- Reddened eyes with discharge or crusted eyelids
- Nausea or vomiting

Children may return to the Center when:

- Fever-free for full 24 hours (without medication)
- Vomiting- free for 24 hours (without medication)
- Conjunctivitis (full 24 hours after prescription medication is administered)
- Chicken Pox (when last sore is scabbed over and there is no oozing)
- Head Lice (after using a treatment and all eggs are removed (no nits present))
- Coxsackie Virus (fever must be gone, sores are scabbed over and when the child can eat and drink comfortably (NYS Health Dept. Guidelines))
- Strep Throat (full 24 hours after medication (4 doses))
- RSV (after 10 days from onset of symptoms and fever-free for 24 hours (without medication))
- MRSA (when sores are no longer oozing and are scabbed over)
- Flu (after 3 days at home after onset of symptoms and may return when fever free for 24 hours (without medication) and with no vomiting, diarrhea or nausea and able to participate in the daily activities)
- Roseola (fever free for 24 hours (without medication) and blisters are dried up (usually 5 days after rash first appears))
- COVID (following current guidance as outlined by NYS Health Dept.)
- If on an antibiotic (full 24 hours after first dose is administered)
- Eating and drinking normally and is able to partake in the center's normal daily activities.

Please understand that doctors do not regulate our program and are not accountable to our licensure. Even if a doctor states that a child is cleared to return, it still must fall within our regulations and exclusion policy as outlined above. Also, if an illness is not listed above, please speak with the Child Care Director for guidance. In an instance where we are unsure, we will reach out to our licensure and the NY State Health Department for clarification.

Medication Policy

Staff must be MAT (Medication Administration Training) certified in order to administer medication to a child in the program. A written Consent Form must be completed by your child's physician. Forms can be obtained from the Child Care Director's office or from your child's teacher. When bringing a prescription to the center, it must be in the original container and match the description (name of child, dosage, method of administration, etc.) or it cannot be administered.

Nebulizers are not included in our Health Care Plan and will require a parent to administer to the child if a treatment is needed during the school day.

Medication must be delivered to the school and handed from the parent to the staff member and then it will be kept in a safe place out of reach of the children. Medication cannot be brought to the center or left in a child's backpack where it can be reached.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Application Fee:

- A \$20 non-refundable Application Fee is collected when the Enrollment Application is completed. This fee ensures placement on the Wait List - it does not guarantee future enrollment in the program. If a child is withdrawn from the Wait List, the Application Fee is forfeited. If the child later enrolls in the program, the \$20 fee will be used as a credit and applied towards the Enrollment Fee **or** the first week's tuition. *****This fee is waived for YMCA Members and current program families.***

Enrollment Fee:

- A \$70 non-refundable Enrollment Fee is collected once an enrollment slot has been offered and accepted. This fee ensures that a space is available for the child - they have been accepted and a start date has been agreed upon. If a child is enrolled but does not actually attend, the Enrollment Fee is forfeited. *****This fee is waived for YMCA Members and current program families.***

Tuition:

- Once a start date has been agreed upon or set up, weekly tuition will be charged as of that start date. Payments are due each Friday. Tuition rates are updated annually and new rates begin on January 1st each year.
 - **2025 Tuition Rates**
 - Infants/Waddlers: \$320/week
 - Toddlers: \$295/week
 - Preschool/Pre-K: \$285/week

- If the family elects to push the start date back to a later time than was agreed upon, the full weekly tuition will still be due as the spot has been reserved for the child as of that original date.
- Tuition fees are the same each week, regardless of how many days a child is present, and it does not change based on the number of hours in attendance. The YMCA does not give credits for illness or family vacations.
- The YMCA requires all families to have a credit card on file for automatically charged payments each week. Families who have tuition paid through DSS are not required to have a card on file.

Hold Fee:

- \$120 per week. Once a pregnant mother has accepted an enrollment slot, the Registration Fee mentioned above is paid to secure the placement. Once the mother's due date is determined by her physician, a start date is then agreed upon between the family and the Child Care Director. Once the mother reaches the final three months before her due date, a weekly Hold Fee is applied. For example: If the due date is May 16th, the family will then begin paying their weekly Hold Fee on February 16th (3 months prior).

Withdrawal Notice

Either the family or the program can terminate enrollment at any time. However, two weeks' notice is required. Only in extenuating circumstances can less notice be given.

Sibling Discount

A discount of 10% is applied on the youngest sibling's weekly tuition when multiple children are enrolled in the program.

LATE FEES

Returned Payment Fee:

- A \$30 Returned Payment Fee is charged anytime a check or credit card is returned from a bank due to insufficient funds.

Late Tuition Payment Fee:

- Tuition payments are due at the end of each week (on Fridays). A Late Fee is charged any time a tuition payment is more than 5 days late. If the balance is not paid in full within 10 days (after the due date), the child will no longer be able to attend, effective immediately. The family will have an additional 4 days to bring the account back into good standing, or immediate termination will occur.

Late Pick Up Fee:

- The center closes promptly at 5:30 pm. A parent or guardian is responsible for notifying the center if at any time a late pick up may occur. A one time

warning/reminder about the policy will be given only. After that occurrence, late fees will be incurred.

- A Late Fee of \$5 per minute will be applied whenever a child is picked up after closing time. *Frequent late pick ups can result in suspension and/or termination from the program.