



CHILDWATCH PARENT HANDBOOK



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA of Greater Michiana

Niles – Buchanan YMCA
905 N. Front Street Niles, MI 49120
(269) 683-1552



Niles – Buchanan
YMCA OF GREATER MICHIANA

WELCOME TO YMCA CHILDWATCH

CHILDWATCH

AGES 6 WEEKS – 8 YEARS

Open year-round!

- Household Memberships: FREE
- Daily Drop-In: \$5

Payments must be made beforehand. Please give your receipt to the Childwatch staff when signing in your child(ren).

HOURS OF OPERATION

MONDAY – FRIDAY – 8:30 AM – 7:30 PM

SATURDAY – 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

SUNDAY – CLOSED

MUST – DO – CARE

MONDAY – FRIDAY

- 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- All Day – 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Please ask staff for more information about our Must-Do-Care program.

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:45AMOpen
8:00 AMFree Play
9:00 AMMusic/Dance
9:45 AMCraft/Fine Motor Skills
10:45 AMGym/Gross Motor
10:45-10:55: Littles (Under age 2)
10:55-11:05: Ages 2+
11:05 AMLunch/Free play
12:00 PMStory Time/Activities
12:30 PMNap/Rest time

1:00 PMMusic & Movement
1:30 PMGym/Gross Motor
2:00 PMSnack
3:00 PMStructures Active Play
3:30 PMFree Play
4:00 PMCreative Time
4:30 PMMusic & Movement
5:00 PMStories & Puzzles
5:30 – 7:00 PMFree Play
7:30 PMClose

A CHILD SHOULD STAY HOME IF EXPERIENCING:

1. Are feverish or have had a fever in the last 24 hours
2. Have a hacking cough or a sore throat
3. Have vomited in the last 24 hours
4. Have pink eye or symptoms which might be pink eye
5. Have been on antibiotics for strep or other contagious infections less than 24 hours
6. Have had multiple loose stools in the last 24 hours
7. Are too "out of sorts" to participate in class activities
8. Unexplained rash

*These standards apply for staff and volunteers as well



GUIDELINES FOR RETURNING TO CARE

CONDITION FOR EXCLUSION	CONDITION FOR RETURNING
Temperature greater than 100.4 degrees (ear) or 99.5 degrees (axillary)	Fever free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication)
Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs).	Until medical evaluation allows inclusion (doctor's written approval for return)
Abnormally loose, uncontrolled diarrhea, that is – increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper	Diarrhea free for 24 hours
Vomiting	Vomit free for 24 hours and able to eat solid foods or until a health care provider determines the illness to be noncommunicable, and the child is not in danger of dehydration
Red or blue in the face, or makes high-pitched croupy or whooping sounds after coughing	Until health care provider or health official determines the condition is noninfectious.
Unusual spots or rash with fever or behavior change	Until health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.
Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge)	Until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
Untreated scabies, head lice, or other infestation	After treatment and free of infestation, such as lice and nits
Known contagious diseases while still in the communicable stages	Until health care provider determines the condition is noncommunicable

EXCEPTION MAY BE MADE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHILDCARE ADMINISTRATIONS TEAM

SNACKS & DRINKS

- Child Watch is a nut free environment. Please do not bring any food containing peanuts or tree nuts.
- Please inform Child Watch staff of any food allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have. If your child has a severe allergy or food sensitivity, you may be asked to provide an appropriate snack.
- To support HEPA guidelines for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity, donated snacks should contain whole grains, fewer than eight grams of sugar per serving, no trans fats, and should not be fried.
- Sippy cups and water bottles are welcome and must be clearly labeled with your child's name. These containers may only contain water.
- Infant bottles may contain breast milk, formula, or milk and must be clearly labeled with the child's name.

Meals may only be brought for children participating in Must Do Care or for children of YMCA staff.



INJURIES, ACCIDENTS, OR SAFETY ISSUES

Parents **MUST** inform the program staff of any health or safety needs of the child that the program may be required to address. If your child has had an injury or illness that may prevent activity, please call and inform the staff. If your child is injured while in our care, parents/guardians will be notified by either a note home or a phone call. If the injury is more than a minor issue, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. If parents/guardians are not available, another adult listed on the child's emergency information form will be contacted. Program staff are trained for your child in possible emergency situations.

MAJOR INJURIES Include: A head injury, a broken bone, severe lacerations or any other injury that requires a doctor's visit.

MINOR INJURIES Include: Scratches, bruises, bumps – parents will receive an ouch report.

BEHAVIOR SUPPORT AND PREVENTION POLICY

Our program is committed to preventing suspension and expulsion whenever possible. We implement proactive, developmentally appropriate behavior supports that focus on teaching skills rather than punishment.

When challenging behaviors occur, staff will:

- Document behaviors and strategies implemented
- Collaborate with families
- Adjust classroom supports and routines
- Consult with specialists when appropriate

If behaviors persist despite documented interventions and family collaborations, the program team will meet with the family to review strategies, consider additional supports, and determine next steps that prioritize the child's success and classroom safety. Schedule modifications or alternative placements will only

BEHAVIORS THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

To maintain safety and ensure a calm, respectful classroom environment, the following behaviors may result in a child being temporarily removed from the classroom and/or sent home and, if necessary, picked up early:

- Physical Harm – Hitting, biting, scratching, kicking, or any behavior that causes injury to others or oneself
- Unsafe Movement – Running from staff, leaving the classroom or playground, climbing fences, or attempting to leave the building
- Aggressive Behavior – Throwing furniture or objects, destroying materials, or acting in a way that may cause harm
- Vulgar or inappropriate language

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DEVELOPMENT & DISCIPLINE

At the YMCA, youth will be guided to lead productive, responsible and caring lives. Youth will learn the importance of giving back to community and will acquire the skills to become leaders in their community. We want your child to enjoy the activities planned, and benefit from his/her experience. Staff will work with them to help them understand the expectations and give clear definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

Y Ties – Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Caring

Childcare uses our Y TIES Program to develop our children's social responsibility. This program allows the opportunity for students and staff to make living the Y character values tangible and collective. Children will be able to make individual pledges or goals, demonstrate their pledge, recognize their efforts and success, and reflect on their pledges and goals.

Expectations

Children are encouraged to:

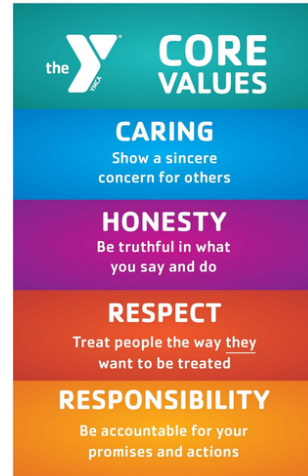
- Follow Directions
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Use safe bodies and kind words with peers and staff
- Ask for help when they need support (if age appropriate)

Consequences

- Warning
- Activity restriction
- Parent notification

Positive Reinforcement

- Praise
- Leadership Opportunities



ILLNESS

To keep all children healthy, we ask that children who show signs of illness, such as fever, diarrhea due to illness, persistent cough, thick green nasal discharge, vomiting, pink eye, or unexplained rash stay home from Childwatch. If your child has been prescribed an antibiotic, we ask that they have a full 24-hour dose before returning. Those with fever must be fever-free without medication for 24 hours before returning.

- We reserve the right to refuse entry if we feel your child is too ill to attend.
- If your child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately.
- Please contact us if your child becomes ill after attending Childwatch.

A parent will be notified and the child sent home for these reasons:

- Fever over 100.4 degrees (ear) or 99.5 degrees (axillary)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (3 loose stools within an hour)

Child must be symptom free (without medication) for 24 hours to return.



RULES & REGULATIONS

- Child Watch is limited to three hours per child each day.
- Only a parent or legal guardian listed on the child's account may sign the child(ren) in or out.
- Parents and guardians must remain inside the YMCA facility while their children are signed into Child Watch.
- Please leave personal toys at home. If toys are brought into Child Watch, staff will ask that they be put away. The YMCA is not responsible for items that are lost, damaged, or broken.
- All children who are walking must wear dry shoes with firm soles. Slippers and flip flops are not permitted. Infants who are not yet walking must wear socks or booties.



The goal of YMCA Child Watch is to provide a safe, welcoming, and caring environment for every child. Our policies and procedures help the program operate smoothly while supporting the health, safety, and well being of the children in our care.

If you have any questions, please contact **Haleigh Kee or Tegan Gaul at (269) 683-1552**

DISCIPLINE POLICY

POSITIVE REDIRECTION

The YMCA Child Care Network provides a calm and consistent environment, in an effort to make children feel comfortable and safe, thus preventing behavioral issues. Our philosophy is to encourage and acknowledge positive behavior, minimizing the amount of behavioral occurrences. We use Conscious Discipline with the children to provide a comprehensive approach to self-awareness and social emotional regulation.

Policies and procedures of disciplinary methods used by the YMCA staff:

1. Children will be assisted in understanding the consequences of their own behavior.

Whenever possible, they will be encouraged to utilize language and social skills to express their feelings, rather than through aggressive behavior.

2. No form of ostracism will be allowed.

3. Children will be provided with the rationale for existing rules and the specific reason for any disciplinary action taken. Rules will be posted, in positive language, so that children and adults can view them daily.

4. Most disciplinary problems will be prevented through kind, consistent treatment and effective intervention. Parents will be kept continually aware of their child's behavior in order to assure that the family and the YMCA program are working toward common behavioral goals.

5. Generally, if an act of severe aggression or disruptive behavior occurs outside of developmentally appropriate context, parents will be contacted via phone and expected to pick the child up in a reasonable time frame. Documentation of the behavioral SUCCESS incident will also be kept on file.

6. DAP (Developmentally Appropriate Practices) vary for each classroom and age group. For example: It may be developmentally appropriate for a Toddler to bite as means to express frustration, whereas with a Preschool aged student, it would not. For more information regarding Developmentally Appropriate Practices please contact the Center Director.

Family Communication and Support

Families will be kept informed of their child's behavior, especially when patterns or concerns arise. We believe in working in partnership with families to support consistent expectations and positive outcomes for children.

If a child demonstrates behavior that is unsafe or significantly disruptive beyond what is developmentally appropriate, families may be contacted and asked to pick up their child within a reasonable timeframe. All incidents will be documented and maintained in the child's file.

STAFF RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF PROGRAM

We understand that quality child care can be difficult to find, and families may be interested in having YMCA staff provide care outside of program hours. While the YMCA of Greater Michiana does not prohibit employees from offering child care services independently, these arrangements are separate from YMCA operations.

Prior to any outside services being provided, both the staff member and the family are required to sign a waiver acknowledging that YMCA employees are not acting in their YMCA role and are not affiliated with the YMCA during non-working hours.



SAFE SLEEP

At the YMCA, your child's health and safety is our priority. Our childcare programs follow safe sleep practices from the State of Michigan licensing and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

WE WILL

- Make sure your baby is safe.
- Provide care and nurture them.
- Make sure they are fed and provided for
- Be on the floor with them during tummy times.
- Ensure they are aligned with safe-sleep standards

WE WON'T

- Use blankets or pillows. (under age of 12 months)
- Allow your infant to sleep in a car seat.
- Allow your infant to sleep in a bouncy seat.
- Allow your infant to sleep in a swing.

BATHROOM NEEDS

- Diapers must be freshly changed before signing into Childwatch.
- You will need to leave a diaper bag with disposable diapers, wipes, extra clothes, and other items your child might need.
- If your child needs assistance in the bathroom, we will assist as much as possible before calling you.

POTTY TRAINING

At the YMCA, we work in partnership with families to support children as they begin the potty training process. Successful potty training is a gradual journey that depends on the child's physical readiness, interest, and emotional comfort.

Is your child ready for potty training?

Children may be ready to begin potty training when they:

- ✓ Stay dry for extended periods (2+ hours)
- ✓ Show interest in the bathroom or wearing underwear
- ✓ Can communicate needs with simple words or gestures
- ✓ Can follow simple instructions
- ✓ Express discomfort with wet or soiled diapers
- ✓ Show signs of independence (pulling pants up/down, helping with tasks)



Our Approach

Staff will assist children with toileting needs in a manner that supports independence while maintaining health and safety practices in accordance with licensing requirements.

- We use positive reinforcement and lots of encouragement
- We will follow your home routine as closely as possible (timing, vocabulary, etc.) If needed, our team is happy to work with you to create a consistent routine that supports your child's success and works well for your family.
- We encourage families to send children in easy-to-remove clothing (no overalls or tricky snaps!)
- We ask that children in the training process wear pull-ups unless they are consistently using the toilet.
- Accidents are normal! We respond with kindness and understanding

Family Partnership

To ensure consistency and success:

- Please communicate regularly with our Childwatch staff about progress or changes
- Provide extra clothing, including socks and shoes
- Work with us on a mutual plan if your child is transitioning to underwear

Questions?

If you feel your child is ready for potty training. Let us know! Please reach out to our Childwatch staff. We are here to support you and your child every step of the way.

ABUSE OR MISTREATMENT

Our organization's top priority is keeping individuals safe. Any form of abuse or mistreatment of all individuals, children, employees, and volunteers is prohibited. Individuals shall not abuse or mistreat employees, volunteers, or other consumer in any way. Use of abusive language, obscene or profane language, including racial, religious or sexual references directed at other people will not be tolerated. It is important to treat others as you would like to be treated.

REPORTING

Because our organization is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone, including you actively participates in the protection of all our individuals. In the event that someone observes any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of other employees, volunteers, or others, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations. Remember, at our organization, the policies apply to everyone.

Our Code of Conduct and policies include:

- Appropriate and inappropriate displays of physical affection.
- Appropriate and inappropriate verbal communication.
- One-on-one interactions and outside contact between employees/volunteers and individuals
- Electronic communication between employees/volunteers and individuals.
- Gift giving and receiving between individuals and employees/volunteers.
- Appropriate and inappropriate individual-to-individual interactions.
- The process for individuals to report concerns, complaints or grievances back to the organization.

How to Report Abuse

You do not need proof that abuse is occurring to make a report, only reasonable suspicion. Reporting child sexual abuse is key in preventing and intervening in abuse. Call Children's Protective Services at (855) 444-3911 for Michigan and (800) 800-5556 for Indiana, or you can contact the YMCA of Greater Michiana by scanning the QR Code.

