



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# FAMILY CHILDCARE HANDBOOK

McCrorey YMCA  
Simmons YMCA  
Stratford Richardson YMCA

Thank you for choosing the YMCA of Greater Charlotte for your child care experience! This handbook contains the childcare policies and guidelines that we follow. If you have any questions, please contact your center:

McCrorey YMCA  
Simmons YMCA  
Stratford Richardson YMCA

MccroreyYMCA@YMCACHarlotte.org	704-716-6500
<a href="mailto:SimmonsYMCA@YMCACHarlotte.org">SimmonsYMCA@YMCACHarlotte.org</a>	704-716-6600
<a href="mailto:StratfordRichardsonYMCA@YMCACHarlotte.org">StratfordRichardsonYMCA@YMCACHarlotte.org</a>	704-716-4800

### **Mission**

The Y's mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

### **Core Values**

Caring – Honesty – Respect – Responsibility – Faith

### **Diversity & Inclusion**

Diversity and inclusion are core tenets of our mission “for all.” We work to ensure that everyone in our community feels welcome and fully engaged as program participants, members, team members and volunteers. The YMCA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, or other legally-protected status.

The YMCA will make reasonable accommodations to serve all children regardless of their developmental or physical abilities. Please contact the camp director at least two weeks in advance to discuss your child's individual needs.

### **Enrollment**

- A COMPLETED paper copy of the registration form is required to complete registration.
- We encourage families to visit the center to tour the facility and meet staff prior to the program start.
- For children receiving subsidized care (Child Care Resources) funding who are not currently enrolled, a signed voucher with the YMCA as provider must be onsite prior to the first day of attendance. Please be aware that 10 days' notice is required by subsidy for processing any new or transferred voucher.
- The Family Handbook with policy information will be sent to the email of the responsible party who registered the child for the program.

### **Parent/Guardian Participation**

#### *Communication:*

Open communication between staff and families is important. Children's actions often reflect challenges or changes they are experiencing outside of the program (death of a family member or pet, new sibling, divorce, etc.). Please keep us informed of anything happening at home or school that may affect your child so we are able to best support your child and family. Please do not hesitate to call, email, or schedule a meeting with your center's child care director to discuss any questions or concerns. We will also periodically conduct surveys to seek feedback on how we can improve our programs. If you believe the program may be in violation of state standards, you may report your concerns through the Child Care Licensing Parent Report Hotline at (800)829-0859. Families may also anonymously report any concerns regarding abuse or neglect to Praesidium by calling (855)347-0751.

#### *Get Involved:*

Families can get involved in a variety of ways to support our programs:

- Attend orientation and other family events
- Volunteer
- Read program communications
- Donate supplies
- Donate to our annual fundraising campaign

### **Financial Policies**

#### *Member Rate*

In order to receive the YMCA member program price, participants must be an active member at the point

of registration and maintain an active membership status through the end of program. If a participant's membership status changes, the rate will be adjusted accordingly.

#### *My Y Scholarships*

My Y Program Scholarships may be available to participants who meet the household income requirements. Please visit your local YMCA center for more information. Rate adjustments will be applied only to future payments following approval of scholarship eligibility. Prior payments are not eligible for a rate adjustment or credit. Financial assistance is only applied to program tuition and not fees.

#### *Payment Procedures*

A payment schedule is provided at the time of registration. The credit or debit card on file will automatically be drafted for the balance due based on the program payment schedule due date(s). Payment estimates included in program descriptions for school year programs are based on full year attendance, and monthly payments may vary if registering after the program start date.

You will be charged a \$35 fee for late or declined payments that cannot be drafted. If you would like to change your payment method, please update your credit card information in your online account or visit your local YMCA center at least 15 days prior to the payment schedule due date. Payment due dates can be viewed in your online account by visiting My Orders. Select the program order and the print option to view the future due dates. You can also visit your local YMCA center if you have questions about your payment schedule. Payment plans are available as needed.

If payment is declined, you will be notified at the email address on file. The system will automatically attempt to re-draft the following Wednesday and the next Friday. If payment is not received until the 2<sup>nd</sup> re-draft the participant will be unable to attend the program until payment is received. If no payment or written notice of cancellation is received after 15 days, the participant will be cancelled from the program. All past balances must be paid in full before registering for future programs, including payment for the time the child was still enrolled in the program before cancellation.

#### *Cancellations/Refunds*

- Cancellations for childcare service require written notice 21 days in advance and must be submitted online.
- All deposits and fees (registration, activity, and field trip) are non-refundable and non-transferable.
- We do not issue refunds for program closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or scheduled closings. We also do not issue refunds for days missed due to individual illness, vacations, or program suspensions and dismissals resulting from violations to our behavior guidelines.
- Participants in programs cancelled by the YMCA are eligible for a refund of the activity/program. If a program session is cancelled after the program has already started, a prorated refund will be applied.

#### *Late Pick Up Fee*

Our late pick up fee is \$10 per 5 minutes and will be automatically charged to the credit/debit card on file.

#### *Copay Fees*

Parent fees for children receiving payments from third parties must be paid monthly, and subsidized care is subject to benefit termination from sponsoring party if fees are not paid. Child Care Resources voucher benefits do not cover the cost of activity fees or field trip fees. These fees are the responsibility of the parent. For additional information about payment methods and options, please contact our YMCA Business Office at 704-716-6504.

#### *Activity Fees*

The activity fee per week, per child in Day Camp, afterschool, Out of school days, must be paid with tuition. The activity fee will cover the cost of special activities that take place that respective childcare week.

#### **Attendance**

The YMCA takes attendance daily for all participants in the program to ensure safety and accountability. We encourage children to attend all days of programming to take advantage of the full experience unless they are sick or a family emergency arises. It is required to inform the childcare director/ childcare office before 9:00 AM if your child will be absent or late. On full childcare days

(camp/Out of school day/holidays) children arriving after 9:00 AM without prior contact and/or approval may not be accepted for that day.

Families and providers must be accountable for the attendance policies/responsibilities in place, including submitting all attendance records to CCRI for children receiving subsidies and reporting absences exceeding 10 days to CCRI.

## **Behavior Guidelines**

### *Philosophy*

The YMCA believes the foundation of our work in youth development is safety and character development. We respect each child's unique needs and recognize that behavior is a form of communication. Our team understands that not all children will come in with the same social-emotional skills, which is why our approach is geared toward individual development. We aim to create a positive, nurturing, and supportive environment where each child can thrive.

### *Behavior Expectations*

Our staff work with youth to help them learn and meet the following expectations in alignment with our core values:

1. Caring- Show a sincere concern for others.
2. Respect- Treat others how they would like to be treated.
3. Responsibility- Be accountable for your promises and actions.
4. Honesty- Be truthful in what you say and do.
5. Faith- Center yourself around your own spiritual well-being.

### *How We Support Youth*

There are several steps we take to help youth be successful and make positive behavior choices:

- We build intentional relationships with youth.
- We create consistent schedules and routines to provide a sense of security and predictability.
- We encourage children to recognize and express their emotions in a healthy manner.
- We use encouragement, praise, and rewards for positive behavior.
- We set age-appropriate expectations but also adjust expectations for individual children based on maturity, ability, culture, language, and learning styles.
- We work with families to align how we can help youth experience success in our programs.
- We remain calm while engaging with children in heightened situations.

The following behaviors jeopardize safety and/or quality of our program experience and will result in a consequence:

- Behaviors that physically harm themselves, other youth in the program, or staff
- Behaviors that threaten the emotional safety of youth or staff
- Behaviors that damage property
- Behaviors that prevent participants from learning and/or experiencing program activities
- Behaviors that violate personal boundaries or are of a sexual nature

When youth demonstrate unsafe or inappropriate behavior, we have an opportunity to teach and help youth learn from their mistakes. Our staff may use the following approaches to guide the youth unless the nature of the behavior warrants dismissal from the program:

- Staff may redirect youth to an alternate choice or activity.
- Staff may review expectations with the youth to ensure they understand what is expected of them.
- Staff may provide a verbal warning and explain that continuing the behavior will result in a consequence.
- Staff may give a logical consequence for the behavior such as being moved to a different seat or not being able to play with a certain toy.
- Rather than putting youth in "time-out," we provide "time-in" (co-regulation) with a staff member. We sit with a youth to talk about what happened, why it happened, and how they can respond in a healthy way the next time.
- Staff may contact the parent or guardian.
- Staff may work with the parent or guardian to create an individual behavior plan.

## **Sign In and Sign Out Procedures**

### ***Rides In and Out on Full Days care:***

Childcare hours are 7:00 AM-6:00 PM During full childcare session, the YMCA operates a car line allowing families to drive through to drop off and pick up their children. Drop off is between 7-9 AM, and pick up is between 4-6 PM.; children may not be dropped off prior to 7:00 AM. Parents/guardians must ensure their child is properly checked in and is under the supervision of YMCA staff prior to leaving the facility. Drivers should come to a complete stop and let the childcare staff person open and close the door for the children. Parents/guardians must wait while the child is checked in and out. Parents/guardians who need to speak with staff should park their cars and come into the center to speak with staff. YMCA staff will not buckle any child into a vehicle, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure their child is secured.

### ***Sign in and Out on Before and After school care:***

Parents are asked to park or lined up in a designated area and follow internal Center childcare instructions.

### ***Authorized Pick-Ups***

Youth will only be released to a legal guardian or responsible adult at least 18 years of age listed on their account as an authorized pickup. Every adult must present a photo ID during pick up each day unless their photo is stored in our childcare software. If a child will be picked up by someone not listed on the child's account, please notify the program director in writing and inform the person picking up that they will be required to present a photo ID. We encourage families to designate at least two additional emergency contacts as authorized to pick up in addition to the parent/guardian.

### ***Late Arrival and Early Pick Up***

We encourage you to leave your child in program until the day ends so they will not miss out on any activities that day. We understand that there will be exceptions and when these occur, please send a note to your child's counselor. When picking up prior to 4:00 PM, parents/guardians must come into the center to sign out and receive their child.

### ***Late Pick Up***

In fairness to our staff and because of subsequent program demands, it is very important that your child is picked up on time (all childcare programs by 6:00 pm with the exception of Pre-K by 5:30 pm). We understand that emergencies come up causing parents to be late. In this case, please contact your center to notify the staff. Our late pick up fee is \$10 per 5 minutes and will be automatically charged to the credit/debit card on file. Repeated or habitual late pick-ups will result in the termination of your child from our program.

### **Custody Situations**

If there are special circumstances involving custody issues, you must provide the program director with legal documentation of these restrictions or arrangements. We will release the child to all parents or legal guardians included on the child's account unless we have legal documentation preventing us from doing so.

### **Field Trips and Transportation**

Field trips may be conducted both on and off-site. A permission slip must be signed for each participant in order to participate in field trips, as well as to travel on the bus. Communication about field trips will be sent in advance to assist families with planning. In the event of severe weather, field trips may be cancelled to ensure the safety of our children.

While on the bus, children are expected to abide by the following rules. Failure to comply with rules will result in children not being allowed to ride the bus.

- Remain seated and face forward during the entire ride.
- Listen to the driver and follow all instructions.
- Speak quietly so the driver will not be distracted.
- Keep your hands to yourself. No horseplay or fighting.
- Feet should be directly in front of you on the floor.
- Do not put your arms or hands out the window.
- Keep doors and aisle clear at all times.
- Do not throw anything on or off the bus.

- Do not make comments or gestures to other vehicles.
- Never play with emergency exits and keep clear of belongings.
- Do not eat, drink, or chew gum while on the bus.
- Seat belts on mini-buses must be buckled while the bus is on and/or in motion.

### **Medical Information and Medication**

If your child has a chronic medical condition or allergy, please notify the program director in advance of the program start date and complete the applicable medical action plan. Please note that some forms must be completed by a physician.

If a child requires medication during their time at the Y, families are responsible for updating the child's health profile in their YMCA account, notifying the program director, and completing our Medication Authorization Form. Child with medical needs, will not be able to attend without the medication being onsite.

Our team will administer medications prescribed by a physician with dosing that the family cannot provide at home. Medication must be in the original container with the prescription label attached that includes child's name, date of birth, medication name, dosage, and expiration date. Over the counter medications must be in the original container and require a physician's note as these will be treated as prescription medication.

With the exception of emergency medications, such as EpiPens, the first dose of new medications should be given at home with sufficient time before the child attends the program in order to observe the child's response to the medication given.

We cannot accept, keep, or use expired medication. Medication must be picked up within one week of the program end date.

### **Health and Wellness Guidelines**

#### *Illness*

For the safety and well-being of all children and staff, the following health and wellness guidelines will be strictly enforced in all youth programs. Please be considerate and do not send your child to programs when they are sick. If a child develops symptoms of illness while in our care, the family will be notified and the child will need to be picked up immediately.

Children who have the following symptoms should remain at home until they are symptom free for a full 24 hours without the use of medication or unless a written note from the child's physician is provided, stating that the symptoms are not contagious and the child can attend programming:

- Fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat
- Undiagnosed rash, sore, or other skin condition
- Head lice
- Continuous and/or colored drainage from nose or eyes
- Persistent cough
- Any other contagious disease or symptoms

Staff will notify the family or guardian to pick up children when any of the following conditions exist:

1. The child displays any of the symptoms above.
2. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
3. The illness results in a greater need than the YMCA staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in the program.

#### *Injuries*

If a child is injured during the program, staff will provide immediate first aid care for the child. If the injury is affecting the child's participation in the program, we will notify the parent/guardian. In the event of a serious emergency, 911 will be called first to secure prompt medical treatment. Please note that EMS or a parent/guardian is required to transport minors in the event of a medical emergency.

## **Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma**

We believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families. SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death.

We observe the following procedures to prevent and respond to SBS/AHT:

- Educate staff on SBS/AHT.
- Provide staff with strategies to assist in coping with a distraught child, including identifying whether the child has an unmet physical need and taking a calming break.
- Observe children for signs of abusive head trauma.
- If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will call 911, notify parents/guardians, and provide medical care as needed.
- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported to the Division of Child Development and Early Education.

## **Technology**

Our programs emphasize play, relationships, and socialization. In accordance with this, we limit the amount of exposure to screens in our programs. We know that some older participants may carry phones or smart watches at the request of their parents/guardians. These devices should remain in the child's backpack during the program unless a scheduled time for checking phones or other exception is granted. The YMCA is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or broken devices brought to the program.

## **Meals and Snacks**

### *Food Service Programs*

Our childcare center participates in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) during the summer months, and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) during school year using meal requirements in accordance with the Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy. Breakfast, lunch, and snack will be provided daily for campers. Meals provided through the SFSP/CACFP must include the following components:

Breakfast: milk, fruit or vegetable or 100% juice, bread or cereal

Lunch or supper: milk, meat or meat alternate, fruit or vegetable (2 servings), bread or alternate

Snack (serve at least 2 of the 4 components): milk, meat or alternate, fruit or vegetable, bread or alternate

### *Nutrition Opt Out*

Participants also have the option of bringing their own breakfast, lunch, and snack. If a family opts not to have the YMCA provide nutritious meals as stated in the NC Childcare regulations, the parent/guardian needs to complete and return the nutrition opt out form to the Childcare director. Families opting out are expected to provide all meals, snacks and beverages. If bringing food from home, families should provide healthy, balanced meals that follow SFSP/CACFP guidelines. Sodas, unhealthy snacks such as cookies, certain chips, and fast food will not be permitted in the program. There may be occasional sweets served at special events, but servings will be limited. If a family does not provide all the meals, snacks or drinks for their child, the program will provide supplemental food and drink.

### *Food Allergies*

While it is impossible to create an allergen-free environment, we take the following precautions to mitigate the risk of exposure to allergens in our programs for the safety of children and staff with food allergies:

- Prior to the first day of the program, we ask all parents to complete their child's profile, which includes information about allergies and medications. We work with families to develop specific care plans for their child as needed.
- The foods we serve do not contain peanuts/tree nuts, and we request that families also avoid sending foods containing peanuts/tree nuts. Please be aware that some products commonly substituted for peanut butter contain tree nuts, including almond butter and Nutella.
- If a child brings a food containing peanuts/tree nuts for lunch and/or snack, our staff will provide an alternate supervised space for the child to eat if there is a known allergy in their assigned group to avoid the potential risk of exposure. Due to the sharing of materials and equipment throughout the

program, we will require handwashing after any peanut/tree nut products are eaten, even if no children with nut allergies are in their assigned group.

- We recommend that families label containers with foods resembling nut products (WOWBUTTER and SunButter, for instance) so that staff are aware of the ingredients and do not mistake the food item as containing nuts.
- Most packaged food products are labeled with verbiage cautioning that food “may contain traces of nuts” or “may be made in facilities or on equipment that processes nuts” so we do expect that some packaged products sent with children for lunch and/or snack may contain that messaging. We do not require children to eat these foods in a separate space since nuts are not listed as an ingredient.
- If the child attends a program that provides food (afterschool snack, for instance), families may request that an alternative snack be provided to avoid a specific allergen (e.g., eggs, milk, wheat). We will make every effort to accommodate these requests but cannot guarantee that every request will be fulfilled. Alternatively, the family can provide their own snack from home.

### **Tobacco-Free Environment**

Children must be in a smoke free and tobacco free environment. Smoking and the use of any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco, is not permitted on the premises, in vehicles used to transport children, or during off premise activities.

### **Aquatics Guidelines**

We're thrilled to give our children an opportunity to swim at camp! Your child's swim day/time will be provided by the childcare leadership. The YMCA of Greater Charlotte has guidelines on appropriate and safe pool procedures for all swimmers that we expect all to follow. ~~Campers~~ Children should bring a swimsuit and towel each day they are scheduled to swim.

Children's swimming ability will be assessed on their first swim day and each child will be assigned a swim band based off the skills they show during their swimming assessment.

RED Band: Non-swimmer; limited to designated red band swim areas and should wear a US Coast Guard approved lifejacket (provided by the Y).

YELLOW Band: Limited to use designated shallow areas (no deeper than armpit depth).

GREEN Band: Able to use all designated areas of the pool including slides.

Swim assessments will be given to all children on their first swim day and are also available year-round at any YMCA of Greater Charlotte pool. Swimmers are encouraged to practice throughout the year to improve their confidence in the water to advance to a Green Swim Band.

### **Weather Guidelines**

#### *Severe Weather*

Our staff team is trained and prepared to respond in the event of severe weather. Staff will move participants indoors when thunder and/or lightning is present in the area. In the event of a tornado warning, staff will move participants to designated areas of the facility away from exterior windows and doors. Please note that participants may not be released for dismissal if the center is under an active weather threat. Our standard rides in/out process may also be delayed or changed in the event of severe weather, which may include requiring that parents/guardians come into the building to pick up their children. If facility conditions become unsafe for program operations, parents/guardians will be asked to pick up their children promptly.

#### *Extreme Temperatures*

We incorporate outdoor play into our daily program schedules and monitor weather conditions to ensure participant safety. Our team utilizes the air quality and childcare weather chart from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to determine if program modifications need to be made.

We follow several best practices to prevent youth and staff well-being:

- Ensuring youth are drinking plenty of water to stay hydrated
- Moving to shaded and/or indoor areas (sunny or raining days)
- Limiting strenuous activities
- Applying sunscreen sent from home
- Rotating groups through air-conditioned or warm spaces as needed.



- Enjoying our swimming pools and other water activities

In the event of extreme heat or cold conditions, programming may be moved indoors or to shaded/covered areas. No matter the weather, we closely monitor children for signs of weather-related illness and ensure they drink plenty of water.

The YMCA reserves the right to cancel, delay or reschedule programs and field trips requiring the use of YMCA transportation base on inclement weather that could affect your child's safety and program quality.

### **What to Wear**

- Children are encouraged to wear loose fitting and comfortable clothing.
- Children should wear shoes with closed toes and closed heels. Rubber soled shoes (sneakers) are perfect for play! Wheelies, sandals, crocs, and open-toed shoes with high heels should not be worn due to safety reasons.
- Children are not permitted to wear any article of clothing or possess items that depict illegal activity, violence, profanity, sexual activity, or nudity.
- Undergarments must be concealed at all times, and no "see through" clothing can be worn.

### **What to Bring and Not Bring**

- Swimsuit/swim trunks and towel on swimming days (goggles, sandals/aqua shoes are optional)
- Refillable water bottle labeled with your child's name
- Sunscreen labeled with your child's name
- An extra set of clothes
- Leave the following items at home: toys, electronics (cell phones, iPods, video games, etc.), money, and anything valuable that you would be sad to lose. Items that pose a danger to campers and staff are also prohibited, including weapons or objects that look like weapons, flammable items such as matches/lighters/fireworks, and drugs/alcohol.

### **Child Safety**

Here are some of the policies we follow to keep kids safe while in and out of our care:

- YMCA staff and volunteers are not allowed to transport participants or members in their personal vehicles at any time.
- Staff/Volunteers may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving or riding in cars, and inviting children to their homes.
- If a YMCA staff member believes that a parent or guardian is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol when they arrive to pick up their child, we will keep the child in our care until an alternate plan can be arranged for the transportation of the child and the parent/guardian. We will first try to reach emergency contacts but may also call a cab service at the parent/guardian's expense if we are unable to reach an emergency contact.
- The YMCA is mandated by state law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation. Families may also report any concerns to Praesidium by calling (855)347-0751.

### **YMCA of Greater Charlotte Code of Conduct**

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte is committed to providing a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment for all. We expect persons using YMCA programs and facilities to behave in a mature and responsible way, and to respect the rights and dignity of others. Our Code of Conduct does not permit language or any action that can hurt or frighten another person, or that falls below a generally accepted standard of conduct. Our Code of Conduct outlines prohibited actions. The list below is not all-inclusive.

- Card sharing, presenting false identification, or intentional abuse or non-compliance of YMCA policies.
- Using or possessing alcohol or illegal drugs on YMCA property, in YMCA vehicles or facilities or at YMCA-sponsored programs is prohibited.
- Smoking on YMCA property – all of our YMCA buildings and grounds are smoke-free environments.
- Carrying or concealing a weapon of any kind.
- Harassment, verbal abuse or intimidation by words, gestures, body language, or any type of menacing behavior.
- Physical contact with another person in an angry, aggressive or threatening way.
- Inappropriate sexual conduct including explicit conversations or any sexual contact with another

person.

- Theft or behavior that results in the destruction or loss of property.
- Loitering within facilities or on the grounds of a YMCA.
- Use of cell phones in locker room or bathrooms.
- Wearing inappropriate (i.e., containing profanity or illegal product marketing), immodest or revealing attire.
- Use of social networking websites in a manner that is contrary to the YMCA's mission, is detrimental to the community or is in violation of the law.
- Any behavior or activity that is against the law.

The YMCA reserves the right to deny, suspend or revoke membership or access privileges to any person if, in the YMCA's sole discretion, the actions or inactions of a person are detrimental to the health, safety or enjoyment of its employees, volunteers, members or participants.

When using a cellphone to film yourself at the YMCA, please do so in a respectful manner, without infringing on the personal space or privacy of others. Filming others without their consent, as well as the use of professional photography equipment, including tripods, is prohibited. The YMCA reserves the right to deny, suspend or revoke membership or access privileges for violating this policy if necessary to maintain a respectful environment.

In addition, the YMCA reserves the right to deny access or membership to any person who is a registered sex offender, has been arrested for or convicted of any crime involving weapons, violence, sexual abuse, or the sale, possession and/or transportation of illegal drugs.

### **Parent Conduct Expectations**

Disorderly conduct from parents/guardians will not be tolerated. We reserve the right to terminate services in the event a parent/ guardian or family representative becomes disorderly to our staff or other individuals at the center.

### **Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Laws and Rules for Child Care Centers**

A summary of child care laws and rules that we follow can be found on the following pages. For more detailed information, families can also visit <http://www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/>.

# Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rule for Child Care Centers

## What is Child Care?

The law defines child care as:

- three or more unrelated children under 13 years of age
- receiving care from a non-relative
- on a regular basis, at least once a week for more than four hours per day but less than 24 hours.

It is only when all of these conditions exist that regulation is required. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care. This is carried out through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The purpose of regulation is to protect the health and well-being of children while they are away from their parents. The law defining child care is in the North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110. The North Carolina Child Care Commission is responsible for adopting rules to carry out the law. Some counties and cities in North Carolina also have local zoning requirements for child care programs.

## Child Care Centers

Licensing as a center is required when six or more children are cared for in a residence or when three or more children are in care in a building other than a residence. Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the regulations described below if they choose not to be licensed. Child care centers may voluntarily meet higher standards and receive a license with a higher rating. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants.

## Two through Five Star Rated License

Centers that meet the minimum licensing requirements will receive a one-star license. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a two through five-star rated license. The number of stars a program earns is based upon the education levels their staff meet, the program standards met by the program, and one quality point option.

## Child Abuse, Neglect, or Maltreatment

Every citizen has a responsibility to report suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment. This occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. It may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. It also occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, appropriate discipline, or when a child is not in a safe environment. North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child maltreatment at a child care facility to report the situation to the Intake Unit at Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829. Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith. North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect in a family to report that to the county department of social services.

## Parental Rights

- Parents have the right to enter a center at any time while their child is present.
- Parents have the right to see the license displayed in a prominent place.
- Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined.

## How to Report a Problem

North Carolina law requires staff from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to investigate a child care center when there has been a complaint. Child care providers who violate the law or rules may be fined, issued an administrative action, and may have their licenses suspended or revoked. Administrative actions must be posted in the facility. If you believe that a child care provider fails to meet the child care requirements, or if you have questions, please call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919 814-6300 or 1800-859-0829.

## Licensed centers must, at a minimum, meet requirements in the following areas.

### Education and Training

The administrator of a child care center must be at least 21 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. Lead teachers in a child care center must be at least 18 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. If administrators and lead teachers do not meet this requirement, they must begin credential coursework within six months of being hired. Staff younger than 18 years of age must work under the direct supervision of staff 21 years of age or older. All staff must have current certification in CPR and First Aid. All staff must complete health and safety training and a minimum number of ongoing training hours annually. ITS-SIDS training is required the administrator and any caregiver that works with infants 12 months of age or younger. One staff member must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care training and plan.

### Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background qualification is a pre-service requirement. All staff must undergo a criminal background check initially, and every five years thereafter.

### Reviewing Facility Information

From the Division's Child Care Facility Search Site, the facility and visit documentation can be viewed <http://ncchildcaresearch.dhhs.state.nc.us/search.asp?lang=English>. A public file is maintained in the Division's main office in Raleigh for every licensed center. These files can be viewed during business hours (8am-5 pm) by contacting the Division at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829 or requested via the Division's web site at [www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov).

### Staff/Child Ratios

Ratios are the number of staff required to supervise a certain number of children. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group. The minimum staff/child ratios and group sizes for single-age groups of children in centers are shown below and must be posted in each classroom. A sample staff/child ratio chart can be found on the DCDEE website under "Provider Documents and Forms".

Age	Teacher: Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
0-12 months	1:5	10
12-24 months	1:6	12
2 to 3 years old	1:10	20
3 to 4 years old	1:15	25
4 to 5 years old	1:20	25
5 years old and Older	1:25	25

Centers located in a residence licensed for six to twelve children may care for up to three additional school-age children, depending on the other children in care. When the group has children of different ages, staff-child ratios and group size must be met for the youngest child in the group. Staff/child ratios for multi-age groupings are outlined in the child care rules and require prior approval

### Space and Equipment

There are space requirements for indoor and outdoor environments that must be measured prior to licensure. Outdoor play space must be fenced. Indoor equipment must be clean, safe, well-maintained, and age appropriate. Outdoor equipment and indoor furnishings must be child size, sturdy, and free of hazards that could injure children.

### Record Requirement

Centers must keep accurate records such as children's, staff, and program. A record of monthly fire drills and quarterly shelter-in-place or lockdown drills practiced must also be maintained. A safe sleep policy must be developed and shared with parents if children younger than 12 months are in care. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma policy must be developed and shared with parent of children up to five year of age.

## Curriculum and Activities

Four and five-star programs must use an approved curriculum in classrooms serving four year old children. Other programs may choose to use an approved curriculum to earn a quality point for the star-rated license. The Division website maintains a list of approved curriculums for four-year-old children. Activity plans must be available to parents and must show a balance of active and quiet activities. A written activity plan that includes activities intended to stimulate the developmental domains, in accordance with North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development. Rooms must be arranged to encourage children to explore and use materials on their own and have choices.

## Health and Safety

Children must be immunized on schedule. Each licensed center must ensure the health and safety of children by sanitizing areas and equipment used by children. Meals and snacks must be nutritious and meet the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care. Food must be offered at least once every four hours. Local health, building, and fire inspectors visit licensed programs to make sure standards are met. All children must be allowed to play outdoors each day (weather conditions permitting) and must have space and time provided for rest. They must provide age-appropriate toys and activities. Centers must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care training and plan.

## Transportation

Child care centers providing transportation for children must meet all motor vehicle laws, including inspection, insurance, license, and restraint requirements. Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and child-staff ratio must be maintained.

## Discipline and Behavior Management

Each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must give parents a copy when the child is enrolled. Changes in discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect. Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, or other physical discipline) is prohibited in all centers. Religious-sponsored programs which notify the Division of Child Development and Early Education that corporal punishment is part of their religious training are exempt from that part of the law.

The law and rules are developed to establish minimum requirements. Most parents would like more than minimum care. Child Care Resource and referral agencies can provide help in choosing quality care. For more information about choosing quality child care, parent resources and/or the in North Carolina law and rules, contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919 814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829; or visit our homepage at [www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov)

This summary shall be posted for the public to view in accordance with G.S. 110-102



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Child Care Commission  
<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/Child-Care-Commission>

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