



Parent/Guardian HANDBOOK



Welcome

Welcome to YWCA Hamilton Child Care. As the second-largest provider of child care in the country, child care is a cornerstone of advocacy for YWCAs across Canada. We're leading the way in building a case for universal, quality child care in Ontario and beyond.

We offer children and youth dynamic learning experiences at locations in both Hamilton and Haldimand-Norfolk. In our child care centres for toddlers and preschoolers, before and after school programs for kindergarten and school-age children, and our summer camps, we're empowering children to reach their full potential. Our team of qualified and caring educators have a passion for engaging children in enriching experiences designed to nurture each child's natural sense of curiosity. We recognize all children as competent and capable of reaching their optimum development.

Our child care programs provide a friendly, inclusive, safe environment where children can participate in fun and exciting activities to support their growth. Children will participate in neighbourhood outings and activities happening at YWCA Hamilton. From time to time, we welcome visitors from our community to engage children in cultural experiences, science, and other fun learning activities. Thank you for choosing YWCA Hamilton Child Care programs for your child!

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Mission & Vision Statement

YWCA Canada is a leading voice for women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people.

For 150 years, we've been at the forefront of a movement: to fight gender-based violence, build affordable housing and advocate for workplace equity. We work to advance gender equity by responding to urgent needs in communities, through national advocacy and grassroots initiatives.

Local YWCAs invest over \$258 million annually to support over 330,000 individuals across the nation. Today, we engage young leaders, diverse communities, and corporate partners to achieve our vision of a safe and equitable Canada for all.

OUR MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Vision Statement

YWCA Hamilton envisions an equitable world where women (cis and trans), girls, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people have the rights and resources to shape their own lives and lead their communities.

Mission Statement

YWCA Hamilton provides meaningful, accessible services to create opportunities, amplify voices, and co-create gender inclusive and equitable communities.

VALUE STATEMENTS

Intersectional Feminism

We actively confront injustice and inequality to eradicate gender discrimination, racism, and oppression in all of its forms.

People Centred

We place people at the core of our decisions, actions and responses.

Belonging

We create inclusive, welcoming spaces and opportunities to foster meaningful connection.

Responsibility

We contribute with care to sustainable and equitable solutions.

Partnerships

We work collaboratively to achieve equity, accessibility, gender and social justice.

Program Statement

YWCA Hamilton licensed child care programs provide a friendly, inclusive environment for toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. Our staff of qualified, caring educators engage children in enriching experiences designed to nurture each child's natural sense of curiosity while recognizing all children as competent and capable of reaching their optimum development. Our programs are consistent with the Ministry of Education's child care policies and curriculum framework.

YWCA Hamilton puts into practice, [How Does Learning Happen: Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#). Our team of educators emphasize the importance of viewing children as "competent, curious, capable of complex thinking and rich in potential" (2014, p. 16). It is our goal to create positive environments which support interactions that generate rich conversations between staff, children and their families about the children's interests and needs. At the YWCA, our staff understand the value of facilitating children's growth and development; that's why they work so hard to provide creative learning experiences through a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and play. Our staff's dedication to child care reflects our philosophy of learning and care during the early years.



Goals that Guide our Practice

1. Children learn from everything they do.
2. We recognize and accept each child as an individual with their own unique strengths and qualities.
3. We recognize that every child develops at their own rate and pace.
4. Children are naturally curious, they want to explore and discover.
5. We understand that children need autonomy, therefore we encourage initiative and independence.
6. Successful relationships are built on trust and respect between the staff, children, and the families we serve.
7. Children are most successful when they are a part of the planning and organizing of their own learning.

YWCA Hamilton child care programs implement a play-based emergent curriculum model. Our educators actively listen, observe, and document the child's learning and experiences. Our staff engage in reflective practice, by themselves and within their teams to best understand the children and the program needs. Staff work to engage families in discussions to build a supportive partnership to benefit both the child and their families.

The YWCA's approach on learning is based on the current child development research. It is due to these studies that we have developed our learning expectations and goals for children to promote belonging, engagement, expression, and well-being:



“Every child has a sense of **belonging** when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world” (2014, p. 24).

“Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and **well-being**”(2014, p. 29).

“Every child is an active and **engaged** learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses” (2014, p. 35).

“Every child is a capable communicator who **expresses** himself or herself in many ways” (2014, p. 41).



Well-being

YWCA Hamilton's child care staff recognize all areas of learning affect the well-being of children. It is for that reason our staff are dedicated to fostering positive, caring and respectful relationships which contribute to children's emotional, psychological, and physical well-being. Our staff are committed to providing a clean and safe environment for all children to learn, play and explore.

Goals & Approaches:

- Adequate nutrition is maintained by serving menus according to Canada's Food Guide
- Culturally diverse food, dietary and religious food requests are considered in our menu planning
- Healthy eating practices are modelled during snack and lunch times while supporting the children's independence
- Assist children in meeting their basic needs while promoting self-help skills, a sense of autonomy and competence during daily routines
- Share information with families about health and nutrition to support the needs of their children
- Respond to children's cues in a calm, responsive manner, allowing staff to better assist children in expressing their needs
- Promote strategies for self-regulation to cope and adapt to changes
- Children are encouraged to engage in problem-solving together by assessing the situation, reflecting on the results, with the support of an educator when needed
- Provide stimulating but safe indoor and outdoor environments that are inclusive while promoting physical and cognitive development
- Offer open ended materials that promote both fine and gross motor development, simultaneously connecting the children with nature
- Nurture responsive, caring relationships that support families

“When educators establish positive, authentic, and caring relationships with families and provide a safe, non-judgmental environment for shared learning, everyone benefits.” (2014, p. 31)



Belonging

Through cooperative collaboration, YWCA Hamilton child care staff plan and execute high quality learning experiences on a daily basis. Through observations and documentation, staff engage in reflective practice to better serve children's unique needs. Staff provide a welcoming environment that is safe, secure, and designed to enhance children's growth and experiences. At YWCA Hamilton, we recognize the close connection between social-emotional development and learning.

Goals & Approaches:

- Provide rich experiences designed to help children develop a love of learning, independence, self-control, and the ability to interact positively with others
- Recognize each child's right to participate equally
- Develop individual support plans through collaboration with parents/guardians, community partners and other required professional resource consultants
- Value and include all cultures and first languages of the children in our care Recognize and respect ancestry, culture, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, developmental abilities, needs and family environments of those we serve
- Welcome families into our program through volunteering, celebrations and social gatherings
- Nurture each child's self-esteem and confidence by using positive guidance, empathy, and care
- Encourage communication and peer entry skills between children by modeling play partnerships and providing opportunities for cooperative play throughout the day
- Build positive relationships with open communication between staff, children, and their families
- Cultivate authentic, caring relationships connecting children and adults to the world around them

“Young children experience their world as an environment of relationships, which affect virtually all aspects of their development.”

(2014, p. 24)



Engagement

YWCA Hamilton child care staff strongly believe learning through play and exploration exemplifies meaningful learning during the early years of a child's life. When play is child-initiated, children are intrinsically motivated, therefore they are more involved with their learning and development. Our staff continuously support these play experiences to foster children's love of learning and discovery.

Goals & Approaches:

- Create an environment where children and their families are valued as active participants and contributors to the curriculum
- Educators actively extend, challenge, and build on children's learning as well as embrace a role as co-learners in the planning and learning cycle
- Provide progressively complex open-ended materials based on observed interests and needs
- Encourage family and community engagement relevant to the lives of the children
- Utilize documentation to capture children's inquiry, learning, and discoveries
- Engage children in conversations to ensure they are active contributors to the program
- Provide opportunities to influence children's level of engagement, both indoor and outdoor
- Allow opportunities for developmentally appropriate risk-taking to promote complex thinking, physical exploration, and independence
- Plan uninterrupted play times to allow children to explore their mind, body, and sense while inspiring inclusive investigation, questioning, and theory testing
- Maintain calm, consistent routines with minimal interruptions and transitions
- Engage children in play to support their development, challenge their thinking, and extend their learning

“Children learn best when they are fully engaged in active exploration, play, and inquiry.” (2014, p. 35)



Expression

YWCA Hamilton's team of educators work diligently to support each child's learning style and developmental needs. All children's individual requirements for active play, rest, and quiet time are respected. Our staff participate in continuous professional learning to provide and promote a positive and inclusive learning environment, both indoor and outdoor.

Goals & Approaches:

- Create inclusive environments that provide meaningful, engaging and accessible learning opportunities
- Establish authentic, positive relationships with children and families in a safe and non-judgmental environment
- Strive to meet children's individual needs by continually being aware of each child's state of arousal and sensitivities
- Safe, stimulating outdoor environments are provided to invite active play and social interaction
- Our team of educators promote the children's competence and mastery in motor skills, which includes revisiting ideas expressed previously to expand learning
- Classroom learning areas are defined, organized, inviting, and filled with open ended materials designed to promote engagement and creative expression through play
- Engage in two-way communication with children to model and promote active listening skills
- Daily routines and experiences are used to promote language, cultural traditions and research ideas
- Encourage creative expression through art mediums such as drawing, painting, music, and movement
- Utilize art materials to help children express their feelings, ideas, and experiences
- Be mindful of the many non-verbal communications children utilize through their body and facial expressions as well as their verbal communication

“When educators are aware and able to understand and respond to the many “languages” children use to communicate, they give every child a voice.” (2014, p. 41)



Families and Community Engagement

YWCA Hamilton embodies the belief that through strong, healthy collaborative partnerships and active contributors, the community is able to grow, flourish, and support all of its members. It is through this guiding principle that our team openly invite and encourage families and community partners into our programs.

Goals & Approaches:

- High quality programming that maintains reciprocal relationships between educators
- Families have the most power and influence on their child's development, health, and well-being
- Families are valued as active contributors who possess knowledge, strengths, and experiences
- Family participation ignites children's interest in learning and creates the feelings of belonging and security needed to explore connections between learning environments and home settings
- Documentation makes learning visible and invites families into our classrooms while encouraging their perspective and participation
- Build community engagement by nurturing relationships with people, places, and the natural world among us
- Connect with community organizations and embrace the support they provide
- Advocate for families to access services and support and assist them in connecting with community organizations and other professionals in retrieving information relevant to their child's development
- Review the strategies and approaches and their impact on families and staff through feedback forms and our quality assurance policy

“Programs are most effective if the primary focus stays on supporting the child within his or her family and community.” (2014, p. 21)

Responsive Caregiving

YWCA Hamilton has policies and procedures set out to maintain the health, safety and well-being of each child provided care. Both the program supervisor and the manager closely observe interactions between the staff and children to guarantee the program's policies, procedures, and program statement are being met.

Goals & Approaches:

- Staff, students, and volunteers are monitored, recorded, and addressed on an ongoing basis
- Educators engage in thoughtful reflection of their professional strengths and weaknesses and are required to attend professional learning opportunities based on these reflections
- Continuous Professional Learning Plans are supported to ensure program quality

Prohibited Practices:

Staff, students and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in the following practices:

- Corporal punishment of a child
- Physical restraint of a child such as confining the child to a high chair, care seat, stroller or other device for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting themselves or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of harm is no longer imminent
- Locking the exits of the child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of YWCA Hamilton's emergency management policies and procedures
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats, or the use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame, frighten the child, or undermine their self-respect, dignity, or self-worth
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, or bedding
- Inflicting bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.
- Sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and prescribed sexual acts (as defined under the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007)

“Evidence from recent studies show that prevention and intervention is most effective when strategies are in place not only to build skills in children, but also to strengthen the capacity of all who have relationships with children.” (2014, p. 31)



Orientation of Staff, Students, and Volunteers

YWCA Hamilton requires all child care staff, students, and volunteers to review this program statement, policies and procedures set out under Ontario Reg. 137/15 section 49 prior to the initial interaction with the children, annually, and any time modifications are made.

YWCA Hamilton policies and procedures:

- Outline the expectations and implementation strategies for staff
- Review compliance and contravention measures of the policies, procedures, and program statement

“When educators engage in continuous learning and questioning, exploring new ideas and adjusting practices, they achieve the best outcomes for children, families, and themselves.” (2014, p. 20)

Child Care Program Information

YWCA Hamilton offers programs for the following age groups at multiple locations in Hamilton and Haldimand-Norfolk:

- Infants (birth to 18 months)
- Toddlers (18 months up to 30 months)
- Preschool (30 months up to 6 years)
- Kindergarten (44 months up to 7 years)
- Primary/Junior School Age (68 months up to 13 years)

YWCA Hamilton Child Care Programs are open Monday to Friday from *7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Our Before and After School Programs are open Monday to Friday from 7:00 a.m. to first bell, and last bell to 6:00 p.m. PA Day programs and break program (winter break, March break) are available from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at select locations. Summer Camp programs are available from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at select locations. (*Note: hours of operation at YWCA Hamilton Downtown Child Care Centre are 7:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.)

Program Location	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Kinder	School Age	PA Days	Camp
Downtown Child Care Centre 75 MacNab St. South Hamilton, ON L8P 3C1 905-522-9922	•	•	•				
Central Mountain Child Care Centre 420 Crerar Dr. Hamilton, ON L9A 5K3 905-389-4251	•	•	•				
Emerald Child Care Centre 20 Emerald St. North Hamilton, ON L8L 8A4 905-523-4918		•	•				
Queenston Child Care Centre 55 Queenston Rd. Hamilton, ON L8K 1E8		•	•				
West Mountain Child Care Centre 11 Guildwood Dr. Hamilton, ON L9C 7K2 905-383-9333		•	•	•	•		
Ottawa Street Child Care Centre 1175 Main St. East Hamilton, ON L8M 1P3 905-547-5151		•	•	•	•	•	
Dunnville Child Care Centre 209 Alder St. West Dunnville, ON L1A 1R3 289-369-0489		•	•	•	•		
AM/PM Care (@Central Public School) 75 Hunter St. West Hamilton, ON L8P 1P9 905-522-992				•	•	•	•
Lisgar Before and After School Program 110 Anson Ave. Hamilton, ON L8T 2X6 905-522-9922				•	•	•	•
Mapleview Before and After School Program 223 Fairview Ave. Dunnville, ON N1A 1M4 289-369-0489				•	•	•	•
Mountain View Child Care Centre 500 Mohawk Rd. West Hamilton, ON L9C 1X4 905-522-9922	•	•	•				
St. John Before and After School Program 115 London St. South Hamilton, ON L8K 2G6 905-522-9922				•	•		
Thompson Creek Before and After School Program 800 Cross St. Dunnville, ON N1A 1N7 289-369-0489				•	•	•	•

All YWCA Hamilton Child Care locations are closed on New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day. Fees are required for holiday closures and closures due to inclement weather.

Fees are required for children who are scheduled to attend on holiday closures, school board closures and closures due to unforeseen circumstances beyond YWCA Hamilton's reasonable control, such as, but not limited to, inclement weather, failure of essential services (e.g. lack of power, water, heat, etc.), and early closures due to insufficient staffing to maintain child care ratios

Child Care Fees & Payment Information

Child Care Rates
Jan 1, 2023

	Hamilton Locations		Haldimand-Norfolk Locations	
	Full-Time Daily Rate	Part-Time Daily Rate	Full-Time Daily Rate	Part-Time Daily Rate
Infant	\$22.00	\$22.00		
Toddler	\$22.00	\$22.00	\$22.00	\$22.00
Preschool	\$22.00	\$22.00	\$17.96	\$20.44
Kindergarten Before School	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$8.50	\$9.00
Kindergarten After School	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Kindergarten Before & After School	\$14.41	\$15.83	\$12.00	\$12.00
Kindergarten Full Day	\$22.00	\$22.00	\$20.32	\$22.00
CWELCC School Age Before School	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$7.50	\$8.00
CWELCC School Age After School	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$11.00	\$12.00
CWELCC School Age Before & After School	\$12.00	\$13.94	\$12.00	\$12.00
CWELCC School Age Full Day	\$22.00	\$22.00	\$17.72	\$19.61
School Age Before School	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$7.50	\$8.00
School Age After School	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$13.00
School Age Before & After School	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$17.50	\$19.50
School Age Full Day	\$51.00	\$56.00	\$37.50	\$41.50

Canada Wide Early Learning & Child Care System

YWCA Hamilton has opted into the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System. Base child care fees for eligible children will be reduced in accordance with the requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act*.

"Eligible child" means any child under 6 years old; and up until June 30th, any child who turns 6 years old between January 1st and June 30th and is enrolled in a licensed infant, toddler, preschool, or kindergarten age group, family age group, or home child care.

"Base fees" means any fee charged for the provision of child care, including fees for service and any other mandatory fees.

"Non-base fee" means any fee charged for optional items or optional services (e.g. field trips or outings), or any fees charged where the caregiver fails to meet the terms of the child care agreement (e.g. fees for late pick-up).

Deposit

A two-week deposit is required upon registration. This deposit will be applied to your last two weeks of care.

Payments

All payments are made through Pre-Authorized Debit or Credit. Child care is a pay-before-use service, with payments due in advance of care being provided. Invoices will be issued monthly. If there is a discrepancy between the amount owing and your records, please contact your Child Care Supervisor.

The account holder is responsible for ensuring payments are made on time and in full. YWCA Hamilton requires weekly payments to be made every Monday. If the payment due date falls on a holiday, it will be processed the following business day.

Subsidy

Families may be eligible for child care subsidy from the City of Hamilton or Haldimand-Norfolk Social Services. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the YWCA Hamilton Child Care Supervisor of any changes in their child care subsidy entitlement. If a family's child care subsidy expires, and the child continues to attend, the account holder will be responsible for making the full child care payments.

Late Fees

All children are to be picked up by the child care location's closing time. If a child is not picked up before closing time, an additional fee of \$10.00 per every 5-minute period will be charged. Non-payment of any applicable late fees will result in suspension and/or termination from the child care program.

Account Status

Any accounts which are in arrears by more than 7 days will result in suspension from YWCA Hamilton Child Care. Upon suspension, the child's space will be held for one week and charged the weekly child care fee. Non-payment over one week during suspension will result in termination from the child care program. Overdue accounts will be transferred to the finance department for collections upon non-receipt of payment. Any payments returned due to non-sufficient funds (NSF) will be charged a \$25.00 processing fee.

Refunds or Credits

Payment is required for any days the child is absent from the child care program, including illness and

vacation. Whenever possible, families are asked to contact the child care program to notify staff of the child's absence. Payment is required for children who are scheduled to attend on holiday closures, school board closures and closures due to unforeseen circumstances beyond YWCA Hamilton's reasonable control such as, but not limited to inclement weather, failure of essential services (e.g. lack of power, water, heat, etc.), and early closures due to insufficient staffing to maintain child care ratios.

YWCA Hamilton will not issue a refund or credit for any of the circumstances listed above. A refund or credit will only be issued in the event that YWCA Hamilton has made an error in calculating a payment which has resulted in overcharging an account.

Waitlist Policy

All enrolments are based on a first come, first served basis. Once program availability is determined, all admission forms must be completed prior to the child starting care. If there are no spaces available for the required age group and program, the parent/guardian will complete the Waitlist Application form for the child to be placed on a waitlist.

When a space becomes available, children will be placed in order of priority. Priority is determined as follows:

1. Children of parents working at YWCA Hamilton
2. Siblings of children already attending a YWCA Hamilton Child Care Program
3. **For YWCA Hamilton Mountain View Child Care Centre, children of parents participating in the Young Parent Program offered through Banyan Community Services*
4. Children who live at the Putman Family YWCA
5. Children who are transferring from another YWCA Hamilton Child Care Program
6. Children from the community

If a family declines the available space for any reason, or we are not able to reach them after multiple attempts, the next family on the waitlist will be offered the space.

Families can contact the Child Care Supervisor at any time to determine their position on the waitlist. There is

no cost to families to be placed on the YWCA Hamilton Child Care waitlist.

Admission & Discharge

Families are required to complete a registration package prior to the child's admission into YWCA Hamilton Child Care. Upon receipt of the completed registration package, YWCA Hamilton requires up to 2 weeks' processing time for new registrations.

A current health history including the child's up-to-date record of immunizations is required from the local public health department before the child can begin care.

YWCA Hamilton provides full-time (5 days/week) and part-time (less than 5 days/week) enrolment options for families. Children must be registered for a minimum of two set days per week. Within our Before and After School programs, children can be registered for mornings only, afternoons only, or mornings and afternoons combined. In an effort to accommodate as many families as possible, YWCA Hamilton is not able to offer flexible scheduling at any of our locations.

Two weeks' written notice must be provided to make changes to a child's enrolment. This includes an increase or decrease in days when care is required, and withdrawal from the child care program.

YWCA Hamilton will discharge a child from care at the family's request given 2 weeks' written notice, for non-payment of fees, or for serious violation of YWCA Hamilton policies and procedures or codes of conduct.

Clients, Members and Community Members Complaints Resolution Protocol

YWCA Hamilton values and encourages the feedback of clients, members, and community members about the programs, services and practices of the organization. Complaints and feedback can provide important opportunities for improving service. A complaint can be made by a client, member or community member individually or with the support of an individual acting on behalf of the client, member or community member if necessary. The complaint can relate to any aspect of the organization's programs, services, and practices.

YWCA Hamilton maintains a high standard with respect to the operation of the organization and its associated programs and services. Strict compliance is expected for all employees, volunteers and contractors of the YWCA Hamilton with respect to its established policies and procedures.

Clients, members and community members have the right to respectful, non-judgmental treatment. YWCA Hamilton is committed to ensuring that it is a safe place, free from discrimination, violence, and harassment. Racism, homophobia, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism or any other form of oppression will not be tolerated by employees, volunteers, students, clients or members.

If clients or community members feel they have experienced harassment or discrimination at YWCA Hamilton, they have the right to voice their concerns by using this complaints process. YWCA Hamilton maintains a strict compliance expectation with respect to its policies and procedures surrounding incidents of violence and harassment.

Harassment is any behaviour that demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions, comments, or displays. It may be a single incident or continue over time.

Procedure: YWCA Hamilton is committed to listening to clients, members and community member complaints and/or feedback while responding in a fair, timely, and respectful manner. All complaints made against the organization are taken seriously, and will be given due consideration without reprisal or discrimination. YWCA Hamilton will attempt to resolve all complaints to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. No client or member will risk having their services and/or supports negatively impacted or withdrawn as a result of submitting a complaint to the organization.

YWCA Hamilton actively informs clients, members and community members of their right to register complaints and provide feedback in seeking resolution or organizational improvements. All aspects of complaint or feedback submission will be handled in accordance with the YWCA Hamilton Confidentiality Policy. However, if the complaint may involve alleged, suspected or witnessed illegal criminal or unethical behaviour, information may need to be shared with external authorities. In

circumstances where external authorities are required, YWCA Hamilton will only initiate its own internal investigation of a complaint after external authorities have completed their investigation.

Where a conflict of interest may arise as a result of individuals involved throughout the complaint investigation process, YWCA Hamilton reserves the right to designate other individuals involved in the complaint investigation to avoid such a conflict of interest and maintain a fair and equitable practice throughout the investigation.

All complaints and/or feedback are documented throughout the investigation process and kept in a secure location.

YWCA Hamilton is not expected to attempt to resolve complaints that it may determine to be frivolous or vexatious.

Step 1 – Informal Resolution Process

Speak directly to the person with whom you have the complaint. If you do not feel safe to speak with the person whom you have the complaint, please ask to speak directly to their supervisor at least within 10 working days of an incident or concern.

Step 2 – Formal Resolution Process

1. You may provide a written complaint and leave it for a YWCA Hamilton employee/volunteer/supervisor whom you have the complaint with or their Supervisor. You may also request a meeting in which you may write down and/or provide specific details of your concern. You must do this as soon as possible but at least within 10 working days of the incident. A person acting on behalf of an individual providing a complaint may be involved in the complaint process at any time.
2. As soon as possible within 10 working days of receiving a complaint, the employee or management staff will provide an initial response. The response to the complaint will include arranging a meeting in person or by phone as the complainant so chooses, to hear the complaint. A resolution of the complaint

may also include a meeting between the parties involved that should take place within 10 working days, unless an extension is needed, of the initial meeting to hear the complaint.

3. If you are not satisfied with the response of the employee or their Supervisor you can contact their Manager within 10 working days from the day you received the response.
4. If you are not satisfied with the response of the Manager, you can contact the Director of the department within 10 working days from the day you received the response.
5. If you are not satisfied with the response of the Director of the department, you can contact the CEO within 10 working days from the day you received the response. The CEO may assign a designate to respond to hear the complaint and provide a response on her behalf.
6. The CEO brings complaints deemed a risk to the organization forward to the Board of Directors within 10 working days. The Board of Directors will review complaints related to the violation of board governance policies within 10 working days following the receipt of the complaint.

Depending on the complaint, the appropriate reporting body (including government funders as required) will be contacted by the CEO or her designate, and the proper complaint reporting procedure initiated.

Frivolous, Vexatious Complaints: Any client, member or community member who makes a frivolous, vexatious, false or bad faith complaint will be deemed to have engaged in harassment and YWCA Hamilton will address this accordingly.

Code of Conduct

YWCA Hamilton is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all of our members and guests. To ensure safety and comfort for all, we expect all individuals at the YWCA Hamilton to conduct themselves in a mature and responsible way, respecting the rights and dignity of others. ***This code of conduct***

applies to children, parents, caregivers, staff, students, volunteers and guests.

Our Code of Conduct allows for **zero tolerance of any language or action that may hurt, threaten or frighten any YWCA Hamilton program participant, employee, volunteer, student, or guest.** This includes mild-moderate behaviours such as but not limited to:

- Angry or vulgar language
- Swearing
- Name calling
- Shouting
- Disrespect towards others

Frequent and recurring mild-moderate behaviours may be considered severe depending on the impact they have on others. Severe behaviours include but are not limited to:

- Bullying
- Physical contact with another person in an angry or threatening way including hitting, punching, kicking, biting, scratching, hair-pulling, etc.
- Any demonstration of sexual activity or sexual contact with another person
- Harassment or intimidation with words, gestures, body language or other menacing behaviour
- Degrading or non-inclusive/non-welcoming behaviour intended to exclude others in a targeted way
- Behaviour which intends to or results in the theft or destruction of property
- Carrying or concealing any weapons or objects that may be used as weapons

Our staff are trained and expected to respond to any reported violation of our Code of Conduct. Please do not hesitate to notify staff if you need assistance. We want to make sure every person feels safe and secure. YWCA Hamilton's management team will investigate all reported violations of the code of conduct. Multiple instances of mild-moderate violations in one day may result in early dismissal from the program. Severe violations will result in early dismissal from the program. Repeated severe violations may result in a temporary suspension or permanent termination from the YWCA Hamilton child care program. No refunds will be issued for early dismissals or temporary suspensions.

Inclement Weather

YWCA Hamilton understands that many families rely on our child care services. For that reason, YWCA Hamilton requires child care employees to attend work even during inclement weather. However, sometimes extreme weather conditions may make it necessary to close child care programs.

All YWCA Hamilton Child Care locations will be closed when both the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board are closed. In the event that only one board is closed, YWCA Hamilton will make a decision by 7:00 a.m. whether any child care programs will remain open. YWCA Hamilton Child Care locations in Haldimand-Norfolk will follow closures according to the Grand Erie District School Board and Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board.

In the event of an early closure, families will be contacted to make arrangements to pick up their child. All closure announcements will be made on public radio stations, social media, and YWCA Hamilton's website (www.ywcahamilton.org).

YWCA Hamilton does not issue refunds for closures due to inclement weather.

Emergency Management Procedures

YWCA Hamilton is committed to maintaining the highest attainable standards of operations to preserve the lives, health, and safety of employees, including students and volunteers, clients, program participants, residents, service suppliers, and the general public.

YWCA Hamilton has an emergency preparedness plan in place that defines specific actions to be taken by key personnel to prevent or respond to emergencies including fire, equipment failure, public safety threats, and natural disasters. All child care programs operating in school buildings must refer to the affiliated school board's emergency policies and procedures.

To prepare both children and staff of YWCA Hamilton Child Care Programs in the event of a fire or any other situation requiring evacuation of the building, YWCA Hamilton conducts monthly fire drills. All child care programs including before and after school programs and camps are required to conduct a monthly fire drill.



In the event of an emergency, families will be contacted by phone from the designated emergency evacuation site.

Supervision of Students & Volunteers

YWCA Hamilton understands and appreciates the value students and volunteers bring to our programs. They bring new ideas and perspectives while gaining real work experiences. YWCA Hamilton takes every precaution to ensure the experience is a safe and positive one for the student, volunteer, staff, and children in the program.

Students and volunteers are closely monitored to ensure they are following all YWCA Hamilton policies and procedures. They are not permitted to have unsupervised access to children and they may not be counted in staff to child ratios.

Students and volunteers are required to provide a Criminal Reference Check including a Vulnerable Sector Screening and review YWCA Hamilton Policies & Procedures, individual anaphylaxis plans, and emergency procedures prior to interacting with children.

Outdoor Play

According to child care licensing regulations, children enrolled in full-day child care programs are required to spend a minimum of two hours per day outdoors, weather permitting. Children enrolled in before and after school programs are required to spend a minimum of 30 minutes per day outdoors, weather permitting.

YWCA Hamilton child care staff will work with families to ensure children are dressed appropriately for outdoor play during every season. Outdoor play will be cancelled when temperatures drop below -10°C, when a heat advisory has been issued by the City of Hamilton, or when the Air Quality Index has reached 7 as determined by the Ministry of the Environment.

When outdoor play is cancelled, opportunities for gross motor play will be offered in the gymnasium whenever possible.

Field Trips

Field trips are a great way to extend children's learning. From time to time, child care staff will plan excursions to build on what the children are learning in the classroom.

Families will be notified in advance of any field trips taking place off the child care premises. A parent/guardian must give written consent allowing the child to attend. Staff will escort the children and be reachable by cell phone at all times. Staff will also inspect the environment upon arrival at the destination to ensure it is safe. Parents/guardians are welcome to participate in field trips with their children. Any parent/guardian wishing to attend must obtain a Vulnerable Sector Screening in advance of the trip.

Safe Arrival & Departure Procedures

The safety and protection of children in our care is a top priority for us. Upon arrival at YWCA Hamilton Child Care Programs, please escort your child into their classroom and ensure the educator is aware your child is present. For the safety of your child, ***please do not leave children at the front door or in the hallway outside of the classroom.***

If your child will be late or absent from the child care program, please notify the program staff or supervisor as soon as possible. When a child has not arrived to the child care program by 10 a.m. as expected, and the parent/guardian has not provided notification of the child's absence, staff will contact the family to confirm the child's absence. If staff are not able to reach the parent/guardian by phone, staff will inform the child care supervisor who will make additional attempts to contact the family by phone and/or email.

Staff will only release a child to the child's parent/guardian or to an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child care program may release the child to. If for any reason the parent/guardian (or other person authorized to pick up the child as stated on the child's registration package) is unable to pick up the child, written permission signed by the parent/guardian must be provided to staff with the name of an alternate person. The parent/guardian may also provide telephone authorization for an alternate person to pick up the child. A physical description of that person must be provided to staff over the phone. Alternate persons authorized to pick up the child will be asked to show photo identification for verification.

To ensure that children are released to appropriate caregivers, we require families to keep us informed of any custody/parental access issues involving the

child. We require a copy of any custody/access orders to be kept on file at the program location where the child attends. It is important to keep the Child Care Supervisor informed of any updates or changes as soon as they occur. We will not release a child under any circumstances to a parent/guardian without access to the child unless there is imminent danger to the staff or other children.

For children enrolled in an infant, toddler, or preschool program, staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or another person authorized to pick up the child. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

For school-aged children enrolled in a before/after school program, or full day camp program during school breaks, the child's parent/guardian may provide written authorization for their child to be released from care without supervision. Staff will review the instructions for release provided by the parent/guardian and release the child at the time set out in the instructions. The staff will document the time of departure from care.

Late Pick Up Procedure

The hours of operation for the YWCA Hamilton Downtown Child Care Centre are 7:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., Monday to Friday. All other YWCA Hamilton Child Care Programs are open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Summer camp is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Our team of educators work diligently each day to provide fun learning experiences for the children in their care. They also prepare children for the end of the day to provide a smooth transition home. Families are expected to pick up their children before the program's closing time. We understand that sometimes unforeseen circumstances prevent families from picking up their children on time. If you will be late picking up your child, please contact us so we are aware.

Ten minutes before closing time, staff will contact the families of any children remaining in care to ensure children are picked up prior to closing, unless we have been notified in advance. If after 15 minutes we have not made contact with the child's parent/guardian, staff will notify the Child Care Supervisor and begin calling the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form.

If a child has not been picked up before closing time, we will make every effort to see if we have been notified. If we have not been notified, staff will attempt to contact the child's parent/guardian. If after 15 minutes we have not made contact with the child's parent/guardian, staff will notify the Child Care Supervisor. The Child Care Supervisor will direct staff to call **Police at 905-546-4925** or **Hamilton Child and Family Supports at 905-522-1121** or **Catholic Children's Aid Society at 905-525-2012**.

If a child is not picked up before closing time, an additional fee of \$10.00 per every 5-minute period will be charged. Non-payment of any applicable late fees will result in suspension and/or termination from the child care program.

Illness/Virus

Sick children pose a risk to other children and the staff who care for them. If a child is not able to take part in usual daily activities including outdoor play, then the child is too sick to attend child care. Families are asked to keep their children at home if any of the following symptoms are present:

- **Fever and/or chills:** any temperature higher than normal body temperature (37°C or 98.6°F)
- **Cough** not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- **Shortness of breath** not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic heart failure)
- **Decrease or loss of taste or smell** not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. nasal polyps, allergies, neurological disorders)
- **Muscle aches or joint pain**
- **Extreme tiredness, general feeling of being unwell, lack of energy** and not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. getting a COVID-19 vaccine and/or flu shot in the last 24 hours, depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction, anemia, malignancy)
- **Sore throat, painful swallowing or difficulty swallowing**, not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. post nasal drip, acid)

- **Runny or stuffy/congested nose** not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. seasonal allergies, being outside in cold weather, chronic sinusitis)
- **Headache**
- **Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea** not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. anxiety, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, side effects of medication)
- **Abdominal pain** not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. menstrual cramps, gastroesophageal reflux disease)
- **Pink eye**
- **Decreased appetite or no appetite**
- **Undiagnosed rash or spots on the body that may or may not be itchy.** The child may return to the program with a doctor's note indicating when they are healthy enough to return.

Children can return to child care if symptoms started improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if they had nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea), they do not have a fever, and as long as they do not develop any additional symptoms.

If educators notice a sudden or gradual change in the child's health over the course of the day, the child will be separated from other children, but remain supervised at all times. The illness symptoms will be documented and the parent/guardian will be notified to make arrangements to have the child picked up within one hour.

In the event of a virus in the child care program, families will be notified of the number of confirmed cases. Staff will implement heightened sanitation procedures to prevent further spread of the virus.

For the health and well-being of all adults and children in our community, we are required to report some diseases to the local public health department. For a complete list of these diseases, please visit your local public health department website.

Medication Administration

If a child requires medication, it will be administered by a qualified staff. Medication will only be administered with the parent/guardian's written consent, and clear and specific instructions. Medication must be provided in the original container as supplied by a pharmacist or manufacturer, and have the child's name clearly labeled.

A doctor's note is required for the administration of non-prescription medication.

Medications will not be administered if:

- The container is unmarked
- The label is illegible or prescribed for another name
- They have expired
- They have been improperly stored
- The colour has changed or the medication has become cloudy

Head Lice

If head lice is suspected, staff will remove the child from the group to check their hair for possible signs. Staff will contact the child's parent/guardian to inform them that head lice is suspected, and ask that the child be picked up from the program. The child may return to the program once treated and nit (egg) free. If there are suspected cases of head lice in the child care program, families will be notified.

YWCA Hamilton child care staff take every precaution to prevent the spread of head lice. When there are suspected cases of head lice in the program, heightened sanitation practices are implemented.

Anaphylaxis & Restricted Foods

Anaphylaxis is a severe systematic allergic reaction which can be fatal, resulting in circulatory collapse or shock. The allergy may be related to a variety of sources such as food, insect stings, medicine, or latex.

YWCA Hamilton takes every precaution to support the needs of children with severe allergies by providing information on anaphylaxis and allergy awareness to parents/guardians, staff, students, volunteers, and visitors of the child care program. Foods containing nuts/peanuts are not permitted in any YWCA Hamilton Child Care Program. As per our Bagged Lunch Policy, staff, students, and volunteers will check any foods brought from home to ensure they are nut-free. Any food item found to contain nuts will be placed in a sealed bag to be returned home with a note explaining the concern.

A valid Epi-Pen MUST be onsite for each child with an anaphylactic allergy. Children with a known anaphylactic allergy without an Epi-Pen, will not be accepted into

care. The child's parent/guardian will be notified well in advance of the expiration date of any Epi-Pens on site. Expired Epi-Pens will be returned to the parent/guardian for disposal.

An Individual Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan will be created for each child with an anaphylactic allergy before the child can begin care. The plan will be developed with input from the child's parent/guardian and any regulated health care professionals involved in the child's care that the parent/guardian would like to involve. It will include procedures to follow in the event of an allergic reaction or other medical emergency. The Child Care Supervisor will be trained by the child's parent/guardian or physician on the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis, the emergency response to anaphylaxis, and the use of all medications administered in the event of an anaphylactic reaction. The Child Care Supervisor will train all staff, students, and volunteers on the signs and symptoms of each affected child and their individual emergency response procedures.

Allergy lists are posted in all areas where food is prepared and served, and Individual Anaphylaxis Emergency Plans are posted in the staffroom, kitchen, and all rooms where food is prepared and served. Every precaution is taken during off-site excursions to minimize exposure to anaphylactic allergens.

Serious Occurrence Reporting

YWCA Hamilton Child Care Programs are required to advise all families of any situation the Ministry of Education has deemed a "Serious Occurrence." Once a Serious Occurrence has been identified, a Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be posted at the program location within 24 hours. This form will provide a brief overview of the situation for families.

To maintain the personal information and privacy of individuals involved, no child or staff names, initials, age, dates of birth, age group identifiers, or any other identifying information are indicated on the Serious Occurrence Notification Form.

The following incidents are considered a Serious Occurrence:

- The death of a child who received care at a child care centre

- Abuse, neglect, or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving care at a child care centre
- A life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives care at a child care centre
- An incident where a child who is receiving care at a child care centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised
- An unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving child care at the child care centre

Duty to Report

Under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, if any staff of YWCA Hamilton witnesses or suspects an act of abuse towards a child by anyone inside or outside of YWCA Hamilton, the staff is required to report the abuse or suspicion of abuse to the appropriate Children's Aid Society. This includes all forms of physical, sexual, psychological, emotional abuse, and neglect.

Concussion

YWCA Hamilton recognizes the importance of health, safety, and the overall well-being of children and takes every precaution to reduce the risk of injury. Children and adolescents are among those at greatest risk for concussion during activities where collisions can occur such as indoor/outdoor play and sport-based activities.

YWCA Hamilton staff are trained to recognize the common signs and symptoms of a concussion and will suspect a concussion following any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits force to the head. Any child with a suspected concussion will be removed from play immediately and the parent/guardian will be notified of the need to pick up the child immediately. Staff will stay with the child until they are picked up to closely monitor and document the child's signs and symptoms. If symptoms worsen, staff will call 911. The child must be examined by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner as soon as possible. The child may not return to care until the results of the medical examination have been communicated to the Child Care Supervisor.



If a child suffers a concussion outside of the child care program (e.g. at home, at school), families are required to notify the child care program supervisor and an individualized medical plan must be completed prior to the child's return to the child care program.

Healthy Eating

YWCA Hamilton Child Care promotes healthy eating by providing nutritious and safe foods in a supportive environment. Our team of educators promote healthy eating by role modelling healthy eating behaviours, including healthy foods in creative play, and by engaging, supporting and educating families.

Our nutritiously safe meals and snacks meet the Child Care and Early Years Act and follow Canada's Food Guide. Our menus are planned and prepared for each child care program and include a variety of both new and familiar healthy appealing foods. The child care staff optimize healthy eating by encouraging a nutrient-rich diet by avoiding potentially harmful ingredients like

trans-fat, sodium, and added sugars. Our child care staff practice safe food-handling techniques and adhere to special dietary indicators and restrictions.

Outside food is not permitted, except for programs where children are required to bring a bagged lunch (i.e. PA Days, Camps), or if a Special Dietary and Feeding Arrangements form has been completed for the child.

Mealtime is a positive social time where children are encouraged to interact and converse. Staff encourage children to try new foods, but trust and respect children to manage the amount and types of foods they eat. Regardless of their age, the children determine what and how much to eat. Foods and beverages are not used as rewards or punishment.

Mealtimes are also a great time for learning in a natural setting. Staff will encourage the children's development using a family style approach that includes self-serving or assisted self-serving when necessary. [V: Vegetarian Option](#)

Sample Menu

Week 1	Food Choice	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Snack - Include a vegetable and fruit choice at least one choice of protein (Snack A) or whole grain (Snack B)					
	Vegetables and Fruits	Frozen Fruit	Canned Peaches	Applesauce	Strawberries	Banana Slices
	Whole Grains		Whole Grain Cereal	Whole Wheat Toast	Whole Wheat Pita Triangles	Oat Granola
	Proteins	Yogurt	Milk	Hard Boiled Eggs	Chocolate Hummus	Yogurt
	Meal/Lunch - Include choices from all food groupings					
	Entrée Name	Tomato Beef Pasta Bake	Stuffed Pepper Casserole	Three Bean Chili and Buns	Tuna Sandwiches and Squash Soup	Chicken Caesar Salad Wraps
	Vegetables and Fruits (2 Choices)	Frozen Carrots & Peas	Peppers, Onions	Tomatoes, Corn	Squash Soup	Broccoli Florets
		Bananas	Garden Salad	Green Beans	Green Peppers	Romaine Lettuce
	Whole Grains	Whole Wheat Pasta	Brown Rice	Whole Wheat Bun	Whole Grain Bread	Whole Wheat Tortilla
	Iron-rich Protein	Ground Beef	Ground Turkey or Lentils	Mixed Canned Beans	Tuna	Chicken or Tofu
	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk
	Snack - Include a vegetable and fruit choice at least one choice of protein (Snack A) or whole grain (Snack B)					
	Vegetables and Fruits	Raw Vegetables	Cucumbers	Melon Slices	Canned Pineapple	Carrots
	Whole Grains	Whole Grain Crackers	Whole Grain Mini Bagels		Mini Oat Muffin	'Carrot Cake' Oatmeal Squares
	Proteins	Hummus	Spinach Dip (Cottage Cheese)	Cheese Cubes	Cottage Cheese	

Bagged Lunches

Families are responsible for providing lunch and snacks for children attending PA Day programs and camp programs. If a child arrives without a lunch, attempts will be made to contact the parent/guardian to bring a lunch for their child. If contact with the parent/guardian is not possible, the program will offer fresh food alternatives that are kept on hand in keeping with any nutrition or dietary restrictions for the child.

Lunch bags and beverage containers must be clearly labelled with the child's name. Lunches and snacks must be free of nuts and other known allergens, and should promote healthy eating habits. Allergy alerts will be posted and distributed to families. Staff will closely monitor the contents of bagged lunches and any food item found to contain nuts/known allergens will be placed in a sealed bag to be returned home with a note explaining the concern.

We recommend that lunches contain a properly frozen freezer pack to maintain safe temperature levels. Families are asked not to send foods that are highly perishable or need to be cooked, heated, or refrigerated.

Rest & Sleep Periods

All children will be provided with the opportunity to sleep or engage in quiet activities based on their needs. YWCA Hamilton recognizes that sleep/rest needs vary among children and parents/guardians will be consulted about their child's specific sleep/rest needs at the time of enrolment and at other appropriate times.

Children under 12 months of age will have an assigned crib, and be provided time to sleep based on their individual schedules and in accordance with the written instructions provided by the child's parent/guardian.

Children 18 months or older will be provided time to sleep for a period of no more than two hours each day, and will be assigned to a cot. Children who do not sleep, or do not sleep for the entire sleep/rest period, will be offered quiet activities. Direct visual checks are completed every 30 minutes to ensure children are resting comfortably without difficulty or distress. The use of baby monitors or other electronic monitors is not permitted.

Any disturbances or significant changes in a child's sleeping patterns or behaviours during sleep will be communicated to the child's parent/guardian and will

result in adjustments to the manner in which the child is supervised during sleep.

Media

Research shows that it is important to limit screen time for young children. Children enrolled in YWCA Hamilton Child Care Programs are not permitted to watch videos, shows, movies, etc. on any electronic device including television, cell phones, tablets, or other handheld devices while they are present in the program. Photos and videos made in the child care program by YWCA staff are excluded from this policy.

Photographs & Video

From time to time, YWCA Hamilton Child Care staff will take photographs or videos of children engaged in activities within the child care program. Photos and videos may be used for documentation, testimonials, information sharing, or marketing purposes. Parents/guardians must provide written consent in order for staff to photograph or video their child for any purposes. Children whose parent/guardian have not provided consent will not be photographed or videoed.

Clothing & Personal Items

Please help your child to choose comfortable clothing that is appropriate for the weather. Clothing should allow your child to explore and play. Elastic waist pants, Velcro shoes, and looser-fitting clothes will help your child build self-help skills during daily routines such as toileting and dressing for outdoors. Families are required to provide a full change of clothes for their child. Please be sure all articles of clothing are labeled with your child's name.

Families are responsible for providing diapers, Pull-Ups, disposable wipes, and any diapering lotions or creams for children who need them.

While comfort toys and blankets from home are encouraged for rest/sleep time, all other toys from home are discouraged and should only be brought for planned show and share activities. All items should be clearly labeled with your child's name. We ask parents to clean out their child's cubby at the end of each week.

YWCA Hamilton is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.



YWCA HAMILTON, MacNab Location
75 MacNab Street South
Hamilton, ON L8P 3C1
CANADA

ywcahamilton.org