



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

# **GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER**



**PARENT HANDBOOK  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
YMCA OF METROPOLITAN DENVER  
Updated January 2025  
POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

## Welcome to YMCA Y Academy Early Childhood Education Programs

We are excited to welcome you to the YMCA Y Academy Early Childhood Education Programs at the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver! Our team is dedicated to serving you and your family, providing a safe, affordable, and high-quality childcare program designed to meet your family's unique needs.

This handbook outlines many of our policies and procedures to help answer your questions about our services. If you have any further inquiries or need additional information, please don't hesitate to contact the director of your program.

## Who We Are

### *YMCA Mission Statement*

The mission of the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build **healthy spirit, mind, and body for all**.

### *Goals and Objectives*

At the YMCA, we are committed to serving the community by offering high-quality childcare services in partnership with local schools and community organizations. **Parent involvement** is a cornerstone of our success, and we encourage families to engage in our programs and activities.

Our goals include:

- Hiring **qualified, compassionate staff** who are dedicated to working directly with children to build positive relationships in a safe, nurturing environment.
- Offering a range of activities that support children's development—**social, emotional, cognitive, and physical**—so that every child can grow to their fullest potential.
- Providing opportunities for **outdoor play** and **recreational activities** that promote physical fitness, coordination, and athletic skills.
- Planning **task-oriented activities** to challenge children's abilities and introduce new skills.
- Fostering an environment of **cooperation and mutual respect**, where children learn social skills, character development, and self-esteem.
- Ensuring that all children, regardless of background, have access to quality programs. We offer programs and services to individuals and families of **all races, religions, national origins, and financial situations**.

YMCA childcare programs focus on helping children grow personally, clarify their values, develop leadership skills, appreciate diversity, and most importantly—**have fun!**

## Ages of Children Served

- The **YMCA Y Academy Early Childhood Program** at the University Hills Schlessman Family YMCA accepts children from **6 weeks to 5 years old**.
- The **Early Childhood Programs** at the Southwest and Duncan Family YMCAs serves children **3 to 5 years old**.

## Children with Access and Functional Needs

The YMCA is committed to being **inclusive** and does not discriminate against anyone based on a disability. We will work with each family on a case-by-case basis to ensure that we meet the unique needs of every child. Our goal is to provide the best care and support for all children, making reasonable adjustments to our programs when necessary.

However, due to ratio requirements, we are unable to provide care below the **state-mandated ratios**. Open communication with families is critical in determining whether the YMCA can meet the specific needs of a child. We are committed to working together to find solutions that support the child's well-being and success in our programs.

## Hours of Operation

The **YMCA Y Academy Early Childhood Program** operates Monday through Friday during the school year from **7:00 AM to 5:30 PM**.

During the summer months (May (after Memorial day) June, July & August), all Y Academy programs will follow a **reduced schedule** from **7:00 AM to 5:00 PM**, Monday through Friday. Please note that there may be **shortened days** and **center closures** throughout the year. These changes will be communicated to you via the **school year calendar**, which will outline any program changes, holidays, or closures.

The YMCA Y Academy reserves the right to modify the school calendar as needed, and will provide **at least 30 days' notice** of any changes. All updates will be communicated via the **Tadpoles Parent App**.

## Bad Weather & School Closures

The YMCA Y Academy follows the **local school districts** for guidance on **inclement weather closures**. If **Denver Public Schools (DPS)** or **Jefferson County (JeffCo)** close due to weather, the YMCA will also close or adjust operating hours accordingly. Additionally, the YMCA may close for unforeseen **building emergencies**, such as power outages, lack of heat, or water. Any closures will be communicated to families promptly through the **Tadpoles App**.

## School Calendar

The YMCA Y Academy will provide a **school year calendar** outlining **school closures**, **early release days**, and **staff professional development days**. While we aim to adhere to this schedule, the YMCA reserves the right to make adjustments if necessary. In such cases, we will provide families with at least **30 days' notice** of any changes, which will be communicated via the **Tadpoles Parent App**.

## Numerical Lock Pin Code / Tadpoles Pin Code

To ensure the safety and security of all children and staff, a **4-digit numerical code** is required to access the building and the child care center. This code is essential for entering the facility. For security purposes, **please only share your access codes with those individuals on your authorized pick-up list**.

The **Tadpoles Pin Code** is linked to the **last 4 digits of the primary contact's cell phone number**. If someone on your authorized pick-up list is not listed in **Tadpoles**, it is the **parent's responsibility** to notify the **Child Care Director** so they can be added.

These measures are in place to protect the safety of your child and ensure that only authorized individuals are able to pick up your child from our program. If you have any questions or need to update your pick-up list, please reach out to the Child Care Director directly.

## Fees

Beginning **January 1, 2020**, a **\$100 registration fee** will be charged per family. This fee will be automatically drafted in **December** for the upcoming year.

## Financial Information

### *Tuition*

Tuition is due on the **1st of each month**. If you require any adjustments or have special circumstances, please notify our **billing team** as soon as possible.

### *Cancellations*

Any cancellation of enrollment must be submitted in writing at least **30 days prior** to the start of the new month. If a cancellation notice is not provided within this timeframe, the **parent/guardian is responsible for the full tuition** for that month.

Please contact our billing team with any questions or concerns regarding payment or cancellations.

<https://denverymca-ymcamso.happyfox.com/new/>

## Withdrawal Policy

To ensure proper notice and avoid being charged for the following month, **written notice** must be provided **30 days in advance** of your child's withdrawal from the program. Any **outstanding balance** must be settled at the time of withdrawal. The YMCA reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program if payment is not received, and the parent will be notified accordingly.

## Late Pick-Up Charge

We understand that delays can happen, but please be mindful that **late pick-up** is stressful for your child and the staff. If you anticipate being late, please call us as soon as possible. A **late fee of \$1.00 per minute** will be charged after closing time. This fee will be added to your online account balance.

**Repeated late pick-ups** may result in the child's dismissal from the program. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in adhering to our pick-up policy to ensure a smooth and timely transition for all children.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Application is available on the YMCA website at [www.denverymca.org](http://www.denverymca.org).

## Health & Safety

### *Immunizations*

In accordance with **Colorado State Law**, all children enrolled in our programs must provide a **certificate of immunization**, signed by a licensed physician, on the first day of attendance. Immunization records must be submitted on the **State-approved form**. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the **dismissal of the child from the program**.

### *Paperwork*

Upon enrollment and yearly thereafter, parents will be required to fill out health and safety paperwork for enrollment. This is completed through Alaris. A completed health form signed by a doctor, and updated shot records will be required to submit as each well visit.

### *Medication*

Both prescription and non-prescription medications may be administered to children at the YMCA, provided the following procedures are followed:

**Parent Authorization:** A completed and signed **Parent Release for Administering Medication** form is required.

**Medication Drop-Off:** Parents must bring medication directly to the Center or Department Director. Please **do not send medications with your child.**

**Prescription Label:** The medication must be accompanied by the **prescription label** or a **doctor's note** indicating:

- a. The child's name
- b. The medication name
- c. The prescribed dosage
- d. The times of administration
- e. The prescribing physician's name

**Storage and Documentation:** All medications will be securely stored in a **locked container**, and staff will document the time and dosage administered.

**Expiration Dates:** All medications must have a valid **expiration date**. Medication without an expiration date or with an expired date will not be administered.

### *Medication Administration Staff Training*

In compliance with the **Nurse Practice Act**, all childcare staff authorized to administer medication have completed a **4-hour, Department-approved training** on medication administration, along with current **First Aid** and **Universal Precautions** training. These requirements ensure the safety and well-being of all children in our care.

## SUNSCREEN

Each family is required to provide sunscreen for their child who is over 1 year of age. Please ensure that all sunscreen bottles are clearly labeled with your child's first name and last initial. Staff will supervise or assist with the application of sunscreen as needed. If your child is prone to sunburn, we recommend sending an extra shirt for them to wear outdoors for added protection.

To help prevent sunburn, we ask that parents apply the first layer of sunscreen before drop-off. If you have already applied sunscreen at home, please indicate this in your child's Tadpoles account under the "Drop-off Information" section (Schlessman Only).

We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring your child is prepared for outdoor activities.

## ALLERGIES

To ensure the safety of your child, it is essential that parents inform staff of any allergies their child may have, including but not limited to food, medications, or environmental substances. While we make every effort to create a safe environment, please note that the YMCA is **not a nut-free zone**, and we cannot guarantee the complete elimination of allergens.

Open and clear communication regarding your child's allergies is vital for us to provide the best care possible. We appreciate your partnership in keeping all children safe.

## ILLNESS

The YMCA Y Academy follows the **"How Sick Is Too Sick?"** guidelines published annually by Children's Hospital Colorado. Please notify us if your child contracts a contagious illness, so we can take appropriate precautions to protect others.

## ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

YMCA staff are certified in First Aid and CPR and are trained in emergency procedures. Emergency contact numbers are readily available at each program location. We have comprehensive emergency plans in place for various situations, including fires, floods, tornadoes, severe weather, and injuries.

In the event of a minor accident or injury, we will contact you or your emergency contact to keep you informed. If a situation arises where your child needs immediate medical attention, we will notify you as quickly as possible to inform you of the actions being taken.

It's important that you keep your contact information up to date, including home and work phone numbers, so we can reach you in case of an emergency.

## LOST CHILD

We make every effort to ensure the safety of all children in our care. In the unlikely event that a child goes missing, a search will begin immediately. If necessary, we will contact both parents and local authorities to assist in the search.

We ask that parents help reinforce the importance of staying with YMCA staff at all times to ensure your child's safety.

## NATURAL DISASTERS, EMERGENCIES, AND THREATS

In the event of a natural disaster or emergency situation, the YMCA Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs will follow specific emergency procedures tailored to the incident. If such an emergency occurs, parents will be notified as soon as the situation is stable and safe. We will reach out via phone, email, or Tadpoles once the location is secure and your child's safety is ensured.

The Director will be available via the YMCA cell phone, and emergency numbers will be provided to all parents. In the case of a child with a disability, staff will partner with the child to move them to a safe location, and parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

## BEHAVIOR SUPPORT GUIDELINES

We will inform parents/guardians of disruptive behavior that is above and beyond the typically expected range. In such an event, a behavior support report will be written and submitted to the childcare program director. A copy is given to the parent/guardian along with some discussion from the staff regarding the child's behavior. In cases where a child receives multiple behavior reports, a conference will be scheduled to discuss the child's plan moving forward and to set goals for the child to help them be successful. There may be discussion of continued participation in the program, possible suspension may occur for 1 to 5 days, depending on the behavior and the number of instances that have been addressed regarding the behavior. Each behavior instance will be addressed individually, and it will be determined if the behavior

deems appropriate to be dismissed from the program. In some cases, it becomes necessary to dismiss a child from a YMCA program immediately. This is based on the safety for self and safety for others. If this occurs, parents will be asked to find alternative care immediately.

## Reporting of Child Abuse

YMCA childcare programs are licensed by the state and are required to adhere to strict regulations and standards set by the Colorado Department of Human Services. As a licensed childcare provider, the YMCA is **mandated by law** to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

If you believe your child has been abused, it is crucial to seek immediate assistance from your county's Department of Social Services. Colorado law requires that all known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect be reported by childcare providers.

*To report suspected abuse or neglect, please contact the following:*

- **Denver County:** (720) 944-3000
- **Douglas County:** (303) 688-4825
- **Adams County:** (303) 412-5212
- **Arapahoe County:** (303) 636-1750
- **Jefferson County:** (303) 271-4357
- **Statewide:** (844) 264-5437

Childcare services are vital in supporting the growth and well-being of families, and strong, healthy families are essential to a thriving community. At the YMCA, we are committed to nurturing your child's education, physical health, emotional well-being, and social development in a safe and supportive environment.

We encourage you to regularly observe the childcare program, paying close attention to the health and safety of the children, the condition of equipment and play materials, and the interactions with staff.

If you have concerns about the program, or if you would like more information regarding childcare licensing, please contact the **Office of Early Childhood** at (303) 866-5958.

Your child's safety and well-being are our highest priority, and we appreciate your partnership in ensuring a safe, supportive environment for all children.

## TRACKING ENTRY AND EXIT OF CHILDREN AND VISITORS

### SIGN IN/OUT

At the YMCA, in accordance with both YMCA policies and the Office of Early Childhood licensing regulations, **only authorized individuals** are permitted to sign children in and out each day. For the safety of all children, **children are not permitted to sign themselves in or out.**

## Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures:

- **During Core Curriculum Hours:** We strongly encourage families to avoid dropping off or picking up children during instructional time to minimize disruptions to the learning environment.
- **During Rest Time:** Drop-off and pick-up during rest time are also discouraged, as it is our program's philosophy to maintain a calm and uninterrupted atmosphere for all children.



## Authorized Pick-up:

Your child will only be released to individuals listed on the **Child Information Record** and/or your **Tadpoles account**. If you need to update the list of authorized pick-up persons, please notify us in writing via email. In case of an emergency, please contact the YMCA directly, and we will make the necessary arrangements.

## Identification and Security:

- **ID Verification:** We will ask for a **photo ID** and verify the person's authorization to pick up the child. If the person is not authorized, the child will not be released.
- **Unauthorized Pick-Up:** If an unauthorized individual attempts to pick up a child, we will immediately contact the parent/guardian and, if necessary, involve law enforcement to ensure the child's safety.
- **Age Requirement:** For safety reasons, individuals designated to pick up your child must be **at least 16 years of age**.

## Safety Concerns:

If anyone attempting to pick up your child appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or is otherwise unable to provide responsible care, we will call **911** and prevent the child from being released.

These procedures are in place to ensure the safety and protection of your child, our staff, and your peace of mind. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a secure and supportive environment for all.

## Late Drop-Off

If you anticipate that your child will be arriving late, please notify the YMCA **in advance** so that we can ensure your child is properly accommodated.

## Late Pick-Up

Children are supervised at the YMCA Child Care Site until 5:30 PM. If your child remains at the site after closing time and we have not been contacted, we will begin reaching out to individuals authorized to pick up your child, as well as emergency contacts.

If no one can be reached **30 minutes after closing**, we will contact **Child Protective Services** and the local police department, following their guidance to ensure your child's safety.

A late fee of **\$1.00 per minute, per child** will be applied for every minute your child is still at the program after closing.

## Closing Procedures

Before closing the building, YMCA staff will conduct a thorough check of all rooms—including bathrooms and the playground—to ensure no children are left behind. Staff will also review the sign-in and sign-out sheets to confirm that all children who were signed in are signed out by an authorized individual.

If there are any discrepancies or concerns, staff will immediately contact the child's parent/guardian and proceed with authorized pick-up procedures to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

## Visitors

Parents and guardians are always welcome to visit the program and do not need to schedule visits in advance. However, to ensure safety, visitors must be listed on the child's authorization card in order to enter the program area.

All visitors must sign in at the front desk upon arrival. The visitor will complete the **Visitor's Register**, stating the purpose of the visit and providing identification. Visitor logs are available at each YMCA location.

## Confidentiality & Release of Records

To protect the privacy of the children in our care, as well as the parents and guardians we serve, the YMCA has a strict policy regarding the release of information. We cannot release any records or information without the submission of an **Authorization, Release, and Request for Information** form, which can be obtained from the YMCA.

This policy ensures that all requests for information are handled in a secure and confidential manner, in accordance with our commitment to safeguarding your child's privacy.

## Discussions Concerning Children, Parents, or Guardians with Third Parties

Any discussion regarding a child, parent, or guardian with a third party will only be permitted with individuals who are **authorized** to pick up the child, as indicated on the child's registration form.

If a third party not listed on the registration form requests information or discussion about a child, parent, or guardian, such conversations will only take place in the presence of a member of the YMCA administration. Additionally, these discussions must be scheduled in advance with the **Executive Director** of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program.

## Program: Location and Supervision of Children

YMCA staff ensure that children are supervised at all times. Attendance is taken daily using the **Tadpoles** system, and staff perform head counts at every transition to ensure no child is unaccounted for.

When restrooms are not immediately adjacent to the childcare room, a staff member accompanies children to and from the restroom.

For any program or field trip away from the site, parents will receive a **written agenda** outlining the details of the event, including timing, destination, and planned activities, ensuring transparency and keeping you informed.

## Transportation & Field Trips

Children attending YMCA programs may be transported in YMCA minibuses or district buses for field trips. Any field trip requiring off-site transportation will be communicated to parents in advance. Please note that children must be **5 years old** or older to be transported by bus.

## Meals and Snacks

The YMCA Y Academy provides a healthy a hot lunch every day. We aim to make meal times a positive, enjoyable experience for children. We encourage conversation during meals, and staff will ensure the atmosphere is relaxed and pleasant. Parents will provide 2 non-perishable, shelf stable, nut free snacks each day. (granola bar's, dry cereal, fruit cup, banana etc). We will be unable to store excess snacks so please provide just for the day.

No child will ever be forced to eat, nor will food be withheld as a form of punishment. If your child has any food allergies, please inform staff so we can ensure their safety. To promote a safe eating environment, **sharing of food is not allowed** at the YMCA.

## Birthdays and Special Occasions

All food brought in for celebrations must be **store-bought** and include an ingredient list. Fresh fruits and vegetables are exempt and may be brought in for parties. This policy is in place to help ensure that children with food allergies or sensitivities can participate safely in celebrations.

## Personal Belongings

At the YMCA, we encourage children to take responsibility for their personal belongings. Learning to care for one's things is an important life skill, and we ask for your support by labeling all of your child's items with first name and last initial for easy identification.

Please limit "home toys" to one small, soft sleep toy that can easily fit in your child's cubby. For safety reasons, **no small toys** (which may present a choking hazard) should be brought from home.

## What to Bring

Please provide your child with a **bag or container** that can hold their belongings and can be easily carried. Ensure that the handles of the bag do not pose a suffocation risk. Check the activity schedule to determine when additional items, such as a swimsuit and towel, are needed.

Each department may also require specific items, such as bottles, diapers, nap items, or a soft sleep toy. Please note that all nap items must be taken home on Fridays to be laundered and returned on Monday.

Bottles must be labeled with child's first and last name and bottle contents such as breast milk or formula. All other items must be labeled with a child's first name and last initial only.

## What Not to Bring

Please do not allow your child to bring:

- Expensive clothes or personal items
- Weapons, toy guns, knives, or any propellant toys
- Electronic devices such as iPods, iPads, or cell phones
- Pets of any kind
- Money, unless specifically requested in the weekly schedule

**Important:** Please only allow your child to bring items they can afford to lose, as the YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen belongings.

## Lost and Found

The YMCA maintains a **Lost and Found** at the childcare site. We encourage you to check for any missing items daily. Any unclaimed items will be donated to charity after 30 days.

## Weather Policy

At the YMCA, we believe that children should have the opportunity to experience the changing seasons and enjoy outdoor activities year-round. To ensure that children get fresh air, exercise, and the chance to explore a natural environment, all children are expected to go outside daily, weather permitting.

Please send your child with appropriate clothing for all types of weather, including snow boots, gloves, mittens, hats, jackets, and sunscreen. In the warmer months, we provide access to water at all times, and some activities may be moved to shaded areas or indoors for comfort.

We closely monitor weather conditions and adjust accordingly. If the temperature falls below **20°F**, children will remain indoors. During summer months, if the temperature exceeds **100°F**, outdoor play will be limited, and children will stay indoors to ensure their safety and well-being.

## Movie & Technology Policy

Movies will be shown on occasion as an optional activity. All films will be **G-rated**, and children will have the choice of participating.

## Discipline & Redirection

At the YMCA, we believe that discipline and redirection are an ongoing, daily process rooted in love and logic. Our approach is designed to promote positive behavior and healthy emotional development through consistent, respectful guidance.

- **Encouragement and Choices:** Children are consistently encouraged and provided with **appropriate choices** to help them adjust their behavior. Positive, responsible behavior is recognized and reinforced.
- **Building Self-Esteem:** We aim to build each child's self-esteem through positive interactions and **age-appropriate consequences**.
- **Safe and Supportive Environment:** The YMCA will **never permit corporal or physical punishment**. Staff members are required to maintain a physical and psychological state that supports the well-being of the children under their care.

When a recurring behavior problem or safety concern arises, staff will communicate directly with parents to address the issue collaboratively. Our discipline techniques include:

- **Positive phrasing**
- **Logical or natural consequences**
- **Redirection**
- **Time-outs**
- **Loss of privileges**

We also welcome and encourage feedback from parents about techniques that work well at home, ensuring we are consistent in our approach and supporting the child's development.

## Difficult Behavior

In cases of disruptive behavior that goes beyond typical expectations, staff will inform parents through a **behavior report** (Parent Communication). This report will be submitted to the Center or Department Director and shared with the parent during a conversation about the child's behavior.

If a child receives **two behavior reports**, a **conference** will be scheduled to discuss the child's continued participation in the program. In some cases, it may be necessary to **dismiss** a child from the program. If dismissal is deemed necessary, parents will be given an opportunity to meet with staff to discuss the situation before the decision is finalized. Parents will be asked to find alternative care immediately if dismissal occurs.

## Biting Policy

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected behavior for infants & toddlers. Some children and many Infants/Toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind. As a child care, we understand that biting, unfortunately, is a part of a child care setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, licensing regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

### When Biting Does Occur:

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting. The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or time out.

#### *For the child that was bitten:*

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified at pickup unless skin is broken, then the parent is notified as soon as possible.
3. The "Incident form" is filled out documenting the incident.

#### *For the child that bit:*

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "NO! DO NOT BITE!" and be re-directed
2. The child will be placed in appropriate time away.
3. The parents are notified.

### When Biting Continues:

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.

3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

### When biting becomes excessive:

1. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for **2 business days**.
3. If a child once again inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, **the parents will be asked to make other child care care arrangements for the rest of the week.**

If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 3 weeks (15 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again.

If a child bites twice in a 4 hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from day care for the remainder of the day. This will not count towards the 2 day suspension.

This policy may be re-evaluated as needed and final decision is up to the discretion of the director on a case by case basis.

### Staff Qualifications

The success and quality of YMCA services for children are directly tied to the skills, experience, and personal qualities of our staff. We are committed to recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting staff who possess the qualities necessary to create a positive, safe, and nurturing environment for children.

Our staff members are selected based on their ability to connect with children and their personal qualities of **warmth, empathy, and positivity**. They must also have experience working with children and a strong knowledge of recreational activities.

All staff undergo extensive training in various areas, including:

- **Safety protocols**
- **Effective child/adult communication**
- **Guiding children's behavior**
- **Arts, crafts, games, and other activities**

YMCA staff members are **First Aid** and **CPR** certified and undergo thorough background checks, including:

- Criminal record checks
- Central Registry checks
- Reference checks

This thorough vetting process ensures that all staff are well-prepared to provide a safe and enriching environment for your child.

## Child-Staff Ratio

The YMCA adheres to the child-to-staff ratio guidelines established by the **Denver Preschool Program**, **Universal Preschool Program**, and the **Department of Human Services Child Day Care Licensing**. These ratios ensure that every child receives the appropriate attention and care they need for their growth and development.

## Prevention of Child Abuse

The YMCA is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of every child entrusted to our care. We take every reasonable step to minimize the risks of child abuse through ongoing vigilance and proactive measures. Staff members are thoroughly trained, supervised, and evaluated on child abuse prevention practices.

While there are no documented procedures to entirely eliminate the risk of child abuse, the YMCA follows best practices based on the latest research and information about the prevalence, effects, and prevention of abuse. We work closely with families and the broader community to raise awareness and ensure a safe environment for all children.

Our program includes detailed **training and reporting protocols** to address and prevent child abuse, ensuring that staff and families are well-equipped to act in the best interest of the children.

## Babysitting Policy

YMCA staff and volunteers are **strictly prohibited** from babysitting or transporting children outside of the YMCA program. We kindly ask that you refrain from requesting staff members to provide babysitting services. This policy is in place to maintain the professional boundaries of staff and ensure that children's care is provided in a structured, supervised environment.

## Communication with Staff

Ongoing communication with your child's teachers is key to their success in the program. We encourage parents to spend a few minutes each day during drop-off and pick-up to engage with teachers and stay informed about their child's progress.

For families with infants, **drop-off information** must be entered into the **Tadpoles app** before arriving at the center. Parents are also encouraged to check the **Tadpoles app daily** to stay up to date on what's happening in the program.

Teachers will communicate with parents through the **Daily Report** and via updates in the Tadpoles app, ensuring you are well-informed about your child's day and developmental milestones. Open communication is essential for creating the best experience for your child.

## Parent Involvement

At the YMCA, we recognize that **parent involvement** is essential to the success of our programs. We greatly value the partnership we have with parents and believe that strong communication and collaboration between home and school create the best environment for children to thrive.

**Daily Communication:** Parents are encouraged to engage in regular communication with staff, as it helps ensure that we are all on the same page regarding your child's needs, progress, and well-being.

**Visiting the Program:** Parents and guardians are always welcome to visit their child's program at any time. **No prior notice or appointment is required** for visits, but we do ask that any visiting parent or guardian is listed on the child's **authorization card** to ensure access to the program area.

**Donations:** We greatly appreciate donations of supplies for areas such as dramatic play and arts & crafts. If you have items that could enrich these areas, please consider contributing. Your support helps us provide a richer, more creative learning environment for all children.

**Family Events and Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Throughout the year, we will schedule **family events** and **parent-teacher conferences** to foster deeper connections between families and staff. We encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities to visit with the staff, discuss your child's development, and get involved in the YMCA community.

## Transitions

The YMCA uses a thoughtful and supportive approach when it comes to transitions. To ensure a smooth process, we often pair children with a **buddy** or transition them as a small group to make the change more comfortable and less overwhelming.

**Developmental Readiness:** Transitions are based on each child's **developmental readiness** and the availability of space in the next room. This process is discussed with parents during our **bi-annual parent-teacher conferences**, where we review each child's progress and determine the best time for the transition.

Our goal is to ensure that every child moves on to the next stage of their learning journey in a way that supports their emotional and developmental needs.

## Colorado Department of Early Childhood

The YMCA collaborates with the **Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care**, which plays a vital role in overseeing and monitoring childcare centers across the state. All YMCA childcare programs are fully licensed by the **State of Colorado** to ensure that we meet the highest standards of care and safety.

### Colorado Department of Human Services

1575 Sherman Street  
Denver, CO 80203-1714  
Phone: (303) 866-5958

## Program Evaluation

Throughout the year, you will be invited to provide feedback through **program evaluations**. Your input is invaluable to us, and we encourage you to share your thoughts, suggestions, and any concerns at any time. We are committed to meeting the needs of our community, and your feedback helps us continuously improve the quality of our programs and services.

Thank you for partnering with us to create a positive, enriching environment for your child!