



Child Watch Parent Handbook

Mission

The Family YMCA's mission is to build individual, family and community strength by focusing on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. We are a charitable institution where, thanks to organizational and individual donations, no one is turned away due to inability to pay. The Y's four core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility are emphasized in all Y programs.

Philosophy

We strive to provide a program that offers children a base of warmth, security, and continuity provided by caring and qualified staff. Our low staff-to-child ratios allow for an active engagement with all children that fosters a sense of acceptance and a positive self-image. The design of our program permits freedom within set limits established and agreed upon by both staff parents. Our ratios are as follows: for every 6 children in the room, we will have 1 staff member, but never less than two staff at any given time. Children 2 years and younger are counted as two children toward our ratios in order to ensure a safe and engaging environment.

Program Information

To keep with our mission to foster and build community strength, The Family YMCA offers Child Watch. Child Watch is our on-site supervision for children who are active on your family membership. The Child Watch is not a state licensed childcare program; it is considered drop-in care. Child Watch is for children to be in a safe and healthy environment while parents enjoy our programs and facilities including the use of the Y Express.

Morning Hours: Monday- Friday 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. (ages 2 months to 7 years)

Evening Hours: *Coming Soon* (ages 2 months to 9 years)

Curriculum

The Y strives to provide age-appropriate educational opportunities for children through a variety of activities that emphasize a hands-on approach and play as the primary mode of learning. Our program's flexible routine allows children to choose among a variety of activities including arts and crafts, active games, dramatic play, puzzles and games, and other activities that are appropriate for the Child Watch room. The program is designed to provide an opportunity for parents to exercise while their children are cared for in a safe learning environment. Children are encouraged to engage with other children, staff, and guests in order to promote their social-emotional development. The Y also encourages parents to share their knowledge and skills, and utilizes guests for activities when appropriate. Our programs are supervised by educated and experienced staff.

Parent Involvement

The Y promotes positive relationships between our staff and parents for the benefit of the children we serve. We encourage parents to be involved with the care of their children while visiting Child Watch. Parents are encouraged to check on their child while in Child Watch.

Parents must follow all Y policies, including child protection policies that specify no private one-to-one contact is allowed during the program except with a parent's own child.

In keeping with our mandate of building strong kids and families and to maintain safe and comfortable facilities, convicted or registered sex offenders are excluded from membership and program participation at The Family YMCA, and offenders shall not enter onto Y property or loiter in the vicinity of Y programs and activities.

Program Goals

Provide a Safe Environment for Children

- All staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR, and emergency procedures.
- Keep room and play areas clear of clutter that could cause accidents.
- Develop rules specifically designed to provide the safest environment and clearly present these rules to children.

Help Give Parents Time to Themselves While Children Have Time to Play

- Provide recreational activities that are interesting and fun for children.
- Provide an environment with several activities so children can choose an activity that interests them.
- Provide enough time for activities to be completed so children are not rushed.

Help Children Develop New Skills and Develop Friendships

- Present new games, crafts or activities several times each week.
- Provide opportunities for children to share their hobbies with others.
- Encourage children to work together on projects and activities to help develop new friendships.
- Make certain all children are included and feel welcome.

Help Children Experience Accomplishment and Build a Sense of Self Worth

- Try to praise each child every day for something, no matter how trivial.
- Provide games and activities suited to proper age groups that children can complete and gain a sense of accomplishment.
- Talk to each child individually and use their names so they know you care and they feel like an individual.

Strengthen Family Relationships

- Be aware of changes or problems with any family situation and provide emotional support for the child and parents when needed.
- Offer financial aid for memberships and payment plans to help alleviate family pressures due to financial problems.

Help Children's Physical, Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Developmental Needs

- Provide activities each week that encourage motor skill development.
- Use grouping for activities so that each child is interacting with different children.
- Staff interact with each child daily.
- Provide intellectually challenging activities.

The Family YMCA Child Watch Program Policies

Safe Facility

Convicted or registered sex offenders are excluded from membership and program participation at The Family YMCA, and offenders shall not enter into Y property or loiter in the vicinity of Y programs and activities.

Child Abuse

Cases of suspected neglect or abuse will be reported to the proper authorities as outlined by state law. If a parent is under the influence and arrangements have not been made for someone else to pick up your child, the Y is required by law to report this to the police department.

Registration

Child(ren) must be registered with completed forms and on an active membership before they may participate in Child Watch.

Signing In and Out

Adults are required to show their membership card when checking in and out. Children may only be checked out by the person who brought them in, or by another authorized adult on the membership paperwork (A PHOTO ID IS REQUIRED). Parents must leave in writing all locations they will be while children are in Child Watch. Parents cannot leave the YMCA while their child is in Child Watch, aside from going to the Y Express for a class.

Please keep your phone on you with the ringtone on while your child is in Child Watch in case we need to contact you.

Visit Duration

The Family YMCA Child Watch Program is not a state-licensed program. As a result, usage is limited to a maximum of 2 hours per day, per family, while an adult listed on the family membership account is actively using the facility. The 2-hour limit can be used all at once or split (e.g., 1 hour in the morning and 1 hour in the evening), but may not exceed 2 hours total per day.

Food and Drink

No food is permitted in Child Watch; we are a nut free zone. Labeled spill-proof cups with water are allowed and will be kept on the counter. Have children finish food before entering.

Toys

Please leave personal toys, coins, candy, gum, and other small objects at home. We provide a variety of toys appropriate for the ages we service. All Child Watch toys are sanitized and checked for safety daily.

Ages

Morning Ages: 2 months - 7 years

Evening Ages: 2 months - 9 years

Child Watch services are not available for children aged 8+ during morning hours. Children aged 10+ are prohibited from utilizing Child Watch.

Illness

We cannot accept a child if they have had symptoms of illness within the past 24 hours, such as (but not limited to): fever, green or yellow mucus, runny nose, diarrhea, cough, lethargy, unexplained rashes, and/or vomiting. To prevent the spread of germs we ask that you wash your child's hands before entering the Child Watch room. Children suspected of illness will be sent home and asked not to return for at least 24 hours after symptoms are gone. This is a staff judgment call. If a child has been asked to leave one day, and brought in the next, Child Watch staff may deny entry to the child. This helps us to ensure the younger infants do not become infected with illness while under our care.

Accidents/Injury

Parents will be notified upon pick-up or immediately if needed.

Crying/Upset Children

When a child is upset and unable to be calmed down, the parent(s) will be contacted, and the child will need to be taken out of the Child Watch room. This will be determined at the discretion of the Child Watch staff.

Behavioral Expectations

Child Watch is intended to be a safe, fun, engaging space for all of the children that attend. In order to ensure this, it is expected that all children in Child Watch treat all Y Staff, as well as the other children in the child watch room, with courtesy and respect. If Child Watch (or any other Y Staff) observe a child being disruptive it will be noted in our logbook and discussed with the parent(s). If there are more than 2 disruptive instances

noted within a 2-week period, an incident report will be filled and the Child Watch Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the parents to discuss next steps. It is at the discretion of the Child Watch Coordinator to determine appropriate courses of action, including but not limited to suspension and/or termination of Child Watch privileges. If a child's behavior is deemed unmanageable, they will be sent home for the day. This is a staff judgment call. Persistent behavioral issues on subsequent visits may lead to suspension from the program.

Toileting

Accidents happen, we understand that; however, due to sanitary issues, children being potty-trained must wear pull-ups or plastic cover ups in Child Watch. If a child has a toileting accident in Child Watch, they must wear pull-ups or plastic cover ups for 2 weeks in a row, without accidents, while visiting Child Watch.

- For children that need to use the restroom, we will call the parent or guardian to take the child to the restroom. Please keep your phone on you with the ringtone on while your child is in Child Watch in case we need to contact you.
- No diaper changes are allowed in the Child Watch room. There are changing facilities in the family restroom in the lobby.

Hours and Late Policy

Child Watch strives to begin and end on time. Times in and out will be verified by the staff from the sign in/out sheet. Repetitive late pick-ups, either exceeding the two-hour visit limit or occurring after closing time, may lead to the suspension or termination of Child Watch privileges. Additionally, The Family YMCA reserves the right to close Child Watch early (based on attendance and lack of staff).

Child Watch Closures and Holidays

Child Watch will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Indigenous People's Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Black Friday
- Christmas: 24-26th

Child Watch follows The Family YMCA Inclement Weather Policy for closures and delays (please refer to the Inclement Weather Policy at <https://laymca.org/inclement-weather>). Additionally, the YMCA reserves the right to close or limit Child Watch hours due to inclement weather, shortage of staff, limited attendance or other unforeseen circumstances.