



# **METROWEST YMCA**

## **Early Learning Center**

### **Family Handbook**

**MetroWest YMCA, Early Learning Center –  
Framingham Branch**

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# **I Overview of MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center**

## **A MetroWest YMCA Mission Statement**

The MetroWest YMCA is dedicated to providing programs and services that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for fall.

## **B Philosophy, Goals and Objectives**

The central focus of the MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center is to foster growth and development, not only among the children involved in the program but also among their parents and other family members as well. Components of this goal are developing self-esteem, learning by discovery, age appropriate activities, individual and group activities, variety, and exploration.

Children develop in many different ways and at many different times. We are committed to being sensitive to each child's growth and development. We are also sensitive to those children who are developing with disabilities. The MetroWest YMCA early learning educators work to establish an atmosphere that enables all children to explore and grow.

## **C Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center is to provide quality care and education in a safe and supportive environment that fosters the physical, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social growth of children, while supporting and strengthening families.

## **D Non-discrimination Policy**

MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center admit children of any race and ethnicity to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all children and families at the Y. The Y does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, parents' marital status, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, physical or mental disability, toilet training status, sexual orientation or ability to pay. Children do not need to be toilet trained in order to be eligible to enroll.

In an effort to ensure that all children and families are welcome and comfortable in our programs, holidays and cultural celebrations are not observed in our classrooms. We encourage children to discuss special events and meaningful parts of their lives while they are at school, but the educators do not design any activities or introduce concepts that are not inclusive and relevant to all of the children. It is our intention that no child or family should ever feel excluded or devalued.

## **E Licensing Information**

All MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center are licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and are mandated to uphold all of the EEC rules and regulations pertaining to large group day care licensing policies. The EEC regional office responsible for the program is located at 10 Austin Street, Worcester, MA 01609. The phone number is (508) 798-5180. Parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history.

## **II Our Educators**

### **A Overview**

We believe the success of our programs, which ultimately rests in your child(ren)'s experience, lies in the quality of our educators. Our educators are carefully selected based on their experience, education, talents and interpersonal skills. They receive an in-depth orientation training to cover such areas as program goals, emergency procedures, group work, curriculum planning, philosophy of education, goals and objectives, and policy procedures. Our early learning educators have a multitude of experiences and backgrounds. All of our educators have background record checks that include criminal background checks (CORI checks), Sexual Offenders Registry Index checks (SORI), Department of Children and Families review, and fingerprints in addition to training in first aid, CPR, and child abuse and neglect prevention.

### **B Educator and Volunteer Qualifications**

The YMCA provides its educators with many opportunities for development and advancement through staff training. The Center Directors inform their teachers of all trainings available to YMCA staff. These trainings include conferences, workshops, college courses, and other opportunities. Teachers are required to complete at least twenty hours of training per year.

Center Directors also contact speakers to come to the YMCA to speak to educators on topics such as child abuse, behavioral problems, children with disabilities, positive guidance, and other pertinent issues.

In addition, the Early Childhood Director provides opportunities for teachers to visit other Early Learning Centers in the community and within the YMCA. These visits provide the educators with the opportunity to observe different teaching styles and share program ideas with their colleagues.

The YMCA also encourages volunteers to work in its early learning programs as teacher assistants or similar roles. These volunteers receive appropriate orientation, training, supervision and staff development. They are chosen for their ability to meet the needs of the children. They must meet the same requirements as the staff in regards to Background Record Checks (BRC)'s, references, and an orientation to the program. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in trainings that are offered to the paid educators. Although volunteers must track the dates and times of their service, they are not to be left alone with children and must always be under the direct visual supervision of an EEC qualified educator unless they meet EEC certification requirements.

For a volunteer who is a parent of a child enrolled in the YMCA's Early Learning Center, the Background Record Check and reference check is not applicable as long as this parent is not included in the required educator to child ratio.

The YMCA will describe, in writing, any arrangements they may have with any school or professional training program that will include an overview of student responsibilities as well as an explanation of the supervision of students by the training program and the YMCA.

## III Children's Rights and Responsibilities

### A Educators' Responsibilities

Educators are responsible for ensuring that children enrolled:

- Have a safe and reliable environment free of hazards.
- Have use of all of the equipment and space on an equal basis; equipment will be in functioning and clean condition.
- Have their ideas and feelings respected.
- Be guided into appropriate behavior using positive guidance strategies that are fair, equal and respectful of them.
- Have opportunity to express their anger, frustration, disappointment, joy, etc., in an appropriate manner.
- Have activities that allow participants to express their creative ability, as they explore and discover, while developing to their fullest potential.
- Have an environment that offers a variety of choices: physical, gross motor, quiet, indoor, outdoor, active and passive areas, creative, dramatic play and exploration.
- Have a right to voice their opinion on the rules and give input on activities offered.
- Have educators that care about them, enjoy being with them and help them grow.
- Are treated with the core values of the YMCA (care, respect, honesty and responsibility).

### B Children's Responsibilities

Children need to be responsible for:

- Learning to accept consequences for their own actions.
- Displaying character development traits: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.
- Respecting the rules that are established for and by them.
- Controlling their anger so that their actions do not harm anyone.
- Not willfully damaging any equipment or property in the building or anyone else's property.
- Sharing equipment and facilities with all children in the program.
- Returning materials and equipment to the place they found them and before they start a new activity or go home.
- Participating in and carrying out an activity that they committed themselves to.

## IV Enrollment Procedures and Requirements

### A Registration

#### 1 Enrollment Criteria

Registration for MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center is for children ages 12 months to six years (pre-kindergarten). Letters are sent to all families to notify them of upcoming registration dates. Outside requests for registration are placed on a waiting list. Individual registration procedures are done throughout the year pending availability by appointment, and include meeting with the Director, a tour of the facility, a parent orientation and child transition visits.

Registration is first offered to the existing participants, then to the established waiting list families and then to the public who inquire about registration. Our enrollment capacity is listed on our EEC license.

Families start the process by submitting a one page application form and fee. Once a start date has been confirmed, families will receive a link to SchoolDoc.com, a secure online service to complete the enrollment process. Registration information include a Parent and Physician Health Form, Developmental History, Pick-up Authorization, Field Trip Permission Slip, Basic Registration (with non-refundable fee), Emergency Information and Consent Forms and developmental screening forms (completed in paper form). Please note that all authorizations and emergency contact information must be updated annually.

## **2 Medical Information Needed Prior to Enrollment**

Medical information from the pediatrician's office must include the following:

- Dates of immunizations (including Varivax/Varicella/Chicken Pox)
- Update Lead Test (yearly up to age 3)
- Date of physical
- Signature of Doctor

Enrollment and registration materials are confidential, but available immediately to:

- The program administrators and educators in the child's classroom
- The child's parents or legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities, on request.

## **B Registration Changes**

Any changes in registration information concerning you or your child(ren) must be arranged on an ongoing basis with your Center Director (i.e., changes in pick-up authorization, addresses, work or home phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc.) If you are changing your child's scheduled days, you must give one month's written notice. Changes will only be accommodated if space allows. Pick-up authorization can be updated via email or written note to the Director or classroom teachers and then updated on SchoolDoc.

## **C Child and Family Orientation**

As part of our commitment to family engagement, the YMCA prepared this orientation process to welcome children and families to our program and to help ensure that the program is a good match for the child, his/her family and the center. In our experience, children are most successful transitioning into our centers when they have the opportunity to visit their new classroom a couple of times prior to their official start date. After the registration form and fee have been received and a start date has been confirmed, we recommend that the child spends at least an hour and one half visit to his/her new classroom. We require that the parent stay for 30 minutes with their child to help him/her transition into the room. The parent will leave the room for the remaining hour of the visit so that the child can start becoming comfortable without his or her parent and the Director or Lead Teacher will meet with the family members to discuss the priorities for the family and review the following center policies and procedures. Please note that all information must be completed on SchoolDoc before the child's first day in the Center.

Whenever possible and needed, the YMCA will work with families to provide a translator and to translate written materials.

- Philosophy, curriculum goals and objectives, and written statements of purpose
- Types of services provided
- Child guidance policy
- Communication strategies



- Procedures for addressing individualized needs including IFSP's, IEP's, and health plan such as severe allergies
- Health and safety precautions and requirements that affect families and their children including building security and access, medications, inclusion or exclusion of ill children, and emergency plans
- Techniques used by the program to negotiate difficulties and differences that arise in interactions between families and program staff;
- Payment, meals and snacks, and sleeping arrangements
- Confidentiality policy
- Referral policy
- Termination and suspension policy
- Identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect
- When appropriate, transportation plans and field trip policies including safety precautions such as cell phone availability, first-aid supplies on trip, and alternative transportation arrangements

Family members are encouraged to leave their child for at least part of the time by the second visit, but are requested to remain on the YMCA grounds. In the event that a child demonstrates significant discomfort and anxiety during this orientation process, additional visits or a modified schedule may be explored.

Once the visits have taken place, all of the enrollment paperwork has been completed and received including physical forms, and the first tuition payment has been made, the child may start on an agreed upon date.

#### **D Financial Information**

New children interested in enrolling in the Early Learning Center will be charged a non-refundable registration fee of \$60. For returning families, the fee is \$30. For state-subsidized participants (contracted slots or vouchers), there is no registration fee required. Please note that families receiving YMCA assist are still required to pay the registration fee.

Upon enrollment, families on EEC subsidies must provide a deposit equal to the assessed parent fee for 5 full days of care which will be credited to the final week of enrollment. Regular tuition payments are due no later than the Monday the week before care is provided.

For all other families, pre-payment equal to one week's tuition will be required at the time of registration to reserve that child's slot and will be applied to the last week of the program year in August. Tuition payments must be made in advance of service and are due on the Monday one week before the week of care unless alternative arrangements have been made. Families will be charged a late fee of \$15 when payments are one week late. Tuition that is two weeks overdue may result in termination of care and prohibit access to other YMCA programs if a payment plan has not been approved. The MetroWest YMCA will send all unpaid tuition fees to a collection agency.

Early Learning rates are not reduced for any weeks containing scheduled holidays, closures due to inclement weather or child absences.

#### **E Financial Assistance**

The tuition is based on covering the operating costs of the program. Our Annual Campaign helps to keep tuition reasonable while allowing us to provide quality programming. Through the Y's Assist Program, we offer reduced rates to individuals and families who cannot afford the full price of

membership, program activity or Early Learning tuition. Eligibility is based on income level, family size and funds available. We require that all families who receive Y-Assist explore other tuition subsidies, such as the Department of Early Education and Care vouchers, so that we can help as many families as possible. As a result, we also accept voucher payments through local resource and referral agencies and have limited contracted slot spaces for income eligible participants. Ask the Early Learning Director or Executive Director of Education for more details.

## **F Withdrawal Policy**

Parents must inform the MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center in writing one month in advance if they are withdrawing their child from the program. Parents who fail to do so will still be liable for payment for one month after the center has been notified. The MetroWest YMCA reserves the right to terminate services with a two-week advance notice to families. When the health, welfare and safety of other children are at stake, the YMCA reserves the right to suspend or terminate services immediately.

## **V Curriculum and Assessment System**

### **A Program Plan**

The MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center is designed to build strong bodies, minds and spirits. Activities at the YMCA are designed to put learning in the context of play and to celebrate the joys of learning and growing. They include gross motor and language activities, sensory experiences, creative expression, learning through hands-on exploration and acquisition of self-help skills. Our curriculum addresses each child's developmental needs and interests and emphasizes the YMCA character values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. This individualized instruction helps each child grow and succeed. Our classes are designed to make children feel safe and comfortable while learning, exploring, socializing and enjoying themselves. Programs allow children to be social, to feel empowered and to participate in hands-on learning activities. Through our programs, young people have opportunities to test themselves through action and performance, which enables their brains to mature and help them learn how to solve problems, make sound judgments and try on broader responsibilities. By participating in a large variety of engaging activities that support all areas of development, children will be more prepared for school and older children will be more successful academically. Our programs provide safe and reliable environments for kids to select and develop new interests . . . while they have fun!

MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center provides high quality early education and care to children ages 12 months to six years (pre-kindergarten). Part-week and full-week programs are available for preschool and pre-kindergarten classrooms. We only offer full-week care in our toddler classroom.

Routines create a structure for children that helps provide a framework for understanding and learning in their environment. In order to meet the developmental needs of each child, the daily schedule and curriculum vary not only from one site to another, but also among classrooms. Even within a single classroom, there is flexibility within the schedule to respond to the individual children at a given moment while still keeping the framework of the schedule for consistency. This is a sample daily schedule for an early learning classroom.

7:30	–	9:00	Arrival, centers, and choice time
9:00	–	9:15	Snack
9:15	–	9:45	Circle Time

9:45	–	11:00	Centers and projects
11:00	–	12:00	Outdoor Play
12:00	–	12:30	Lunch
12:30	–	1:00	Story time
1:00	–	2:30	Quiet time/Rest time*
2:30	–	3:00	Stories, Special Quiet Activities/Rest time
3:00	–	3:15	Snack
3:15	–	4:00	Outdoor Play
4:00	–	5:30	Centers, projects, and choice time
5:30	–	6:00	Story time and departure

\*Quiet time/rest time is incorporated into the daily schedule in the early afternoon for each early learning classroom. Although children are given the opportunity to sleep during this time, children who do not fall asleep are given quiet activities.

## **B Curriculum and Assessment**

MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center provide a variety of activities in a safe and caring environment that is designed to meet the individual interests and developmental needs of the children enrolled in our programs. The curriculum provides the basic structure for how we go about the business of supporting growth and learning. It is based on a thorough knowledge of the developmental stages each child travels through and the skills that are acquired along the way.

In 2006, the MetroWest YMCA followed the YMCA of the USA’s recommendation to adopt the Creative Curriculum system for curriculum and assessment. The tool recently expanded to include a separate assessment portion, Teaching Strategies GOLD. Combined together, this curriculum and assessment system is one of the three tools approved by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) for ensuring the effective measurement and support of programs across all developmental domains. It identifies important skills and knowledge for children across a broad range of developmental stages in the areas of social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language as well as a number of content areas such as literacy, mathematics, science and technology, health and safety, creative expression and the arts.

With this basic knowledge and a greater knowledge of your child over time, our educators plan learning experiences that are designed to encourage active learning and continued growth in all areas. The key to keeping your child excited and motivated to learn is by planning activities based on what we discover about your child’s interests and needs.

Our learning environments are child-friendly, print-rich and organized into interest centers. The materials and equipment seen in our programs include:

- Dramatic play materials such as dress-up clothing , puppets, housekeeping furniture, play food and dishes
- Sensory materials such as sand, water, play dough, paint, and blocks
- Literacy materials such as books, writing utensils, posters, photos, and shelf labels
- Math materials such as balance, counting bears, unit blocks, and lotto games
- Science materials such as magnets, prisms, rocks, shells, feathers, and plants
- Gross motor equipment that requires pulling up, climbing in, on or over, moving through, around, under and pushing, pulling, and riding

Diversity in culture, language, gender roles, age and abilities is represented through planned activities, books, dolls, play food, multilingual labels, dress-up clothes, musical instruments, posters, and other activities, materials and equipment.

A daily schedule and routine helps to integrate all of the activities and opportunities for learning, but is always flexible enough for unplanned learning experiences that may present themselves. Children are scheduled for times of quiet or active play and also have opportunities to interact with large groups, small groups, or independently. Some activities are short in duration, while others may be long term or repeated frequently. Many activities will challenge children to use what they already know and challenge them to apply that knowledge to different circumstances.

The use of passive media (screen time) is limited to developmentally appropriate programming that supports learning objectives and includes social interaction for no more than 30 minutes per week and must be preapproved before being shown in the classroom. Screen time is prohibited for children under the age of two.

### **C Developmental Screening**

In the fall of 2009, the MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center added the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE) to its enrollment documents. Before the child's first day, parents and guardians complete these developmental screening questionnaires at home or in another location comfortable for the child. The questionnaires provide information on how each child is developing in their communication, gross and fine motor (physical), problem solving, personal-social, and social emotional skills. Both the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE identify each child's strengths as well as areas where additional support may be needed. This information is beneficial since it helps establish a partnership between the child's family and educators, they provide information necessary for individualizing the classroom curriculum, and puts a system in place for addressing potential areas of concern.

Once the questionnaires have been completed and returned to the Center, they will be scored and reviewed by a trained program supervisor. The ASQ-3 results will be shared with the child's parents or guardians as well as the educators in the child's classroom during the family orientation. If the screening tool indicates follow-up recommendations, a more formal conference with the parents or guardians, lead teacher from the classroom and a program supervisor will take place. During the conference, different options will be discussed to determine the best way to support the child in future learning and development. Some examples of follow-up actions are to provide specialized activities both in the classroom and at home that are designed to target specific skills, a recommendation to share results with child's primary care physician, or a recommendation to be further screened by early intervention or the special education department of the family's public school system. Based on our Confidentiality Policy, the MetroWest YMCA will only share ASQ-3 results and recommendations within the Center staff on a need to know basis and no referrals to outside professionals will be made without the written consent of the child's parent or guardian.

Additional information regarding the ASQ's is available at [www.AgesandStages.com](http://www.AgesandStages.com) or with the Center Director.

### **D Assessment and Its Relationship to Curriculum Planning**

Assessment is the process of examining each child's progress towards achieving developmental milestones. Each skill or content learning a child develops within each developmental level is built upon a previous skill or knowledge base. The assessment portion of the Creative Curriculum, now known as Teaching Strategies GOLD, involves the use of a progression of knowledge, skills and behaviors that are

the most predictive of school success. It also includes objectives that help educators focus on the competencies valued in the Massachusetts State Early Learning Standards as well as national standards. Each area of development – socio-emotional, physical, cognitive, language – is subdivided into curriculum goals and objectives. Those goals and objectives serve as tools in the teaching/learning process. Teachers use these goals and objectives as focus points for observations.

Teachers must participate in workshops or college coursework in addition to mentoring support in order to learn the Y's curriculum and assessment process. After teachers finish their training on how to authentically assess children, they observe and interact with each child in their natural state of play as individuals and participants in small and large groups within their class. The assessments take place in a language the children understand doing developmentally appropriate activities to discover their interests and strengths. Educators collect detailed records over time for each developmental goal to reveal growth, areas of interest and possibly areas needing special support. This informal assessment technique includes discussions, observations, and information gained from parents. Educators also collect samples of children's work and photograph children in action for sharing in portfolios with families twice a year. Assessments are discussed with families at least twice per year. Teachers will also email a chart that demonstrates the child's progress during the year before the conferences. Conferences are offered to discuss each child's development and any goals families and teachers have for the child. Methods of supporting students at home will be shared taking into account learning strengths and style. To ensure student confidentiality, all assessments will be maintained by the classroom teacher until they are discussed with parents during scheduled conferences. After the conference, the assessments will be placed in the child's permanent file at the Center and one will be sent home with the family member.

The benefits to using the Teaching Strategies GOLD Objectives for Development and Learning include the following:

- Assisting educators and families to have realistic expectations within developmental stages
- Targeting specific goals for observation and develop individual plans for each child based on these observations
- Promoting a positive approach to teaching by focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses
- Providing educators with a wealth of information to share with families about their child
- To improve curriculum, adapt teaching practices, and adjust the environment
- To identify areas for program improvement such as informing curriculum, individualized instruction, and professional development topics

Once teachers have collected their observations, they analyze the data collected and identify which objective each child has reached on the developmental continuum. Educators discuss this information with families and jointly plan priorities, goals, and next steps. By working with parents and caregivers, educators gain greater knowledge of each child to plan learning experiences that are designed to encourage active learning and continued growth in all areas. The key to keeping children excited and motivated to learn is by partnering with families to provide activities based on each child's interests and needs within the context of each family's values, beliefs, experiences and language.

In addition, educators analyze cumulative information for the whole class to prioritize objectives for both the entire class as well as for individuals. Teaching teams then plan strategies to best support children's learning creating the final step in a four part cycle: 1. Observe, 2. Record, 3. Reflect, 4. Plan.

Educators constantly flow from one part to the next which provides the framework to present activities that encourage continued growth in all areas.

## **E Interest Centers**

The classrooms are divided into different interest centers to help provide learning in different areas. The materials and equipment seen in our programs include

- dramatic play;
- sensory materials such as sand, water, play dough, paint, and blocks;
- literacy, math, science, social studies, and other content areas; and
- gross-motor such as pulling up; walking; climbing in, on, and over; moving through, around, and under; pushing; pulling, and riding.
- Manipulatives

## **F Outdoor Play Areas**

Every day, children are given the opportunity to be active for at least 60 minutes in full day programs. Most of the time, this active play takes place outside on our playgrounds. The playgrounds were designed to be age and developmentally appropriate and include places for children to play alone or with friends. Motor experiences such as running, balancing, riding, jumping, crawling, and scooting are typically part of the structure experience. Other non-motor activities such as dramatic play, block building, manipulative play and art activities are also incorporated into the outdoor experience. Children have opportunities to learn about the natural environment including exploring different types of surfaces, materials, and plants during outside time. It is our hope that children with all level of gross motor skills, including those with disabilities, can participate in the outdoor curricula. Sandboxes used for playing are kept clean and covered when not in use by the children.

A Certified Playground Safety Inspector has visited our playgrounds and certified that the play equipment is safe for children through kindergarten age, there are no unsafe conditions, and regular inspection and maintenance is performed.

## **G Program Evaluation**

In order to ensure that the Early Learning Center is operating at the highest level of quality possible, every June, the MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center conducts a comprehensive program evaluation. Administrators, families, educators, and other stakeholders work together to measure progress toward the MetroWest YMCA Strategic Plan and the individual program's goals and objectives. The evaluation process gathers evidence in all areas of program functioning by using valid and reliable processes such as family surveys, educator surveys, classroom observations, aggregated child assessment data, and financial reports. Educators are encouraged to attend the June Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meeting where the agenda focuses on program planning and ongoing program operations. During this process a complete review of the program takes place. Since all components of program operation are guided by written policies and are carried out through articulated plans, systems, and procedures, the evaluation process also includes reviewing whether the policies support the smooth and effective guidance needed to reach program goals.

Some examples of program functioning that are evaluated are: policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning (including review of developmental screening and assessment effectiveness), family involvement and satisfaction, community awareness and satisfaction, and financial health.

Once the evaluation has been completed, a report of the annual evaluation findings is shared with families, educators, administration, and the Regional Education Community Board. With their input, the evaluation results are used to support the continuation of successful activities and to establish goals for

improvement and innovation. The evaluation helps determine appropriate professional development opportunities, program quality improvement activities, and operation and policy updates.

During staff and PAC meetings, program goals and requirements are evaluated to ensure that progress is being made. Electronic documentation including data review toward goals is maintained in addition to the database collection and monitoring of children and staff files and financial records. Adjustments may be made in the program goals during the year based on new circumstances or priorities that occur.

## **VI Policies and Procedures**

### **A Child Guidance**

The goal of our child guidance plan is to minimize opportunities for challenging behaviors, suspension, and/or exclusionary measures, as well as to help children develop tools to make good decisions about resolving conflicts and solving problems so that children can demonstrate respect for each other and their environment as well as ensure the safety and security of everyone involved.

Behavior management is accomplished through a positive approach that respects the child as an individual. Teachers actively incorporate communication, social, and emotional regulation skills into the curriculum to support children in using appropriate behavior rather than focusing only on reducing challenging behaviors. Discipline procedures are handled individually, usually with a mild consequence that is associated with the particular infraction and incorporates the teaching of a more positive alternative and does not include any circumstances when it is permissible for staff to use any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child.

Teachers observe children to assess the function of the behavior and to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that predict or contribute to the child's use of challenging behavior. Once these negative behavior triggers are found, educators explore ways to minimize their impact to promote positive behaviors by the children through the modification of the environment or activities as well as provide adult or peer support.

#### **1 Methods of Guidance Approved for YMCA Educators**

Teachers address challenging behavior by assessing the function of the child's behavior, convening families and professionals to develop individualized plans to address behavior, and using positive behavior support strategies.

When a challenging behavior occurs, the teachers discuss the problem with the child in a developmentally appropriate manner. Teachers respond to the child in a way that is safe for the child and others in the classroom, is calm, is respectful, and provides the child with information about acceptable behavior. When possible, the child is encouraged to suggest alternative solutions and assist in implementing them.

Teachers also help children manage their behavior by guiding and supporting children to:

- Persist when frustrated
- Play cooperatively with other children
- Use language to communicate needs
- Learn turn taking

- Gain control of physical impulses
- Express negative emotions in ways that do not harm others or themselves
- Use problem-solving techniques
- Learn about self and others.

A typical classroom intervention follows a three-step process depending on the infraction and the age of the child. First, the child would be redirected to a positive alternative to the negative behavior. Second, if the negative behavior continues, the child would be asked to leave the activity, but encouraged to find a different option. Third, if the negative behavior persists, the child would be separated from the rest of the group to a safe place within view and near the educator. The child may rejoin the group once he or she has demonstrated the ability to follow classroom guidelines and make appropriate behavioral decisions. Please note that although the time that a child is separated is not dictated by a set number of minutes, rather by the child's ability to demonstrate his or her capacity to make good decisions, educators check in with the child in fewer minutes than the number of the child's age.

In problematic situations where children exhibit persistent, serious, and challenging behaviors, teachers, families, and the Y's Inclusion team will partner as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success both at home and at the YMCA.

## **2 Prohibited Methods of Behavior Management**

**Staff may NEVER use the following methods of discipline:**

- No spanking or other corporal punishment.
- No cruel, unusual, or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, abusive treatment.
- No denial of meals or snacks, drink, rest or bathroom facilities as punishment.
- No force-feeding.
- No punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet or other excessive practices of toileting.
- No punishment related to eating or not eating food.
- Time-outs where children are isolated for a specific amount of time based on their ages. At the MetroWest YMCA, children may need to leave the group or their activity until they can demonstrate that they can make appropriate decisions about their behaviors. Educators help the children explore the situation as a learning experience so that the children can make more appropriate decisions in the future.

Any YMCA staff that violates any of the prohibited methods listed above will be immediately suspended until Department of Children and Families and Department of Early Education and Care complete further investigation.

In all cases, suspension and/or expulsion of a child from the Early Learning Program is the final decision of the MetroWest YMCA President or her designee. Although a last resort, suspension may be necessary to ensure the safety of your child and of others in the group.

## **3 Child Guidance Procedure**

There are times when a child's behavior may be cause for concern by educators, family or your child's program director. When this occurs, a conference with the appropriate YMCA staff and the child's parents/guardians will be held to outline the concerns and develop a plan for managing the behavior(s). The cooperative behavior management procedure will be presented to the parent/guardian for their



signature. In most cases, external consultations will be recommended and follow up meetings will be scheduled to discuss the progress of the plan.

In some cases it may be necessary to ask the parent to withdraw the child from the center –

- If the concerning behaviors have not diminished.
- If the problematic incident is the final incident in a succession of aggressive behaviors that are harmful to the child and/or other children/staff at the center.
- If it is determined that we are unable to provide the services that the child requires (i.e. special language or speech support, additional staffing, etc.). If this situation occurs, re-enrollment of the child will be considered after this phase has passed.

## **B Children's Evaluations**

All children enrolled in the Early Learning Center will have two formal evaluations each year using Teaching Strategies GOLD. Parents/Guardians will also be informed either verbally or in writing about their child's development and learning on a quarterly basis. Evaluations provide the opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss goals and next steps for the child. They also cover developmental areas including cognitive, social, and physical growth. Parents/Guardians or educators may also request an individual conference with educators or the Early Learning Center Director at any time.

## **C Special Needs**

The MetroWest YMCA will request and review information given by the parent related to the child's participation in the program. Identification of specific accommodations required to meet the needs of the child, which would include change or modification in the child's participation in regular activities, would be discussed, as well as identification of any special equipment, materials, ramps or aids. If such accommodations will cause undue burden on the program, the parent will be notified in writing, which would include reasons for the decisions. Parents may contact the Department of Early Education and Care to review the decision.

## **D Referrals**

The MetroWest YMCA has information regarding resources for multiple different resources for families. Here are some of the more commonly requested community supports:

### *Counseling:*

SMOC Behavioral: (508) 879-2250

Wayside Youth and Family: (508) 879-9800

Advocates: (508) 485-9300

### *Medical Services:*

Dr. Jeffrey Zaref, Southboro Pediatrics in Framingham: (508) 872-1260

Natick Dental Partners (Pediatric Dentists): (508) 653-2417

MetroWest Medical Center: (508) 383-1000

### *Education and Special Needs:*

Criterion Early Intervention: (508) 620-1442

Ashland Public Schools (508) 881-0150

Ashland Public Schools, Special Education Department: (508) 881-0155

Framingham Public Schools, Parent Information Center: (508) 424-3420  
Framingham Public Schools, Special Education Department: (508) 424-3458

*Social Services and Tuition Assistance:*

Department of Transitional Assistance: (508) 661-6600  
Child Care Resources: (508) 796-1829  
SMOC Helpline: (800) 620-2347  
United Way Call Center Information & Referral Line: 211

Inquiries about these and other referral services should be made through the Director. If an educator develops a concern about a child based on the assessment process, the behavior will be observed, recorded and reviewed before a referral is recommended. A parent meeting will be set up to discuss the program's concerns and referral in a sensitive and supportive way. All referrals are kept confidential.

If a child is at least 2 ½ years of age, the YMCA will inform the child's parent(s) or guardians(s) of the availability of services and their rights, including the right to appeal under Chapter 766. If a child is under the age of 2.5 years, the YMCA will inform the child's parent(s) of the availability of services provided by Early Intervention Programs.

The YMCA will provide parents with a written statement including the reason for recommending a referral for additional services, a brief summary of the program's observations related to the referral and any efforts the program may have made to accommodate the child's needs. The YMCA will offer assistance to the child's parents by making the referral; written parental consent will be obtained before any referral is made. A written record of any referrals will be maintained, including records of conferences with parents and the results. The Director will have contacts for the Chapter 766 and Early Intervention Programs.

## **E Transition Plan**

Educators, specialists, and family members work together to determine the best way to support children when they transition out of our Early Learning Center. When possible, the adults involved work together to use multiple strategies to help the child understand and prepare for the change. With family consent, educators complete a developmental profile to share with teachers of the child's new school including kindergarten and special education teachers. For children involved with special education as well as significant behavioral challenges, Y educators try to be involved in the transition meetings and provide written reports as appropriate.

The MetroWest YMCA collaborates with the Framingham Public Schools to support children and families transitioning into the public school system. YMCA staff can quickly access public school information, forms, and supports directly to families enrolled in our Early Learning Center. YMCA staff share flyers relating to special education screening, kindergarten enrollment, and other public school related services. When families experience challenges navigating the public school system, YMCA staff can provide additional support. For children moving into kindergarten, School's Out can provide before- and afterschool care at six of the eight public elementary schools in Framingham. Please contact the School's Out Director or School's Out Enrollment Coordinator for more information.

We try to minimize transitions during the year, especially for our toddlers to allow for children to develop trusting relationships with their teachers and to promote their social and emotional development. For this reason, we prefer not to enroll children between 2 and 2 years, 9 months. This

way, children have at least 9 months with the same teachers to support their social and emotional needs.

## **F Procedures to Avoid Suspension or Termination**

Warnings and/or suspensions are used before termination is instituted when possible. Incidents will be documented and shared with parents when possible. A reasonable effort is made to work with the family prior to termination. Documentation of all referrals that are recommended for or requested by the parent is kept in the child's file.

Exclusion is considered only after multiple interventions and meetings have been explored and is a last resort method. Any referrals or services are discussed with the parent or guardian to assist them in finding an alternate. Our policies are in line with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Regulations.

Possible reasons for suspension and/or termination of a child from the Early Learning Center include:

- Inappropriate behavior by child, considered to be harmful to your child, educators or others (Families are still liable for payment for days suspended due to inappropriate behavior.)
- Inappropriate behavior or language by adult family members, considered to be harmful to your child, educators or others (Families are still liable for payment for days suspended due to inappropriate behavior.)
- Chronic tardiness at pick up time
- Chronic absenteeism
- Overdue fees
- Other, as determined and discussed with the Director

When a child is terminated from the program, the educators must prepare the child for termination in a manner consistent with his/her ability to understand, when possible. Suspension will not be for punishment or to circumvent the referral requirements and will not be in violation of the ADA.

## **G Clothing and Rest time**

Children at the YMCA are active and involved. They should wear clothes that are seasonally appropriate, comfortable, practical and wash easily. Although children wear paint smocks, spills and paint still can get onto their clothing. Please send your child to the program with an extra set of clothing in case of accidents/spills. And during the winter months, all children should come to the center with mittens, boots, hats and snowsuits. To protect your child from injury while running and climbing, we ask for no sandals or flip flops. Your child's shoes should cover the toes completely and be secure on their feet.

In addition, children need to bring bedding for their cots during rest time. Typically, children need a small blanket and crib-sized sheet. Some children also enjoy a small pillow and a small stuffed animal or other comfort animal. Due to our space limitations, sleeping bags and full size pillows are not allowed. Families are responsible for washing all bedding weekly or more often if needed.

All belongings should be *labeled* with the child's name. The Y is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing or bedding.

## **H Toileting Procedures**

For children not toilet trained, the educators will change diapers every two hours, when the child wakes from a nap, or as needed during the day. Diapers will be changed on a changing table with fresh paper. Soiled diapers are placed in a closed container that is lined with a leak proof disposable lining. Diaper pails will be cleaned when needed. The changing surface is washed with a soap and water solution then disinfected with bleach/water solution (1 part bleach/10 parts water) between each change. Each child will be washed and dried with individual washing materials during every change. Teachers will wear gloves whenever changing a child.

After every change the child and educators will wash their hands following EEC guidelines for hand washing, and disposable towels will be used to dry hands. The parent will supply diapers and ointments.

Children who are already toilet trained will go to the bathroom as needed. For those children who are just learning, teachers will provide opportunities throughout the day for the child to become accustomed to the toilet. Children using the toilet will follow EEC guidelines for hand washing, and will use disposable towels to dry their hands. The teachers will always discuss the procedures with the parents, and follow their requests.

If a child should have a toileting accident and he/she soils his/her clothes, one teacher will escort the child to the bathroom where he/she will be cleaned up and provided with a clean change of clothes. The soiled clothes will then be put into a plastic bag labeled with the child's name. The bag of soiled clothes will be given to the parent upon pick-up. All parents are required to provide the teachers with a clean set of seasonally appropriate clothes for their child (pants, shirt, underpants, t-shirt, & socks).

## **I Tooth Brushing**

With concerns about the increase in tooth decay (cavities) among young children, the MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center includes the promotion of positive oral health and prevention of tooth decay in the classrooms. Early Learning Educators will assist children with brushing their teeth when they are in care for more than four (4) hours and have a meal in our care. This program is implemented safely by following the regulations for infection control set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is free to the families. Children will be brushing with the direct supervision of our educators using toothpaste with fluoride and approved by the American Dental Association. The MetroWest YMCA will provide new tooth brushes for each child after three months of use, or after they are sick.

## **J Sippy Cups and Pacifiers**

One of our goals at the Early Learning Center is to help children learn self-help skills and that includes learning how to eat while seated and to drink from a regular cup and transition from a pacifier.

Preschool children who arrive at the Center with a sippy cup with milk or juice as part of their breakfast will be encouraged to sit at the breakfast table until they are finished. After the child is finished, the contents will be discarded and the cup will be rinsed out and put in your child's cubby. Snack and lunch beverages (except juice boxes) will be served in 5 oz. disposable plastic cups.

Toddler parents are encouraged to provide more than one sippy cup for use at snack (2 times) and lunch. All sippy cups must be sanitized before they can be reused. Beverages that are not totally consumed may not be returned to the refrigerator for later use. When each Toddler is individually developmentally ready he/she will be introduced to a regular drinking cup.

When children are fully adjusted into the early learning center and are developmentally ready, educators and families will work together to support children who enroll in the centers using bottles to transition to sippy cups, then to regular cups.

Pacifiers can be very comforting to young children, especially during transition and rest times. In an effort to support the development of self-soothing skills as well as prevent ear infections, speech delays, and dental problems, educators and families will work together to help children transition away from pacifiers as soon as appropriate.

In order to prevent children from using someone else's sippy cup or pacifier, please make sure that all sippy cups and pacifiers are labeled with the child's name.

## **K Toys from Home**

The teachers discourage any toys/valuables from home being brought to the programs so that sharing does not become an issue and nothing is lost or broken. The classrooms provide toys that promote learning and essential skills which are rotated throughout the center. If a child brings in a toy to the center, the toy will be placed in their cubby until the end of the day.

## **L Birthdays**

Birthdays are happy events and most families enjoy celebrating by having parties and inviting friends and relatives to share the special day. Traditional parties involve lots of decorations, balloons, special foods, cake, ice cream and gifts. These types of parties usually take place at home or at a function hall.

At the Early Learning Center we like birthdays, too, but because this is an inclusive school environment that has to follow state regulations, we honor birthdays differently. We have a variety of special birthday cooking projects that children can select for their birthdays. Depending on dietary or allergy restrictions and the child's age, the birthday child chooses the specific dessert (refer to the Health Care Policy Manual for guidelines on nutritious snacking) for the kids to make in the classroom and has the role of special cooking helper. Usually, the special dessert is served for afternoon snack so that a few family members can join us.

If a family would like to join in the birthday celebration, parents should speak with the Center Director or Lead Teacher before the special day. During this discussion, families can share the names of visitors other than immediate family members who may be participating as well as receive approval for optional "goody bag" contents and fill out a photo/video release form.

Please note that children from other classrooms may not "come to the party" since ratio and classroom size guidelines must be met. Unfortunately, balloons are a choking hazard, so they are not allowed in the Center and gifts are not a part of this classroom party.

There are many advantages to this type of birthday celebration. We are able to ensure sanitary food preparation, while giving the children the opportunity to practice cooking skills, learn math concepts, and nutritional information. In addition, children can all experience and participate in a special birthday celebration regardless of their family's ability to provide a birthday experience.

## **M Holidays**

MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center may not be open on the following days.

Professional Development (two days)	August
Labor Day	September

Columbus Day	October
Veteran's Day	November
Thanksgiving Day	November
Day after Thanksgiving Day	November
Christmas Eve (close at 1:00)	December
Christmas Day	December
New Year's Eve (close at 1:00)	December
New Year's Day	January
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January
President's Day	February
Patriot's Day	April
Memorial Day	May
Independence Day	July

### **N Inclement Weather Policy**

In the case of inclement weather, please call for a voice mail message for Framingham based programs at the Framingham Branch (508-879-4420) for cancellation or delayed opening changes. If poor weather develops during the day, parents and guardians may be asked to pick up their children early. The MetroWest YMCA also reserves the right to close early or consolidate programs and/or classrooms due to low attendance.

### **O Drop-off and Attendance Policy**

To ensure a child's safety at drop-off, family members and other authorized adults must walk the child into the child's classroom, sign the child in on the appropriate form, and make sure that an educator is aware that the child has joined the group. Drop-off and pick-up times are also great opportunities to connect with your child's teachers. If the teacher is busy with another parent or engaged with children, feel free to wait until she has a moment or ask her to call you during rest time. Families are also welcome to email the Director who can forward any questions to the classroom educators. Please note there is a "no cell phone" policy inside the center. If you must take/make a phone call, please step outside of the child care doors to do so.

In order to ensure the safety of all of the children in our Early Learning Center, the MetroWest YMCA has added a locked security door to access the classrooms. For programs with combination locks, please do not share the code with children or any adults not on an authorized pick-up list including non-management or facilities employees of the YMCA who do not work in that department. In addition, do not open the door for any adults or children unless you are completely certain that they are families of enrolled children or YMCA educators. If you are not positive that an individual should have access to the classrooms, please refer the individual to the director.

Attendance will be taken throughout the program hours. Educators will note any unusual arrival or departure times. All programs will repeat attendance procedures at times of transition (i.e., going to the playground, lunch, etc.)

If a child is to be absent from a MetroWest YMCA Early Learning program, the parent must call prior to the child's usual scheduled arrival at the program. If your child is absent on his/her scheduled day, the parent is still responsible for payment for early learning services. The parent may be contacted in the event that a child does not arrive at the YMCA and previous notice has not been given. We request that all children arrive by 10:00 a.m. so that they can benefit from participation in circle time and classroom meetings.

## **P Late Pick-Up Policy**

All employees' scheduled hours revolve around the program's closing time. On certain occasions, when a parent must be late, the YMCA has established these firm policies:

- Parents must call the YMCA to let us know what time they will expect to arrive if they anticipate being late.
- Parents will be assessed a \$10.00 fee for the first ten minutes, and \$5 for each five minute interval afterward when children are still in the program after the center closes. A late fee charge will be added to the parents' bill. Cash is not accepted.
- In the event of consistent tardiness, a case conference will be convened to discuss possible alternatives. Consistent cases of tardiness may result in your child's termination from the program.

In the event that the YMCA does not receive a prior phone call from the parent, the following procedures will be immediately implemented:

- A YMCA educator will contact parents for instructions. If contact cannot be made, a YMCA educator will call the people on the emergency contact list to arrange pick-up. The late pick up fee will still be required.
- If by 1 hour after closing, contact cannot be made to the child's parent or emergency contact people, a call will be placed to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Emergency Unit to report an abandoned child. Educators will then follow instructions given by DCF as to what further arrangements are necessary. Parents will be informed to contact DCF for further instructions.

## **Q Authorized Pick-Up Policy**

Prior to the child's enrollment in the Early Learning Center, the parent or guardian must complete a Pick-Up Authorization Form. If a child is to be picked up by someone other than an authorized person, the Center must be notified in writing. Parents or designated persons picking up children must come in the building and sign the child out. For your child's safety we will not allow your child to leave the site without an authorized person. Please have picture identification available. All persons authorized must be 16 years of age.

Please be aware that if an educator suspects you have been consuming alcohol/drugs, you will be asked to have someone else pick-up your child. Your child will not be released to anyone believed to be under the influence.

## **R Emergency Procedures**

Children experiencing minor injuries or illness such as bumps, bruises, scrapes, bee stings and stomach upsets will be treated by educators who have received First Aid training, taking note of specifications on the child's health form. Educators will fill out first aid forms and give a copy to parents, retaining a copy for the Program's records. Parents will be informed of all first aid given to their child. If their child's symptoms persist, parents will be asked to pick up their child.

In case of a major emergency such as suspected broken bones, puncture wounds, etc.; the child will be taken by ambulance to the nearest emergency medical facility. Health forms on file will include child and parent information, emergency numbers when parents cannot be reached and a medical release to seek treatment if parents cannot be reached.

## **S Emergency Evacuation Plan**

Each Early Learning Center has evacuation instructions and routes posted at each exit.

- Children will walk escorted by their teachers to the nearest exit.

- Using daily attendance records, teachers check attendance to make sure all children are evacuated safely. Roll is called following evacuation to check for location of all children. Director leaves the building last, after having checked all rooms in the Center for any stragglers. Each classroom will bring the emergency contact information, first aid kit, and attendance records during an evacuation. For the toddler classroom, extra diapers and wipes will be kept with the first aid materials so that they can be easily accessible in the case of a long term evacuation.
- Evacuation/Fire drills take place at least monthly for early learning programs. The Director/Assistant Director is responsible for assuring that evacuation/fire drills are held at different times of the program day and are practiced with all groups of children. Specific procedures for each site will be provided and explained by the Director to all staff. The Director documents date, time and effectiveness of each drill and maintains documentation of the above-mentioned drills.

## **T Transportation**

MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Programs do not transport children on a regular basis. Children may be transported for field trip experiences or walks around the neighborhood with their teachers and classmates. To keep your child as safe as possible, please make sure that the child restraint system that is used for transporting your child is installed correctly, designed for children of the same age and/or size, and in compliance with current Massachusetts law.

### **1 Parking**

The family members and adults listed on children's pick-up authorization forms may park in any of the parking lots at the MetroWest YMCA Branch in Framingham. All children must be escorted by an adult to and from their classrooms. Let the Director know if you or your child needs assistance with this process so that assistance can be explored. Please note that all cars must be turned off when no one is in the vehicle, even for short periods of time. Any cars parked in the fire lane will be towed at the expense of the driver. This can also result in the loss of key card access to the side of the building which will require families to enter through the main door of the building.

### **2 Emergency Transportation Plan**

MetroWest YMCA Early Learning emergency procedures are as follows: A child who is injured at the YMCA and needs emergency medical care will be transported to the nearest emergency medical facility by ambulance. Parents or guardians will be immediately notified of the child's injury. If the parents or guardian cannot be contacted, the emergency contact list will be called. An educator will accompany the child to the nearest medical facility to await the child's parent, guardian or emergency contact person.

If a child is injured at a field trip location, an educator certified in first aid/CPR will assess the injury and instruct a fellow educator to obtain the child's emergency contact number from the vehicle and phone an ambulance, parent or guardian or emergency contact person and the YMCA's administrative staff. The child will then be transported by ambulance to the designated medical facility accompanied by an educator. The educator will stay with the child until the child's parent, guardian, or emergency contact person arrives at the medical facility.

### **3 Field Trip Transportation Plan**

Children participating in field trips from our early learning programs will be transported in YMCA vehicles, rental vehicles, transported by carriages (buggies/strollers), or walking. A minimum of two educators escort children when going for walks in the neighborhood. Educators take a charged cell phone or two-way radio in order to have contact with the Early Learning Director or designee. Prior to



departure, the communication device is tested by sharing that the group is leaving. The group also connects with the Early Learning Director or designee upon return.

The MetroWest YMCA is responsible for your child during vehicle transportation on field trips. In the event a vehicle should break down, alternative transportation will be secured at the branch with YMCA vehicles, or rental vehicles. All groups visiting an off-site facility will be responsible for travel first aid and emergency procedures. At least one person on all trips will be certified in first aid and CPR and a complete first aid kit with emergency information will accompany the group.

## **VII Health Policy**

The focus of the MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center will not be limited to learning but will encompass the physical and emotional aspects of your child's development. We ask for your complete cooperation in accepting the rules we have made for the health and safety of each child, and in turn we pledge to you our diligence in maintaining good practices. If at times you are inconvenienced, we ask you to remember that in protecting someone else's child you will also help maintain a safe environment for your own. A full Health Care Policy is available upon request.

### **A Sickness**

Please keep your child at home if he/she seems listless, unusually irritable, complains of aches, is feverish, or seems to be unusually pale or flushed. It is better to be overcautious than to risk exposing the rest of the children and educators. The following is a guideline for you to follow in determining when to keep your child at home.

### **B When Your Child Should Attend the YMCA**

Children should be kept home for:

- Earache
- Fever over 101°
- Strep throat
- Stomachache
- Anything that is contagious, i.e. chickenpox, conjunctivitis, etc.
- The child is unable to keep up with the pace of the day
- Diarrhea (3 or more loose stools within one day. Child must be free of diarrhea for 24 hours before return)
- Vomiting (One or more episodes. Child must be free from vomiting for 24 hours before returning)
- Rashes that are contagious (Rashes that are not identified/not diagnosed as non-communicable by a physician will need to be seen by a doctor).

Head Lice (When returning to the Y, parents should allow extra time for educators to check the head of the child to ensure that there are no nits. If nits are found, child will not be able to stay).

Child May Come With:

- Earaches, strep throat (provided they have been on medication for 24 hours)
- Colds
- Hay fever
- Anything that is not contagious
- The child is able to keep up with the pace of the day

When a child is kept home due to illness, he or she must be symptom free, on prescription medication, or off nonprescription medication, such as Tylenol and Motrin, for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Each child responds and reacts differently to sickness, so please be advised that the teachers and Director may need to send children home if they are unable to participate and keep up with the pace of the day. If your child is at the program and becomes ill, you will be required to pick up your child immediately. Please be aware that these guidelines are set forth to help maintain the health and safety of your child and other children as well.

Please notify the YMCA program immediately if your child is exposed to a contagious disease. The Director will notify you if and when it is necessary to keep your child at home. All parents will be given notice if a child in the program has been reported to have a contagious disease. Notices will include information on symptoms and general information on the contagion.

### **C Administration of Medication**

Prescription medication administered to a child must have prior written parent authorization. Prescription medication will only be administered on the written order of the child's physician and must be in the original container with the child's name, the name of the drug and directions for its administration and storage on the label. No educator shall administer the first dose of any medication to a child except under extraordinary circumstances and with parental consent.

When non-prescription oral medication needs to be administered, every attempt will be made to verbally contact the parent prior to giving it to the child. Non-prescription oral medication (i.e. cough syrup, Tylenol, etc.) must have written permission from a physician that is valid for one year. Written parental consent with dosage, times, days and purpose is also required and will be valid for either one week or one year depending on the situation.

When a child requires medication that requires special procedures, educators must receive specific training with a written performance evaluation indicating that they are competent in following the written special procedures.

All non-prescription topical ointments must have written parental consent (i.e. sunscreen, Vaseline, Destin etc.). All products that are provided by the parent must be labeled and only used for their child. Consent is valid for one year.

MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center will keep a written record of the administration of any medication that includes the time and date of each administration, the dosage, the name of the educator administering the medication and the name of the child. The YMCA will store all medications under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety. All unused medication will be returned to the parent.

### **D Individual Health Care Plans**

Individual Health Care Plans are required for children with chronic medical conditions that have been diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner. The plan must describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is in care, the potential side effects of that treatment, and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered. The educator must have successfully completed training, given by the child's health care

practitioner or, with his/her written consent, given by the child's parent or the program's health consultant that specifically addresses the child's medical condition, medication and other treatment needs. The educator may administer routine, scheduled medication or treatment to the child with a chronic medical condition in accordance with written parental consent and licensed health care practitioner authorization.

In addition to the requirements for the routine, scheduled administration of medication or treatment included in the Individual Health Care Plan, any unanticipated administration of medication or unanticipated treatment for a non-life-threatening condition requires that the educator will try to contact the parents prior to administering such unanticipated medication or beginning such unanticipated treatment, or, if the parents cannot be reached in advance, as soon as possible after such medication or treatment is given. Educators will document all medication or treatment that is administered, whether scheduled or unanticipated, in the child's medication and treatment log.

The written parental consent and the licensed health care practitioner authorization shall be valid for one year, unless withdrawn sooner. Such consent and authorization must be renewed annually for administration of medication and/or treatment to continue.

## **E Infection Control**

All educators must be trained in infection control procedures as part of their new staff orientation. The full guidelines are located in the full Health Care Policy.

### **1 Hand Washing**

The MetroWest YMCA recognizes the importance of hand washing as the first line of defense against infectious disease. Unwashed hands are the primary carriers of infections. Educators and children will observe the following hand washing procedures:

- Children and adults' hands should be washed:
  - On arrival for the day
  - After diapering or using the toilet
  - Before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, or after handling any raw food that requires cooking
  - Before and after playing in water that is shared by two or more people, outdoor play, handling pets and other animals, and any materials such as play dough, sand, dirt, sensory table materials, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals
  - When moving from one program area to another such as going from playground to the classroom
  - Educators also wash hands before and after administering medication and after handling garbage or cleaning
- Educators assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

### **2 Communal Water Play**

In order to prevent communal water play from spreading infectious disease, the following procedures are in place:

- No child is allowed to drink the water.
- Children with sores on their hands or other parts of their bodies that may come into contact with the water are not allowed to participate in communal water play.
- Fresh portable water is used

- Water is changed before children from another class in the program can participate in the activity.
- Water is drained when the activity has been completed.

### 3 Maintenance and Cleaning

To prevent the spread of infection, the following steps will be taken for washing and disinfecting specified equipment, items and surfaces:

- Educators will use disinfectant spray when cleaning counters, tables and garbage cans including diaper pails. Bleach or an approved EPA disinfectant will be used (¼ cup of bleach to one gallon is sufficient and safe for cleaning surfaces).
- Although all equipment, items and surfaces (including floors and walls) are washed with soap and water and disinfected as needed to maintain a sanitary environment, additional guidelines are also followed regarding the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting.
- Educators receive training on universal precautions annually to protect themselves and others when coming into contact with blood and other potentially infectious body fluids.

### F Disinfectant Solution

The disinfectant solution must be either a self-made bleach solution or a commercially prepared disinfectant that has been registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a sanitizing solution. (Registration can be identified by reading the product label and using the disinfectant precisely as directed on the label.) The household bleach used to prepare a self-made bleach solution must have 5.25% available chlorine as hypochlorite. A self-made bleach solution must be sealed with a cap and the solution must be prepared daily or tested daily in accordance with the Department of Public Health's guidelines. All such disinfectants must be stored in a secure place and out of the reach of children.

### G Nutritious Snack or Lunch Suggestions

MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center will work with parents to help ensure that the children's nutritional needs are being met in accordance with USDA requirements. Parents are required to provide a nutritious lunch for their child and asked to follow the guidelines below. We suggest the following items for when your child needs to bring a lunch and/or snack. A nutritious lunch would include something from all four-food groups.

The YMCA will ensure that nutritious snacks are provided for children. In accordance with USDA guidelines our fruits and vegetable serving sizes will be between ¼ and ½ cup depending on age. Each snack and meal that the Y serves contains a fruit or vegetable along with another food group component(s). Grains are always 100% whole, and water and white milk are the only beverages we serve. In addition the YMCA will follow parental or physician's orders in relation to special diets. Please label all food and beverage containers with the child's name. All unused food will be thrown away.

*Please note that the MetroWest YMCA cannot refrigerate or warm up lunches. We require using ice packs and thermoses.*

**Sandwich Suggestions:** cheese, chicken, jelly or jam, tuna, meats (turkey, ham, etc.)

**Sides:** Orange, apple, pear, banana, peach, dried fruit, trail mix, cucumbers, pepper strips, crackers, unsweetened yogurt, muffins, granola bars, cheese sticks.

**Beverage:** water, 4-6 oz. 100% fruit juice (orange, apple, grape), milk (low-fat or non-fat for children ages 2 and older; children under 2 receive whole milk)

Please note that the following types of foods are prohibited at the YMCA: fried foods, sugar sweetened beverages, and foods high in sugar such as chips, soda, juice drinks, chicken fingers, cookies, and candy.

Due to a high number of children with peanut and tree nut allergies, the center has imposed a “no peanuts or tree nuts rule.” This includes (but not limited to) foods that may contain nuts such as granola bars, trail mix, cereal, baked goods, peanut butter, and Nutella.

For children less than 4 years old, foods that may cause choking are prohibited. Examples include: peanut butter, celery sticks, , popcorn, nuts, chicken or turkey on the bone, cherries with pits, sausages, gum, unpeeled apples, sunflower/watermelon seeds, etc. (If you must send hot dogs and grapes, please cut them into small pieces.)

## **H Allergies**

Any allergies to foods, chemicals or other materials MUST be listed in the "Allergies" section of the child's information form. Please include any reactions and treatments of the allergies. This information will be placed on a master list and posted in food preparation and distribution areas, the Director's office and the child's room. Educators will be informed of children's allergies and instructed to avoid these products.

## **I Animal and Pet Policy**

Animals provide a large array of growth and learning opportunities for children. When they are classroom pets or visiting animals, they must appear to be in good health. Pets or visiting animals have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Educators supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Educators make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal. Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk for salmonella infection.

# **VIII Child Protection Policies**

## **A Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect Strategies**

These preventive strategies are designed to protect the children in YMCA programs and to protect YMCA staff and volunteers from being wrongly accused of incidences of child abuse.

- The YMCA has in place a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure to screen out staff not suited for working with children.
- The YMCA will take any allegation or suspicion of child abuse seriously and will respond accordingly.
- Educators understand the legal obligation to report suspected abuse.
- Policies, procedures and training are available relating to discipline, supervision, staff/participant interaction, staff and volunteer Code of Conduct, etc.
- Staff understands what practices may be considered abusive and the difference between what may be considered appropriate and inappropriate touch.
- Defensive strategies have been identified for avoiding unfounded allegations in our yearly abuse prevention training for staff.

- Educators communicate frequently with parents/guardians regarding day-to-day activities and encourage parents/guardians to report or question any behavior or event their child may share that appears out of the ordinary.
- Parents/Guardians know that they can visit unannounced any program their child participates in, and are encouraged to do so.
- Staff try to identify stressed parents/guardians and offer support and referrals for help.
- Staff have learned how to discuss sensitive issues with children such as toileting, sleeping and questions about sex.
- Staff protect themselves and the YMCA by agreeing not to be alone with YMCA youth or program participants outside of YMCA programs or facilities (i.e. baby-sit, take children on trips, have them in their homes when others are not present, etc.).

## **B Mandated Reporting**

In order to insure the well-being of the children in our care, our educators have a continuing duty under state law to report incidents of possible neglect or abuse, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, to the Department of Children and Families and Department of Early Education and Care, and to cooperate in any investigation of such possible neglect or abuse. (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A). We do not have discretion in this matter, but must make such referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe that a child might have been harmed by anyone, including non-family members, and we may be subject to criminal penalties if we fail to report such possible harm.

Moreover, in grievous cases, we may refer the matter directly to the police or consult with the District Attorney as well.

As a licensed provider of early learning and School's Out programs, we are mandated by Massachusetts State Law to report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families. If a case of child abuse is suspected by an educator or in the care of an educator, the following procedures have been put in place.

## **C MetroWest YMCA Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

The MetroWest YMCA advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, redirection, prevention, and the development of self-discipline. At no time will the following disciplinary techniques be tolerated: physical punishment, striking, biting, kicking, squeezing, shaming, withholding food or restroom privileges, confining children in small locked rooms or verbal or emotional abuse. Affectionate touch and the warm feelings it brings is an important factor in helping a child grow into a loving and peaceful adult. However, YMCA staff and volunteers need to be sensitive to each person's need for personal space (i.e., not everyone wants to be hugged). The YMCA encourages appropriate touch; however at the same time it prohibits inappropriate touch or other means of sexually exploiting children.

In the event that there is an accusation of child abuse, the YMCA will take prompt and immediate action as follows:

1. At the first report or possible (probable) cause to believe that child abuse has occurred, the employed staff person it has been reported to will notify the Center Director, who will then review the incident with the YMCA President, or his/her designee. However, if the program director is not immediately available, the staff person should report to the senior staff member. This review by the supervisor cannot in any way deter the reporting of child abuse by the mandated reporter. Most states mandate each teacher or child care provider to report information they have learned in their

professional role regarding suspected child abuse. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse/neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone, unless it is proven that the report was intended to do harm. In most states, mandated reporters are granted immunity from prosecution.

2. The YMCA will make a report in accordance with relevant state or local child abuse reporting requirements and will cooperate to the extent of the law with any legal authority involved. The person receiving the initial report will be responsible for confirming the facts reported and the condition of the child on the day of the first report.
3. After the information is secured and documented, the President or his/her designee will then determine if the Department of Children and Families (DCF) needs to be notified. If so, he/she will call DCF at (508) 872-8122 (8:00am to 4:00pm) or (800) 792-5200 (after business hours) and file a 51A report. Within 48 hours a written 51A will be filed with the Department of Children and Families. If any of the individuals involved are enrolled in a licensed program, the appropriate licensing agency will be notified immediately that a 51A was filed.
4. In the event the reported incident(s) involve a program volunteer or employed staff, the President will use his/her discretion to either suspend the volunteer or staff person from the YMCA or give them administrative tasks away from children if available and appropriate.
5. If appropriate, the parents or legal guardian of the child(ren) involved in the alleged incident will be promptly notified in accordance with the directions of the relevant state or local agency.
6. Whether the incident or alleged offense takes place on or off YMCA premises, it will be considered job related because of the youth-involved nature of the YMCA.
7. Reinstatement of the program volunteer or employed staff person will occur only after all allegations have been cleared by DCF to the satisfaction of the persons named in #1 above and EEC, if relevant. At the time of reinstatement, the staff person will receive back pay.
8. All YMCA staff and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of this information, and therefore, should only discuss the incident with the people directly involved.

## **IX Parent Rights and Responsibilities**

### **A Parental Rights**

Chapter 28, Section 10 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating rules and regulations governing the operation of day care centers (including Nursery schools).

The MetroWest YMCA is required to inform all parents of their rights and responsibilities at the time of admission of their child to the center. Section 7.04 of 102 CMR 7.00, the regulations that govern day care centers, contains more information.

### **B Parent Input and Volunteer Opportunities**

The MetroWest YMCA must have a procedure for allowing parental input in the development of program policy and procedures. Director informs parents of their rights as parents to offer input into the program. Parents are encouraged to discuss concerns with their child's Teacher. If they are not comfortable approaching the educator, the parent and Director develop a plan together to work towards a resolution. The MetroWest YMCA must provide an explanation to the parent when a parent makes suggestions as to the program or policy of a center and the MetroWest YMCA does not adopt the

suggestions. If the parent requests a written response, the MetroWest YMCA must respond in writing to the parent. The program will decide whether or not the parental suggestions will be implemented.

Each early learning center has instituted a Parent Advisory Council to allow for parental input from a programmatic standpoint. In this Council, educators and family members can plan events such as family nights, field trips, fundraisers, and parent workshops as well as provide opportunities for families to meet with one another, work together on projects, and learn from and provide support for each other. All parents and interested family members are welcome to attend. The schedule of these activities varies based on the schedule and availability of interested families.

In addition to the Parent Advisory Council, parents and other family members are encouraged to participate and volunteer in the center. We welcome short and long term volunteers in the classroom, for special activities and events, fundraising, administrative tasks, and more. Please contact the Director if you are interested in volunteering.

### **C Parent Visits and Conferences**

In order to ensure a quality Early Learning program, we need your help. The YMCA encourages parents to visit at any time. Conferences may also be arranged by appointment. Open and friendly communication is essential.

Please notify the YMCA if you are going to be away for several days and your child will be in the care of someone else. This sometimes affects your child's behavior. Also, it is important for us to know who is responsible when you are away. Throughout the year, if there is anything unusual going on in your home, please let the Director or Teacher know. Even though your child may seem not to have been affected, it may show up in her/his behavior.

Remember, your child may be a bit timid and shy at first, so encourage your child to get involved with the program activities. As you gain feedback throughout the year, keep us informed. We need to have open communication between the program and the home as to how your child feels, what he/she likes and dislikes. As your child arrives home each day, discuss the day. Find out the name of the group he/she was assigned to, the names of the teachers, and what activities took place that day.

Parent participation and input is welcomed. The children, educators and Director appreciate your creativity, ideas and leadership in activities.

We would appreciate hearing from you in writing as to what areas your child liked as well as those suggestions you may have. Your feedback is encouraged and will be studied during the year as well as for future planning. Feedback and letters regarding the early learning center can be mailed to the address on the front of this booklet. With this feedback, we can continue to grow as one of the best early learning programs in Massachusetts.

Parents' concerns or complaints about our program should be immediately directed to the Teacher or Center Director. Details surrounding the parents' concern or complaint will be reviewed, solutions will be discussed and an action plan will be implemented. Feel free to discuss any concerns or suggestions that you may have with the educators and/or the Director.

### **D Progress Reports**

The MetroWest YMCA must periodically but at least every six (6) months prepare a written progress report of the participation of each child in the Center's records. The MetroWest YMCA must provide a



copy of each report to the parent or meet with them at least every six (6) months to discuss their child's activities and participation in the center. In addition, for children with disabilities the MetroWest YMCA must complete a written progress report of the child's development every three (3) months, and provide it to the parent; the MetroWest YMCA must bring special problems or significant developments to the parent's attention as soon as they arise.

## **E Children's Records**

Information contained in a child's record must be privileged and confidential. The MetroWest YMCA will not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without written consent of the child's parent. The Y will notify the parent if a child's record is subpoenaed.

### **1 Access to the Record**

The parent must have access to the child's record at reasonable times. In no event must such access be delayed more than two (2) business days after the initial request without the consent of the child's parent. Upon such request for access, the child's entire record, regardless of the physical location of its parts, must be made available.

The MetroWest YMCA must establish procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of such information; and must maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record indicating any persons to whom information contained in a child's record has been released. Each person disseminating or releasing information contained in a child's record, in whole or in part, must, upon each instance of dissemination or release, enter into the log the following: his/her name, signature, position, the date, the portions of the record which were disseminated or released, the purpose of the records which were disseminated or released, the purpose of such dissemination or release, and the signature of the person to whom the information is disseminated or released. Such log must be available only to the child's parent and Center personnel responsible for record maintenance.

### **2 Charge for Copies**

The MetroWest YMCA must not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in the child's record.

### **3 Amending the Child's Records**

A child's parent must have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant materials to the child's record. A child's parent must have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record. Such request must be made in accordance with the procedures described below:

If such parent is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the child's record, he/she must have the right to have a conference with The MetroWest YMCA to make his/her objections known; The MetroWest YMCA must, within one (1) week after the conference, render to such parent a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If his/her decision is in favor of the parent, he/she must immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

### **4 Transfer of Records**

Upon written request of the parent or guardian, the MetroWest YMCA must transfer a copy of the child's record to the parent, or any other person the parent identifies, when the child is no longer in

YMCA care. The Center will ask the parent or guardian to sign a form documenting consent for transfer of records and/or verifying that the record was received.

## **F Parental Responsibilities**

In order to maintain a comfortable and safe environment for children, families and educators, we have the following guidelines that we ask all adults to model the Y Character Values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. The following are some examples of how these values can be implemented:

- Use appropriate language while in the program.
- Respect confidentiality by having personal conversations in private.
- Interact with others in a non-threatening and non-aggressive manner.

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in termination of care with parents still responsible for all fees including tuition for the following 30 days.

## **X Responsibilities of the Program**

### **A Providing Information to the Department of Early Education and Care**

The MetroWest YMCA must make available to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) any information required to be kept and maintained under these regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of these regulations. This includes information in the child's records. Authorized employees of EEC are not to remove identifying case materials from the Center premises and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

### **B Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

All educators are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to either the Department of Children and Families or to the MetroWest YMCA's program administrator. The MetroWest YMCA must have written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrollment.

### **C Notification of Injury**

The MetroWest YMCA must notify parents and guardians immediately of any injury that requires emergency care. They must also notify the parent, in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to the child.

### **D Availability of Regulations**

The Center must have a copy of CMR 102 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises, available to any person upon request. If you have questions about any of the regulations, ask the personnel at the Center for a copy.

### **E Confidentiality Policy**

The MetroWest YMCA respects each family's right to privacy and confidentiality. As a result, information such as incident reports, portfolios, family specific supports including referrals regarding a child, and the child's health and safety file are confidential and will only be shared with the child's legal guardians or parents unless the guardian or parent provides written authorization. Within the Center, child specific information is shared with Y staff based on a need to know basis. EEC, our licensing authority, and NAEYC, our accrediting organization who may review children's files as part of an agency

review. Information gathered for the Center's compilation of developmental checklists or portfolios may be shared with EEC, but all identifying information will be removed.

In addition, the following EEC regulation Confidentiality and Distribution of Records and Information 7.04(12) provides additional information about our confidentiality practices.

*Information pertaining to children and their families is privileged and confidential. No licensee or educator may distribute or release information about a child or his/her family to any unauthorized person, or discuss with any unauthorized person information about a child or his/her family without the written consent of the child's parent. The child's parent, at reasonable times, must, upon request, have access to everything in his or her child's record.*

*(a) The licensee must not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parent(s) or pursuant to a court order. The licensee must notify the parent(s) if the child's record is subpoenaed.*

*(b) The child's parent(s) or guardian(s) must, upon request, have access to their child's record at reasonable times. In no event may such access be delayed more than two business days after the initial request without the consent of the child's parent(s). Upon such request for access, the child's entire record must be made available regardless of the physical location of its parts.*

*(c) Upon written request of the parent(s), the licensee must transfer a copy of the child's records to the parent(s), or any other person the parent(s) identifies within a reasonable amount of time.*

*(d) The licensee must establish procedures governing access to, duplication of, and distribution of such information; and must maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record indicating each time a child's record has been released or reviewed.*

*1. Each time information is released or distributed from a child's record to someone who is not a program employee the following information must be recorded: the name, signature, and position of the person releasing or distributing the information; the date; the portions of the record which were distributed or released; the purpose of such distribution or release; and the signature of the person to whom the information is distributed or released.*

*2. Such log must be available only to the child's parent(s), to program personnel responsible for record maintenance, and to the EEC as part of its regulatory function.*

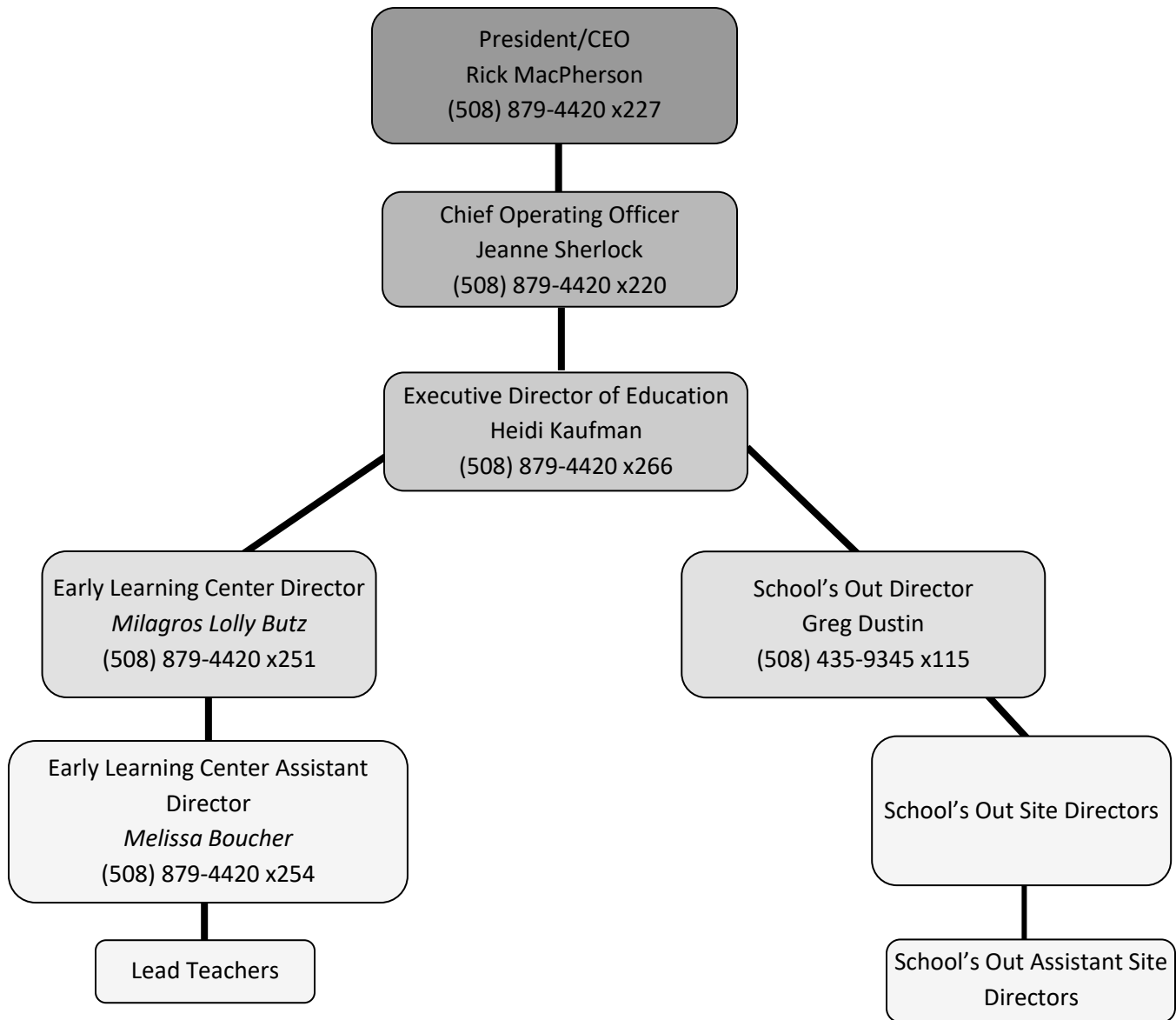
## **F Research, Experimentation, and Unusual Treatment Policy**

The MetroWest YMCA will not conduct or allow any research, experimentation, or unusual treatment involving children without the written, informed, consent of the affected child's parents or guardian, for each occurrence. In programs where observations of children (by other than parents of the children in the center) are common, a general written parental consent may be used. Observations mean that there is no interaction between the child and the observers and no identification of the individual child. The MetroWest YMCA will not allow and research, experimentation, or unusual treatment to take place in the programs that might harm a child. Research and experimentation shall not mean program evaluation or data collection for purposes of documenting services of the program which do not identify individual children.

## **G Unauthorized Activities Policy**

The MetroWest YMCA will not allow children to participate in any activities unrelated to the direct care of children without the written, informed consent of the parent(s) or guardian. "Activities" shall mean, but not be limited to: fund raising and publicity, including photographs and participation in the mass media.

## Appendix A: MetroWest YMCA Staff, Lines of Authority & Supervision



*Our Policies and Procedures are based in part by the guidelines established by Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Please see the Early Learning Center Director or Executive Director of Education for more details.*

## Appendix B: MetroWest YMCA Early Learning Center Rates 2020 – 2021

(Weekly rate based on schedule)

Full year: September – August

### Toddler Rates

5 days	\$395
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### Preschool and Pre-K Rates

5 days	\$320
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3 days	\$225
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2 days	\$160
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5 full day rate includes a MetroWest YMCA Family Membership. 2 and 3 day rates include a MetroWest YMCA Youth Membership for the enrolled child. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack is also provided with tuition.

**The MetroWest YMCA is a 501(c)3 charitable organization.  
Financial Aid is available to those who qualify.**