



YMCA Calgary Child Development Centres

Information Handbook (v Sept 2023)

YMCA Early Years Purpose Statement

We nurture impactful relationships utilizing YMCA Calgary's core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and caring. Our intentional program experiences provide children with the best possible start in life.

Child Care Philosophy

Positive, caring relationships form the foundation for all that occurs within the childcare setting with children learning about YMCA Calgary's four core values of honesty, caring, respect and responsibility. With the support of YMCA educators, children practice behaviours which support social skills development, emotional competence, and community engagement. Choice-based programming along with flexible schedules create child-oriented environments in which children belong, grow, and thrive. Through engagement in play-based learning activities, we help them to progress in all developmental domains.

Learn more about YMCA Calgary [HERE](#)

General Inquiries

Please direct general inquiries to childcare@ymcacalgary.org





Locations

YMCA Calgary operates six licensed child development centres. All centres are required to follow applicable zoning, health, and safety legislation. This includes Alberta Health Services, the Alberta Childcare Licensing Act and Alberta Childcare Regulations.

Childcare Locations and Contact Information [HERE](#)

Hours

YMCA Child Development Centres are open 7am-6pm, Monday – Friday, excluding holidays. Should a holiday fall on a weekend, the childcare centre will be closed the next business day. YMCA Calgary recognizes the following holidays:

January – April

New Year's Day, Alberta Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday

Note – Staff professional development training is held on Easter Monday

May – August

Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday

Sept – December

Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day

Note – 1:30pm closure on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve



Unforeseen Closures to Childcare Centre and/or YMCA facilities

YMCA Calgary is committed to the health and safety of everyone within our facilities. While rare, situations may arise requiring temporary closure of a program area or building. Childcare centre closures will be posted to the Weemarkable™ App, used by registered families and childcare centres for communication.

Late Pick Up Policy

A late charge of \$1.00 per minute will be applied to your account for children not picked up by our closing time of 6:00 p.m. Habitual lateness may result in withdrawal of childcare services.





Enrolment

YMCA Calgary recognizes that childcare is important for families and securing quality care arrangements can be challenging. Our childcare centres are licensed by Alberta Children's Services and follow regulations for the number of children registered in each age-specific classroom. We will do our best to meet a family's needs while being unable to guarantee a space when a space will be available, or that a space will be available for all children following parental leave.

Due to demand, part-time care is rarely available within our childcare centres.

YMCA Calgary maintains a wait list for each childcare centre. At times, waitlists will be considered full and capped. Only currently available waitlists will be listed in the YMCA online registration portal. There is a \$25 fee/child to join a centre's waitlist.

YMCA Calgary Early Years Programs - [LINK](#)



Childcare Waitlist

When a space becomes available in the childcare centre, YMCA Calgary will first ensure necessary internal movement of children is completed before reaching out to the parent/guardian of the next eligible child on the waitlist for the age-specific space available. A family has 24 hours to respond to the phone call/email indicating whether they wish to take the space or not. Should the family decline the space, their child will remain on the waitlist with the original waitlist joining date.

It is the family's responsibility to ensure their contact information is current. Updates can be done by contacting our administrator T 403-351-6686

YMCA Calgary prioritizes placement for siblings of currently registered children, as well as children of previously registered families returning to care following a maternity/parental leave.



Interested in Transferring Centres?

Currently registered families wishing to be considered for transfer to another YMCA Calgary childcare centre, should speak with the Childcare Director of their centre to determine whether a transfer is possible.

Moving to Calgary? YMCA Calgary is not able to guarantee acceptance of children who have been attending a YMCA childcare centre outside of Calgary. Please contact us for further information.





YMCA Calgary Membership

All children registered in a YMCA Child Development Centre receive a complimentary YMCA Child Membership. This provides your child with access to all Calgary YMCA Health, Fitness & Aquatics facilities, discounted program rates (including swim lessons), member access to drop-in experiences and advance/online YMCA program registration.

Arrival & Departure Procedures

Daily child sign in/out is required and transfer of care of the child occurs between a YMCA staff member and the child's parent/guardian. YMCA Calgary's educators will sign all the children in/out of the program.

Any individual picking up a child who is unfamiliar to the educator will need to provide government issued photo identification. Should the individual not be listed on the child's enrolment form as either a parent/guardian or listed as authorized to pick up the child, the child's parent/guardian must communicate their approval for this to occur to the centre in advance.



Absenteeism

All absences (casual and those of a medical nature) are to be communicated to the centre. Please note that YMCA Calgary does not pause, reduce, or refund payments when a child is absent from the centre, including illness and vacation periods.

Fees

Pre-authorized payments must be set up at the time of enrolment and monthly childcare fees will be scheduled for processing on the 4th of each month. Payment may be made by Visa, MasterCard, American Express or by automatic withdrawal from a bank account. Payments made by automatic withdrawal can take up to 10 business days to be reflected. NSF charges apply for refused payments.

Childcare Fees [HERE](#) Childcare Subsidy – [LINK](#)

Accounts & Payments T 403-351-6686 E christina.thomas@calgary.ymca.ca

Please direct account and payment inquiries to Christina Thomas, Childcare Admin Supervisor



Childcare Deposit

A \$600 childcare deposit is needed at the time of enrolment all children. The deposit is kept on account for the duration of time the child is registered in the centre and refunded to the family providing sufficient notice of when care will end is received.

Termination of Care

Families are required to provide 45-days written notice of their child's last day of care to receive a refund of the \$600 childcare deposit on file. **For families receiving provincial subsidy** – YMCA Calgary retains the deposit until after the subsidized portion for the child's last month of care has been received from the province and the account reconciled.





Communication

YMCA Calgary values open communication. A child's legal parent/guardian is the key person(s) YMCA Calgary communicates with about matters relating to individual experiences within the childcare setting. Parents/guardians are encouraged to use available communication channels including on-site conversations, phone calls, email, Weemarkable™ posts, and scheduled in-person or virtual meetings.



Weemarkable™

Developed by the YMCA of Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford, the Weemarkable™ provides you with regular updates about your child. You can securely add others to your account so they can also stay up to date on your child's YMCA experiences. Upon enrolment, you will be provided with account set up information.

Weemarkable™ is the primary way YMCA Calgary shares general centre information, updates, and emergency alerts with families.



Centre Communication

A senior childcare staff member is available during child drop off and pick times for general communication. Please call the childcare centre's main phone line to report child absences or to speak with a member of the senior team. Please leave a message if a staff member is not available.

Childcare Locations and Contact Information [HERE](#)

Additional Assistance

Please first address questions and concerns with the onsite team. Should additional support be required, please contact the appropriate person listed below.

North YMCA Calgary Locations Jackee Creamer, Manager jackee.creamer@calgary.ymca.ca	Quarry Park Child Development Centre Trudy Halvorsen, Manager trudy.halvorsen@calgary.ymca.ca
South YMCA Calgary Locations Sasha Fernando, Manager sasha.fernando@calgary.ymca.ca	Early Years General Manager Caryl Broen caryl.broen@calgary.ymca.ca
Additional concerns may be directed to Childcare Connect ; toll free at 1-844-644-5165 (Alberta Children's Services). Complaints may be submitted anonymously. All complaints are reviewed.	





Curriculum

YMCA Calgary believes children learn best through play, laying the foundation for the development of necessary social, emotional, physical, creative, and academic skills.



Research into brain development and how children learn has formed the basis for the **national YMCA Playing to Learn curriculum** implemented in all YMCA Calgary Child Development Centres. Children take part in developmentally appropriate, small group and play-based learning activities which prepare them for school while supporting them to become curious life-long learners.

Educators identify what children already know along with what they are interested in and their developmental stage. By gaining insight into how each child learns, educators can create a dynamic play-based learning environment through inviting and intentional programs and facilitation strategies.



YMCA Canada - [Playing to Learn Video](#)



YMCA Calgary Core Values

Relationships form the foundation for all that happens within the childcare environment. Children learn about YMCA Calgary's four core values of Respect, Honesty, Caring and Responsibility through social engagement and opportunities to practice with the support of their educators.



YMCA Calgary Promise

We believe in people. We see their potential. We see strengths in our differences and inspiration in our diversity. We are the neighbour you can count on, a place for everyone; a space to play, to challenge yourself, to build resilience and to grow. The journey may start with a splash, a bounce, or a crunch under your boots; and if we do our part, it will lead to a healthier, more vibrant community. Your YMCA exists so that everyone has an opportunity to belong.



During their time in the centre, children enjoy:

- Classroom experiences with daily set ups designed to invite children to play and learn.
- Daily use of the centre's dedicated outdoor environment
 - Active play provides children with freedom to run, jump and move about vigorously. Our outdoor spaces are safe places to let off steam and excess energy while learning about, and developing, confidence and physical skills.
 - YMCA Calgary aims to have children experience outdoor play for a minimum of 2 hours per day.
 - In response to extreme, or adverse weather conditions, outdoor play will be lessened, adapted, or replaced with indoor activities. This includes extreme summer or winter temperatures, considering additional elements such as poor air quality, UV index, wind, snow, and rain as well as available shelter.
- Use of facility amenities which vary by location and include indoor and outdoor spaces for active play. Some locations may also have an on-site Calgary Public Library. Centres located in YMCA Health, Fitness and Aquatics facilities will provide recreational swim times for children.
- Opportunities to experience guest presentations, neighbourhood experiences and fieldtrips.

Daily Schedule

The childcare centre's flexible daily schedule ensures children's play is protected while routines for eating, toileting, and rest time remain consistent. Educators support children developing self-help skills for toileting, meals, room cleanliness, rest/nap time, dressing and play. Outdoor play time is scheduled daily for each classroom. Times will vary to meet the needs of children.



7:00am

Centre Opens. Play opportunities & morning snack

11:30am-12:30pm

Lunch

12:30pm-2:30pm

Rest/nap time

2:30pm-6:00pm

Afternoon snack, play opportunities. Centre closes

Note – YMCA Calgary recognizes that individual family schedules may result in their child's group being away from the classroom during drop off or pick up time. Should that occur, the child's parent/guardian will be asked to go to the secondary activity location for drop off or pick up.



Rest/nap period

YMCA Calgary recognizes all children need adequate rest and opportunities to recharge. All children will be provided with an afternoon rest/nap period for a minimum of 30-60 minutes. To meet the needs of infants aged 12 – 18 months, rest/nap time will address individual schedules.

For further information about your child's daily schedule and activities, please refer to your "Welcome Letter" or reach out to the Childcare Director or Supervisor.



What to Bring – please ensure all personal belongings are labelled with your child's name

- A small blanket (and comfort toy, if needed) for the rest/nap period
- Indoor footwear as well as clothing suitable for outdoor, active play
- Closed toe footwear is required for safety, with runners being highly recommended



- At least 2 changes of clothing
- Diapers/wipes/diaper cream (if applicable)
- Water bottle, with a mouthpiece lid
- A nutritious lunch, as well as morning and afternoon snacks

Note - Children attending the Quarry Park Child Development Centre are provided with all snacks and meals.

Provision is made for children to be able to have food outside of scheduled snack and mealtimes.

All foods served in YMCA Childcare Centres must be NUT FREE.

Liquids are not allowed in cribs or on cots.

We recommend families follow the recommendations of Canada's Food Guide to meet children's nutritional needs. [Link HERE](#)



Celebrations

YMCA Calgary is committed to fostering and cultivating experiences where everyone is respected, valued, and heard. Educators and children are encouraged to explore customs and cultures from around the world. Celebrations within individual classrooms will vary based on the unique interests and developmental stages of the children.



Birthdays

Celebrating children's birthdays in a warm YMCA way is something we cherish. Please speak with a member of our team to discuss how we can make your child feel recognized on their special day.

Family Engagement Opportunities

YMCA Calgary childcare centres schedule a minimum of two-family events throughout the year. Additionally, parents/guardians who wish to volunteer within the centre are encouraged to speak with their centre's senior team to learn more.

As a registered charity, YMCA Calgary provides families with opportunities to learn more about our impact in the community and to engage with our annual fund-raising campaign, Let's Raise.





Child Development

To support the establishment of optimal conditions for a child's development, YMCA Calgary is committed to working with families regarding their child's individual nutrition, sleep, activity, and developmental needs. YMCA Calgary uses Alberta Health Services recommendations to determine age and developmentally appropriate health practices within the childcare setting.

Educators complete daily journal entries for each child in their group which includes details about their daily schedule. These entries are completed through the Weemarkable™ app.

Program plans are available inside classrooms. They have information about children's interests along with the developmentally appropriate play activities being planned and provided. Photographs of children at play and written play experiences are also available within the classroom and posted on the Weemarkable™ app.

A Developmental Report outlining your child's progress will be provided to you twice per year. This will be accompanied by an opportunity for a scheduled parent/guardian and educator meeting. Parents/guardians are encouraged to reach out to the centre Director should they have concerns or questions about their child's development.

Inclusive Practices and Resources

YMCA Calgary has two full-time Child Development Specialists trained in therapeutic practices who supply support for children, educators, and families. They assist with assessments, creating developmental plans, and accessing community and family supports through external agencies. Should your child require services to support their ability to take part in regular childcare activities, further discussion between the centre's senior team, your child's educator and one of our Child Development Specialists will occur. A written plan will be developed with agreed upon strategies and accommodations. Should added supports be necessary to support your child's successful integration within the childcare setting, information about, and options for, external agency engagement will be provided.



1:1 External Agency Aides, Supports and Therapists

Should a family have government support funding in place for a dedicated aide to work with their child within the childcare setting, the family will manage all aspects of the funding agreement and associated HR requirements.

Should a family require support to access funding, please contact us to arrange a meeting with one of YMCA Calgary's full-time Child Development Specialists. All external support



personnel will have to present a clear and current Security Clearance with a vulnerable sector check.



Additional Community Resources:

Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) Intake Line: 403-297-6022

Foothills Creative Beginnings 403-851-5534 info@foothillscreative.org

Health Link – Health Advice available 24 hours/day by calling 8-1-1

Child Guidance Policy

This policy is included in a child's enrolment package and signed by their parent/guardian.

YMCA Calgary is committed to helping children grow and develop to their fullest potential in a safe, caring, and nurturing environment. The health and well-being of each child is the primary focus and child guidance strategies will be tailored to meet individual needs in the group setting.

Educators will:

- model appropriate behaviour and problem-solving techniques
- guide children in a positive, encouraging, and constructive way
- try to calm and redirect a child who is having trouble demonstrating self-regulation within the childcare setting
- approach the children at their eye level when speaking to them
- provide time for children to work out problems with their peers verbally before intervening
- be consistent in their guidance techniques
- utilize and adjust guidance techniques appropriate for the age and development of each child within the program
- Individual differences for each child will be considered when determining:
 - the level of responsibility a child has for his/her actions
 - the child guidance techniques most effective for the child and the situation
 - a child's level of involvement in problem solving as well as opportunities for growth and development
- keep parents/guardians up to date regarding their child's behaviour and experiences in the program
- Ensure that any child guidance action taken is reasonable in the circumstances

Educators will not:

- inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal, or physical degradation or emotional deprivation
- deny, or threaten to deny, any necessity
- use, or permit the use of, any form of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation as a form of child discipline.

As the parent/guardian, you are encouraged to provide verbal or written feedback regarding guidance techniques used at home to maintain consistency between the Child Development Centre and the home environment.



Staff will incorporate child guidance suggestions made by the parent/guardian for their child except when they are inconsistent with the techniques outlined in this policy or are not feasible within the childcare setting

The Child Guidance Policy will be reviewed with you, and a written copy provided to them, upon a child's enrolment in the Child Development Centre. As a parent/guardian, you are required to sign the Child Guidance Policy and a copy will be kept in your child's registration file. Should the policy be revised, you will be provided with an updated copy for review and signing. Staff members will review, and sign off on, the Child Guidance Policy, upon hiring. Should the policy be revised, staff members will be provided with an updated copy for review and signing.

Staff members will discuss behaviour expectations with children, where developmentally appropriate, when they are first enrolled in the Child Development Centre and throughout the child's time in the program as new situations arise and as opportunities for growth and development occur. When required YMCA staff will work with the child's parent/guardian to identify and secure additional supports for a child.

In the event a child is struggling to exhibit appropriate behaviour while in the childcare setting, YMCA staff members will work with the child and you to develop and implement strategies to help the child develop self-regulation. Should a child continue to demonstrate behaviour that is negatively impacting childcare experiences, or operations, further action may be required including suspension or termination from the childcare centre.

Note:

YMCA Calgary Child Development Centres are responsible for ensuring children are supervised at all times and to ensure each child's safety, well-being, and development. Effective supervision reduces the risk of harm to children by preventing injuries and accidents while also promoting a positive, responsive, and intentional learning environment between children and childcare providers. Minimum staff to child ratios, as outlined in the Childcare Licensing Regulations, are maintained.

Children will be involved in choice-based activities encouraging them to make decisions for themselves and experience the world independently. Recreational programming is unstructured with educators observing and supporting developmentally appropriate play and behavior.

“Spontaneous play is natural and healthy for children. Children learn best through play. Through play all areas of a child's development can be enhanced. Play positively supports children's social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language and literacy skills, is essential to a child's overall healthy development and enhances self-regulation.” Best Start, School Readiness Through Play





Health and Safety Measures

As an operator of provincially licensed childcare centres, YMCA Calgary must ensure that all Alberta Health Services (AHS) requirements are met. YMCA Calgary's internal Health, Safety & Risk Team also monitors and supports additional measures.

The information supplied below outlines health measures evident within our childcare centres. Please contact a senior childcare team member if you need more information.



Health Assessments & Temperature Checks

Before leaving home, adults and children accessing the childcare centre, are encouraged to self-screen for symptoms of illness. Individuals who are ill are to stay home until symptoms have resolved.

Infrared contactless thermometers are used within the centre to check child temperatures. The acceptable temperature range for children is between 35.5 - 38.0°C using an infrared contactless thermometer.

Child Immunization

If your child's immunizations are not current, or you have chosen not to immunize your child, there may be an increased risk to your child should a related communicable disease at the centre your child attends. Instances of significant illness and communicable diseases are posted, at minimum, on the Weemarkable™ App for the benefit of a child's parent/guardian.

Illness in Children

YMCA Childcare staff monitor children who are showing behaviours not typical for them within the childcare setting which may indicate illness. This includes when a child is fretful or listless, is unable to be comforted when crying, or is unusually quiet or inactive. Once the child's usual demeanor has returned, and there are no other signs of illness, the child is able to return to care.



If a child develops symptoms of illness while in childcare, the parent/guardian will be notified to come and pick up their child at once. Alternate pick-up arrangements are needed if the parent/guardian is not available.

Please speak with a member of the onsite childcare team should you have questions. Consultation with a health care professional may be required to determine when your child is able to return to the centre following a significant illness.



Alberta Health Services is engaged should multiple instances of an illness be evident with the centre.

Medication

YMCA Calgary accepts emergency medications (epi-pens and inhalers) for administration. Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen medications are not typically accepted as they may mask symptoms of illness in children.

Should your child require the administration of prescribed antibiotic medication, please reach out to the centre's senior team to discuss specifics along with their return to care following illness.

YMCA Calgary will only administer medications with a completed 'medical administration form' and as per medication guidelines.

Illness Chart

A Child May Not Attend Childcare When -	A Child May Return to Care When -
Child has a new or unexplained rash, or signs of any contagious disease	They have been examined by a doctor and received a doctor's note providing medical clearance to return
Child has any form of untreated infestation (i.e. scabies, head lice, etc.)	They have been treated.
Child has been prescribed any kind of medication that is not considered emergency medication (i.e., inhalers and epi-pens)	They have been taking the prescribed medication for a minimum of 24 hours; providing their condition is not contagious. Please speak with the centre's Childcare Director or Supervisor prior to returning to care with medication.
Gastrointestinal (nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea)	Children experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms will need to be symptom free and have restored, typical body function without the use of medication for 48 hours prior to return to care.
Any communicable disease (i.e., measles, mumps, rubella, bronchitis, chicken pox, croup, fifth disease, hand, foot & mouth, roseola, strep throat, meningitis, etc.)	Has been examined by a doctor, is provided with medical clearance, and has spoken with a member of our senior team to discuss the return to care plan
He/she has a fever of 100 degrees (37.78C)	His/her fever has remained below 100 degrees (37.78C) for 24 hours without medication

Cleaning and Sanitizing

YMCA Calgary's contracted housekeeping services ensure the childcare centre, and its equipment, are kept clean and ready for use by children. Centre staff manage toy rotation, cleaning, and sanitizing. Additional cleaning and sanitizing measures are implemented during periods of increased illness within the centre.





Emergency or Critical Situations

If an emergency or critical situation occurs within the childcare centre or larger YMCA facility, a notification Alert will be posted on the Weemarkable™ app.

All YMCA staff members receive annual YMCA Calgary Health and Safety training. They must also renew their First Aid certification bi-annually and their CPR certification annually. If a medical emergency, YMCA staff begin First Aid and contact Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The child's parent/guardian is informed as soon as possible.

There is always a designated staff member in charge at the centre. YMCA radios are used to engage YMCA Calgary's crisis response team in an emergency, ensuring all aspects of the emergency are managed in a safe, calm, and effective manner.

Fire Drills and Evacuation

Monthly fire/evacuation drills are completed and recorded as per a plan approved by a Calgary Fire Marshall. In the event of an evacuation, children, and staff members of the childcare centre will relocate to their designated off-site location:

Brookfield Residential YMCA at Seton
Quarry Park Child Development Centre
Remington YMCA
Saddletowne YMCA
Shane Homes YMCA at Rocky Ridge
Shawnessy YMCA

Joane Cardinal-Schubert High School: 19480 45 St SE
Remington YMCA: 108 Quarry Park Road SE
Quarry Park Child Development Centre: 10702-18 St SE
Calgary Police Service District 5 – 800 Saddletowne Circle NE
Melcor YMCA at Crowfoot: 8100 John Laurie Blvd NW
Tim Hortons: 400, 303 Shawville Blvd SE

Note: As each situation is unique, YMCA Calgary and City of Calgary Emergency Response Teams may determine alternate safety and response measures.

YMCA Childcare
Helping your young one shine

