



# Billings Family YMCA Preschool Parent Handbook

(Revised September 2021)

## **Philosophy and Goals**

### **Welcome!**

YMCA Preschool is a quality education that is designed with the Creative Curriculum. We provide a safe, creative environment based on the four core values of honesty, respect, responsibility, and caring that are essential for positive character development.

### **Program Philosophy**

YMCA Preschool will provide a safe, nurturing atmosphere in which children exercise individual responsibility, social interaction, and activities that promote healthy self-image and enhance the quality of a child's life. The Creative Curriculum program will emphasize on the children acquiring social competence and the skills they need to succeed as learners. The Creative Curriculum identifies the knowledge, skills and concepts important for preschool children to acquire in each contents area: literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology.

YMCA Preschool enrolls participants without discrimination of race, religion, creed, color, or national origin. Families needing financial assistance may fill out a scholarship application at the Member Services Desk.

### **YMCA Mission Statement**

The Billings Family YMCA seeks to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

### **Program Goals**

The goals of the YMCA Preschool are to help children acquire social competence and the skills they need to succeed as learners.

The YMCA Preschool program strives to provide learning experiences and opportunities to develop relationships, self-confidence and respect for others. We do this through planned activities that may include arts, blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, library, discovery, sand and water, music and movement, and outdoor play. The program's environment will attempt to meet a wide variety of participant needs.

Each child will....

1. Be loved and cared for in a safe, healthy, and fun learning environment.
2. Be given an opportunity to develop their social, emotional, and physical skills.
3. Be respected for their individuality and given experiences to foster a positive attitude about themselves and others.
4. Be given positive, age-appropriate experiences in their environments.

Parent's will....

1. Be given opportunities to participate in all activities provided for their children.
2. Be informed of children's daily routines and activities.
3. Be given the opportunity to have conferences with staff and supervisor as need, to discuss their child's development etc.
4. Be given opportunities to contribute and share special skills and talents.
5. Be respected for their individual values and beliefs.

## **Communications**

### **Parent Role**

The role of the parent in the YMCA Preschool program is vital. Parents are welcome to visit the site and work with staff on special activities (birthdays, guests, themes, holiday and family events). Parent involvement generates a united and healthy experience for the child.

### **Parent Concerns**

As a parent of a child enrolled in the YMCA Preschool program, if you have a suggestion, question, concern or complaint about the program, the conduct of the staff or the policies, the best course of action to take is:

1. Talk to your child's teacher. You may call and leave a message at the YMCA or talk to the teacher when you pick-up your child.
2. If the concern or problem is not resolved in Step 1, please contact the Program Director.

### **Data Privacy Provision**

YMCA Preschool programs comply with State and Federal data privacy laws. Information gathered from the registration and medical forms is shared only with the after school staff in order to serve your child properly. Information regarding families who are funded through financial assistance is shared only with the Administrative Staff.

### **Enrollment, Health and Emergency Forms**

Enrollment, health and Emergency Forms must be completed and returned to the YMCA Program Registration Office or Preschool Teacher before your child's first day of attendance. It is extremely important to keep your forms up to date. If you change your job, move, or change your phone number, please inform the Preschool Teacher.

## **Program and Financial Information**

### **Cancellations and Refunds**

If a parent chooses to terminate their relationship with the YMCA Preschool program, a written request must be submitted five business days prior to the monthly bank draft to stop preschool program payments.

### **Registration Fee's**

All registration fees are nonrefundable or transferable. Registration fees are not reduced.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Daily Attendance and Authorized Pick-Ups**

A parent or an authorized adult must accompany each child in and out of the YMCA Preschool program site each day. Children will not be dismissed or released to an unauthorized person. Preschool staff will ask for identification from the person picking up the child. **A photo ID, such as a driver's license will be required to pick up your child each day.**

**\*\*\*\*\*If a parent comes to pick up a child and appears to be intoxicated, the child will be released to the parent; and as required by state law, and the YMCA, staff will immediately call local law enforcement.**

### **City County Health Department Childcare Illness Policy**

A designated person must check each child's health status upon entry to care and exclude any child with the following symptoms. Children who come with any of these symptoms cannot stay in the Center.

1. Fever of 100 degrees or greater- child must be without fever for 24 hours before they can return to care.
2. Vomiting and diarrhea-children must be without vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours before they can return. Vomiting includes two or more episodes in the previous 24-hour period. Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools, increased water in the stool, and/or decreased form to the stool that cannot be contained by a diaper or clothing.
3. Bacterial infections-children with bacterial infections must have antibiotic treatment for 24 hours before returning to child care for:
  - Strep throat
  - Scarlet fever
  - Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
  - Impetigo
  - Skin infections – such as draining burns/wounds
4. Generalized rashes, including those covering multiple parts of the body. These rashes must be evaluated by a health provider to determine cause before they can return to childcare. Healthcare providers should provide written statement, which authorizes the child's return for the childcare centers file in each instance.
5. Chickenpox-children with chickenpox cannot attend childcare until the sores dry up (usually 5-7 days). Children cannot be exposed to chickenpox, even with the parent's permission.
6. Symptoms of severe illness, whether or not they would otherwise be excluded. Examples: Uncontrolled coughing, breathing difficulties or wheezing, stiff neck, irritability, poor food or fluid intake, or a seizure. Such children must be evaluated by a healthcare provider before they may return to childcare.
7. A child need not be excluded for a nasal discharge unless the discharge is green and accompanied by a fever. Such symptoms may indicate an infection. Children with such discharge must be evaluated by a physician and authorized to return.
8. If a child develops symptoms of illness after the parent or guardian has left, the childcare center must do the following:
  - Isolate child immediately
  - Contact and inform parent/guardian, as soon as possible and request him or her to pick up the child.
  - Report each case of suspected communicable diseases the same day by telephone to the local health department (i.e. salmonella, shigella, giardia, campylobacter,etc.)
  - COVID – please see our COVID policies.

\*\*\*\*The YMCA reserves the right to require a medical release or the child to be able to return to preschool.

### **Administration of Medications**

The YMCA Preschool program will not give medication to any child in our care. This includes medications such as prescription medications, Tylenol, Benadryl, and other common over the counter medications. **All medications, whether prescription or over the counter are prohibited at the YMCA Preschool Program.**

### **Policy for Recording and Reporting Accidents**

In the event of a medical emergency, staff will take the necessary steps to obtain care for the child. These steps include:

1. Administer first-aid deemed appropriate by staff.
2. Completion of an Accident/Incident Report to be kept in the child's file.
3. Informing parent of accident/incident and what type of first-aid was administered. If appropriate, the parent may be asked to pick the child up from preschool.

### **Severe Medical Emergency**

If immediate care of a physician or paramedic is required, staff will:

1. Call 911 immediately. Parents will be contacted immediately after 911 has been called.
2. If a parent cannot be reached, staff will attempt to contact an authorized person found on the Emergency Contact Form.
3. In the event that a child will need to be transported to a medical facility, the YMCA preschool staff reserves the right, with the assistance of paramedics, to determine if the child will be transported by an emergency vehicle.
4. Families will be responsible for any expenses incurred due to a child's injury.

Because accidents can happen to all children, it is important that the YMCA has current phone numbers where parent/guardians can be reached during the day, as well as the numbers for the authorized persons parents have listed on the Emergency Contact Form.

### **Insurance Liability**

Medical coverage for children will be the responsibility of the parents.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Under Montana State Law, all professional staff that work in childcare are required to report all suspected physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect of children to Child Protective Services.

### **Policy for Recording and Reporting Accidents**

In the event of a medical emergency, staff will take the necessary steps to obtain care for the child. These steps include:

4. Administer first-aid deemed appropriate by staff.
5. Completion of an Accident/Incident Report to be kept in the child's file.
6. Informing parent of accident/incident and what type of first-aid was administered. If appropriate, the parent may be asked to pick the child up from the program.

### **Severe Medical Emergency**

If immediate care of a physician or paramedic is required, staff will:

5. Call 911 immediately. Parents will be contacted immediately after 911 has been called.

6. If a parent cannot be reached, staff will attempt to contact an authorized person found on the Emergency Contact Form.
7. In the event that a child will need to be transported to a medical facility, the YMCA staff reserves the right, with the assistance of paramedics, to determine if the child will be transported by an emergency vehicle.
8. Families will be responsible for any expenses incurred due to a child's injury.

Because accidents can happen to all children, it is important that the YMCA has current phone numbers where parent/guardians can be reached during the day, as well as the numbers for the authorized persons parents have listed on the Emergency Contact Form.

### **Insurance Liability**

Medical coverage for children will be the responsibility of the parents.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Under Montana State Law, all professional staff that work in childcare are required to report all suspected physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect of children to Child Protective Services.

### **Child Abuse Prevention Information for Parents**

- Who should talk to children about Safety?  
A parent is the best person to teach a youth about personal safety. However, the staff at the YMCA will also be communicating similar messages.
- When should I speak with my child about safety?  
While age and maturity matter and will impact the information you provide, as well as the manner in which it is provided, much of the content will be repeated for years to come. Start teaching very young children the correct names for their body parts.
- What else can I do to help keep my child safe?

Listen to your child.

- Know your child's daily activities and habits.
- Listen to what they like and what they don't like.
- Encourage open communication. Let your child know they can talk to you about any situation.
- Reassure your child that their safety is your number one concern.

Teach your child.

- Set boundaries about places they may go, people they may see, and things they may do.
- Reinforce the importance of the buddy system.
- Tell your child to trust their instincts – it's ok to say no.

What personal safety skills should my child have?

- Knows his or her full name, address, telephone number and parent's names.
- Always checks first with parents or person in charge before going anywhere or getting into a car even with someone he or she knows.
- Always checks first with parents or trusted adult before accepting anything from anyone, even from someone known to them.
- Always take a friend when going places, or playing outside without parents.
- Says NO if someone tries to inappropriately touch them.
- Leaves the area if someone behaves in a manner that makes him or her feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.

## Parent Role in the Partnership to Prevent Child Abuse

- Familiarize yourself with the YMCA's policies.
- Learn the basics of child physical and sexual abuse.
- Talk to your child about sexual abuse.
- Participate in your child's programs.
- Do not hesitate to contact the YMCA with any concerns.

## **Basics of YMCA Child Abuse Prevention Policy**

Research shows that only 11% of incidents of sexual abuse are committed by a stranger. The remaining 89% are committed by a family member or by someone known to the child or the family. Some molesters use the organizations where they work to volunteer and gain access to child.

### **When and where can child abuse happen?**

1. Away from the YMCA: Molesters do whatever they can to spend time with students away from the YMCA ex: field trips, sporting events, phone calls, and online chats
2. During unstructured times: Unstructured times such as before school childcare, sports programs, or directly after lunch in a full day program are potentially dangerous because children may be unaccounted for while others are distracted by the events. Staff may be busy tending to one child while another wanders off.
3. In isolated or infrequently used locations: Child molesters love privacy. Areas such as empty rooms, stairwells, storage closets, etc. Provide privacy and allow the child molester to be alone with the child.
4. When age groups are mixed: Children may be at risk of abuse by another child that is older, stronger, or larger.
5. When programs are short staffed: When programs run short staffed, supervision may become lax. Or, an employee or volunteer may be alone with a lone child or avoid scrutiny by others.
6. In activities involving water: Activities that involve partial or full nudity abuse increases.

### **Steps for Safety:**

1. **WATCH** for interactions or behaviors that are not normal for your YMCA
2. **INTERRUPT** an employee, volunteer or member that is spending too much time with a child. Ex: favoritism, sitting on lap.
3. **REPORT** any concerns that you have about suspicious or inappropriate behavior immediately to your Department head, Volunteer Coordinator or to the Cause Driven Leader on Duty.
4. **CHECK BACK** after you report a suspicious incident be prepared to share specifics and check back to see if the problem has or was corrected.

### **Protecting Yourself:**

1. Keep your boundaries with kids clear. You must set limits in your relationships with children because you are the adult. They have less judgment and maturity. They are not your friend or your equals. Your responsibility is to supervise and care for them.
2. Avoid situations where you are alone with a child. In most programs you will NEVER be required to be alone with a lone child. In some programs, however, or under unusual circumstances, you may need to be alone with a child.

## **Managing the Risk When One Staff is Alone with one Youth**

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, staff should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

- When meeting one-on-one with a youth, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.
  - Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes.
  - If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
  - Inform other staff and volunteers that you are alone with a youth and ask them to randomly drop in.
  - Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.
3. The policies of the YMCA state that there is no outside contact from work such as babysitting, tutoring, social media, etc. If you know a child prior to starting at the YMCA you must disclose this information prior to starting.

### **Appropriate and Inappropriate Physical Contact**

Our organization's physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth, staff and volunteers. Our organization encourages appropriate physical contact with youth and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff or volunteers towards youth in the organization's programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteering.

#### **Appropriate Physical Contact**

- Side hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder or temple hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High fives and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate
- Touching hands, shoulders and arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)

#### **Inappropriate Physical Contact**

- Full-frontal hugs
- Kisses
- Showing affection in an isolated area
- Lap sitting
- Wrestling
- Piggyback rides
- Allowing youth to cling to an employee
- Any type of massage given by or to a child
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth, staff or volunteer
- Compliments relating to physique or body,
- Touching bottom, chest or genital areas

### **Appropriate and Inappropriate Verbal Interactions**

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youth in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating. Staff and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with youth. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with youth.

## **Appropriate Verbal Interactions**

- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes
  
- Encouragement
- Praise

## **Inappropriate Verbal Interactions**

- Name-calling
- Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youth in the personal problems of staff and volunteers
- Secrets
- Cursing
- Off-color or sexual jokes
- Belittling
- Derogatory remarks
- Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth
- Derogatory remarks about the youth or their family

## **Bathrooms/Locker rooms.**

Molesters need privacy. Kids are more likely to act out sexually in bathrooms. Guidelines for managing bathrooms should be followed at ALL TIMES.

1. Take children in small groups. Even if only one child needs to go to the bathroom never go alone, always take at least 2 other children with.
2. Examine areas: check the bathroom before allowing the child to go in. This includes each stall to ensure that someone is not hiding.
3. Only one child can be in the bathroom at a time. If a restroom has more than one stall, more than one child can go in at a time as long as you stand in the door way to ensure that the children are not going into each other's stalls. Also remember that if you only have three children with you and two go into a stall you have now left yourself one on one with a child.
4. Stand nearby: after you have checked the bathroom and it is all clear, you must stand outside the door and do not allow anyone else to go in the restroom until the child is finished and out.

## **Moving Groups of Children**

When moving large groups of children from one destination to the next, a head count must be done before moving. There is to always be a staff/volunteer leading the line and one at the end of the line (sandwich effect). Do not allow large gaps in the line, if there does become a gap, stop, head count and wait until you can see the staff at the end of the line again. When getting to the final destination make sure that a head count is done again to ensure that all children have made it.

## **Information About Sexual Abuse**

What to discuss with your child about Sexual Abuse

- Parents should provide their child with an age appropriate definition of abuse.
- Parents should tell their child that if someone tries to touch them or abuse them in any way, they should get away from that person as soon as possible.
- Parents should encourage their child to tell them immediately if they have a problem or someone makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Parents should assure their child that they will not get in trouble if they tell about abuse.

Warning Signs that your child feels uncomfortable

- Increased seeking of affection from adults.
- Reluctance to spend time with a previously favored adult.
- Reluctance to attend activities that were previously enjoyed.
- An uncharacteristic decrease in bathing and grooming.



- Preoccupation with sexual matters.
- Increased aggressiveness.
- Nightmares and sleep disturbances.

How to respond if your child discloses abuse

- Listen.
- Be sensitive to vague disclosures.
- Avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Don't threaten or condemn the alleged perpetrator.
- Let your child know you believe him or her.
- Tell your child he or she was right to disclose.
- Assure the abuse was not your child's fault.
- Reassure them that they will be safe.
- Avoid questions that could make your child feel responsible.
- Get as many details as your child is comfortable disclosing.
- Write down exactly what your child discloses and contact authorities.

Please contact The Youth Development Director or any member of senior management at the YMCA with any concerns of this nature.

## **Program Policies**

### **Enrollment, Health, and Emergency Forms**

All Enrollment, Health and Emergency Contact forms must be completed and returned to the YMCA before the child's first day of attendance. It is extremely important to keep the needed information on these forms up to date. The YMCA must be notified of any changes immediately.

### **Late Pick-up Fees**

The YMCA Preschool provides program services from 8:30am – 11:30am and/or 12:00 – 3:00 Monday through Friday. Parents are required to pick-up and sign out their child no later than closing time. Unless prior arrangements have been made for a late pick up; a late pick up fee of \$1 for every minute, after the first five minutes will be charged and paid to the YMCA Member Service Desk. After 15 minutes, if parents have not contacted the preschool or picked up the child, emergency authorized persons will be contacted to pick up the child. If the child remains at the program one hour after program closing, YMCA staff will call local law enforcement for child abandonment and law enforcement will handle the situation. Excessive late pick-ups can result in your child being suspended from the program.

### **Check out or sign out procedures**

1. If your child will be absent or have a change in schedule, please inform the YMCA Preschool Teacher.
2. Only individuals who are listed on the enrollment authorized pick-up form will be allowed to pick up your child.

### **Emergency Closing**

If the YMCA Preschool program needs to close due to an emergency because of weather or building problems, announcements will be made on local radio stations. If parents are in doubt please call the

YMCA. Preschool staff will make every effort to contact parents and remain open until every child is picked up.

### **Transportation**

The YMCA Preschool program provides educational and recreational field trips from time to time. YMCA transportation, with a certified driver, will provide all transportation. The following are behaviors that will not be tolerated during YMCA bus transportation.

1. Loud voices or yelling
2. Throwing objects
3. Standing up while bus in motion
4. Other safety rules as applied by bus driver

Parents will be notified of field trips and of the locations. Proper safety measure will be adhered to at all times by staff and children to ensure a safe, enjoyable activity for all.

### **Child Guidance and Discipline**

The goals of the YMCA Preschool program are to guide children to develop respect for themselves and each other. When conflicts arise over the rights of other people or property, the staff will attempt to work with each child individually and in small groups to solve and resolve problems and concerns.

1. Parents will be notified of any problems that may arise.
2. If a child continues to experience difficulty with their behavior, a parent/staff conference will be held.
3. If conflicts continue to exist without solution, a child may be suspended from the program.
4. If a problem with a child is deemed excessive, dangerous or puts the Preschool staff at risk of neglecting the other children in the program, a discipline action will be written up on the child and they may be suspended. If a child has been written up with a discipline action three times, the child may be indefinitely suspended from the YMCA program.
5. **The YMCA reserves the right to restrict all personal items from being brought to the YMCA such as:**
  - Gameboys/personal game players
  - Walkmans/personal CD players, Ipods
  - Toys
6. The YMCA Preschool program has a **NO Tolerance Policy** for the following:
  - Drugs
  - Tobacco
  - Alcohol
  - Weapons, anything that looks like a weapon, or can be used as a weapon
  - Inappropriate language (cussing)
  - Inappropriate bus behavior
  - Fighting or extreme hands-on behavior

In any of these cases, parents will immediately be notified to come and pick up their child. Length of suspension may range from the rest of that day to indefinitely, depending on the severity of the offense.

**\*\*\*\*At any time, the YMCA may choose to terminate your child's involvement with the YMCA.**

## Parental Agreement

I have received a copy of the Preschool Parent/ Guardian handbook and will read and fully understand and abide by the content within.

---

Child's Name

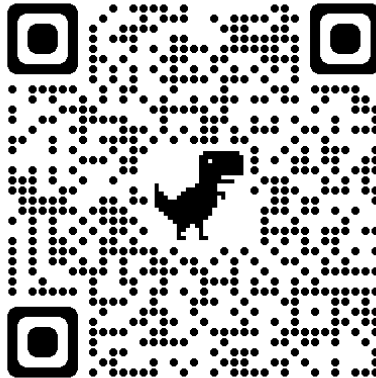
---

Parent/ Guardian's Name

---

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date



**Scan QR code to access Preschool Parent Handbook  
and other important documents on our website!**