Welcome to YMCA Child Care!

The YMCA is pleased to welcome you and your child to our Child Care program. Our Child Care programs deliver stimulating learning experiences in a safe environment that will enhance your child's social, intellectual, physical and emotional development. This enhancement happens throughout a child's daily routine which encompasses a balance of indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time.

This handbook will provide you with program information and regulations regarding Child Care services. If you require further information please feel free to contact your Centre Supervisor.

YMCA Quality Statement

Parent evaluations, current research and years of experience in delivering Child Care programs have helped us to define our Quality Checklist:

- Children are happy and involved
- Staff have a caring attitude
- The centre, equipment and toys are accessible, clean and safe.
- Children will participate in small groups in stimulating activities with teachers.
- Food is nutritionally balanced.
- Parent-teacher communication is encouraged and parents feel welcome in the centre.
- Sufficient play materials are available.
- Outdoor activities are taking place in well maintained play areas.
- Staff are good role models and have appropriate training.
- Parents have regular feedback about their child.

Licensed Child Care Centres are regulated by the Provincial Licensing Standards. Centres are required to meet the mandatory regulations, and are visited regularly by a Licensing Official to ensure they are in compliance. Any recommendations from these reports are used as an opportunity to improve the centre.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Philosophy of our program is based upon the view that children learn through play. We believe play is essential to the healthy social and cognitive development of all children. We provide a developmentally appropriate program, based on the interests and needs of the children whereby children are actively involved in the program. We provide experiences that support children's development in all areas; physical, cognitive, emotional and social. In an atmosphere surrounded by knowledgeable and caring adults, children learn to pursue their own interests, develop skills at their own pace, make decisions, solve problems and most importantly enjoy the process of learning. We believe that each child is unique and brings to the centre unique learning experiences, learning styles, capabilities and needs. Adults in this environment recognize and respect individual differences, and are respectful of children's right for privacy and for making choices. Children from all backgrounds and cultures are welcomed and valued. Adults provide and monitor a safe, secure environment and are readily available for guidance, support and encouragement. Parental involvement is encouraged and welcomed. We believe parental involvement strengthens the relationship between parent-staff-child, and we strive to ensure all necessary supports are available to children and their families through quality child care. We partner with families and communities collaborating with, and supporting one another thereby helping to build stronger communities, and creating valuable resources that will assist in providing positive learning environments and quality care for all children.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The YMCA Child Care Centres attempt to meet the needs of the whole child. By this, we mean that opportunities are provided for the child to develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and linguistically. We aim to provide a program where the child feels, happy stimulated and satisfied.
A number of objectives have been developed which provide direction for activity planning.

To assist each to develop a sense of dignity and self-worth:

- By providing a wide variety of social activities and learning experiences that encourage the development of self-confidence and the ability to get along with others.
- By building warm relationships of trust between staff and children

To assist each child to improve his/her cognitive skills:

- By providing a variety of age-appropriate educational and life experiences
- By providing stimulating space, equipment and resources.
- By encouraging creative activities that develop verbal skills, self-discipline, decision-making and problem solving.

To assist each child to maintain good health and develop his/her physical skills:

- By providing an environment free from health and safety hazards.
- By providing health, nutrition and parenting information to families.
- By providing a daily period of physical activity.

To enhance family life:

- By providing opportunities for family involvement.

PROGRAM AND POLICY MANUAL FOR PARENTS

The Child Care facility includes a planned learning environment which encourages children to manipulate, explore, use acquired skills and knowledge to meet new experiences with curiosity and confidence. Our programs provide children with opportunities for choice and leadership with a focus on strengths and the development of skills and relationships. The YMCA provides an interactive curriculum that reflects true play as the way a child learns, manipulates their environment, and fosters continued enthusiasm to learn through a choice base approach. Educators plan a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on children's needs, interests, and their developmental levels. Staff observe, document and provide opportunities for scaffolding; planning activities that build on children's present knowledge and taking the child into a new level of understanding, helping them to discover new ideas and information on any topic being explored.

The centre is divided into the three playrooms as listed below. In addition, we have a large fully equipped fenced outdoor play centre.

- Room 1 - Full Day Room (36 months - 69 months)
- Room 2 - Toddler Room (24 months - 36 months)
- Room 3 - Before and /Afterschool Room (57 months - 155months)

ACTIVITY AREAS (Rooms 1 and 2)

The centre includes the following learning areas:

► **ART AREA** where children have opportunities to express their feelings through the use of art materials, be creative as they experience various ways of using materials, develop skills needed for hand writing, and develop an understanding of the written language.

► **BLOCK AREA** for constructive and imaginative play where children develop a concrete understanding of concepts essential to logical thinking. They learn about sizes, shapes, numbers, order, area, length and weight as they select, build, and clean up blocks. As children build together, they solve problems and learn to cooperate with, and respect the work of others.

► **SMALL MANIPULATIVE AREA** where children have opportunities to develop hand-eye coordination and fine motor control, as well as math concepts such as pairing, sorting and patterning that are prerequisites for the ongoing development of math skills. They become confident in their abilities to solve problems and puzzles and they learn to work cooperatively with others.

► **STORY AREA** where children develop listening and language skills, develop an understanding of books and the reading process, and are provided with a space to relax away from the stimulation of the room.

► **DRAMATIC PLAY AREA** where children can participate in all types of dramatic play— creating environments as strange and exciting as a space station or as typical as a shoe store. It offers children a forum in which they can safely act out fears and relive life experiences. As children act out roles, they develop many new skills. They learn about themselves, their families, and society around them. Most importantly, they learn to cooperate with others as they play out scenes and negotiate roles.

►**SCIENCE AREA** for stimulating the senses, developing curiosity and the child's natural sense of wonder.

►**WATER PLAY AREA** for calm and passive play. Children gain skills and concepts through water play such as: coordination, concepts of volume and measurement, language practice and extension. Water play provides children with a pleasurable and satisfying experience.

►**SAND PLAY AREA** for manipulative and constructive play. Sand Play fosters children's development in many areas. It helps develop social skills, refines fine motor skills by and enhances creativity through experimentations with sand and water.

►**LARGE MUSCLE AREA** where children have opportunities to satisfy their need to be physically active, develop their physical fitness and strength and develop body and spatial awareness.

ACTIVITY AREAS (ROOM 3)

This space is divided into Zones as follows:

► **Creative Zone** where children have opportunities to express their feelings through the use of art materials, being free to concentrate on creating using a variety of media.

► **Active Zone –** providing enough space for children's active play that would include gross motor play, dramatic play, music, dance, and group games through a variety of movement activities.

► **Exploration/Manipulation Zone --** where children have opportunities to work alone or in small groups. Children are provided with opportunities to explore and discover the logical, scientific and mathematical properties of sensory materials. Children become confident in their abilities to solve problems and they learn to work cooperatively with others.

► **Quiet Zone**—a place to relax away from the stimulation of the room, and a space to be alone when needed. This area is reserved for quieter activities such as reading, writing, playing quietly with one or two friends, and/or doing homework.

►**Common Zone** – a space were children are able to store their belongings, where notices and information are placed for children and parents to read and where children and parents are generally greeted and welcomed to the program. This is also the Sign In Area.

DAILY PROGRAMS

Our program is based on an emergent curriculum. Educators plan a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on children's needs, interests, and their developmental levels. Emergent curriculum stems from the interests of children and relies on educators' knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice. Our curriculum focuses on play and its importance in child development. It emphasizes the importance of relationships, the importance of planning learning opportunities based on the child's interest and the importance of detailed documentation of the child's progress. A child's day is organized to meet the needs and interests of the child and to provide a logical flow to the day. The consistency in the program, the staff, the group, and the homeroom provide a basic security for children while still allowing for flexibility within their day. Children are provided with multiple of choices that reflect individual and group interests and needs , allowing children to explore and practice the competencies needed for their ongoing learning and development. Our quality child care programs create rich learning environments for children to flourish and reach their potentials.

Planning:

Early Childhood Educators are involved as a team in planning and creating conditions for rich learning experiences to take place in all areas of development. Throughout the preschool years your child will be learning through developmentally appropriate play experiences. Educators plan special activities in various curriculum areas for daily use. Topics may last one week, two weeks, depending on the interests of the children. There is a specific time set aside for circle time by staff for regularly planned activities such as songs, finger plays, rhymes and discussions, music and /or sharing news. Language arts and Reading Readiness activities, as well as Concept Development games are used at this time. Circle time provides an opportunity for children to learn to share and to listen to others. It can be a time to practice many social skills that are an important part of group interaction. Circle time activities are usually geared to teaching concepts that relate to the interests observed at that time. The size of the group and the duration of the planned time will depend on the developmental level and interests of the children. For the School Age children, a daily group meeting is held whereby children and educators are involved in discussions of ideas and interests and planning of activities.

Small Group Time is a regular part of our program. Small groups are key in ensuring children's needs are being met. Children and educators are in small groups throughout the program time, allowing relationships to be built and activities to be implemented safely. The activities may be planned or may happen as a result of children's choices and interests. Small groups give you more opportunity to really be a part of the activity and extend children's interests and learning -spontaneously and through conversation.

PROGRAM INFORMATION/POLICIES

HOURS OF OPERATION

We operate Monday through Friday, 7:30AM - 6:00PM daily from January to December.
This centre operates Full Day Programs/ Early Care/ Before School and After School Programs

Full Day Program	AM & PM Programs	School Age Program
Operating Five Full Days (Monday to Friday)	**Times:** AM: 9:00 - 11:30 PM: 1:30 - 4:00 **Sessions:** 5 AM or PM (Mon - Fri) 3 AM or PM (Mon/Wed/Fri) 2 AM or PM (Tues/Thurs) **Early & Late Care** Times set aside to accommodate parents work schedules when they conflict with regular program hours.	Operating 5 days Monday to Friday . **Sessions Offered:** Before School Care from 7:30AM until school begins. After School Care until 6:00PM. During school closures, an option to attend full day will be offered

ROOM STAFF – CHILD RATIO

►In mixed age grouping (57 months – 155 months) there can be no more than twelve children between the ages of 57 months – 84 months accommodated, and the ratio is 1 – 15
►In mixed age grouping (2 - 6 years) where two year olds are accommodated (no more than four two year olds are permitted) the ratio is 1 - 7 with a maximum number of 14 children permitted.
►In mixed age grouping (3 - 6 years) with no two year olds registered; the ratio is 1 - 8, with a maximum number of 16 children permitted.

TODDLER PROGRAMS

- Toddlers are accommodated in a separate room space. The staff ratio in this group is 1 - 5 with the maximum number of 10 children permitted within this space.

School Age Programs

- School Age children are accommodated in a separate room space. The staff ratio in this group is 1 - 15.

PARENT INFORMATION CENTRE

Our parent information centre is located near the entrance of the centre as well as in your child's homeroom. Please refer to it periodically as important news will be posted there. Please check daily for memos, newsletters, and reminders.

ENROLMENT

Children's acceptance into the YMCA Child Care Programs is on a first come first served basis. We strive to include all children into our programs. If your child has a special need in any area, please indicate on your registration forms, and follow up by scheduling a time to meet with the operator of the centre. This is necessary in order that we may work together to ensure a smooth transition for your child. Children who are currently enrolled will continue on until the required one month written notification is received. Parents are required to complete all Registration Forms included in the Registration Package prior to the child's admission into the program. Please Note: Parents are required to report any change in the address, phone number, or place of employment to the operator of the centre.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

In the case of **severe storms and/or other emergencies,** the centre will be closed. Radio announcements will be made. There will be no fee deductions for these closures.

MAINTENANCE/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There may be a period during the year where the centre closes for a day in order to accommodate necessary maintenance/cleaning of the building and/or a required Professional Development Session for educators. Advance notice will be provided when and if a closure is happening.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

► **For your child's safety**, we request that parents bring their child into the centre, locate his/her locker and assist your child to undress, and then greet an educator with your child. Children who attend the School Age Program are either walked or bussed from their schools while being supervised by the Child Care Staff. Each child is signed in by the staff at this program and parents/guardians are required to sign their child(ren) out when they are picked up at the end of the day. (Permission forms are included in your child's registration form allowing staff to walk children to and from the this program and Woodland Primary at the designated times) The centre's responsibility for your child does not begin until your child is in the care of the centre's staff.

►**It is necessary** that all parents sign their child in on the attendance sheet. In the event of an emergency such as a fire, the attendance sheet allows us to do an immediate check of the children present.

►**We will not release** a child to anyone not listed on your completed "Individual's Permitted To Pick Up Your Child" portion on your registration form unless you have notified the centre in advance that a different person will be picking up your child.

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

Woodland Primary School or the YMCA Afterschool Program located in the gym at Woodland Primary are the safe areas designated for this centre. In the event of evacuation, you will be notified to pick up your child at the designated area. Never take your child from the safe area without notification to one of the lead staff.

SNACKS & LUNCHES

Children are required to bring their own snack and lunches from home. It is important that snacks and lunches be of nutritious value. Chips, bars, candy, and soft drinks are not permitted.

TOYS FROM HOME

We prefer that children do not bring toys from home. Toys can get broken and cause unnecessary upset. If your child has a special toy that will help during the initial adjustment to the centre, we will certainly make allowances. There will be show and share days throughout the year when children can bring in something special from home.

SICK CHILDREN

It is recommended that if a child has a cold or other sickness (such as diarrhea, vomiting or a temperature) he/she be kept home for the duration of the illness. A communicable disease can spread very quickly throughout the centre. A high temperature in a young child can elevate very quickly and we do not want to take related emergency measures in your absence.

MEDICATION

We cannot administer non-prescription drugs to any child without written consent from a doctor. Prescription medication will be administered upon parent's written instruction and signed permission for the child care staff to do so. Prescription drugs must be in the original container before a staff member can administer it to a child. Fever reducing medication may be administered in the event of an emergency after speaking with the supervisor of the centre.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

We are required to report any cases of communicable diseases to the Public Health. Please inform the staff if your child develops any such diseases or comes in contact with anyone who has.

ALLERGIES

All center guidelines relating to children's allergies are to be strictly adhered to. Allergy information will be included in your registration Package (if applicable) and you will be kept informed of any changes that may arise in this area.

CLOTHING

We advise that children dress in comfortable, wash and wear clothing, as we do lots of messy activities. Each child is required to have a change of clothing with their name attached to be left in the child's bag and replenished whenever necessary. **Please dress your child appropriately for the weather each day**. Outdoor play is a part of our program. Proper outdoor clothing for each season is essential.

HOLIDAYS

The YMCA Child Care Programs observe the following holidays. In observation of those days the centres will be closed.

- ► NEW YEARS DAY
- ► GOOD FRIDAY
- ►VICTORIA DAY
- ► LABOUR DAY
- ► REMEMBRANCE DAY
- ► CHRISTMAS: DECEMBER 25TH AND 26TH
- ► THANKSGIVING
- ► MUNICIPAL HOLIDAY

THERE WILL BE NO FEE DEDUCTION FOR THE ABOVE HOLIDAYS

PAYMENT OF FEES

All fees are paid through pre-authorized payment (chequing account). A Payment Registration Form is included in your Registration Package. Payment of fees include statutory holidays, any noted days, as well as any day the child does not attend due to illness or vacation periods. A $25.00 registration fee is due before your child's start date. This deposit is not-refundable and is not credited towards any program cost. All Registration Forms are to be completed and returned prior to your child's attendance.

LATE FEES

A fee of $5.00 per quarter hour will be charged for a child picked up after centre closing time.

WITHDRAWALS

The centre requires a one month written notice when withdrawing your child from the program. Cancellation forms are available from the supervisor of your child's program.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

In the case of **severe storms and/or other emergencies,** the centre will be closed. Radio announcements will be made. There will be no fee deductions for these closures.

Strong Kids Annual Support Campaign

Kids can help create strong communities for today and for the future, but only if they have the chance to reach their full potential. Donations to the YMCA Strong Kids Campaign help support proven programs that give kids the opportunities they need to live healthier, happier lives and to grow into productive adults. By supporting the Strong Kids Campaign, you can help our kids build a better community for tomorrow.

Please consider a charitable gift to Strong Kids.
You can give online by going to www.exploitsvalley.ymca.ca or through your YMCA Child Care or your local YMCA Health, Fitness & Aquatics Centre.

POLICY ON DISCHARGE OF CHILDREN

An area that may lead to the discharge of a child is in the event of a child whose behavior cannot be managed in the centre. Observation and documentation will be complied by the staff, and a parent conference will be set up to discuss these concerns. We will work together planning strategies to help the child in being able to interact in his/her environment in an acceptable manner. Parents will be made aware of what supports and professional services are available and how to access them. If parents express that they would like to access any extra supports, a consent to release information form is signed and dated by the parents before any sharing of information with other professionals can take place. Working together as a team (parents, staff and invited professionals) we can decide what supports are needed in order to ensure that the environment and staff are prepared and any necessary supports are in place to meet the needs of the child. All information being shared is done within the parameters of the family's informed consent. When every technique that can be devised has been exhausted, then we may have to look at removing the child from the centre. This would be a last resort and would prove to be a very difficult and serious decision to make. You need to look at what impact this action will have on the child, and what messages are we sending to the child. This would be a very last resort. In the case where there are ongoing difficulties while working with a parent, all parties (supervisor, parent and staff that may be involved) will come together and work to come up with the best solution for all involved, trying to ensure that needs are being met to the best of our ability. When all avenues have been exhausted, and it is obvious that issues are continuing and cannot be resolved, then a decision to ask that family to leave may actually be the best decision for everyone involved. If is important that all parties involved (parent, child, staff and supervisor) maintain respect and a genuine understanding of each other's needs and issues during this process.

GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

The YMCA Child Care programs have in place a policy which is consistent with the following principles and strategies:

►Our ultimate aim is to help the children achieve self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Therefore, limits for behavior are set up, and are consistently implemented by the staff. These limits are appropriate to the developmental level of each child, and deal with health and safety, care of equipment and the rights of the individuals.

►A positive approach is used to guide children and each situation and child is dealt with individually. Methods used include; redirection, limit setting, modeling, providing choices and anticipating situations. Emphasis is put on a warm and positive child care atmosphere which promotes positive behavior.

►Children are encouraged to verbalize their feelings rather than strike out at others. If necessary, the child may be removed from the group for a short period of time. During this time the child will sit in another learning area with an educator and will be given time and comfort to work through his/her feelings.

►All children who participate in YMCA programs and services are made to feel special. Children have the right to be understood, loved and respected within the framework of a caring family and community