



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

Parent Handbook





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WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY

Welcome to the YMCA Youth Development Centers!

Thank you for choosing the YMCA as your trusted partner in nurturing and guiding your child's growth. We are proud to provide a safe, enriching, and developmentally appropriate environment where every child can thrive.

At the YMCA, we don't just meet the basic requirements for child care in North Dakota—we go above and beyond. All of our Youth Development Centers participate in Bright & Early North Dakota, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System. This voluntary program recognizes programs that are committed to exceeding licensing standards and continuously improving the quality of care and education provided.

Earning a Bright & Early Quality Rating means we've demonstrated excellence in areas such as learning environments, staff qualifications, family engagement, and child development practices. It's one more way we show our commitment to giving your child the strongest possible start in life.

We're honored you've chosen us to be part of your child's journey—and we're excited to grow, learn, and shine together!

Welcome to the YMCA family.



MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

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

To fulfill this mission, our Youth Development Centers are committed to:

- **Providing a Safe and Nurturing Environment:**
 - Ensuring every child is cared for in a secure, welcoming space where they feel valued, supported, and encouraged.
- **Promoting Holistic Development:**
 - Supporting the healthy development of each child's spirit, mind, and body through age-appropriate activities, curriculum, and positive role modeling.
- **Encouraging Lifelong Learning and Curiosity:**
 - Creating learning experiences that spark curiosity, promote school readiness, and build a strong foundation for academic and social success.
- **Supporting Families:**
 - Building strong partnerships with parents and caregivers through open communication, engagement opportunities, and shared goals for each child's development.
- **Upholding Excellence in Early Learning:**
 - Participating in Bright & Early North Dakota, and continually exceeding state licensing standards to ensure quality in all areas of care and education.
- **Celebrating Diversity and Inclusion:**
 - Welcoming all families and children, regardless of background or belief, in keeping with our commitment to serve for all.



SAFETY

The safety, well-being, and protection of every child in our care is our top priority. We are fully committed to maintaining a secure and nurturing environment where children can learn and grow safely.

Our program strictly complies with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations, including those set forth by North Dakota child care licensing.

We make child abuse prevention a core priority in our daily operations. All staff receive ongoing training in child abuse prevention, appropriate boundaries, and best practices for supervision and child safety. These trainings help ensure that our team remains vigilant, informed, and proactive in creating a safe environment.

We enforce a zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behavior involving children. Any suspected violations are taken seriously and addressed immediately.

As required by North Dakota Century Code section 50-25.1-03, all staff members are mandated reporters, legally obligated to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities without delay.

As a YMCA program, we are also held to national standards. All YMCA associations are required to implement and uphold comprehensive child abuse prevention policies in order to remain in good standing with the National Council of YMCAs. This includes rigorous training, regular policy review, and a commitment to transparency and accountability.



COMMUNICATION

In accordance with licensing regulations, parents of infants will receive a written daily report detailing their child's sleeping, eating, and diapering activities.

Our program uses ClassDojo as a primary tool to communicate with families. Infant daily reports will be shared through ClassDojo. If you prefer a physical copy, please let us know.

Families of older children may also request daily updates regarding meals, naps, and toileting. These updates can be provided through ClassDojo upon request. Please speak with your child's teacher or the program director to arrange regular updates that meet your preferences.





STAFF HIRING AND TRAINING

The safety, well-being, and development of your child is our top priority. We take great care in selecting and training our staff to ensure they are qualified, prepared, and continually growing in their role. Below is an overview of our hiring and staff development policies to help you feel confident in the care your child receives.

Hiring & Background Checks

All employees undergo comprehensive background checks and are fingerprinted prior to working in the center. This includes state and federal checks to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

Staff under the age of 18 may be hired in support roles; however, they are never left alone with children and are always directly supervised by a qualified adult staff member.

Required Training & Certifications

Upon hire and throughout employment, our staff are required to meet the following training and certification standards:

“Getting Started” Training: All new staff must complete the North Dakota “Getting Started” child care training program within their first 90 days of employment.

ND Safe Sleep Training: All staff receive annual training on North Dakota Safe Sleep practices to promote safe environments for infants in our care.

Mandated Reporter Training: All employees are trained to recognize and report any suspected child abuse or neglect, in accordance with North Dakota Mandated Reporting laws.



STAFF HIRING AND TRAINING

CPR & First Aid: Every staff member is certified in Pediatric CPR and First Aid. Certifications are kept current and renewed as required.

Ongoing Continuing Education: Staff complete a minimum number of hours of professional development each year to remain current on best practices in child development, behavior guidance, health and safety, and early education.

Annual Coaching & Performance Reviews

Each staff member participates in at least one annual coaching session with a member of leadership. These sessions focus on professional growth, reflective practice, and continuous improvement in their role.





HOURS OF OPERATION

The Youth Development Centers are open Monday through Friday, 6:30am-6pm.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

The Youth Development Centers are closed on the following holidays:

- New Years Day*
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day*
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day*

*If the holiday is on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday prior to the holiday. If the holiday is on a Sunday, we will be closed the Monday following the holiday.



WEATHER CLOSURES

In the event of inclement weather or emergency closures, updates will be communicated promptly through the following channels:

- Our Website: Please visit <https://bismarckymca.org/> for the most up-to-date information on center closures or delays.
- ClassDojo: Families will receive direct notifications and updates through ClassDojo. Be sure to check the app regularly and ensure your notifications are turned on.

The safety of our children, families, and staff is our top priority. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation during weather-related events.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Our center maintains active liability insurance coverage in accordance with state regulations and licensing requirements.

While we prioritize the safety and well-being of all children in our care, the Youth Development Centers are not liable for any injury or accident that may occur during the course of normal activities. We strongly recommend that all families maintain their own health and accident insurance coverage. By enrolling your child at our center, you acknowledge that you are responsible for securing and maintaining adequate insurance to cover any potential medical expenses related to an injury. We encourage families to review their insurance policies to ensure they provide sufficient coverage for your child while in our care.



OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily routine and supports children's physical health, emotional well-being, and overall development. Weather permitting, children go outside every day as part of our curriculum.

- All children will be taken outside daily unless a doctor's note is provided specifying that they must remain indoors for medical reasons.
- If a child is not well enough to go outside, they are considered not well enough to attend care for the day.

To ensure all children are comfortable and safe during outdoor time, appropriate outerwear is required based on the temperature:

- Infants and toddlers (ages 0–2): Must wear a coat when temperatures are below 50°F.
- Preschool and school-age children (ages 3–12): Must wear a coat when temperatures are 60°F or below.

Please send your child dressed for the weather, including hats, gloves, boots, or snow gear as needed. We appreciate your support in helping us keep all children healthy, safe, and active throughout the seasons.



EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

Fire/Evacuation

1. Evacuation of building may occur from fire or gas leak.
2. After problem is identified, fire alarm will sound and the Fire Dept will be summoned automatically.
3. Evacuate participants outside via nearest exit
4. If all clear is determined, staff will allow participants to re-enter the building.
5. If unable to re-enter building, staff will proceed with off-site evacuation protocol.

Power Outage

1. Staff will keep children in rooms.
2. YDC Director will determine when/if parents need to be called to pick up children.

Medical Emergency: Code Blue

1. Staff responding announce: CODE BLUE IN ____ (area).
2. If at the YMCA site, management staff or attending dept. staff notify member desk as to location.
3. Notify parents or designated emergency contacts.
4. Meet emergency personnel at the designated entrance.
5. Management staff follows through with emergency until over.



EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

Weather Emergency: Code Black

1. In the case of inclement weather: Tornado Warning has been issued for our area and the weather sirens are sounding: Staff move all participants into designated safe area.
2. Staff monitor weather reports via two way radios.
3. After the all clear has been established, participants may return to their activities.

Lock Down/Shelter In Place

1. In the case of a fight or physical altercation a Lock Down Alert will be issued through the 'All Call' on the phone system and two way radios.
2. Classroom staff will proceed with Lock Down or Shelter In Place procedures as practiced during the monthly Lock Down drills.
3. Contact the Police if necessary to mitigate a dangerous situation.
4. Try to resolve the situation in peaceful means, but if force is necessary, be safe and have multiple staff present to assist.
5. Staff are to remain locked-down until Management or Police clear each room.

Lost or Stolen Child: Code Adam

1. Staff responding announce: CODE ADAM ____ (area).
2. Alert staff as to description of child/adult over 2 way radios and also 'Page Staff' over phones.
3. Building is locked down via management– nobody in/nobody out.
4. Management staff are assigned to exits and don't allow anyone to leave or enter; If the child or child/adult is spotted then notify staff or police.
5. Management confirm situation, and notify authorities and parents.
6. After all clear, responding Management Staff fill out incident form.
7. After incident has ended, notify YDC desk and all staff posted at exits.



EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

Emergency Procedures: Burns

In the event that a child sustains a burn (thermal, chemical, or electrical), the following steps will be taken:

1. Immediate Response

- Staff will remove the child from the source of the burn immediately and assess the severity.
- For minor burns (red, unbroken skin), we will run cool (not cold) water over the area for up to 10 minutes and cover it with a sterile, non-stick dressing.
- For more severe burns (blistering, charring, or affecting a large area), we will:
 - Call 911 immediately.
 - Avoid removing clothing stuck to the burn.
 - Keep the child calm and prevent shock by laying them down and elevating legs if needed.

2. Parent Notification

- Parents will be notified immediately by phone.

Emergency Procedures: Ingestion of Poison

If a child is suspected of ingesting a poisonous substance:

1. Immediate Response

- Call Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) and follow their instructions.
- If the child is unconscious, seizing, or having trouble breathing, 911 will be called immediately.

2. Provide Information to Authorities

- Staff will give details such as the substance, the amount ingested, and the time of exposure.

3. Parent Notification

- Parents will be contacted immediately.



EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

Injury Reporting Procedures

We classify injuries into Minor and Serious, with specific protocols for each:

Minor Injuries

Examples: small scrapes, paper cuts, mild bumps, nosebleeds (not due to trauma)

- Treatment Provided: First aid administered (cleaning, bandaging, ice packs, etc.)
- Documentation:
 - A Bumps and Bruises is completed.
 - Parents are notified at pick-up or through Clasdojo unless the injury involves the head or face, in which case a phone call will be made during the day.
- Follow-up: Staff monitor the child for changes and update parents if needed.

Serious Injuries

Examples: broken bones, head injuries, severe allergic reactions, large wounds, or any injury requiring emergency services

- Emergency Services Contacted: 911 will be called immediately.
- First Aid: Staff will provide care until medical personnel arrive.
- Parent Notification:
 - Parents will be called immediately.
 - If unavailable, the next emergency contact listed will be called.
- Documentation:
 - An incident report will be completed.
 - The incident may be reported to state licensing authorities as required.



EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

Medical Emergency Contacts & Consent

Parents must keep emergency contact information and medical authorization forms up to date. These forms give us permission to seek emergency care if we are unable to reach you.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

In life-threatening situations, we will always prioritize contacting emergency services (911) and then contact the parent/guardian immediately after.





INJURY AND EMERGENCY CARE

The safety and well-being of every child in our care is our highest priority. While minor accidents may occur during normal play and activities, we have procedures in place to ensure prompt and appropriate care:

Minor Injuries

- For minor injuries such as small scratches, scrapes, or bruises, staff will:
 - Clean the area with soap and water.
 - Apply a bandage or cold compress if needed.
 - Comfort the child and monitor for further issues.
 - Document the injury and provide an incident report to families at pick-up.

Serious Injuries

- In the case of a more serious injury (e.g., cuts requiring stitches, head injuries, suspected sprains/fractures, allergic reactions), we will:
 - Provide immediate first aid.
 - Contact the child's parent or guardian immediately.
 - If necessary, call emergency services (911) for urgent medical care.

Emergency Medical Care

- In any life-threatening or critical situation, we will call 911 first and then contact the family as soon as possible.

Insurance Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of families to maintain their own accident and health insurance coverage for their child(ren) while participating in our programs.
- The program does not provide medical or accident insurance for enrolled children.

If you have any specific medical needs or emergency procedures for your child, please inform us upon enrollment.



MEDICATIONS

The health and safety of all children in our care is a top priority. To ensure proper handling and administration of medication, the following policy is in place:

Prescription Medications

- We do not administer prescription medications unless:
 - The medication is life-saving (e.g., EpiPen, asthma inhaler), or
 - It must be given at specific intervals during program hours. The medication form with specific instructions and signed by a doctor must be on file for each time a medication is prescribed.
- Families must meet with the Site Director to discuss any special circumstances or requests for medication administration.

Medication Requirements

- All prescription medications must:
 - Be in the original container with the child's full name clearly labeled.
 - Include the prescribing doctor's instructions and dosage.
 - Be accompanied by a completed Medication Permission Form, signed by a parent/guardian and approved by the Site Director.

Non-Prescription Medications

- We do not administer non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications unless accompanied by a written note from a licensed physician, along with a completed Medication Permission Form.

Storage & Safety

- All medications must be stored in the designated medication storage area, as determined by the Site Director.
- Medications may not be stored in diaper bags, backpacks, cubbies, or anywhere accessible to children.
- Medications must be handed directly to a staff member for proper storage.



ILLNESS AND EXCLUSIONS

To protect the health and well-being of all children and staff, we follow the North Dakota Health and Human Services Infectious Disease Guidelines regarding illness, exclusion, and return to care.

Exclusion Guidelines

Children will be excluded from care if they exhibit symptoms of a contagious illness, including but not limited to:

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Persistent coughing or difficulty breathing
- Unexplained rash or skin lesions
- Eye drainage or pink eye
- Severe sore throat
- Head lice or nits
- Any other symptoms consistent with a contagious or communicable disease

Pick-Up Policy

- If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be notified immediately.
- Children must be picked up within 30 minutes of notification.
- If we are unable to reach a parent/guardian, we will call the emergency contacts listed on your child's enrollment form.



ILLNESS AND EXCLUSIONS

Return to Care

Children may return to care when:

- They are symptom-free, or
- Have been cleared by a healthcare provider, or
- Have met the minimum exclusion period as outlined by North Dakota Health and Human Services.

A doctor's note may be required before returning in certain cases.

For the most current exclusion and return-to-care guidelines, please refer to the North Dakota Health and Human Services Infectious Disease Control Guide or consult your Site Director.





HEALTH CARE PLAN

In accordance with licensing regulations, a written Health Care Plan is required for any child who has been diagnosed with a special need or medical condition that requires special care, monitoring, or accommodations during program hours.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to:
 - Provide a current, written Health Care Plan developed and approved by a licensed medical professional.
 - Ensure the plan is updated annually, or sooner if there are changes to the child's health needs.

Implementation of Care

- Staff cannot implement special care or accommodations for a child without a written, approved Health Care Plan on file.
- Any changes requested by a parent or guardian must:
 - Be documented.
 - Include written permission from the parent/guardian.
 - Be approved by a medical professional if related to medical treatment or care.

Program Rights and Limitations

- The YDC reserves the right to refuse any requested changes that are:
 - Not submitted in writing.
 - Not approved by a licensed medical professional when required.
- This policy is in place to ensure the safety, consistency, and quality of care for all children.

If your child requires a Health Care Plan, or you need to make updates to an existing plan, please contact your Site Director as soon as possible to begin the process.



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To ensure the safety and security of all children in our care, the following procedures must be followed each day:

- **Daily Sign-In/Out:**
 - Parents or guardians are required to sign their child in and out each day using the Procure system. This helps us maintain accurate attendance records and ensures each child's safety.
- **Classroom Drop-Off and Pick-Up:**
 - Children must be walked to and from their classroom by a parent or authorized guardian. Children may not be dropped off at the door or allowed to walk alone through the center.
- **Absence Notification:**
 - If your child will be absent, please call the center by 9:00 AM. If we have not heard from you by then, we will contact you to confirm your child's status for the day.
- **Authorized Pick-Ups:**
 - Only individuals listed on your child's authorized pick-up list will be allowed to take your child from the center. All authorized individuals must present a valid photo ID upon request.
- **Check the Whiteboard:**
 - If your child is not in their classroom at pick-up or drop-off time, please check the whiteboard near the reception area for their current location (e.g., playground, gym, or another activity area).
- **Infant Car Seat Policy:**
 - For safety reasons, infant car seats may not be left at the center during the day. Please take them with you after drop-off.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us provide a safe, smooth, and secure experience for all children and families.



CLOTHING

To help children stay comfortable, safe, and ready to participate in all activities, we ask that families follow our clothing guidelines:

1. Comfortable, Washable, and Season-Appropriate Clothing

- Children should come dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes that allow them to move freely and fully participate in indoor and outdoor activities.
- Please choose clothing suitable for the season and daily weather conditions.

2. Label All Clothing

- All clothing items, including jackets, hats, mittens, and extra clothes, must be clearly labeled with your child's name to help prevent mix-ups or lost items.

3. Outerwear for Cold Weather

- When temperatures are 32°F or below, children must have appropriate outerwear, including a warm coat, hat, mittens or gloves, and boots as needed.
- We go outside daily (weather permitting), so please ensure your child is dressed to enjoy outdoor play comfortably.

4. Extra Change of Clothes

- Each child should have a complete change of clothes (shirt, pants, socks, underwear) stored in their cubby.
- This helps us handle spills, accidents, or wet/messy play quickly and comfortably.
- Please replace the extra set of clothing as it is used or as the seasons change.

Thank you for helping us keep all children comfortable, safe, and ready for fun learning experiences every day!



AQUATICS POLICY

The Youth Development Centers (YDC) are proud to offer a variety of aquatic activities designed to promote safety, skill development, and fun in the water. Our aquatic program may include swimming lessons, free swim, and outdoor swim opportunities throughout the year.

Permission to Participate

- A signed Aquatics Permission Form is required for every child before participating in any water-based activity.
- Families will receive advance notice of all swimming events, including dates, times, and locations.
- Only children with completed permission forms on file will be allowed to participate.

Health and Safety

- The health and safety of each child is our top priority.
- Children must be in good health to take part in swimming activities. Any medical conditions, allergies, or special considerations related to aquatic participation must be listed on the child's health record.
- YDC staff follow all safety procedures, including designated swim areas, buddy systems, and adherence to pool facility rules.
- Appropriate swimwear, and towels should be sent from home for all indoor and outdoor swim days.

AQUATICS POLICY

Supervision and Ratios

- All aquatic activities are supervised by certified lifeguards at approved pool facilities.
- YDC maintains supervision levels that meet or exceed state licensing requirements for aquatic environments.
- YDC staff present at swim sites are trained in CPR and First Aid.
- Children are closely monitored at all times while in or near the water to ensure their safety and well-being.

Through structured lessons and supervised swim experiences, YDC aims to help children build water confidence, learn essential safety skills, and enjoy positive experiences in aquatic settings.





PHOTOGRAPHY AND MEDIA

The Youth Development Centers (YDC) value the privacy and safety of all children in our care. We recognize that photographs and videos can be a wonderful way to capture learning experiences and celebrate our program, while also requiring clear boundaries to protect every child's rights.

Program Photography

- YDC may take photographs or videos of children during daily activities, special events, and program celebrations.
- These images may be used for classroom displays, newsletters, or promotional materials such as brochures, social media pages, or the YDC website.
- Photographs will only be used if a signed Photo Permission Form is on file for the child. Families may choose whether to grant or deny permission at any time.

Parent and Visitor Photography

- For the privacy and protection of all children, parents and visitors are strictly prohibited from taking photographs or videos of any child other than their own while on YDC premises or during program events.

Staff Photography Guidelines

- YDC staff may only take photos using program-approved devices for educational or promotional purposes.
- Staff are not permitted to use personal phones or cameras to photograph or record children under any circumstances.
- All YDC employees sign an agreement acknowledging that photos or videos of children may not be shared on personal social media accounts or through any other personal means.

YDC is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and secure environment for all children and families. We appreciate your cooperation in supporting our privacy and media guidelines.



PERSONAL ITEMS

To help us provide a safe, clean, and organized environment for all children in our care, we ask that families follow the guidelines below when bringing personal items from home:

- **Nap Bin:** Each child must have a clearly labeled nap bin (plastic storage container with lid) to keep their personal rest-time items such as a blanket, small pillow, and soft comfort item separate and sanitary. Nap bins are stored individually and sent home at the end of each week for cleaning.
- **Seasonal Change of Clothes:** Please keep a full, weather-appropriate change of clothes (including socks and underwear, if applicable) in your child's cubby at all times. Clothing should be clearly labeled with your child's name and updated as the seasons change or as your child grows.
- **Valuables:** We kindly ask that all valuables and sentimental items be kept at home. The center is not responsible for any lost, broken, or misplaced personal belongings.
- **Cell Phones & Electronics:** Cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices are not allowed at child care. If a child arrives with a device, it will be held by staff and returned to the parent or guardian at pick-up.



TRANSPORTATION

The safety of every child in our care is our top priority. When transportation is provided by the center—for field trips, pick-up/drop-off, or other approved activities—the following policies are strictly enforced:

- **Children Are Never Left Unattended:** Children are supervised at all times during transport. A thorough check of the vehicle is conducted after every trip to ensure no child is left behind.
- **Qualified & Certified Drivers:** All bus drivers must:
 - Be at least 21 years of age (18 for van drivers)
 - Hold a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with a Passenger (P) Endorsement
 - Have a clean driving record and pass all required background checks
 - Be trained in child transportation safety, including emergency procedures
- **Compliance with Transportation Laws:** All drivers and staff follow local, state, and federal laws, including:
 - Proper use of child restraint systems (car seats, booster seats, seat belts), as required by age and size
 - Adherence to traffic laws and speed limits
 - Required safety inspections and vehicle maintenance
- **Staff-to-Child Ratios Maintained:** Adequate staff are present on each vehicle to supervise and assist children, in accordance with required staff-to-child ratios. Staff assist with boarding, seating, and unloading.
- **Vehicle Safety Procedures:** Vehicles are regularly inspected and maintained to meet all applicable safety standards. Emergency equipment (first aid kit, fire extinguisher) is kept on board.



ND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The State of North Dakota Licensing Rules, provide very exact guidelines regarding what is and is not allowed regarding discipline. The Youth Development Centers agree with this rule, as copied below, not because it is law, but because it is right. It is there to protect our children.

Disregard of any of the following disciplinary rules or any disciplinary measure resulting in physical or emotional injury, neglect, or abuse to any child is grounds for license denial or revocation:

- The child care center must have a written policy regarding the discipline of children. The operator shall provide the policy to, and discuss the policy with, the staff members responsible for caring for or teaching children before the child care center begins operation or before staff members begin working with children.
- Discipline must be constructive or educational in nature and may include diversion, separation from the problem situation, talking with the child about the situation, praising appropriate behavior, or gentle physical restraint, such as holding. A child may not be subjected to physical harm, fear or humiliation.
- Authority to discipline may not be delegated to children nor may discipline be administered by children.
- Separation, when used as discipline, must be appropriate to the child's development and circumstances. The child must be in a safe, lighted, well-ventilated room within sight or hearing range of an adult staff member responsible for caring for or teaching children. A staff member may not isolate a child in a locked room or closet.
- A child may not be punished for lapses in toilet training.



ND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- A staff member may not use verbal abuse or make derogatory remarks about a child, or a child's family, race, or religion when addressing the child or in the presence of a child.
- A staff member may not use profane, threatening, unduly loud, or abusive language in the presence of a child.
- A staff member may not force-feed a child or coerce a child to eat, unless medically prescribed and administered under medical provider's care.
- A staff member may not use deprivation of meals or snacks as a form of discipline or punishment.
- A staff member or any other adult in or at the child care center may not kick, punch, spank, shake, pinch, bite, handle roughly, strike, mechanically restrain, or physically maltreat a child.
- A staff member may not force a child to ingest substances that would cause pain or discomfort, for example, placing soap in a child's mouth to deter the child from biting other children.
- A staff member may not withhold active play from a child as a form of discipline or punishment, beyond a brief period of separation.
- To report suspected licensing violations contact the Early Childhood Section at 1-800-997-8516.
- YMCA staff are mandated reporters and are legally obligated under the North Dakota Century Code Chapter 50-25.1 to report suspected child abuse. To report suspected child abuse or neglect please call Child Protective Services at 1-833-958-3500.



YDC DISCIPLINE POLICY

At our centers, we believe that all behavior is a form of communication, and we are committed to helping each child develop the social-emotional skills they need to be successful in a group setting. We recognize that some children may need additional support in learning how to manage their emotions, express themselves appropriately, and interact safely with others.

Our Approach

When a child exhibits challenging behavior, we work closely with families to identify possible causes and to build a plan that supports the child's growth and development. This support may include:

- Observation and documentation of behavior in the classroom
- Adjustments to the classroom environment to reduce triggers and increase support
- Individualized behavior support plans
- Consistent use of redirection and logical consequences
- Positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior
- Ongoing communication and collaborative meetings with parents or guardians

Our goal is to teach missing skills, not to punish, and we strive to create a nurturing, inclusive environment where every child has the opportunity to thrive.



YDC DISCIPLINE POLICY

When Safety Is a Concern

While we are committed to supporting all children, the safety and well-being of all children and staff is our top priority. Repeated or severe hurtful, aggressive, or unsafe behavior—including physical harm to others, ongoing disruption to the learning environment, or risk to self—may result in:

- A formal written behavior support plan
- Temporary suspension from the program
- Termination of the child care agreement, if it is determined that the child's needs exceed the level of support we are able to provide within our program

This decision is made carefully, in consultation with the family and after all reasonable accommodations have been considered.

We are dedicated to working in partnership with parents to support every child's development, and we appreciate your trust and collaboration in helping create a safe, supportive space for all.

Families may be held financially responsible for the repair or replacement of property that is intentionally damaged or destroyed due to a child's challenging behavior.



BITING

Biting is a common behavior among young children, especially in infants, toddlers, and twos. While it can be alarming for families, it is a typical part of early childhood development as children explore the world, communicate needs, and respond to frustration. At our center, we are committed to addressing biting in a way that supports all children's safety, development, and well-being.

Understanding Biting

Children may bite for various reasons, including:

- Teething discomfort
- Limited language skills
- Frustration or inability to self-regulate emotions
- Sensory stimulation
- Responding to changes in routine or environment

Our staff are trained to observe and identify the underlying causes of biting and to respond appropriately and consistently.



BITING

How We Respond to Biting

When a biting incident occurs:

- The biting child is immediately redirected and given a firm but calm response that biting is not acceptable.
- The bitten child is comforted and cared for. The injury is cleaned and treated as needed.
- Both sets of parents are notified:
 - The family of the child who was bitten will be informed of the incident and the care provided.
 - The family of the child who bit will be notified privately and given information on the behavior and our response.
- Names of the children involved are never disclosed to other families to protect privacy.

Staff will document biting incidents, look for patterns or triggers, and implement proactive strategies, such as:

- Adjusting the classroom environment
- Offering teething toys or sensory outlets
- Increasing supervision and one-on-one support
- Using consistent redirection and positive behavior reinforcement
- Collaborating with families to address behavior at home and school

Our goal is to guide children through this developmental phase with compassion, consistency, and support from families. We appreciate your partnership as we work together to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for all.



ASSESSMENTS AND CONFERENCES

Our center uses Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS Gold) as our formal assessment tool to support each child's individual development. TS Gold allows our teachers to observe, document, and assess growth in key developmental areas such as social-emotional skills, language, cognitive development, and physical abilities. These observations guide our curriculum planning and ensure each child is receiving developmentally appropriate experiences and support.

To keep families informed and engaged in their child's progress, we schedule parent-teacher conferences throughout the year by age group as follows:

- Infants (0–1 year): Conferences are offered by request. Parents may request a conference at any time to discuss their child's development or address any questions or concerns.
- Toddlers (1–2 years): Conferences are scheduled in April to review developmental milestones and share documentation gathered through TS Gold.
- Preschool (3–4 years): Conferences are scheduled in May to discuss progress, readiness for the next age group, and individualized goals.
- Pre-Kindergarten (4–5 years): Conferences are scheduled in January to provide updates on school readiness skills and support a smooth transition to kindergarten.

Additional conferences can be requested at any time by parents or teachers as needed. We value open communication and are committed to working in partnership with families to support each child's growth and success.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

We believe that strong family partnerships are essential to a child's success and well-being. Parents and guardians are always welcome to visit their child's classroom and be a part of our daily activities.

We encourage families to get involved in meaningful ways, such as:

- Volunteering to read stories
- Attending field trips
- Sharing a special talent, tradition, or cultural activity
- Leading a simple craft or hands-on learning experience

Your involvement enriches our program and helps children build connections between home and school.

We also value consistent and transparent communication. Our center uses ClassDojo to keep families informed about:

- Nap schedules
- Meal and snack times
- Diaper changes and toileting
- Classroom updates and reminders
- Lesson plans

We welcome your participation and look forward to building a strong, supportive relationship with your family throughout the year.



ADDRESSING CONCERNS

At our center, we are committed to maintaining open, respectful communication with families. We value your feedback and believe that working together strengthens the care and education we provide to your child.

Steps for Addressing Concerns

If you have a question, concern, or suggestion, we encourage you to follow these steps:

1. Speak with Your Child's Teacher First

- a. Many concerns can be resolved quickly through direct communication with your child's teacher. We encourage open, respectful dialogue and appreciate the opportunity to address matters as they arise.

2. Speak with a Member of Leadership

- a. If further support is needed, or if the concern is not resolved after speaking with the teacher, please reach out to a member of the leadership team (Director or Assistant Director). We are here to listen and work with you to find solutions.

3. We Welcome Feedback

- a. We value all feedback—positive or constructive—and use it to improve our program. Families are encouraged to share ideas, concerns, or compliments at any time through in-person conversations, email, or Classdojo.

Licensing Concerns

If you have concerns that relate to licensing regulations or believe that a licensing violation has occurred, you may contact the North Dakota Early Childhood Section directly at: 701-328-2115

Your child's safety and well-being are our top priorities. Thank you for working with us to maintain a high-quality, responsive program.



PEER TO PEER HARM

At our center, we are committed to maintaining open, respectful communication with families. We value your feedback and believe that working together strengthens the care and education we provide to your child.

Steps for Addressing Concerns

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1. Speak with Your Child's Teacher First

- Many concerns can be resolved quickly through direct communication with your child's teacher. We encourage open, respectful dialogue and appreciate the opportunity to address matters as they arise.

2. Speak with a Member of Leadership

- If further support is needed, or if the concern is not resolved after speaking with the teacher, please reach out to a member of the leadership team (Site Director or Coordinator). We are here to listen and work with you to find solutions.

3. We Welcome Feedback

- We value all feedback—positive or constructive—and use it to improve our program. Families are encouraged to share ideas, concerns, or compliments at any time through in-person conversations, email, or Classdojo.



PEER TO PEER HARM

The safety, dignity, and emotional well-being of every child in our care is our highest priority. Peer-to-peer harm—including physical harm, verbal threats, bullying, or any repeated aggressive behavior—is not tolerated in our program.

While we recognize that young children are still learning appropriate ways to express emotions and resolve conflicts, we are committed to teaching respectful behavior and intervening quickly and appropriately when harmful actions occur.

What We Do

- **Immediate Intervention:** If a child engages in aggressive or hurtful behavior toward another child, staff will intervene immediately to stop the behavior and ensure the safety of all children involved.
- **Developmentally Appropriate Guidance:** Staff will use age-appropriate strategies such as redirection, modeling empathy, setting clear boundaries, and reinforcing positive behavior.
- **Support for All Children Involved:** Both the child exhibiting the behavior and the child affected will be supported with care and guidance. The goal is to teach healthy, respectful ways to interact with others.
- **Parent Communication:** Families of all children involved will be notified of the incident, and follow-up communication will occur as needed. Specific names of other children will not be disclosed in order to protect privacy.

PEER TO PEER HARM

When Behavior Persists

If peer-to-peer harm becomes repeated or severe, the following steps may be taken:

- Behavior observation and documentation
- Development of an individualized support or behavior plan
- Meetings with the child's family
- Temporary removal from the classroom or program, if necessary for safety
- Termination of the child care agreement, if it is determined that the behavior poses a continued risk to others and cannot be safely supported within the program

We are committed to working closely with families to support positive behavior and ensure a safe, inclusive environment for every child. Thank you for partnering with us to uphold this standard of care and respect.





TUITION

To ensure smooth and consistent processing of child care tuition, the following payment policies are in place for all enrolled families:

Automatic Payment Requirement

All families are required to complete and maintain an active Auto Pay Authorization Form for tuition payments. Tuition is charged on a monthly basis, and payments must be processed no later than the 25th of each month.

- Auto Pay Forms must be submitted and updated through the official form only.
- Updates to payment methods cannot be made at the Member Services Desk or through our website.
- It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to ensure that payment information is current, accurate, and that payments are successfully processed each month.
- A \$25 return fee will be assessed to any account with a returned or declined payment (including insufficient funds, expired cards, or closed accounts). This fee will be added to the account.

Outstanding Balances

The YMCA Child Development Centers reserve the right to terminate child care services for any family with an outstanding balance or failed payment. Continued enrollment is dependent on maintaining a current account.



TUITION

Closures and Missed Days

Tuition is based on monthly enrollment, not attendance, and remains the same regardless of:

- Holidays
- Weather-related closures
- Emergency or unforeseen circumstances

No credits or refunds will be issued for these situations.

Programs with Online Registration

For programs that offer online registration, families will set up automatic payments during the registration process, in accordance with this policy.

If you have questions or need to update your Auto Pay Authorization Form, please contact the child care directly. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a consistent and reliable payment process.

DISCOUNTS

Families with more than one child enrolled in our program may be eligible for a sibling discount under the following conditions:

- The youngest child is always charged full tuition.
- A discount is applied to each additional child enrolled full-time in our program.
- To qualify for the sibling discount, all children must be enrolled in full-time, year-round programs.

Part-time and seasonal enrollments are not eligible for the sibling discount.



WITHDRAWAL POLICY

If a family chooses to withdraw their child from our program, a 30-day written notice is required.

- Billing will continue until 30 days from the date written notice is received, regardless of the child's last day of attendance.
- Written notice must be submitted to the child care office via the cancellation form, verbal notice to staff does not qualify as official notice.
- Full payment is the responsibility of the family during the 30-day notice period.

Please note that tuition secures your child's spot in the program. If a child is temporarily withdrawn, spots will not be held without full monthly tuition payment. We cannot guarantee re-enrollment if space becomes unavailable.





LATE PICK UP FEES

The YMCA Child Development Centers are committed to providing quality care during our scheduled hours of operation. The centers closes promptly at 6:00 PM.

Parents or guardians who arrive after 6:00 PM will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute per child.

- Late fees begin accruing at 6:01 PM.
- The fee will be added to your account and must be paid in full with your next tuition payment.
- Repeated late pick-ups may result in a meeting with center leadership and could affect continued enrollment.

We understand that emergencies can happen and ask that families contact the center as soon as possible if they anticipate being late. Thank you for respecting our staff's time and helping us maintain a consistent schedule.





SCHOLARSHIPS

We believe that all children deserve access to high-quality early learning experiences, regardless of their family's financial situation. To help ensure our programs remain accessible to everyone, we are proud to offer scholarships to qualifying families.

- Scholarships are evaluated and awarded on a quarterly basis, based on demonstrated need and available funding.
- Families interested in applying for financial assistance are encouraged to contact the Program Director for more information and to begin the application process.
- All scholarship applications are handled confidentially and reviewed with fairness and sensitivity.

We are committed to supporting families and removing financial barriers so that every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in our care.





CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

We accept Child Care Assistance (CCAP) from the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services to help families offset the cost of child care.

Applying for Assistance

It is the responsibility of the family to apply for CCAP directly through the state. Families can learn more or apply at www.hhs.nd.gov or by contacting their local Human Service Zone office.

Notification & Reporting

Once approved for assistance, families must inform their Program Director immediately. This allows our center to:

- Submit the required monthly tuition report to NDHHS
- Ensure proper billing for the correct coverage month

Failure to notify the Program Director in a timely manner may delay or impact coverage.

Family Responsibility

Any portion of tuition not covered by CCAP—including co-pays, denied days, or partial coverage—is the responsibility of the family and must be paid in full each month.

Additional Support

Families receiving CCAP may also qualify for YMCA scholarships, which can help cover any remaining balance. Please contact your Program Director for more information about how to apply.

We are committed to working with families to ensure every child has access to high-quality care, regardless of financial circumstances.



CURRICULUM

At our center, we believe that children learn best through hands-on experiences and meaningful interactions. Our curriculum is designed to support the whole child—fostering growth in cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development through play-based, developmentally appropriate practices.

We are committed to providing quality environments and experiences that promote exploration, creativity, problem-solving, and a love for learning.

Preschool & School Readiness

Our preschool curriculum focuses on preparing children for success in kindergarten and beyond. Children engage in a variety of activities that support school readiness through:

- Science, Math, and Early Literacy concepts
- Creative Play and imaginative exploration
- Large and Small Group Activities that promote cooperation and communication
- Fine and Gross Motor Skill development
- Social-Emotional Learning to build confidence, self-regulation, and positive relationships
- Swimming Skills – Half hour swimming session each week (children not fully potty trained must wear swim diaper under swimwear)

Curriculum planning is guided by observation and assessment to meet the unique needs of each child, while ensuring alignment with early learning standards.

We are proud to offer a learning environment where children are encouraged to explore, discover, and grow at their own pace.



CURRICULUM

Required Preschool Supplies

To help ensure your child is comfortable, safe, and prepared for daily activities, please provide the following labeled items for your preschooler:

- Extra clothes (including socks and underwear)
- Nap items: blanket and small pillow (must be in nap bin)
- Water bottle
- Swimwear (swimsuit and towel on designated swim days)

Infant Rooms

Our infant program is designed to meet and exceed each child's daily needs in a loving, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment. We understand that infants learn through movement, sensory exploration, and responsive relationships—and we are committed to supporting their growth every step of the way.

Curriculum for Infants

Our curriculum focuses on:

- Fine Motor Development – grasping, reaching, and manipulating small objects
- Gross Motor Development – tummy time, crawling, sitting, standing, and walking
- Sensory Experiences – safe, hands-on exploration that engages all five senses
- Language & Social Interaction – through songs, stories, facial expressions, and one-on-one communication

Each infant's schedule is individualized to meet their unique needs and routines.



CURRICULUM

Safe Sleep Practices

We follow the "Back to Sleep" policy as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Infants are always placed on their backs to sleep in a safety-approved crib with a fitted sheet and no loose bedding or toys.

Required Infant Supplies

Families are required to bring the following clearly labeled items for their child:

- Diapers and wipes
- Bottles or sippy cups (as appropriate)
- Extra sets of clothing
- Blanket for rest time
- Pacifier (if used)

Nutrition & Feeding Guidelines

We support both breastfed and formula-fed infants. The following is provided by our program at no additional cost:

- Gerber Good Start Gentle Formula (for infants up to 12 months)
- Jarred, pureed fruits and vegetables (up to 12 months)
- Solid food from our Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) beginning after the child's first birthday
- Whole milk is introduced after 12 months of age, unless otherwise directed by a physician



CURRICULUM

Breast Milk Storage & Handling Policy

We welcome and support breastfeeding families. To ensure the safety and proper handling of breast milk, please follow these procedures:

- Breast milk must be brought to the center in bottles (not bags)
- Each infant is assigned a color-coded band, and bottles must be 8 oz to fit the band correctly
- Bottles must be labeled with:
 - The child's full name
 - The date the milk was expressed
- Please bring more breast milk than you think your infant will need in a day to ensure we can meet their hunger cues
- Used bottles of breast milk will not be emptied, rinsed, or sanitized by staff
- All used bottles must be taken home daily for proper cleaning and sterilization
- Breast milk is stored in accordance with state licensing and health regulations, including appropriate refrigeration and expiration guidelines

We are honored to care for your infant and work closely with you to provide a safe, healthy, and loving environment for your child to grow and thrive. Please reach out to your Program Director with any questions or updates regarding your infant's routine or feeding needs.



CURRICULUM

Toddler Rooms

Our toddler program is designed to support your child's rapid growth and increasing independence through a nurturing, structured, and engaging environment. At this stage, children are busy exploring their world and building foundational skills through hands-on experiences and active play.

Curriculum Focus Areas

Our toddler curriculum is developmentally appropriate and focuses on the following key areas:

- **Fine Motor Skills**
 - Toddlers practice using plates, cups, and utensils, and engage in activities like stacking, drawing, and manipulating small objects to build coordination and independence.
- **Gross Motor Development**
 - We provide daily opportunities for active play—running, climbing, dancing, and jumping—to help toddlers develop balance, strength, and coordination.
- **Social-Emotional Growth**
 - Toddlers are learning to identify and express emotions, take turns, and build friendships. Teachers guide them through transitions, model appropriate behavior, and support emotional regulation.
- **Potty Training Support**
 - When children show readiness, we work with families to support positive potty training routines. Staff follow a consistent and encouraging approach to help children gain confidence and independence.



CURRICULUM

Required Toddler Supplies

Families must provide the following clearly labeled items for their child:

- Diapers or pull-ups (as developmentally appropriate)
- Baby wipes
- Diaper cream, if needed (must be labeled with child's name and a signed medication form)
- Extra sets of clothing (including socks and shoes)
- Nap items: blanket, small pillow, comfort items (such as a stuffed animal)
- Water bottle for hydration throughout the day

Please be sure to check and replenish your child's supplies regularly. All items must be labeled with your child's full name.

Our toddler environment is designed to foster independence, curiosity, and confidence. We are proud to partner with you during this exciting stage of development.

Let us know if you have any questions or updates regarding your child's routine or potty training progress.



CURRICULUM

Before and After School Program

Our Before and After School Program provides safe, nurturing care for children attending Bismarck Public Schools. We offer a balanced schedule with structured activities designed to support your child's academic, physical, and social development.

Program Hours

- Before School Care: 6:30 AM – 7:20 AM
- After School Care: 2:20 PM – 6:00 PM

Meals & Snacks

- Nutritious breakfast is served during before-school care.
- A healthy afternoon snack is provided during after-school care.

Curriculum & Activities

Our active curriculum includes a variety of developmentally appropriate activities designed to enhance:

- Academic skills through homework support and enrichment
- Physical development with games and movement activities
- Social skills through cooperative play and group projects

Attendance & Communication

To ensure the safety of your child, please notify us by calling 701-255-6122 by 1:00 PM if your child will not attend the after-school program that day.

Transportation

We provide transportation from select Bismarck Public Schools to our after-school program location. Please contact the program director for specific school pickup information.



CURRICULUM

Adventure Camp

Our Adventure Camp is offered on days when Bismarck Public Schools are not in session, providing a safe, active, and engaging environment for school-age children.

Registration:

Register online at bismarckymca.org
Click the “Register” tab to get started.

Spots fill quickly—early registration is encouraged!

What’s Included

- Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are provided daily
- Developmentally appropriate activities designed to promote creativity, movement, and teamwork
- Access to the Splash Center for water fun
- Field trips to exciting local destinations (as scheduled)

Adventure Camp is a great way for children to stay active, connect with friends, and continue learning through hands-on experiences—even when school is out!

For questions about camp dates, or schedules, please contact the Program Director.



CURRICULUM

Summer Programs

School Age Summer Camps

Our School Age Summer Camps offers a fun, active, and enriching experience for children entering grades 1–7. Designed to keep kids learning, exploring, and building friendships all summer long, this full-day program is packed with hands-on activities and adventure.

What Camp Includes:

- Weekly themes and developmentally appropriate activities
- Daily physical activity and outdoor play
- Access to the Splash Center for water fun
- Field trips to exciting local destinations
- Creative arts, STEM challenges, and team-building games

Campers are grouped by age and participate in a variety of structured and choice-based activities that promote confidence, creativity, and connection. Whether your child is into sports, science, swimming, or simply making new friends, our Summer Camp is the place to be!

Registration

Register online at bismarckymca.org

Click the “Register” tab to reserve your spot.

Spaces are limited and fill quickly—early registration is encouraged!



CURRICULUM

Kinder Camp

For children ages 4–5

Camp Hours: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Kinder Camp is a special half-day summer experience designed just for preschoolers 4–5 years of age. This fun and engaging camp introduces young children to the routines of a structured day in a playful, supportive environment that encourages creativity, curiosity, and confidence.

What Kinder Camp Includes:

- Age-appropriate activities focused on school readiness
- Arts & crafts, music, STEM, and outdoor play
- Social skill building through group games and cooperative play
- A caring, low-ratio environment just for our youngest campers
- Morning snack
- Engaging, age appropriate field trips

Kinder Camp is the perfect way to ease into longer school days while making friends, having fun, and building independence—all in a camp made just for them.

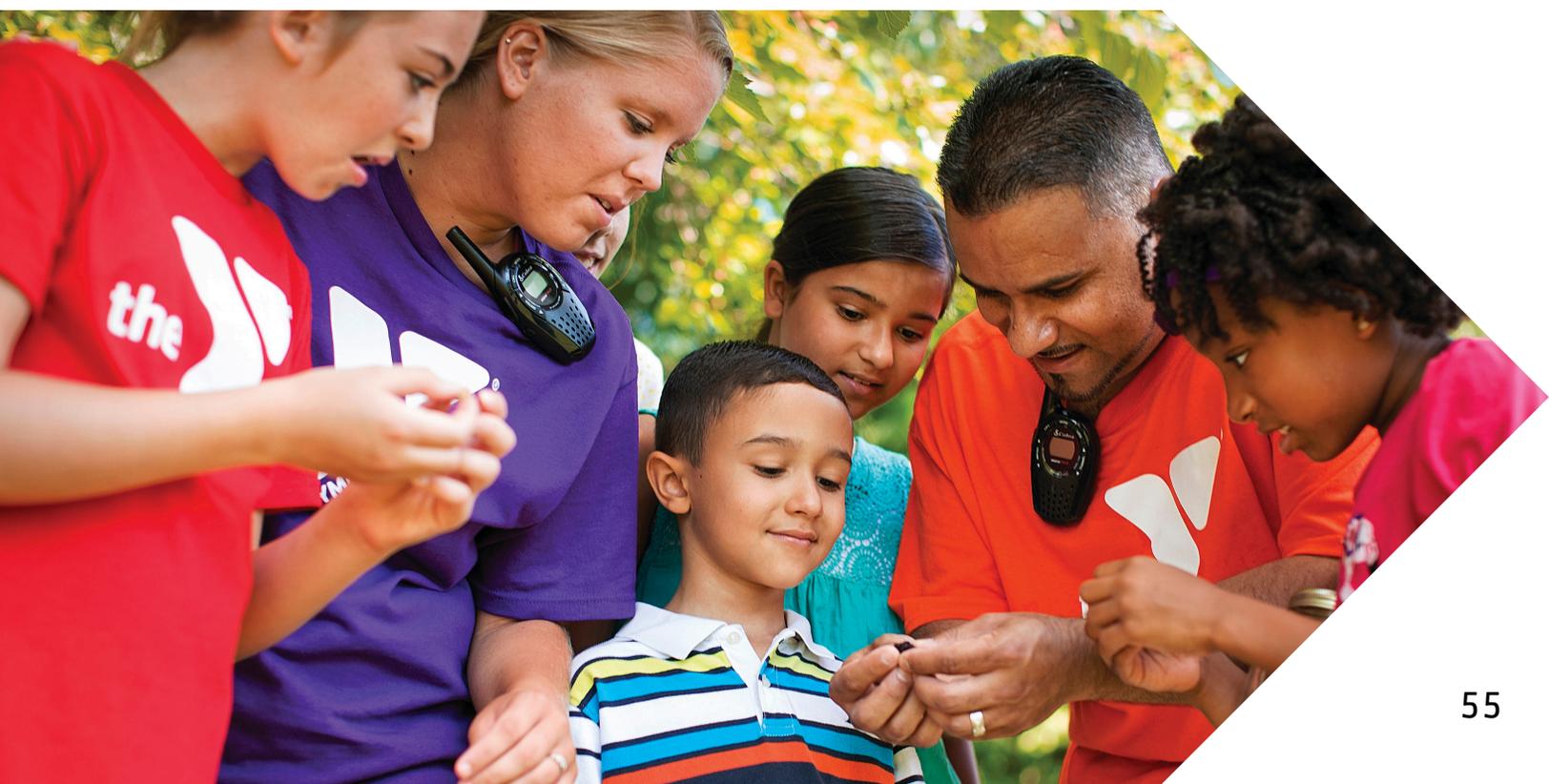
Registration

Register early at bismarckymca.org under the “Register” tab.

BUG SPRAY/SUNSCREEN

To help protect children during outdoor play, especially in warm weather months, families are asked to provide both bug spray and sunscreen for their child(ren). Please review the following guidelines:

- **Required Supplies:** Each child must have their own bug spray and sunscreen provided by their parent or guardian during summer months.
- **Labeling:** All products must be clearly labeled with the child's full name. Unlabeled items will not be used.
- **Application:** Staff will apply bug spray and sunscreen as needed, following proper hygiene and safety procedures. If you prefer to apply it at home only, please notify the classroom teacher in writing.
- **Expiration Dates:** Products must be within their expiration date and in good condition.





FOOD PROGRAM

Meals and Food Policy (CACFP Participation)

We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which ensures that all children in our care receive nutritious meals and snacks that meet USDA guidelines.

Meal Schedule and Arrival Time

- Breakfast is served at 8:45 AM.
- Children who arrive after 8:45 AM are expected to eat breakfast before arriving at the program, as meals will not be served outside of scheduled times.

Outside Food

- No outside food or beverages may be brought into the program, unless previously approved by the Site Director for medical or religious reasons.
- This policy ensures compliance with CACFP regulations and supports a safe environment for children with allergies and dietary restrictions.

Special Dietary Needs

- If your child has special dietary needs, allergies, or food restrictions, please inform the Site Director.
- A Medical Statement to request special accommodations must be completed by a licensed medical provider and kept on file.
- Without a completed and approved medical statement, we are unable to make meal substitutions.



OUR COMMITMENT

At the YMCA Youth Development Centers, we are honored to be part of your child's early learning and care experience. We look forward to being a supportive partner in your child's growth, development, and well-being—helping them build confidence, learn new skills, and thrive in a safe, nurturing environment.

Thank you for choosing the YMCA. We are grateful for the opportunity to grow with your family and be part of your child's journey.

— The YMCA Youth Development Center Team

