



## **UNIVERSAL PRE-K**

The goal of the YMCA UPK program is to provide your child with high quality targeted instruction and structured activities designed to facilitate learning and social-emotional growth.

## **OUR CURRICULUM**

The YMCA UPK program partners with local school districts to deliver a developmentally appropriate preschool curriculum. These programs introduce academics while focusing on socialization, physical activity, communication, and social emotional skills. We strive to prepare all learners for Kindergarten.

## **OUR RESPONSIBILITY**

At the YMCA we strive to meet your family and child's needs and expectations, all while delivering a high quality, safe, and fun program. We welcome your questions and feedback and can be reached during normal operating hours. We will adhere to the procedures outlined in this handbook.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITY**

Your involvement with the YMCA UPK program and cooperation with its policies and procedures is essential. Please take some time to read and understand the policies contained in this handbook. Take every opportunity to talk with YMCA staff about your child and ask your child about the program each day. Staff are also available for individual parent conferences as requested.

## **OUR STAFF**

YMCA hiring practices meet all New York State Department of Education UPK requirements. Prior to hiring, staff must successfully complete a criminal background investigation as well as additional background screenings to meet state regulations. In addition, all staff are required to successfully complete Buffalo Niagara's New Employee Orientation, Child Abuse Prevention, and Bloodborne Pathogens training prior to starting their positions.

## **DROP OFF/PICK UP**

Only those authorized on your child's registration may pick up your child from the program. Please refer to the following procedures for pick up:

- Photo I.D. is required. Your child will not be released to anyone without proper identification.
- The person picking up your child must be at least 18 years of age.
- Children will not be permitted to walk or bicycle home.
- The YMCA must be notified in writing of any changes in people authorized to pick up your child.

If drop-off and pick-up are subject to any court orders, you must notify and provide proper documentation to the YMCA for your child's file. If your child is not picked up by the class end time, staff will attempt to reach the parent/guardian. If YMCA staff members are unable to contact the parent/guardian, the emergency contacts listed on your child's registration form will be called and your child will be released to him/her. If no one is reached within 1 hour of classroom dismissal time, the Executive Director, and local Child Protective Services Agency may be notified.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation to and from our site is the responsibility of each parent and/or school district. We cannot transport children in our personal vehicles. If a site's transportation plan changes, the YMCA will notify you in writing before the change occurs.

## **ATTENDANCE**

As a student in our UPK program, your child is being introduced into the school setting. It is essential from the very beginning for students to understand going to school on time every day is an important responsibility. We want to ensure that your child has every opportunity to succeed in the UPK program and be ready for Kindergarten. Absences result in lost learning for your child, and late arrivals cause a disruption to the learning of the rest of the class. Our UPK schedules align with the district that we partner with. Please follow district schedules for vacations, holidays and other built-in days off such as conference days.



## VISITATION

You may visit your child at any time he/she is in attendance. All visitors are required to sign in and out and to state the purpose of the visit in our visitor log located at each site.

## SNACK AND MEALS

All of our sites follow the regulations set forth by the Child and Adult Food Care Program. We prepare menus for all snacks and meals and post them at our program site. The option to purchase a school lunch is available based on the school site.

## SPECIAL OCCASIONS

The YMCA sites may have celebrations during the program on special occasions. On those days, the YMCA may serve treats for the celebration. Homemade treats are prohibited. Snacks provided for celebrations must be purchased from a grocery store or bakery. Children are asked not to bring candy to the program and are strictly prohibited from sharing any food or candy without approval from the Y staff.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### Illness

Be sure to inform your classroom teacher of an absence from school. For the health and well-being of all our children and our staff, please make sure your child is symptom-free for 24 hours. If your child becomes ill during our program hours, we will call you or an authorized person to pick up your child within one hour.

### Communicable Diseases

If we notice a contagious illness affecting children at our site, we will notify you and encourage you to consult your family doctor. We report major outbreaks to our local health authorities.

### Medication

While in our care, children may require medication. All YMCA sites are able to accept children that require the following emergency medications:

- inhaler
- nebulizer
- epi-pen
- Benadryl (when prescribed in conjunction with epi-pen)

Medications must be in their original container with the child's complete name, the medication name, and expiration. If your child requires any medications not listed above, please contact the Program Director.

The following forms must be completed, provided, and approved by the Program Director prior to the child starting the program and medication being onsite:

- Written Medication Consent Form
- Individual Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan
- Individual Health Care Plan for Child with Special Health Care Needs

These forms can be found on our website: <https://www.ymcabn.org/programs/child-care/after-school-care>



### **Toileting**

Staff are not permitted to be alone with any child but are able to use verbal prompts from outside of the bathroom to help coach the children through the toileting process if needed. If a child soils themselves and is unable to respond to coaching a staff member will bring another adult to assist in supervision. The staff member will then use hand over hand techniques to assist in the child in cleaning themselves.

In cases of frequent accidents, the YMCA will include the family in the development of a plan that supports the child using the toilet independently. Working with the family to establish vocabulary words and a routine that can be used consistently at both home and school can assist in developing this skill.

### **Incidents**

We want to ensure a safe environment for your child; however, accidents sometimes happen. We have staff certified in First Aid and CPR on site at all times. You will be notified about any injury and the type of medical attention that was given. In case of a serious medical or dental emergency, we will first call 911 for medical assistance, then notify you. If we cannot reach you, we will notify the person designated on your emergency form.

### **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION**

All YMCA Buffalo Niagara staff are mandated child abuse and maltreatment reporters in New York State. If our staff suspect abuse or maltreatment of a child participating in our program they are required by law to file a report. In the event you suspect your child or someone you know is being abused or maltreated by a teacher, friend or family member, we can help. Please speak with the UPK Program Director or UPK Program Executive Director for guidance on documentation and reporting options. Reports may also be made anonymously by calling the NYS Child Protection Service System at 800-342-3720.

### **BABYSITTING**

YMCA staff and volunteers are not permitted to babysit children in the YMCA programs outside of program hours and spaces at any time. Please assist us by not requesting staff to babysit your family.

### **EMERGENCY PLAN**

Each of our sites has a well-defined plan for emergency and fire evacuation and we conduct fire drills each month. As part of the emergency plan we also conduct two Shelter In Place drills each year. The YMCA staff will notify in advance of the Shelter In Place drills.

In the event the program is required to evacuate, children under the supervision of the YMCA staff will be brought to a secure nearby location. Children may or may not be required to board a bus to be transported.

In the event of an evacuation the YMCA staff will contact parents to inform them as to where the children and staff have been evacuated to. Several relocation sites have been identified for each site. A list of these sites is available upon request. If at any point these relocation sites change all parents will be notified.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES**

In the event of a natural disaster or other unforeseeable emergency, we may need to close. Unforeseeable circumstances could include:

- Loss of power affecting lights and heat/air
- No lights after dark
- No running water
- Natural Disasters
- Fire
- Inclement weather

YMCA UPK programs follow the school districts' closing procedures. If the closure occurs during our program hours, you will need to pick your child up immediately. The YMCA reserves the right to close sites based on a concern for the safety of the children.



### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Our first step in behavior management is prevention. We provide clear, reasonable limits for children's behavior and maintain them. We reinforce positive behaviors and redirect negative behaviors. We help children recognize and identify their feelings as valid and acceptable. If a child's behavior is harmful to him/herself or to others, we will intercede.

We make every effort to communicate and solve individual behavior challenges; however, if a problem persists, we reserve the right to remove a child temporarily or permanently.

### **EXTREME BEHAVIOR ISSUES**

In extreme cases, a child's behavior may warrant immediate removal from the program. Such cases include the use of profane or abusive language or any aggressive behavior which threatens or causes physical harm to other participants or staff.

### **TOYS AND ITEMS FROM HOME**

We strongly discourage participants from bringing toys or other items from home. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items brought to our Before and After school locations.

### **NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

The State Office of Children and Family Services maintain a toll-free complaint line for complaints about day care programs. Call this number during normal working hours and a staff person will take the information. The Office is empowered to investigate any possible violation of child care regulations. Your complaint will be investigated, and if it is substantiated, staff will work with the provider to correct any violations. If you wish to make a complaint, call (800) 723-5207.