



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



LEARNING CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK

GREATER MISSOULA FAMILY YMCA

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Welcome to the Y Learning Center!

Welcome! We're glad to have you join our Y family. The Learning Center is part of the Missoula Family Y. Since 1967, our Y's been providing safe, affordable, and healthy options for the greater Missoula area.

- **The YMCA's Mission** is put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.
- **The YMCA's Vision** is to build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities, which ties directly into what we strive for at the Learning Center. We're committed to your child's early education and to being your partner in providing your child with a solid foundation for life.
- **The YMCA's Areas of Impact** are Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility.

The Learning Center provides a structured, educational, and fun environment for your child to learn, grow, and thrive in. We want your experience with us to be a positive one.

This handbook is designed to clarify and answer your questions. The information and policies outlined in this book are what you can expect. It also outlines what our team needs from your family so we can be partners in this journey. Please take time to familiarize yourself with our program.

The Learning Center traditionally has an open-door policy—you are welcome to spend time in your child's classroom any time during the day.

Sincerely,



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ABOUT OUR CENTER

Our Philosophy

As early educators, we value and develop the individual child's strengths, interests, skills, abilities, and knowledge to extend their learning. We have an open door policy—you are welcome to spend time in your child's classroom at any time throughout the day.

- **We believe in educating and developing the whole child.** We understand effective teaching encompasses the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of each individual child.
- **We believe in equal learning opportunities.** Our teachers provide age-appropriate curriculum and activities that allow children to explore, develop, and grow.
- **We believe environments should support curiosity and exploration.** We strive to create classroom environments where all students feel welcome, comfortable, and safe. Children learn through play and their experiences of touching, moving, listening, and observing.
- **We believe in fostering partnerships with families.** We look to parental involvement as we work together to develop and nurture a positive attitude toward school and learning.
- **We believe in valuing diversity.** We value the diversity of each child and enable them to understand and acknowledge their own unique ability, interests, and background, as well as others'.

Child Guidance

Our approach to child guidance includes positive reinforcement, redirection, the setting of clear boundaries, and age-appropriate expectations that support your child's social emotional development.

- **When emotions run high and prevent a child from participating in classroom activities, we provide a safe space for them to take a break.** Taking a break gives children the opportunity to practice their self-calming skills until they are able to re-join the group.
- **All early education staff are expected to model appropriate behaviors for children at school.**
- **Physical punishment is unacceptable and prohibited.**

Classrooms & What to Bring

We have five classrooms—Bunnies, Monkeys, Frogs, Tigers, and Zebras. Daily schedules and menus are posted in your child’s classroom. What your child needs at school depends on their classroom. Below are lists of necessary items for each classroom. We recognize that the needs of each individual child may differ. Talk with your child’s teachers to determine what your child needs to bring to have a successful start. Talk to your child’s teacher to learn more about transitioning between classrooms.

Bunnies Classroom (Infants)

- Bottles
- Pacifier optional
- Sleep Sack no blankets for children under 12 months
- Diapers, Wipes, & Ointment
- Extra Clothes several sets
- Weather-appropriate Clothing
- Sunscreen if 6+ months

Monkey Classroom (Waddlers)

- Water Bottle
- Blanket
- Stuffed Animal optional
- Diapers, Wipes, & Ointment
- Extra Clothes several sets
- Weather-appropriate Clothing
- Sunscreen

Frogs Classroom (Early Preschool)

- Water Bottle
- Blanket & Pillow
- Stuffed Animal optional
- Diapers/Pull-ups, Wipes, & Ointment if needed
- Extra Clothes several sets
- Weather-appropriate Clothing
- Sunscreen

Tigers Classroom (Preschool)

- Water Bottle
- Blanket & Pillow
- Pull-ups, Wipes, & Ointment if needed
- Extra Clothes several sets
- Weather-appropriate Clothing
- Sunscreen

Zebras Classroom (Pre-K)

- Water Bottle
- Blanket & Pillow
- Extra Clothes several sets
- Weather-appropriate Clothing
- Sunscreen

Classrooms & What to Bring (continued)

We are raising Montana kids and will spend lots of time outside. Please dress your child appropriately for indoor and outdoor conditions. Sandals and flip-flops are not recommended for outdoor play.

It is very helpful when parents/guardians apply sunscreen before arriving at school during summer months. Our teachers will apply as needed.

Please do not bring toys or other items from home. A “stuffy” may be brought to school for nap/rest time. Teachers will inform families of special days when children may bring a favorite item or book to school.

Please call before 9:00 a.m. if your child will be absent or has a change in schedule. It helps us plan the day. We do not provide transportation.

Closure Days

The Learning Center is closed on the following days:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve*
- Christmas Day*
- New Year’s Eve (at 5:00 p.m.)
- New Year’s Day*
- Memorial Day
- July 4*

*If a holiday falls on a weekend, school will be closed the preceding Friday and/or the following Monday.

Hours of Operation & Contact Information

The Learning Center is open Monday–Friday from 7:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. We are located at 2683 A Palmer St., Missoula, MT 59808. Our phone number is 406-728-1243.

YMCA Membership Discount

The Missoula Family YMCA is pleased to offer a discounted Family Membership rate to all families enrolled at the YMCA Learning Center. Enjoy Family Fun Time, fitness classes, the indoor swimming pool, free drop-off child care in Child Watch, sports program discounts, and more!



STARS TO QUALITY & LICENSING

STARS to Quality

We are committed to providing quality care and education. The Learning Center is a Level 3 STARS to Quality participant and licensed by the State of Montana.

The Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program is a voluntary quality rating and improvement system that aligns quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals. The Early Childhood Services Bureau has enjoyed watching the program grow and develop with the input from the various stakeholders, and has listened carefully to early childhood professionals, parents, and national experts to provide a strong program, desired by many. Learn more about the STARS to Quality program online at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/STARS.aspx>

Licensing Information

You must sign your child in and out with the time and a full signature every day. You may be asked to show photo identification. Signing your child in and out is required by Child Care Licensing.

Licensing Information (continued)

YMCA staff must be notified in writing by the parent/guardian should someone other than those listed on the emergency contact form want to pick up your child. Notification must happen beforehand. To ensure your child's safety, staff is instructed to ask for photo identification of anyone unfamiliar to them.

If your child is involved in a minor accident, they will be given first aid and you will be notified when your child is picked up. We ask that parents/guardians sign the provided accident report. If serious injury should occur, YMCA staff will perform first aid and notify parents/guardians to pick their child up immediately. We are required to self-report injuries resulting in medical care to Child Care Licensing. Please let us know if you take your child to the doctor.

In case of an emergency, YMCA staff will:

- Call 9-1-1.
- Perform immediate first aid.
- Contact you (at the latest) when 9-1-1 services arrive.

First responders will decide what actions will be taken. If a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, a YMCA staff member will accompany the child and stay until a parent/guardian arrives.

The Montana Department of Health requires that we keep current immunizations on file for each child. In order to meet YMCA best practices, a pediatric statement of health has to be completed by a physician licensed in the State of Montana. Please provide us with a copy of updated shot records when your child receives their booster shots. The YMCA complies with state and federal privacy laws. Gathered information is only shared with appropriate staff.

Child Care Licensing requires that certain forms be updated annually. Please ensure that contact information in your child's file is up to date so you can be reached in case of an emergency.

For more information on Montana State Licensing Regulations, please visit <https://dphhs.mt.gov/ecfsd/childcarelicensing>.



NUTRITION & FOOD SAFETY

Your child's health and safety are our top priority. We monitor the ingredients of all foods brought into the center. Store-bought foods are welcome.

CACFP

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally-funded program of the Food & Nutrition Services (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS) is the State agency that administers the CACFP in Montana and ensures program requirements are followed. Below are some of the services we provide as a CACFP site:

- Offer a wide variety of nutritious foods.
- Use fresh or locally-grown foods whenever possible.
- Develop menus and recipes that include cultural considerations.
- Serve meals that follow USDA Dietary Guidelines.
- Serve meals family-style.
- Support breastfeeding or use of breast milk, or serve iron-fortified infant formula.
- Serve milk with all meals for children ages 1+.
- Serve meals to children 12 and under.

See page 26 for more information or to view the USDA nondiscrimination statement.

Meals & Meal Times

Infants

Breakfast—8:15 a.m.

Lunch—11:15 a.m.

Snack—2:15 p.m.

All Other Classrooms

Breakfast—8:30 a.m.

Lunch—11:30 a.m.

Snack—2:30 p.m.

If you miss a meal time, please feed your child/children before dropping them off at school or ask the staff if they have something to offer.

We understand that children who rise early can benefit from a pre-breakfast snack. The following foods will be allowed to be brought into the center before breakfast:

- All fruits (cut-up or in the original form)
- All vegetables (cut-up or in the original form)
- String cheese (must be in original packaging)
- Milk or water
- Plain or butter bread/toast

Nut-Free Center

No foods containing any kind of nut can be brought into our center.

Please Note: We work diligently to ensure that children are not exposed to items that may cause allergic reactions. However, exposure may happen in a group care setting. Please have the necessary medical items and documents present to ensure the best, most immediate care possible for your child.

Breastfeeding

We are committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers. Breast milk may be stored in the center's freezer or brought in fresh daily. Mothers are welcome to use the chairs in the infant room when nursing, as well as the one in the nap room.

Healthy Eating & Physical Activity (HEPA) We're committed to making our community a healthier place to live! In order to do so, we have adopted Y-USA's HEPA standards.

HEPA (Healthy Eating & Physical Activity) (continued)

There are six HEPA standards: beverages, family engagement, food, infant feeding, physical activity, and screen time. In our programs, we incorporate the following Healthy Eating and Physical Activity standards:

- Active play takes place outdoors whenever possible. We provide opportunities for moderate and vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day in full-day programs and 30 minutes for half-day programs.
- We eliminate screen time for children under two years old. Screen time for children over the age of two is limited to special occasions, such as holidays.
- Children serve themselves “family style” during mealtime (depending on age).
- Fruits or vegetables are provided at every meal and snack.
- We do not serve any fried foods or foods containing transfat.
- We serve whole grains daily.
- We serve foods free of sugar as one of the first 3 ingredients or no more than 8 grams of added sugar per serving.
- We provide only water and unflavored milk.

Birthday Celebrations

Our goal is not to cut out all treats, but to make sure they are eaten in moderation and do not become the focus of parties or celebrations.

The focus should be on fun, not food. The list below provides healthy suggestions for celebrations:

- 100% fruit juice freezer pops/real fruit popsicles
- Apples with caramel dip
- Fruit or vegetables
- Yogurt parfaits with berries and nut-free granola
- Dried fruits
- Low-fat yogurt
- Fruit leather
- String cheese
- Pretzels
- Fruit smoothies

We encourage parents to use the list above as a guide in providing healthy snacks. You may also choose to bring in a non-food items to give to each child on your child’s birthday. Here is a list of ideas:

- Slap bracelets
- Party hats
- Bubbles
- Chalk
- Stickers
- Little toys
- Pencils
- Crayons

CENTER POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Payment Policy

The Financial Agreement explains the terms and conditions of the YMCA credit extension. By registering for an ongoing monthly program, you as a parent of the participant are accepting the financial responsibility until the contract is terminated in writing. Please read the details of this agreement carefully.

By accepting this agreement, the enrolling parent is the sole person responsible for the debt. We are not a collection agency, nor can we enforce child support orders. Failure to pay within 15 days of due date may result in denial or service or limited enrollment in any YMCA program until debt is resolved.

The enrolling parent is responsible for the full amount due to the YMCA as well as all fees related to collecting payments. If payment becomes a hardship for any parent, financial assistance is available based on demonstrated need.



Payment (continued)

Your Bill

For a continuous enrolling program such as the YMCA child care, your enrollment in an automatic payment method is required. Payments may be set up automatically through a bank account and/or a credit card (Visa, Discover, or Mastercard).

Promise to Pay

You promise to pay the total amount of all charges on the 1st of each month unless payment arrangements have been made with the director.

Notices

You agree to notify the YMCA of any phone or address change immediately. If we mail you a letter, notice, or statement to the address you have provided to us, you agree that you will be bound by the information contained in that mailing. A 30-day notice is required when discontinuing enrollment.

Uncollectible Amounts

In the event that an amount is returned unpaid, the parents/guardians will notify the YMCA and make arrangements to pay the amount within three days of the returned payment. If the method of payment is returned more than twice in a six-month period, a new payment method will be required to continue enrollment in the program.

When turned into collections, participation in any YMCA programs is not possible until the debt has been satisfied in full.

Receipts and Tax Statements

Receipts and tax statements will be provided upon request.

Best Beginning Scholarship

The Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship is a state program that provides financial assistance for child care tuition to qualifying families: <https://www.childcareresources.org/families/paying-for-child-care/>

Best Beginning Scholarship Basics

- Parents/guardians are responsible for setting up and paying all co-pays determined by Child Care Resources (CCR) and/or the Greater Missoula Family YMCA.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for completing and returning all required paperwork to CCR prior to child(ren)'s start date.
- Greater Missoula Family YMCA's co-pay may be higher than the co-pay listed on my Best Beginnings authorization plan.
- Parents/guardians' co-pay will increase if child's attendance does not meet the amount of approved hours on my authorization plan.
- A child has to be authorized for 30+ hours to qualify for the 2 free absences per month.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for any absent days exceeding two days per month.

Late Pick Up

A \$30 late pick up fee will be charged if you pick up your child after 6:00 p.m. Please keep contact information current in your child's file.

If your child is not picked up on time, the following steps will be taken:

- Every effort will be made to reach the parents/guardians with phone numbers on file.
- The emergency contacts listed on enrollment form will be telephoned.
- In the event that no one can be reached by 6:30 p.m., police will be notified.

Illness

If at any time your child cannot participate in daily activities because of illness, you will be notified and expected to pick up within 30 minutes. A physician's note may be required before your child may return to school.

Children with the following symptoms should be excluded from group care:

Fevers of 100.1 or greater

Children should be fever free for 24 hours before they return to school without the use of fever reducing medication. Exception: Children with fevers related to vaccinations need not be excluded if they are able to participate in the daily activities.

Vomiting or Diarrhea

Children should be excluded until symptoms subside for 24 hours. (Diarrhea is loose, watery stools, more than two times in 24 hours.)

Bacterial Infections

The child should be treated with antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to child care. Bacterial infections include: ear infection, strep throat, impetigo, bacterial conjunctivitis (red eyes with colored, pus-like drainage), other skin infections, such as draining burns, sores that can't be covered.

Generalized Rashes

Your child should be kept at home until diagnosed by a medical professional. Children with generalized rashes can return to child care at the healthcare provider's discretion (unless one of above conditions is present.)

Head Lice or Scabies

Children with head lice or scabies should stay home until treated. All lice and nits must be removed before returning to child care or school.

Medication Administration

At the YMCA we believe that when children are in need of medication, it should be given to them in the safest way possible for the child, parents/guardians, and providers.

Medication Administration (continued)

We require that all medications be given at home whenever possible. Under certain circumstances it may be necessary for medications to be administered to a child during the day. Administering medication is based on parent/guardian consent and the child's healthcare provider recommendations.

By law, medications can be administered to a child only under the following conditions:

1. Parents/guardians must fill out and sign a medication authorization form for each medication being administered.
2. Medication is in the original container with medication name, dosage, directions, physician's name, pharmacy name, and telephone number.
3. Prescription is non-elective and must be administered on a specific time schedule, which occurs during child care attendance.
4. Medication is given directly to the child care staff. Children are not allowed to administer medication to themselves.
5. Any over the counter medicine such as sunscreen, lip balm, cough drops, etc. require a medication form filled out by the parents/guardians and then given to the staff.
6. When medication is brought into the facility by a parent/guardian, they will be given a Medication Authorization Form to fill out for the child and medication. If parents/guardians do not fill out the form, the medication will not be given. When the medication is complete or has become expired, it will be returned to the parents/guardians. If parents/guardians do not pick up the medication within one week, the medication will be disposed of according to the program's guidelines.
7. A Medication Administration Log will be kept on file to keep track of dates and times the medication is given. Parents/guardians will be notified of any side effects the child suffers from the medication.
8. Staff designated to administer medication must double check the five essential safety "rights" prior to giving a medication to any child:
 - **RIGHT CHILD** The child's identity must be confirmed.
 - **RIGHT MEDICATION** The authorization form must be compared to the medication log and the pharmacy label.
 - **RIGHT DOSE** The exact amount of the medication specified by the healthcare provider must be given as ordered.

Medication Administration (continued)

- **RIGHT TIME** The medication log must be checked to determine the time of administration of the last dose. The label on the medication should be checked to confirm the correct interval between dosages.
 - **RIGHT ROUTE** The pharmacy label must be checked for exact route for the medication to be given, e.g., by mouth, ear drops, etc.
9. If a medication error or incident has occurred, a medication error/incident report will be filled out and signed by the staff member giving the medication and also signed by the director.
 10. Only staff that have completed Medication Administration Course 1 will be administering medication.
 11. Medication will be stored and/or locked up appropriately and safely, and stored at the proper temperature (i.e. refrigerated or room temperature).
 12. Medication authorization forms and administration logs will be stored in the child's file.
 13. A summary of this policy is included in the Family Handbook and the full policy is available upon request. ECC staff also receive this policy.

Biting and Behavior

- If a child's behavior is disruptive towards others in the program, it will be discussed with the child and parents/guardians in an attempt to improve the behavior.
- If at any time your child's behavior becomes uncontrollable or violent, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and asked to pick up the child within 30 minutes.
- A child may be asked to miss the following day to gain a fresh perspective and take a break from the situation.
- Hitting, choking, and biting are not allowed and will warrant being sent home immediately if so determined by director and/or teachers.
- If problems continue, parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the staff to work on a plan that resolves the situation.
- If none of the above procedures are effective, the program director reserves the right to temporarily or permanently discontinue child care services.
- Teachers will work with all children to teach and reiterate that biting is not allowed at the YMCA.

Biting and Behavior (continued)

- If biting becomes frequent or we see a pattern developing, parents/guardians will be contacted by the program director to strategize solutions and develop an action plan that might work for the child.
- If a child bites or is bitten, incident/accident reports will be filled out. Incident/accident reports will be available for parents to review at pickup on the day of the bite.
- Children that bite will be monitored closely for a few days by the teachers to try to dissuade any future incidents.
- If the bite breaks the skin, the wound will immediately be cleaned with soap and water. To ensure the safety of all children, parents/guardians of the biter will be called immediately and asked to take their child home for the rest of the day. Parents/guardians of the child that was bit will also be called and notified of the incident.
- If a child bites twice a day without breaking the skin, the parents/guardians of the biter will be called and asked to take the child home for the remainder of the day to ensure the safety of the other children.
- If the implementation of the action plan does not curb the behavior significantly, a timeline will be put in place as a final attempt to work with both the child and parents/guardians. However, if the safety of the other children in care becomes an issue, the program director retains the right to terminate services immediately.
- Information and resources are available. Please ask teachers and director for more information
 - Child Care Resources 728-6446
 - Department of Family Services 1-866-820-5437

Safe Sleep

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is a sudden and unexpected death of an infant 12 months of age or younger who had seemed in good health at the time of their death.

All child care providers that are working in the infant/toddler rooms will be trained in safe sleep to ensure safety measures are being met. The YMCA and the infant/toddler child care providers will practice the following safe sleep policy: (see next page)

Safe Sleep (continued)

1. All center staff who work in the infant/toddler room or may potentially work in the room will receive training on our safe sleep policy.
2. Infants will always be placed on their backs on a firm surface to sleep, unless a parent/guardian provides a signed sleep position medical waiver. In that case, the signed waiver will be placed in the child's file and a waiver will be placed on the child's crib.
3. An infant who is able to regularly turn over from their back to their stomach will be allowed to adopt whatever sleeping position is comfortable for them after initially being laid down on their back.
4. Child care staff will check with parents/guardians to make sure that it is okay with them if a child that can easily turn over is left to adopt whatever sleeping position is comfortable for them. From this consultation, the staff will act in accordance with the wishes of the parents/guardians.
5. Sleeping infants will be visually checked every 10–15 minutes by assigned staff. We will make sure the infant's skin color is normal, watch their chest rise and fall, and make sure that the infant is sleeping soundly. We will watch for signs of overheating which include flushed skin, sweating, and restless sleep.
6. Any and all cries will be investigated immediately by staff.
7. The room temperature will be kept between 68–75° F. A thermometer will be kept in the room to ensure the temperature stays the same.
8. No blanket may be placed in the crib, playpen, or seat with an infant under 12 months of age. Sleep sacks and similar safe sleep clothing may be used if the item does not restrict the infant's arms.
9. Infants under 3 months of age may only be swaddled if medical documentation from a healthcare provider is on file at the facility. Infants over 3 months of age must not be swaddled at any time.
10. No loose bedding, pillows, crib bumper pads, toys, or stuffed animals will be allowed in the crib when the infant is sleeping. Infants will be allowed to have their pacifiers while they sleep.
11. Each child will have their own assigned crib, mattress, or cot to sleep on. All cribs and cots will be safety approved by the State of Montana Child Care Licensing Division.

Safe Sleep (continued)

12. The crib mattresses will be firm, waterproof, fit tightly into the cribs, and be easy to sanitize. All cribs will have a plastic lining on the mattress for sanitation purposes.
13. Children will be placed in the cribs head-to-toe while sleeping to prevent the spread of germs.
14. Cots will be firm and easy to sanitize.
15. Only one infant is to be placed in a crib at a time. The only exception would be for emergency evacuation.
16. Smoking is never permitted in the infant room or on YMCA premises.
17. The parents/guardians of infants enrolled in the program receive a copy of the YMCA Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy when the child is enrolled at the facility.

Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention

Infants' and young children's neck muscles are not yet well developed. As a result, they are especially susceptible to head trauma caused by any type of forceful or sudden shaking, with or without blunt impact. Damage can occur in as little as 5 seconds.

Abusive head trauma can occur in children up to 5 years of age; however, infants less than one year are at greater risk of injury. Shaken baby syndrome can lead to serious conditions including:

- Brain damage, problems with memory and attention, cerebral palsy
- Blindness or hearing loss
- Intellectual, speech, or learning disabilities
- Developmental delays

Signs and Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome or head trauma include:

- Seizures
- Bruises
- Lack of appetite, vomiting, or difficulty sucking or swallowing
- Lack of smiling or vocalizing
- Rigidity, inability to lift the head
- Difficulty staying awake, altered consciousness
- Difficulty breathing, blue color due to lack of oxygen
- Unequal pupil size, inability to focus the eyes or track movement
- Irritability

Injury Prevention

Infant crying is normal behavior, which changes as a child ages. Teachers should develop proactive strategies to manage stress levels and appropriate responses to a crying child. This includes being self-aware and noticing when a teacher may become frustrated or angry. Parents/guardians and teachers should discuss what calming strategies are successful with a particular child at home or at school.

Emergency Response

If a child presents any of the above symptoms or you suspect a baby has suffered abusive head trauma:

- Call 911, call the parent/guardian and inform the director
- Report to the appropriate child protective services agency (or law enforcement, if applicable) within 24 hours or less as required by law, refer to mandatory reporting policy

Strategies for Caregivers and Parents

A child is usually shaken out of frustration, often when the child is persistently crying or irritable. The following strategies may work some of the time; but sometimes nothing will comfort a crying child. A teacher should seek support from a coworker and/or center management. If a child is inconsolable on a regular basis, the director should be notified and determine if the right supports are in place for the child and for staff. This applies to children of all ages in our care, not only to infants.

Do:

- Hand the child to another caregiver.
- Place the child somewhere safe in the classroom (or home) and call the office (or a neighbor) for support; take deep breaths and count to 10
- Check to see if the baby's diaper needs changing
- Give the baby a bottle. If baby readily takes bottle, feed slowly stopping to burp often. Do not force the baby to eat
- Check for signs of illness and call the parent if you suspect the child is sick
- Hold the baby close against your body and breathe calmly and slowly
- Gently rock the baby using slow, rhythmic movements
- Sing to the baby or play soft, soothing music
- Use "white noise" or rhythmic sounds that mimic the constant whirl of noise in the womb
- Hold the baby on its side or stomach position to help with digestion. Babies should always be placed on their backs to sleep
- Take the baby for a walk/ride in a stroller
- Be patient: let the baby cry it out if necessary

Never:

- Shake a child
- Drop a child
- Throw a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat
- Push a child into any object including walls, doors, and furniture
- Strike a child's head, directly or indirect

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse and Neglect

All YMCA staff are mandatory reporters and all YMCA child care staff are required to complete training. Speak to your director to learn more.

The Reporting Law

Montana Law (41-3-201) mandates that if persons in certain child-contacting professions, such as teaching, medicine, child care, social work, etc., “know or have reasonable cause to suspect, as a result of information they receive in their professional or official capacity, that a child is abused or neglected by anyone regardless of whether the person suspected of causing the abuse or neglect is a parent or other person responsible for the child’s welfare, they shall report the matter promptly to the Department of Public Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Division’s MONTANA’S STATEWIDE TOLL-FREE CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE.”

MONTANA’S STATEWIDE TOLL-FREE CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE is 1-866-820-KIDS (1-866-820-5437).

Failure to report known child abuse or neglect or purposely or knowingly preventing another person from doing so may result in a conviction of a misdemeanor.

Preventing Child Abuse

YMCA executives and program directors can help prevent child abuse by screening all staff members who have direct contact with children (teachers, counselors, on-going volunteers).

- Reference checks on all prospective employees will be conducted, documented, and filed within two months of employment.
- Background checks on all prospective employees will be conducted prior to the start date and submitted to the state within two weeks of employment, for employees working in licensed programs.
- Photographs will be taken of all staff and attached to personnel records for identification at a later time if needed.

Preventing Child Abuse (continued)

- All new staff/volunteers must participate in an orientation program including written materials explaining YMCA policies, procedures, and regulations. They should be aware of legal requirements and, by their signatures, acknowledged having received and read appropriate policies, standards, and codes of conduct.
- Staff/volunteers working directly with children will be provided information regularly about the signs of possible child abuse. Staff training will include approved procedures for responding to the suspicion of abuse.
- Administrative staff supervising programs involving the care of children will make unannounced visits to each program site to assure that standards, policies, program quality and performance of staff are being maintained.
- In order to protect YMCA staff, volunteers, and program participants, at no time during a YMCA program may a program leader be alone with a single child, unobserved by other staff.
- Young children under the age of seven years will never be unsupervised in bathrooms, locker rooms, or showers.
- YMCA staff and volunteers will not discipline children by use of physical punishment, or by failing to provide the necessities of care, such as food or shelter.
- YMCA staff or volunteers will not verbally or emotionally abuse or punish children (name-calling, condescending tone of voice, swearing, etc.).
- Staff and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of all children each time they report for a program and indicate, in writing, any signs of injury or suspected child abuse.
- Parents/guardians will be informed about their child's program participation and general health, and the name of the program administrator.
- Parents/guardians will be invited and encouraged to visit program sites at any time, and need not ask permission to do so.
- YMCA staff will not, under any circumstances, release children to anyone other than the authorized parent(s), guardian(s), or to an individual authorized by parents, in writing, including relatives of children. Sign-in and sign-out logs will be maintained on a daily basis, and kept on file at the program site.
- Information regarding YMCA policy will be given to parents at the time they enroll their children in YMCA programs.

Staff and Child Relationships

The Missoula Family YMCA restricts its employees from providing child care or babysitting services for families they meet through their employment at the YMCA.

Staff may not be alone with children whom they have met through YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleep-overs, and inviting children to their home unless one of the following conditions exist:

- The child's family or guardians have a pre-existing relationship with the staff member. The child or the child's family or guardians are related to the staff member.

Delayed Starts

When Missoula County Public Schools are closed or canceled due to weather, we will implement a delayed opening time of 9:30 a.m. The late start time will ensure staff arrive safely and appropriate snow removal can take place. It will be your responsibility to stay up to date on MCPS closures. MCPS will announce school closures using social media, news outlets and pre-recorded messages.

Early Outs

In the event that Missoula County issues Emergency Travel, we will contact you via phone and will have you pick up your children within two hours. If we cannot reach parents/guardians, we will call the emergency contact listed in the child's file. Please remember to provide us with your updated phone numbers for yourself and your emergency contacts.

We will contact you as early in the day as possible, if we deem an early closure necessary to allow extra travel time for staff to get home safely.



Emergency Plans

The Learning Center has its own specific disaster plan, which includes evacuation and medical emergency plans as well as several safety emergency plans such as lockdown procedure (intruder, missing child), severe weather, electrical outage, and earthquake.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation.

For more information, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/usda-nondiscrimination-statement-other-fns-programs>

YMCA Diversity & Inclusion Statement

Together, we work to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race, or sexual orientation, has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity.

Notes:



GREATER MISSOULA FAMILY YMCA

3000 S. Russell St. | ymcamissoula.org | 406-721-9622

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