



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# **Down East Family YMCA Early Learning Center Parent Handbook**

An overview of our policies and procedures.

Our program focuses on our four core values of caring, respect, honesty, and responsibility which are incorporated through curriculum design and staff delivery.

*Revised 2023*

## **PARENTS PLEASE NOTE:**

Updates to this policy handbook are made throughout the year. When significant changes are made as deemed necessary by the Down East Family YMCA, parents will be notified by letter. You may request a new handbook from your childcare center office at any time.

Please speak with your classroom Lead or your site director if you have any questions. The Down East Family YMCA reserves the right to change guidelines as particular situations arise. It is our goal to work with families to accommodate specific needs without jeopardizing the rules and regulations set forth by the State of Maine Rules for the Licensing of Childcare Facilities.

**Down East Family YMCA Childcare Center reserves the right to make changes at any time, without notification, of policies in this handbook.**

## Contact Us

### **Down East Family YMCA Early Learning Centers**

#### **Moore Community Center**

5 General Moore Way · Ellsworth, ME 04605  
Phone: (207)307-0324 · Fax: (207)664-0120  
6:30am-5:30pm · Monday-Friday

Childcare Site Director	Crystal Follette cfollette@defymca.org	ext. 307
Building Director of Operations	Shauna Esposito Sesposito@defymca.org	ext. 306

#### **YMCA Beechland Early Learning Center**

171 Beechland Road · Ellsworth, ME 04605  
(207)412-2240  
6:00am-6:00pm · Monday-Friday

Childcare Director	Courtney Wood	cwood@defymca.org
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#### **James Russell Wiggins Center · Down East Family YMCA**

P .O. Box 25 · Ellsworth, ME 04605  
Phone: (207)667-3086 · Fax: (207)664-0120 · Website: [www.defymca.org](http://www.defymca.org)

Chief Executive Officer		
Associate Executive Director	Jean Wood	<a href="mailto:jwood@defymca.org">jwood@defymca.org</a>
Chief Financial Officer	Michelle Tuttle	<a href="mailto:mtuttle@defymca.org">mtuttle@defymca.org</a>
Childcare Finance Specialist	Heidi Tupper	<a href="mailto:htupper@defymca.org">htupper@defymca.org</a>

Hello Families and Friends,

We are so excited to welcome you and your family to the Down East Family YMCA Early Learning Centers. We appreciate your interest in our programs and look forward to serving your family. All the staff love the connections we make with the children and families and we cannot wait to show you how passionate we are about our jobs! We love to make a positive effect in each child's day.

Early childhood education can provide your child with the tools and skills to be successful in the kindergarten setting. We believe social emotional development in an early childhood experience is important to help build a child's self-esteem, learn the ability to regulate and communicate emotions effectively, be a successful part of a group, and form relationships that foster positive and meaningful engagement all while helping your child develop a love of learning which extends through a life-time.

Children in the Infant, Toddler, Preschool and After School programs all learn through a variety of play experiences created by educated and trained staff. Our staff combined have over 200 years of experience which is very impressive and are required to receive up to 40 hours of additional training which helps them grow and remain current in the field of early childhood education. Most staff do the trainings simply out of a love of learning and passion for the work they do in the classroom. Our programs are guided by the four core values that embody our philosophy within the YMCA: respect, responsibility, caring and honesty.

Our amazing team of teachers put their heart into creating a learning environment that is welcoming, loving and fun. Staff work together within all the programs to provide the highest quality of care for families and strive to allow children the space to develop at a pace that is individualized. Thank you again for giving us this opportunity to serve your family!

Should you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or comments throughout your experience at our centers, please do not hesitate to contact your site directors. Again, welcome to our program!

Warm wishes,

Your Child Care Directors

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## **Introduction to the YMCA**

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to build strong communities, families, and individuals by fostering respect and promoting a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

### **YMCA Early Learning Center Philosophy**

The Philosophy of the Down East Family YMCA is to provide children with a safe, fun, high quality, reliable, friendly, and activity oriented environment. We will be teaching your child the YMCA's four core values: Caring, Respect, Honesty, and Responsibility.



Our centers are licensed by the State of Maine to provide care for children ages 6 weeks to age 5. Our afterschool programs provide care for kindergartners to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. All programs offer a secure and stimulating environment allowing children to develop imagination and share positive experiences with peers and adults. Our thoughtfully designed activities and play areas encourage children to explore and discover the world around them. Through this process, children develop self-help skills and build a foundation for enjoyable learning throughout life.

### **We promise to follow best practices in childcare programming.**

Our YMCA Early Learning centers understand that parents/guardians are the primary influence in children's lives. We complement that influence by building a relationship of mutual trust and support; using open communication, we work with parents/guardians to create the best possible care for each child.

## **Best Practices**

We implement best practices in our childcare program that involve the entire staff, parents, and children. By establishing attainable, realistic, and effective goals, a positive environment for the staff and the children is the inevitable outcome.

Our Childcare Centers strive to offer high quality, stimulating, caring programming in which;

- Children have the opportunity to develop secure relationships with peers and staff.
- All children are treated equally.
- Children learn the ability to respect the rights of others.
- Staff co-operate with each other to provide positive role modeling.
- Children's self-esteem and individuality are encouraged.
- Staff provides a consistent approach with children and parents/guardians.
- Staff and parents/guardians work together.
- Staff respects the knowledge and abilities of others.
- A variety of activities are provided for children.
- Children are given choices throughout their day.
- Parents/guardians are listened to.
- Parents/guardians have the opportunity to contribute to the program and its evaluation process.
- The program reflects individual children's needs, abilities, and interests.
- The program enhances all areas of a child's development through thoughtful planning, observations, and communication.

## **Rising Star rating Program**

The Rising Star rating program is a voluntary system for licensed childcare providers to have their quality assessed on a 5 star rating scale. Expectations at each step must be met before moving to a higher level. Every step is an important quality measure based on the following criteria:

- Licensing history
- Learning environment (daily schedule, activities planned, etc.)
- Program evaluations (looking at strengths and weaknesses)
- Staff development (training opportunities for staff)
- Administrative policies and procedures (holiday closings, illnesses, etc.)
- Family involvement (welcoming parents into the classrooms)
- Community resources (where to find other services to help families)
- Child observations (watching for children's interests and skills)

## **Child Care Committee**

A Childcare Committee exists to foster communication between parents/guardians and teachers regarding fundraising, policies and program development. The committee consists of parents, the lead teacher of each room, and the Director. Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate any ideas, suggestions, or concerns with the committee.

The history of the YMCA Childcare Committee:

- Began in the summer of 2004, during our childcare expansion.
- Fund raising efforts have raised over \$120,000.
- Able to purchase more than \$40,000 of playground surfacing and equipment, outdoor play equipment, a play ship climber and so much more.
- Funds have been able to support staff trainings that go beyond our programs allotted in our budget.
- Addressed and changed health policies, medication policies, payment policies, and more.
- Volunteer efforts have included beautification of grounds, manning childcare information booths at childcare fairs, carpentry work, re-modeling projects, recognizing childcare appreciation day, arranging dinners for childcare staff, attending all fund raising events, designing marketing brochures and flyers, YMCA annual campaign volunteers, donating to Community Closet & Emmaus Center Families for Christmas, plus countless hours of personal time to help when the need arose.
- Continue to meet the needs of our community, childcare programs, and staff.

## **Staffing (requirements and training)**

Each classroom is staffed by a Lead teacher, whose responsibility is the operation of that particular program, including but not limited to the supervision of children and staff, program planning and implementation, communication and parent/guardian relations. The Lead teachers are supported by additional staff based on the needs and size of the program.

The following requirements and qualifications were taken from the Rules for the Licensing of Childcare Facilities for the State of Maine.

**Director and/or Program Coordinator:**

The Director and Program Coordinator shall be at least 21 years of age and meet one of the following:

- Degree in Early Childhood Education – Bachelor of science/ Bachelor of Arts (BA/BS) in Early Childhood Education; or
- Degree and experience- an Associate in Arts/ Associate in Science (AA/AS in Early Childhood Education and (3) years direct childhood experience; or
- AA/AS and experience – AA/AS in a related field with (18) credit hours in Early Childhood Education and (3) years direct childhood experience
- BA/BS and experience- BA/BS in related field with (18) credit hours in Early Childhood Education and (3) years direct childhood experience
- Credential and experience- Child Development Associate (CDA) as awarded by the CDA National Credentialing Program with (5) years direct experience, or
- Experience and training- (7) years of experience and (180) hour of training in healthy, safe environments, child development; observations and assessment; developmentally appropriate practice; guidance; relationships with families; individual and cultural diversity or business and professional development; childcare, early childhood education, topics related to operating a childcare facility; or other subjects related to age or characteristics of children for whom care is planned

**School age childcare program:**

Directors and Program Coordinators of school age childcare programs (Afterschool Care) will have a BA/BS in Early Childhood Education or closely related field such as elementary education or recreation management or an AA/AS in Early Childhood Education or closely related field such as elementary education, youth development, or recreation management and (2) years of experience or meet requirements of a CDA or (7) years of experience and (180) hours in above topics.

**Qualifications of Childcare staff:**

All staff must be at least (18) years of age.

All staff shall have a high school diploma or equivalent or is attending high school or enrolled in a GED (general Education Development) preparation program.

All staff will pass a federal fingerprinting background check before starting in a classroom.

All staff shall demonstrate the following:

- The ability and willingness to comply with all applicable laws and rules;
- The ability to provide safe, compassionate services;
- A history of honest and lawful
- In addition, all staff will be required to have the following trainings:

- CPR/ First Aid in infant, child and adult
- MRTQ Health and Safety training- yearly
- Maine Early Learning Guidelines for Preschool Age (preschool staff)
- Maine Early Learning Guidelines for Infants/ Toddlers (infant/ toddler staff)
- Caring for Infants/ Toddlers and their Families (Infant/ toddler staff)
- How to be a Mandated Reporter

Staff scheduled to work 20 hours or less per week must have 18 hours of training per year.

Staff scheduled to work more than 20 hours per week must have 30 hours of training per year

Lead Teachers and Childcare directors must have 40 hours of training per year.

**Supervision of staff:**

Upon hire, immediate supervisors and the Childcare Director will orient new staff, including volunteers, prior or during the first week of services in the following:

- Rules for the licensing of childcare facilities
- YMCA Personnel Policy Handbook
- YMCA Best Practices Handbook for Childcare Employees
- Fire drills and other emergency procedures

New staff members will have documentation of all service training prior to hire. All current staff will show documented evidence of on-going trainings. Each staff member will be evaluated yearly on performance and will have documented evaluations on file.

The childcare centers also provide staff with two to four time a year meetings with immediate supervisors, childcare center wide staff meetings with the Childcare Director, and YMCA organization meetings with the CEO. Staff also have regular check ins with their classroom lead to address anything either party feels needs improvement.

Volunteers and substitutes will be provided orientation to enable them to carry out their assigned responsibilities.

## **Confidentiality**

We believe that our parents/guardians, children, and staff deserve the right to privacy. It is our goal to represent the organization's mission and core values. Absolutely no information regarding a present or former individual (child, family, student, or employee) is discussed by staff with anyone outside of our childcare center or posted online.

**Staff members of the DEFYMCA Childcare Centers may not offer babysitting services to families with children in our care.**

## **General Information**

### **Holidays and Closings**

The DEFYMCA Childcare Centers are closed to observe the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (4<sup>th</sup> of July)
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day- in service training day
- 1 in service day to be determined in either March or April
- Thanksgiving
- The day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

**There is no reduction of weekly fees due to these holidays/ in-service days.**

**It is not customary for our centers to close due to weather. If you are unsure if we are closed or have delayed openings due to a snow storm please call the YMCA, check our Facebook page, website ([www.defymca.org](http://www.defymca.org)), or listen to STAR 97.7 FM for postings.**

**If your child is enrolled in one of our off-site afterschool locations the school reserves the right to cancel programing due to weather. Payment is still expected for these days.**

\*Quarterly the facilities will be closing 1 hour early for licensing required whole building staff meetings; you will be given a 2 week notice prior to the early closing.

## **Security/Front Area**

The Moore Community Center Site will have a staff member on duty at the front area. This allows everyone to be greeted upon entering and someone to answer phones to answer questions or provide direction when needed. For security, the doors to the childcare wing are locked from 9 am to 3 pm, Monday-Friday. Please see the front desk staff or the main office for assistance accessing the classrooms.

Beechland Center has a keypad code system in lieu of a front desk so the building is always locked and each person will access it with their own code.

A photo I.D. is required for each person allowed to pick up the children in our care until teachers get to know each individual. We want to use every measure of precaution in regards to the safety and welfare of the children in our care. We ask that parents let us know if someone other than them is picking up their child for the day.

Individuals that are not on the pick-up list may not pick up a child unless written or verbal notification is received from the child's parent/guardian. A photo I.D. will be required at time of pick up.

### **Video Cameras**

At our Early Learning Centers we have video cameras throughout the building. The purpose of these cameras is to promote safety. The footage is recorded and can be viewed if needed but only by our management team, local law enforcement or in the case of an emergency.

We will also be utilizing the taped footage as a learning tool for planning purposes, training and problem solving. We will always strive to be better.

## **Enrollment Procedure and Forms**

### **Available Childcare Programs**

Infant Program: 6 weeks - 18 months

Toddler: 18 months – 3 years

Preschool 3 - 5

Afterschool – Grades kindergarten - 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Summer Camp – entering kindergarten (age 5 by June 15<sup>th</sup>) - Grade 9

*\*Classroom age breakdown varies by center*

## **Infant through Preschool Enrollment Procedure**

Over the years, our organization has identified a trend in the amount of hours families need for care for their child throughout the day. We believe the enrollment cost should honestly reflect the diverse flexibility we are able to offer each family. We have formulated an enrollment structure that accommodates the schedules of working families as well as our staffing demands. We ask that you commit to a 9 hour, 10 hour or 11 hour (full flexibility) time slot. By providing us with a time slot that closely corresponds with your family's schedule, you provide us the opportunity to efficiently and effectively staff your child's classroom. Our teachers will know when to expect your child to start and end their day with us. For more information on time slots or pricing please see the enrollment forms in your parent packet.

The Child Care enrollment for new participants includes:

- A one hour minimum visit with a parent/guardian, child, and head teacher. The visit will acquaint the parent/guardian and child with the teachers, kids, and daily routine. The best time to visit is between 8 am and 10:00 am or 3 pm and 4 pm. Additional visits may be scheduled as deemed necessary by parents/guardians or teachers until the child feels secure, comfortable, and at home in the new setting.
- Immunization Record\*\*
- Completed YMCA Registration Form
- Completed Financial Agreement
- Completed Bank Draft Information
- Other program specific authorization forms.
- If there are custody arrangements in place for a child, the custodial parent/guardian is requested to make those arrangements known to the center staff at the time of enrollment. If any relevant court orders are in effect, a copy of the court order(s) will need to be provided. Without a copy of the order, we cannot keep the child from the other parent.

**\*\*Please note: A copy of current immunizations is required upon enrollment.  
If you have chosen to abstain from vaccinations for religious, ethical or philosophical reasons, licensing requires a written document stating this upon enrollment.**

## **After School Enrollment Procedure**

To enroll, each child will need:

- Completed YMCA Registration Form
- Payment Contract
- Other various authorization forms

Unfortunately there is no guarantee, that if your child has been in our programs before, you will be automatically enrolled. This is a first come first serve registration process.

## **Licensing**

All of the programs at the DEFYMCA childcare centers are licensed by the State of Maine. Copies of our licensing certificates are available for viewing throughout the childcare centers. Copies of the licensing rules and regulations are available in the offices as well as every classroom.

### **How to report a licensing violation:**

The Down East Family YMCA Childcare Centers programs are licensed by the State of Maine. Copies from the Fire Marshall and Maine State Licensing Childcare Division are available for your review. Should you feel the childcare programs are in violation of the state requirements, you may contact the Maine Department of Health and Human Service Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services at (207)287-9300 or 1-800-791-4080 or email [dlrs.info@maine.gov](mailto:dlrs.info@maine.gov).

## **Child Abuse Prevention**

The Down East Family YMCA Childcare Centers shall make all staff and volunteers aware during annual trainings provided by DHHS online of their status and responsibilities as Mandated Reporters when there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 18.

Staff and volunteers will be trained to recognize the common signs and symptoms of child maltreatment or neglect which are discussed during staff orientation and during annual trainings.

Whenever a staff member or volunteer knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or maltreated, the staff member will contact their immediate supervisor. The supervisor will then contact the Director who will then contact the CEO of the Down East Family YMCA. The immediate supervisor or Director will make the call to the

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) 1-800-452-1999 within 24 hours of becoming aware of the suspected abuse and neglect.

When reports are made in good faith, reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability for the act or reporting or participating in the investigation or proceeding. (Maine State Licensing for Childcare facilities, article 21.1)

### **Suspected Child Abuse by Childcare Providers/Volunteers**

If a staff member or volunteer is suspected of child abuse or maltreatment of a child in our care, that staff member or volunteer will be reported to the proper authorities for investigation. They may be suspended or given leave (with/without pay) pending investigation of the accusation. Staff or volunteer may also be removed from the classroom and given a job that does not require interaction with children. No accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Staff or volunteers found guilty will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

The Down East Family YMCA Childcare Centers and staff/volunteers shall cooperate in the investigation of allegations of abuse and neglect by:

- Meeting with DHHS or law enforcement investigators and answering questions related to the investigation
- Testifying in court when served with summons
- Providing written records related to the investigation when served with a summons

### **Staff Requirements for Reporting a Licensing Violation**

All staff is required to report to their immediate supervisor any licensing violations of DHHS licensing Rules and Regulations for operating childcare facilities.

Staff shall report to their immediate supervisor any witnessed detrimental actions or practices regarding the welfare of children in our care as defined by the division of Licensing and Regulatory Services. These actions include but are not limited to the following:

- Corporal Punishment
- Use of a stick or other instrument in disciplining a child
- Sexual abuse
- Lack of Supervision
- Neglect in any form
- Withholding food or drink
- Derogatory remarks to or about children or parents
- Name calling
- Shaming or embarrassment
- Unusual confinement
- Rough handling

## **Arrival and Departure**

Children must be brought into the center by an adult. The adult must sign child(ren) in/out using the iPad attendance system . When dropping off your child:

- Please escort him/her to the classroom.
- Convey messages to the staff.
- Help your child unpack.
- Say a nice goodbye before departing.

Children will be released only to a parent/guardian or those people listed on the emergency contact card/registration form for pick up. Parents must authorize the YMCA in writing to release their child to a person not listed on the authorization form. In the event that written notice is not possible, parents must advise the YMCA as soon as possible by telephone. When the escort arrives, he/she will be required to submit a photo ID for verification purposes.

If a parent/guardian or authorized individual arrives to pick up children and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, center staff will request the local police evaluate the person to determine fitness to drive. If the individual removes the child from the facility before a police evaluation, the center staff will immediately notify the police of their concerns.

## **Injury**

### **Accident and Emergency Procedures**

All YMCA Early Learning Center staff members are Infant and Pediatric CPR and First Aid certified. Any accident requiring first aid treatment will be reported by staff on an Accident Report Form. Parents are asked to read and sign the report within 48hrs of the incident. A copy of the report is filed in the child's folder. Minor accidents such as small cuts, scrapes, skinned knees, etc. are cleaned and covered with a bandage. Bumps and bruises are treated with ice packs. Parents/guardians are notified immediately of accidents that may require a doctor's care. If an accident occurs that requires immediate medical care, the child will be taken to the nearest health care facility in the company of a staff member. The Emergency Procedure form in the registration packet authorizes the YMCA to obtain medical care when your child must be treated in your absence.

## **Accident Insurance**

YMCA Early Learning Centers' liability insurance does not extend to accidents incurred by children on the premises. Parents should take steps to ensure they have adequate means to provide for medical expenses arising from any injury sustained while in care.

## **Illness/ Medication**

The Downeast Family YMCA Early Learning Centers' (the "Center") Illness and Medication Policy adheres to the Department of Health and Human Services ("DHHS") guidelines and focuses on both the needs and behaviors of the ill child as well as the ability of the staff to meet the ill child's needs without compromising the care of other children. At our Centers, we understand and appreciate the needs of working and student parents/guardians. However, it is essential that children at our Centers are protected from exposure to illnesses to every extent possible. It is our belief that ill children, under certain circumstances, would benefit from care in the comfort of their own home.

The following sections outline the circumstances under which the Center will require an ill child to stay home, or if already in care, be sent home, as well as the Center's guidelines for administering over the counter ("OTC") and prescription medications.

### **DEFY Early Learning Center Health Consultant**

Our Center's Health Consultant is Dr. Sheena Whittaker of Maine Coast Pediatrics.

Staff is trained annually in the following health procedures and practices:

- Medication dispensing
- Access to emergency medical services
- Prevention and control of communicable diseases
- Common childhood illnesses
- Inclusive and exclusionary illnesses

Through trainings and other resources along with Dr. Whittaker's, advise all staff and parents/guardians of current health issues to help promote the overall health and well-being of the Centers' programs.

### **Symptoms Requiring a Child to be Sent Home**

The following is a list of symptoms requiring a child to be sent home:

- Fever of 100.4° or higher with no known source  
(Dr. Whittaker recommends that a child be fever free for twenty-four (24) hours without the use of OTC medications to return to care ,see Fever Policy below)
- Vomiting (if sent home may not return until 24hr after the last time the child vomited)
- Diarrhea: runny, watery, bloody stools (three or more consistently loose stools AND also exhibiting noticeable signs of discomfort)
- Blood found in stool
- Any illness accompanied by uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or wheezing.
- Unidentifiable rash- to return there must either be a doctor's note or the rash must be gone
- Behaviors that require child to receive one-on-one care.

The Center reserves the right to send home any ill child at the discretion of either the classroom Lead or the Childcare Director. In general, a child must be well enough to participate in classroom activities as our classrooms are not staffed so that a child can receive one-on-one care for all or a substantial part of the day. If a child has been exposed to/has contracted a contagious disease, the Center asks that the parent/guardian report the details to the classroom as soon as possible.

When illness develops, the child's parent/guardian will be notified and the child will be required to be picked up within one (1) hour. If the Center is unable to reach the child's parent/guardian, or if the child is unable to be picked up within one (1) hour, the Center will call the child's emergency contacts on file with the Center.

### **Symptoms Requiring a Child to Remain at Home**

The following is a list of symptoms requiring a child to remain at home:

- Fever that is higher than 100.4°
  - Dr. Whittaker recommends that a child be fever free for twenty-four (24) hours without the use of OTC medications to return to care.
- Vomiting two or more times within a twenty-four (24) hour period.
- Diarrhea: runny, watery, bloody stools (three or more consistently loose stools AND also exhibiting noticeable signs of discomfort)
- If a child has been prescribed a NEW antibiotic, the child must stay home for a twenty-four (24) hour period after the first dose is administered to

monitor possible reactions to the medication. If a child has been prescribed a previously taken antibiotic, the Center requires a doctor's note stating the medication has previously been prescribed and that no reaction has been noted.

- If a child has a contagious illness and is prescribed antibiotics, the child must stay home for twenty-four (24) hours after the first dose is given.

For the health and wellness of all children and staff at the Centers, we request that parents/guardians exercise every precaution and keep their child at home under the foregoing circumstances in accordance with this policy.

## **FEVER POLICY**

**Fever Definition:** For purposes of this policy, fever is defined as having a temperature greater than 100.4° when taken under the arm. The Center's staff will take an initial fever reading and then check again after thirty (30) minutes. This helps to give an accurate reading.

If the child has a fever, the child may remain in care under the following circumstances:

- A known source of the fever is determined
- The child is drinking and urinating well
- The child is comfortable enough to participate in daily classroom activities
- The child has no visible behavioral changes

The staff will monitor the child and contact the parent/guardian should the child's symptoms worsen.

If the child has a fever, the child is required to be sent home under the following circumstances:

- There is no known source
- The child is not drinking or urinating well
- The child is uncomfortable/unable to be consoled
- The child has visible behavioral changes

If any of the foregoing symptoms are present in addition to a fever, the child's parents/guardians will be notified and the child will be required to be picked up immediately. If the Center is unable to reach the child's parent/guardian, or the parent/guardian is unable to pick up the child immediately, the Center will call the child's emergency contacts on file with the Center.

**Please Note: Any child with a fever registering 102° or higher will be sent home immediately.**

## HEAD LICE

Children with head lice (small, tan colored insects that live on the scalp) should be treated with a medicated shampoo rinse or lotion developed specifically for head lice. Upon detection of head lice, the child will immediately be sent home for the remainder of the day. When the child returns to child care, a staff member will check for live louse and nits. If live louse are found, the child must return home for additional treatment.

If no live louse are detected and nits are two (2) inches away from scalp and easily removable, the child may remain in care.

The parent or guardian is required to stay with the child and staff member during the check.

## MEDICATION POLICY

### Over the Counter (“OTC”) medications:

The Centers intention behind this policy is to avoid children remaining in care through continual and controlled comfort using primarily OTC medications, when in actuality there could be an underlying condition or contagious illness that may require a doctor’s care and/or rest. We believe that children who require more than one (1) dose of OTC medication and are in discomfort would benefit from rest in the comfort of their home. The Center will administer OTC medication according to the following guidelines:

- The Center staff will administer one (1) dose of any OTC medication per day.
- OTC medication must be in the original container.
- If dosing directions from the parent/guardian differ from the medication’s recommended dosage for a child’s age, a doctor’s note is required.
- Any OTC medications brought from home must be given to a teacher and a medication dispensing log must be completed. OTC medications may not remain in a child’s backpack or with a child’s belongings.

### Prescription Medications

Children requiring prescription medications during care in our Centers shall receive the prescribed medication by staff under the conditions described below:

- All medication must be either prescribed or recommended by a physician.
- Medication will only be administered to a child with written parent/guardian authorization indicating the condition requiring the medication, the dosage,

time and potential side effects. If the medication is given in response to certain symptoms those symptoms must be specified.

- Prescription medication must be in the original container and will be followed as indicated on the container.
- The first dose of all new medication or change in dosage of current medication must be given at home. Please notify the head teacher of any medication that the child is currently taking, including any cold medicine.
- Dosage time(s) will be followed as accurately as possible. The staff member who gives the medicine will sign or initial the medication form indicating that the medication was administered.
- Staff will communicate with parents/guardians about any concerns regarding the medication and or information about the child.
- All medications are kept in a medicine box or in the kitchen in the refrigerator out of reach of children.
- Medications that are to be given 1-2x a day should be given at home, unless noted with in the hours of school operation.
- Staff will attempt to administer medication, but cannot force the child to consume the medication.

### **Nebulizer treatments**

Nebulizer treatments may be administered in the classroom. **First time treatments need to be given at home.** In the event that a first time treatment needs to be given in the classroom, we ask that the parent administer the treatment. Staff will make every attempt to administer on-going treatments to a child; however, if a child refuses treatment the staff will contact the parent for further recommendation. Our staff cannot administer medication to a child against their will.

### **Allergies**

If your child(ren) experience allergies/sensitivities we require a doctor's note explaining the severity and steps that need to be taken to safely care for the child(ren). An action plan will be created with parent/guardian and staff to accommodate these allergies in the classroom/building. If your child requires and epi pen, we require that it is in the original box with instructions and it remains at school. A medication log will be created for any allergy medication/epi pen and if dispensed a parent/guardian will be notified immediately. Upon notification pick up is required.

## **Blood Exposure**

An exposure is defined as contact with blood or bodily fluids to which universal precautions apply such as:

- An injury to the skin (i.e. Cut with a sharp object).
- Mucous membranes
- Skin that is chapped, chafed, or otherwise affected so that an effective skin barrier is not present.
- A bite or injury that results in blood exposure.

Latex or protective gloves are worn by staff when dealing with blood or bodily fluids. If exposure does occur the following steps will be taken:

- Wash with soap and water after exposure to infectious materials or after taking off gloves or other personal protective equipment.
- Use antiseptic, cleansers, or towelettes if no washing facilities are available
- Place contaminated items in a plastic bag and discard in the proper location.
- Notify supervisor immediately.
- Classroom Lead or Childcare Director will contact parent/guardian.

## **Communicable Disease**

We are required to inform parents/guardians of illness in our Centers. These policies were taken from Managing Infectious Diseases in Childcare and Schools, American Academy of Pediatrics and through direct consultation with Dr. Sheena Whitaker, Maine Coast Pediatrics.

Here are a few examples of communicable disease that we would post on classroom doors; Strep throat, conjunctivitis, hand foot and mouth, COVID, Flu, etc.

If you have any questions on these or any another communicable disease please ask your classroom lead or director. They will provide with more information.

## **Biting**

The safety of the children in our childcare program is our primary concern. As children achieve or reach major developmental milestones, they become increasingly independent. In order to foster a healthy independence, our staff provides our children with constructive and appropriate ways to manage behavior. Our staff models and facilitates to help our children make "good choices" and interact positively with peers.

Throughout the developmental process, biting can be one of the many obstacles that children (0-3 years) will commonly face in group settings such as childcare. Biting may occur when a child:

- Is unable to communicate verbally (i.e. child is babbling and does not have many words).
- Is frustrated or angry.
- Is seeking attention.
- Is teething.
- Needs to satisfy their strong need for independence and control.
- As a defense mechanism for a child who feels threatened.

It is important to recognize that this behavior is a normal part of a child's growth and development. Biting is developmentally appropriate but socially unacceptable. Biting is usually upsetting to all parties involved (including the family of the child who bit). During this difficult transition, we ask that parents be patient with the children and staff as they identify patterns or reasons for biting and implement a plan of action to prevent it.

The following sections contain information specific to each program, including how instances of biting are handled for that particular age group. Please refer to the appropriate section below for more information about how biting is handled in your child's classroom. CONFIDENTIALITY OF ALL CHILDREN INVOLVED WILL BE MAINTAINED.

### **Infant**

Though socially unacceptable, biting is developmentally appropriate for this age group. We understand that children need to express themselves through actions when they are not yet able to communicate verbally. Communication is a key reason that children bite, but also children in this young age group are explorers and need to discover how things taste, feel, and react when the child uses his/her mouth. We strive to help children communicate effectively with their peers and teachers so we will first try to understand why the bite happened and then determine the best approach to address the situation.

If/when a child is bitten the following procedure will take place:

- Give him/her big hugs and snuggles and lots of attention, comforting the child until he/she is in a good place to go back and join his/her friends.
- Wash the bite with soap and water.
- Ice the bite (as long as the child will let us - some children find this more upsetting).
- If the skin is broken the parents/guardian will be notified prior to pick up.
- A bite report will be written requiring parent/guardian signature upon pick up.

If/when a child bites another child the following procedure will take place:

- The child will not receive a big reaction to the bite but will be removed to the other end of the classroom for space.
- The child will be offered a teether or alternative option.
- We will try to satisfy all of the child's basic needs to see if the child was trying to communicate that he/she was hungry, needed a diaper, was tired, or wanted milk.
- We will show the child easy touches and teach words/signs to communicate with his/her peers/teachers more effectively.
- If the skin is broken the parents/guardians will be notified prior to pick up.
- A bite report will be written requiring parent/guardian signature upon pick up.

## **TODDLER AND TRANSITIONAL PRESCHOOL**

As previously stated, biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior that may occur in the classroom. Although socially unacceptable, biting is considered developmentally appropriate up until age 3.

If/when a child is bitten the following procedure will take place:

- Remove the child from the immediate situation in a calm manner.
- Comfort with validation, snuggles, and empathy.
- Wash area with soap and water.
- Apply ice if child will allow.
- If skin is broken, a call to the parent will be made by lead staff.
- A bite report will be written requiring parent/guardian signature upon pick up.

If/when a child bites another child the following procedure will take place:

- Immediate attention will not be given as all attention is given to the peer who was bitten.

- Try to identify reason for bite to apply proper modeling (hunger, communication, emotional response, teething, and/or sensory overload).
- Give an alternative item to bite and explain, "Teeth are not for biting friends, but you may bite a teether".
- Explain that biting hurts. Do not make the child apologize because the peer needs space and children do not yet understand apologies.
- A bite report will be written requiring parent/guardian signature upon pick up.
- If the bite breaks the skin a parent/guardian will be called by lead staff.

When the biting behavior becomes a safety issue requiring that a staff member be assigned one-on-one to that child, lead staff will call the parent/guardian and may request that the child be sent home for the remainder of the day.

If biting becomes a reoccurring behavior for a child (3 or more bites/week) an action plan will be created to assist the staff and parents on the situation. An action plan is a form developed for the child outlining goals and actions to be taken by parents/guardians and providers.

## **PRESCHOOL**

Preschoolers are ruled by their emotions and impulses. They are just beginning to understand their feelings but have not learned all of the things they need to control them. Impulse control is not yet developed, so if your child feels something, they are most likely going to act on it whether it is positively or negatively.

Three and four year olds may use biting (as well as hitting or pushing) to resolve conflicts when they feel angry, frustrated, or overwhelmed. While biting is one of the more unacceptable, aggressive behaviors, children of this age still do not completely understand the difference of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Our goal is to help them develop social skills and learn appropriate behaviors.

If/when a child bites another child the following procedure will take place:

- Intervene immediately, directing most of the attention on the child that was bitten. We will tell the child that bit "I do not like it when you bite people. It hurts!"
- Wash the bite with soap and water and get an ice pack for the child.
- A bite report will be written (one for each child's parent/guardian) requiring parent/guardian signature upon pick up.
- Parents will be notified at pick up or via telephone depending on the severity of the bite.
- We will continue to observe the child that bit and intervene as necessary.

If the biting incidents continue, we will schedule a meeting with the child's parents/guardians to discuss our concerns and observations and to prepare an action plan. An action plan is a form developed for the child outlining goals and actions to be taken by parents/guardians and providers. **Periodic meetings will be scheduled with parents/guardians and teachers to evaluate the progress of the individual child to determine if the child qualifies for early intervention through Child Development Services (CDS). If the child is eligible for specialized services through CDS, the parents/guardians, teachers, and CDS personnel will work together to navigate the best interest of the child. This may include specially designed instruction within the classroom through one-on-one support. If after Child Development Services intervention proves the child is not making satisfactory progress, the Center will determine if the child's needs are greater than what the Down East Family YMCA Early Learning Centers can provide.**

## **Emergency Procedures**

Our Centers practice drills monthly in case of emergencies. All staff are trained in emergency protocol and fire exit maps are posted in each classroom. For more information please talk to your Director.

## **Inclusion Policy**

Our Childcare programs are designed to help each child reach developmental milestones. Our curriculum enhances each child's potential with intention to build upon skills needed for school readiness.

When an individual child is in need of extra support reaching learning objectives and goals based on each program's developmental checklist, our Center will make every effort with the parents/guardians and child to bring any necessary community resources and assistance to the child.

Our Centers follow the steps below when identifying children in need of outside assistance:

1. The staff will evaluate the child's development through observations and documentation based on age-appropriate assessments.
2. The staff will document concerns regarding the child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and fine/gross motor development.

3. The staff and Classroom Lead will review collected documentation and discuss concerns. The Classroom Lead will notify the Childcare Director of specific concerns
4. The Classroom Lead along with the Director will request a parent/guardian meeting to talk about the options of community resources available to the child and family.

When it is decided that additional outside support be contacted for evaluation, our program will use these community resources:

- Child Development Services
- Private Practices

These free services provide our programs, children, and parents/guardians with information, referrals, and tools to help children reach their potential while enrolled in our Centers. The DEFYMCA Childcare Centers will make every attempt to include children receiving services. If the DEFYMCA Childcare Centers cannot meet the needs of a child determined by appropriate professionals, alternative care may be needed.

## **Program Structure**

### **Ratios**

Our staff to child ratio at Down East Family YMCA Childcare Centers:

- After School 1 to 13
- Preschool ... 1 to 8
- Toddlers ... 1 to 5
- Infants ... 1 to 4

These are the state licensing requirements. The staffing patterns in our Centers usually exceed the minimum staff to child ratios.

### **Clothing**

Children should dress in comfortable play clothes that are weather appropriate. We strongly encourage shoes that support active play. Children often soil their clothes when eating, playing, and participating in program activities. As such a spare set of clothes should be sent each day or left in your child's classroom. Please label all clothing with your child's name. Please do not inhibit your child by dressing them in clothes that should not get stained, dirty, or messy.

State law requires that your child be given access to the outdoors at least two hours each day, weather permitting. This will include the winter months so please make sure to send boots, mittens, hats, and snow pants when needed.

## **Transitions**

The transitional process between rooms depends on the four criteria, all of which can be reviewed by the child care staff and parents/guardians based on individual circumstances:

1. Availability
2. Age
3. A child's development
4. Potty Trained before going into Preschool

### **Availability:**

A child will only be allowed to transition when a slot becomes available. This is considered when the open slot left by another child can be filled by another child currently enrolled in the program. If this cannot take place, the slot will be opened to the public. This may indicate a waiting period for a child who has met the age requirement. The staff will make every effort to ensure that a child will be moved when the next slot becomes available.

### **Development:**

All staff work cohesively to prepare children for their graduation into the next learning environment. To provide a child with the best possible foundation, each room implements a strong curriculum which includes growth in social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Each classroom has specific development recommendations that need to be met before a child is able to transition. If there are any concerns with a child's development or special needs, a meeting with the Lead Teacher and the parents/guardians will be scheduled to discuss how to create a successful transition.

### **Parent Notifications of Transitions:**

The parents/guardians will be notified by their current lead teacher 2-3 weeks prior to the scheduled transition that their child has met the criteria to transition to the next program. Parents/guardians will receive a transition packet from the new Classroom Lead.

**Based on availability, the scheduled transition from room to room will take place over a minimum of two weeks allowing the child to grow accustomed to their new teachers and classmates.**

During the process, the parent(s) and Classroom Leads of the respective rooms are required to meet to discuss the child's transition schedule, express ideas and thoughts, review the new program, and collect a transitional packet which contains:

1. A letter from the new Classroom Lead
2. A schedule of the transition days and times for the child
3. A daily schedule for the new program
4. New registration form
5. Any other program specific information regarding the child's new environment

**Please Note:** Our Centers recognize transitional periods for children in June and September. Should space become available outside of these months parents will be notified by the child's current teachers.

## Curriculum

We offer a secure and stimulating environment that allows children to develop their imagination and share positive experiences with peers and adults. Our thoughtfully designed activities and play areas encourage children to explore and discover the world around them. Through this process, children develop self-help skills as well as a foundation for enjoyable learning throughout life. We plan activities and develop individual goals for children in order to ensure that all children have meaningful opportunities for learning.

Additional Goals for children's development and learning:

- To explore and discover the world at an individual pace, with the support and guidance of responsive adults
- To involve parents/guardians as their child's most important teachers
- To build relationships with other children and adults
- To promote a healthy self-image

Experiences:

- Children have access to a variety of activities. They spend most of their time playing and working with materials independently and with other children.
- Children have the opportunity to play outside every day (weather permitting).
- Families are invited and encouraged to share their special talents, interests, and professions with the group.
- Opportunities exist for meaningful conversations throughout the day, sharing life experiences.
- Conversation between teachers and parents/guardians help support the development of individual child's goals.

Roles:

- Parents/guardians are considered to be the experts regarding their child(ren). Family members are partners that contribute to the development of curriculum. We encourage family input in the assessment process. We will be happy to meet with parents/guardians at any given time to discuss the child's development upon parent request.
- Teachers act as guides and facilitators for children as they gain skills. Teachers observe children and complete a developmental checklist a minimum of twice a year.

They use this information, in addition to parent/guardian input, to create meaningful experiences and programming for children. A teacher may request to meet with parents or guardians to discuss development.

- Childcare Director and lead teachers provide supervision and support to all teaching staff. Leadership roles also promote quality programming for children and support the continuing professional development of staff.

DEFYMCA Early Learning Centers use the following Early Childhood resources to support curriculum development:

- Maine Roads to Quality Training center
  - Maine Early Learning and Development Standards
  - Infant and Toddler Maine Early Learning and Development Standards
- 5210 Physical Activity and Nutrition Resources
- Handwriting Without Tears
- Social and Emotional Learning Birth to Age 5
- Conscious Discipline

## **Classroom Communication**

The communication between parents, staff, and children is vital in creating a quality program. Parents are encouraged to talk with the teachers regularly.

Each Program has their own process for communicating with parents and distributing information. Some examples of this communication are:

- Daily Connect (an electronic daily communication)
- Newsletters containing current information and upcoming events
- Parent/Guardian bulletin boards or white boards outside of classrooms highlighting daily activities
- Parent pockets

Parent/guardian involvement is extremely important to our children as well as our programs, and we welcome volunteers and visitors. We have implemented several ways in which communication flows freely but still caters to everyone's busy lifestyles.

**We encourage parents to reach out to teachers or Classroom Leads if you have any questions, concerns, ideas, or just want to chat about your child.**

## Behavior Management

Our behavioral management policy is strongly guided by the Four Core Values of the YMCA:

**Honesty**

**Respect**

**Caring**

**Responsibility**

Our staff models and teaches these life values in all of our programs. Beginning with infancy and continuing throughout their experience in our programs, the importance of following these character building values is key. We recognize the social and emotional development of the specific ages of the children in our care and follow the appropriate, positive action(s) needed to foster a healthy self-image.

<b>We do</b>	<b>We do not</b>
Praise, reward, and encourage	Physically punish
Reason with and set limits	Tease, belittle, shame, or make fun of
Model appropriate behavior and language	Talk to or about the child or their families disrespectfully
Build on problem solving skills to prevent or rectify situations before they occur	Never shame or punish for bathroom accidents
Listen	Deny food, drink, or rest
Give choices and alternatives for inappropriate behaviors	Relate discipline to food, drink, or rest
Utilize natural logical consequences of behaviors to enforce changes in behavior	Rely solely on apologies. Empty apologies do not promote empathy or emotional growth and understanding.
Remain consistent with practices	Leave children alone or isolated
Use age appropriate language	Speak out of anger or use sarcasm
Ignore minor behaviors	Disregard behaviors that are teachable moments or cause harm to others
Remember the developmental stages so that expectations are realistic	Set unrealistic goals that children cannot obtain

Our behavioral goals are to teach children to:

- Solve problems creatively
- Understand logical and natural consequences to their actions
- Understand self-responsibility
- Show empathy towards others
- Be open to the idea of inclusion, rather than exclusion
- Seek help from our staff when they feel overwhelmed

- Avoid using any form of negative resolutions such as: verbal, emotional, and/or physical attacks

Behavior is a way for a child to express a need. When a child in our program demonstrates the in-ability to practice these behavior goals, the lead teacher and staff of the respective room will develop and implement a positive plan of action specific to the need(s) of the child. Parents/guardians will be notified and asked to become involved in changing the behavior.

If the behavior is habitual or dangerous to the well-being of the child and/or other children, despite the on-going efforts of the lead teacher, staff, and parents/guardians, the child may be taken out of the classroom and sent home for the remainder of the day.

Our program puts the welfare of the child first. If the needs of the child are more than our programs can provide, alternative care may be recommended.

## **Potty-Training**

We believe that potty-training should be an empowering endeavor for each child. We understand that it can be a lengthy process at times and that can be frustrating for children as well as parents/guardians. We feel that it is our position to support the child and the family routine using encouragement and keeping in constant communication with progress updates.

Parents are asked to supply the items necessary for their child's level of potty-training development (wipes, diapers, pull ups, underwear, and full changes of clothes including socks and shoes).

Potty training can be both a terrifying and exciting transition for everyone involved. We believe potty training needs to be a consistent practice with the home and school, but must be introduced at home in the care of people the child knows best. At the point in which the child is ready to bring training to school we as a staff would become a support system to encourage the routine you as parents/guardians have already established at home. Please know licensing requires us to follow a child's lead and we cannot force a child to use the potty. Also know that we use the proper anatomical terminology for the body. If you have concerns regarding this please see your lead teacher.

\*Some parents/guardians choose to start the process by implementing a sticker chart or small reward system we are more than happy to continue during the school day. We do ask, however, that you refrain from sending in candy or food as a reward.

Watching for signs of readiness is the first step to this transition and we will communicate when/if we see your child displaying any of these signs or an interest in the potty. Please know that children develop at a different rate so one child may go right into

“big kid undies” while another child may regress and want to be back in diapers. All of this and everything in between is developmentally appropriate and to be expected. Also, the school day/environment is very different from home. Your child may have a different level of success at school than at home and that is perfectly normal.

Each day our routine is to offer potty several times throughout the day to the children in diapers. If the answer is affirmative then the potty is introduced. We understand the potty may not actually be used at this time but creating a feeling of safety and patience is important. If the potty is used then the staff will carry through with the routine that has been established at home. Children often use the potty and soil their diaper too and this is ok. We do not support shaming, treating with anger or responding with frustration as this is a time for learning and exploration.

When the child is ready for underwear, teachers and parents/guardians will have a conversation. It is imperative that the routine between home and school be consistent and that communication between parents/guardians remain constant.

There are a few items that would help this time be more successful for your child:

1. Loose fitting clothing that enhances the independent skills of the child- please no overalls  
belts, undershirts with snaps between the legs or big fluffy dresses that your child cannot maneuver around.
2. 5-6 pair of underwear
3. 4 changes of clothes including socks (after 3 accidents will return to a pullup/diaper)
4. An extra pair of shoes (crocs or washable canvas are perfect).
5. Please let the teachers know if your child is training sitting down or standing up.
6. A supply of pull ups for nap time (we understand that nap time and nighttime may take a little longer).

*\* Program teachers do not rinse or wash soiled clothing. Our practice is to bag items and place them on a hook to be sent home at the end of the day.*

We understand that this can be a time of frustration, full of perceived progress and regression. Each child will train at their time and not before, regardless of our schedule. This transition is often easiest when the child is ready. We can help facilitate this process in the most caring, consistent way; without pressure. Potty training should be a positive experience for everyone involved.

## Quiet Rest Time

The State of Maine licensing rules and regulations require each program in our Centers to observe a rest time. Each program has a daily schedule that specifies the rules and length of quiet time. For the Toddlers and Preschoolers this is an opportunity for resting bodies. Sleep is not required. Infants and Early Toddlers sleep as their body requires it whenever they require it.

We will not wake an Infant or Toddler (0-3) with in their scheduled rest period unless for an emergency, children need to follow their own sleep patterns. Preschool (3-5) has a scheduled 1.5hour rest time, during that time we will not wake a child unless of an emergency.

## Toys From Home

We understand that children like to bring their favorite toys from home to show to their friends. However, problems can arise because sometimes children do not like to share their toys. Toys may become broken or lost or the toys may not be appropriate for a classroom setting. Accordingly, if a child wishes to bring a toy, he/she **may** display it to friends and/or share it at circle time and then the toy must be placed in the child's cubby box until the child leaves for the day. PLEASE CHECK YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM POLICY ON TOYS.

## Outside Programming Opportunities

It is important to us that we offer a variety of programs outside of our everyday activities. We understand the importance of offering age appropriate activities keeping in mind developmental needs and goals.

### Water Safety Rules:

When children are active in water play or enrolled in our YMCA swim program, all staff and children will adhere to the following:

1. Children are allowed to swim or play in the pool/water area only when an adult staff is present.
2. Walk slowly in the pool/water area.
3. No rough housing (dunking, pushing, or wrestling).
4. Do not bring glass material near pool/water area.
5. Do not eat or chew gum while in the water.
6. Swimming or playing in the water during thunderstorms is not permitted.

7. Non-swimmers must wear approved flotation devices.
8. All posted water safety rules.
9. Children are instructed in water safety rules.

The pool/ water area shall:

1. Have a water safety attendant on duty at all times. Lifeguard certification or water safety training certificate is posted.
2. Be free of toys, clutter and debris.
3. Riding toys should not be near the pool/water area.
4. Have sufficient clarity. The bottom of the pool/water is clearly visible at the deepest part.
5. Have all lifesaving equipment conspicuously and conveniently on hand.
6. Have a first aid kit readily available.
7. Have an emergency plan readily available.
8. Legible water safety rules posted.
9. Telephone in the pool area is available and in working order

## **Nutrition**

### **Food Program - Prepared Meals**

**(Moore Center Location Only)**

Our Early Learning Center located at the Moore Community Center participates in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program. Children in our Infant, Toddler and Preschool programs are given a delicious and nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snack daily prepared fresh in our kitchen located on site at no additional cost to the family. The meals and supplements meet or exceed the nutritional requirements set forth by the U.S. Government. Upon enrollment, parents are asked to fill out an income eligibility form. Every income is eligible to participate in the food program.

A menu is provided for parents and also posted in classrooms. We will feed your child from the menu unless you have indicated to the classroom lead teacher that your child will not be eating from our menu. Please pack your child nutritious food choices in his or her lunchbox when not participating in our food program. Please do not pack hard candy or soda in your child's lunchbox.

Our Center practices family style dining in which every food is offered on a tray to your child. Teachers sit at the table with the children to encourage healthy eating habits. Our

preschool children transition to our cafeteria for breakfast and lunch in preparation for kindergarten.

Should you have specific questions regarding the food program and how it relates to your child, please see your classroom teachers.

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

#### **Federal**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

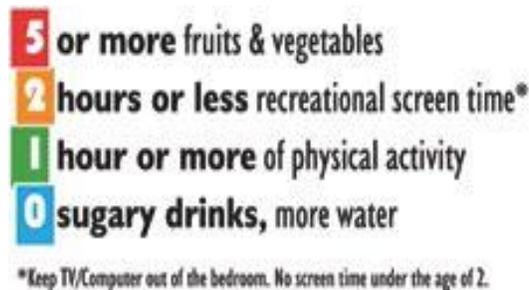
#### **State**

The Maine Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, religion, ancestry or national origin. Complaints of discrimination must be filed at the office of the Maine Human Rights Commission, 51 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0051. If you wish to file a discrimination complaint electronically, visit the Human Rights Commission website at <https://www.maine.gov/mhrc/file/instructions> and complete an intake questionnaire. Maine is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Nutrition Policy

Our Early Learning Centers believe that all children deserve the opportunity to be healthy and successful. Healthy eating and physical activity are required for proper development. Water is available throughout the day. We have a food pantry initiated by our Center's Parent Committee in which snacks are kept in each classroom should children show signs of hunger. We welcome snack donations from our parents such as: crackers, fig newtons, pretzels, goldfish, cheese sticks, and graham crackers. If you would like to donate snacks, please see your Lead teacher.

We are pleased to share with you that our programs support 5-2-1-0 Every Day message, which states the following:



To further support healthy children, staff, and families, we participate in *Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 Goes to Childcare*. As part of this program, we promote and follow the *Let's Go!* The five healthy strategies below support the 5-2-1-0 behaviors:

1. We limit unhealthy choices for snacks and celebrations and provide healthy choices instead. Please refer to the healthy options listed for ideas if you are considering bringing a food item into your child's classroom for a celebration.
2. We do not offer or serve sugary drinks.
3. We do not reward children with food. This includes food incentives for potty-training.
4. We provide opportunities for children to get physical activity every day.
5. We limit recreational screen time.

These strategies and the 5-2-1-0 message are promoted at other *Let's Go!* Childcare programs, schools, out-of-school programs, and health care practices in our community and throughout Maine. Together we can help ensure a healthy environment for children throughout the day.

Our Center will provide *Let's Go! 5-2-1-0* nutrition education and resources for families and children in the form of Center postings and notes sent home from classrooms.

If you would like more information about *Let's Go!*, please visit [www.letsqo.org](http://www.letsqo.org).

For families packing lunches at any of our centers; we ask that you pack your child's food in a labeled lunchbox with an icepack. Please be sure that they have a breakfast snack, lunch and afternoon snack, we will have small cracker snacks to provide as back up or a mid-day snack. We ask that once the children start handling their lunchboxes that you do not pack glass containers. We really try to follow 5210 so we ask that you do not pack or limit to 1x a week any of the following;

- NO Soda, juices or sugary drinks
  - NO Candy
- Limit gummies, cookies, or any high sugary treats to 1x a week

(Other options may be; granola bars with chocolate chips, dried fruit crisps, yogurt cover raisins)

We will happily heat up your child's food but it needs to be cooked at home beforehand (examples; oatmeal, Easymac, frozen meals, etc.) and need to be microwaved for no more than 60 sec.

Packing for new eaters or eaters with major preferences to certain foods can be tricky so here are some suggestions for snack and lunch options:

<b>Breakfast snack-</b>	<b>Lunch-</b>	<b>Snacks-</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yogurt and fresh fruit</li> <li>• Oatmeal and berries</li> <li>• Applesauce and cereal bar</li> <li>• Cottage cheese and pineapple</li> <li>• Cereal and banana</li> <li>• Bagel</li> <li>• Mini pancakes with jelly</li> <li>• Waffle with butter and cinnamon and sugar sprinkled on w/ fruit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turkey &amp; cheese roll ups with crackers and carrots</li> <li>• Sunbutter &amp; jelly sandwich, pretzels and green beans</li> <li>• Hummus w/ crackers, peppers and cubed ham bites</li> <li>• Mini burgers, chips, cherry tomatoes and applesauce</li> <li>• Leftovers from dinner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chocolate hummus with pretzels or strawberries</li> <li>• Apples with sunbutter or almond butter</li> <li>• Pirates booty and applesauce</li> <li>• Fruit and cheese</li> <li>• Crackers and peperoni</li> <li>• Frozen yogurt tubes</li> <li>• Veggies slices with ranch</li> <li>• Cheese sticks</li> </ul>

*\*Please note any classroom specific allergy restrictions as well as making teachers aware of any allergies/sensitivities your child may have.*

## Infant Feeding Policy

The following policies are in conjunction with the State of Maine licensing rules and regulations for center-based infant care.

### General:

- Feeding schedules shall be in accordance with each child's needs rather than according to the hour.
- Containers, bottles and cups used in the program cannot be made of glass
- We have filtered pitchers we use, however on occasion our programs may use unfiltered tap water to make a bottle or water cup. If you do not wish to have tap water used for your child we ask that you please send in a jug of water you wish to use.
- All formula and breastmilk will be warmed by water in a crockpot , never microwaved
- All self -provided milk or milk alternatives should be provided daily in a labeled cup or at the beginning of the week in the commercial packaging it comes in, it must be unopened. (Any milk left at the center will be discarded at the end of the week)
- All milk or milk-alternatives that have been put into a cup for consumption will be discarded at the end of the day and will not be saved for used

### Breastmilk:

- All bags and bottles must be labeled with your child's name, date and stored in the refrigerator\*\*\*
- Freshly Expressed or Pumped milk can be left on the counter for up to 4 hours, in the fridge for 24hrs on site, and 2 weeks in the freezer \*\*\*
- Thawed, previously frozen breast milk may be left on the counter 1-2 hours and in the fridge for 24 hours \*\*\*
- Breast milk that has been warmed and if the baby did not finish the bottle, we must use it within 2 hours from when they finished eating it the first time. \*\*\*
- Breast milk bottles will not be shaken once warmed
- Breast milk bottles that have surpassed the 2 hour mark will become unusable and be discarded. If you do not wish for the milk to be discarded, please seek out your child's Coordinator to make alternate arrangements

### Formula:

- Formula must be made from commercially prepared products and provided to the center unopened. Homemade formula solutions are prohibited.
- Pre-made formula must be labeled with your child's name, date, and stored in the refrigerator for no longer than 24 hours
- Powder formula that has been opened and not used within the 1 month time frame will be discarded
- Formula must be refrigerated within 2 hours of mixing
- Once the feeding begins, formula will be offered for up to 1 hour then discarded

### Solid Foods:

- Our center asks that you introduce any new foods 5 or more times at home before sending them in, in case of allergic reaction.
- Open jars shall be disposed of or returned to the parent/guardian the same day they are opened
- No previously opened commercial baby food jars/pouches are to be accepted
- Once feeding begins, any uneaten food can be left out and offered again for up to 2 hours
- Containers of food stored in the center's refrigerator must be labeled with your child's name, the contents, and date.
- All homemade baby food containers must be labeled with the date the center received it, containers will be returned nightly
- Homemade baby food may be stored in the freezer for up to 1 month only

## Physical Activity

We strive to provide at least 120 minutes of active play to all children each day. This is offered through inside play as well as playground time and gym time. We understand the importance of physical activity in child development and give these opportunities several times throughout each day.

We do not withhold active play for behavior purposes. We provide additional active play as rewards.

The amount of time outside is determined by the weather conditions. When the weather is extremely hot (over 95) or cold (wind chill below zero) children will not go outside.

**If your child is not feeling well enough to go outside, please do not bring them to childcare.** Unfortunately our teacher/child ratio does not allow us to stay inside with an ill child while the remainder of the class plays outside.

We play outside almost every day, even if it is for a short time. Please dress your child appropriately.

- Sun hats and sunscreen are recommended for sunny days.
- The YMCA provides sunscreen, if your child has sensitive skin please provide your child sunscreen for the classroom.
- Please apply sunscreen in the morning before attending childcare
- In the winter, snowsuits, boots, hats, and mittens are essential.
- Clothing often gets wet. Please provide an extra set of clothes.
- The amount of time outside is determined by the weather conditions. When the weather is extremely hot (over 95) or cold (wind chill below zero) children will not go outside.

# Inclement Weather

## Heat

Maine periodically experiences either a heat wave or single days when the heat index puts children at risk for heat related illnesses. **Infants and newborns are at particularly high risk for heat related illnesses.**

Children get heat related illnesses more quickly than most adults. This is because:

- Children create more heat and are generally more active.
- Children sweat less and this reduces their ability to cool.
- Children are less likely to drink enough fluids.

Our childcare Centers' policy in regards to heat is to identify when the heat index puts the children in our care at risk, to identify when a child in our care is exhibiting signs of heat related illness, and to take the correct steps once there is suspicion of illness.

Our Centers' approach is to:

- Encourage children to drink plenty of fluids, especially water.
- Offer our children cool, shaded areas to play on the playground.
- Recommend light weight, loose clothing.
- Check the heat index before taking our children out to playground.
- Watch for signs of dehydration.

## Cold

When weather permits we utilize our playground. If the weather is below 10 degrees Fahrenheit or the wind chill factor dictates freezing temperatures we will opt for inside physical activities.

# **SCHOOL AGE**

## **Before and Afterschool Care**

The Down East Family YMCA offers quality care for school age children. Children enjoy physical activities, homework help, organized games, and much more while under the direct supervision of caring, experienced and trained staff. Programming, ages and times vary by location.

### **Before School Care**

Offered in Ellsworth at the Moore Community Center location beginning at 6:30 a.m. and Beechland Road location beginning at 6:00 a.m. For Ellsworth Students ages kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> grade. Designed for families working before school begins. Children at the Beechland Road location ride the bus to Ellsworth Elementary Middle School. Children at the Moore Community Center walk to EMMS (during inclement weather, children will ride the bus).

### **Afterschool Care**

We offer afterschool in the following locations:

#### **Ellsworth Beechland and Moore Community Center locations:**

Monday-Thursday 2:30-5:30 p.m. Friday 1:30-5:30 p.m.

#### **Hancock Grammar School**

Monday-Thursday 3:00-5:30 Friday 2:00-5:30 p.m.

Afterschool Ratio of child to staff: 1 teacher to 13 children.

**Please note: If your child receives support with an educational technician during the school day, please notify the Down East Family YMCA upon registration.**

## **School Vacations**

Vacation camps are offered during scheduled school vacations. A schedule of the activities for the week will be made available prior to the week. Children may sign up for the entire week or select days. Parents may register for vacation camps at the front desk or in the main office. Options vary upon location. Please refer to your location.

## **In Service Days**

We offer programs for days that school is not in session based on the Ellsworth School Calendar. Parents/guardians can register in advance by phone or at the front desk.

## **School Closings**

Care is typically provided on days that school has been unexpectedly closed- such as snow days. Hours and options vary upon location.

## **Bus / Transportation Rules**

In cases where a child does not conduct themselves properly on the bus, the Afterschool Coordinator or the Childcare Director will inform the parents/guardians by phone, in person, or written referral when necessary. Children who become a serious disciplinary problem on the bus may have their bus privileges suspended for a reasonable time by the Afterschool Director. In such cases, the parent/guardian of the child is responsible for the child's transportation to the Afterschool site until such time that the student's behavior allows him/her to be permitted to resume riding the bus.

## **Childcare Accounting/Billing Department**

### **Contact Information**

Heidi Tupper is the Billing Specialist for the Early Learning Centers and Afterschool Programs. She is available for consultation or questions via 667-3086 ext. or [Htupper@defymca.org](mailto:Htupper@defymca.org).

## **Payments**

**ALL PAYMENTS ARE TO BE BANK DRAFTED UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.** Fees are based on enrollment not attendance for all programs. To maintain a reserved space, your fee must be paid during the absence of a child due to illness, holidays, vacation, or any other reason. Our Childcare Centers accepts families on voucher programs.

- Families will receive a \$5.00 discount on an older child's fee when two children from the same family are enrolled in any YMCA Childcare Program.
- Children who are members of the YMCA will also receive the discounted member rate for all childcare program.

- Bank draft, credit card payments, or EFTs that are returned for nonsufficient funds will be assessed a fee of \$30.00.

If your child is enrolled in our afterschool program, payment is expected regardless of attendance as we staff according to expected enrollment.

## **Attendance**

Please call to notify your child's teacher if your child will not be attending or will be late. We ask that you pick a time slot for staffing purposes (ex:6:30-3:30,8-5,etc). If you need to drop off early or pick up late, we require a 48hr notice so that we may adjust our staffing if needed.

If your child has any contagious conditions please let us know, even when they occur over the weekend. Please let staff know about extended absences. After one week of unexplained absences we reserve the right to terminate services and fill your spot with another child.

## **Late Pick-up Fees**

Late fees will be charged for each child picked up after the scheduled closing time. Please be considerate and pick up your child on time. We know that on occasion there may be an emergency that arises. However a late fee will be charged for late pickups after the second offence at a rate of \$1.00 per minute after the first 5 minutes. If you are going to be delayed please notify the YMCA Childcare Center ASAP.

## **Changes/Withdrawals**

In order to assure accuracy, a written notice is required for changes such as: payment options, change in schedule and attendance, or things in which a fee change would be applicable. Please allow up to 14 days processing for changes in the program

Please note that it is your responsibility to inform the billing specialist of any changes. It is not that of the classroom staff.

Additional days of care may be available depending on program availability. Please contact your child's Lead teacher for more information.

State Licensing requires a written notice stating your intentions to withdraw from our program a minimum of two weeks prior to your child(ren)'s last day.

## YMCA Membership Benefits

**Family membership** cost is \$80.00 per month.

**One parent Family Membership** cost is \$67.00 per month.

**Youth membership** cost is \$23.00 per month

Aside from the standard benefits like usage of the Down East Family YMCA facilities and receiving YMCA news and information first, members receive the following:

- If your child is a member and enrolled in the childcare programs you save \$25.00 per week or \$924.00 savings a year!
- Members save an average of \$20.00 per session on other Youth Programs!

If you are interested in joining or you have any questions please contact Heidi Tupper at the Wiggins Center at (207)667-3086.

***NOTE:*** *If you withdraw from one of our Childcare Centers with an outstanding balance, your membership benefits could be put on hold and you may not be eligible to enroll in programming until your outstanding balance is paid.*

## Parent/Guardian Statement of Understanding

This information is important for the safety and protection of your child. Please keep and refer to your copy of the Down East Family YMCA Early Learning Center Parent Handbook, which includes the following program policies:

- I understand that I am not to leave my child at the YMCA Early Learning Center unless a YMCA staff member is there to receive and supervise my child.
- I understand that the YMCA staff and volunteers are not allowed to baby-sit or transport children outside of the YMCA program at any time without prior authorization from the Executive Director. The YMCA will take immediate disciplinary action toward staff and volunteers if a violation is discovered.
- I understand that my child will not be allowed to leave the program with an unauthorized person. Any person authorized to pick up my child must either be listed with the YMCA (Emergency Contact Information) or other arrangements must be made by calling the Early Learning Center to inform them of the change.
- I understand that should a person arrive to pick up my child who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, for the child's safety, staff has no recourse but to contact the police. (Please do not put staff in a position where they have to make this judgement.)
- I understand that my child cannot return to school for a 24 hour period after beginning a new antibiotic treatment.
- I understand that the YMCA is mandated, by state law, to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

I have received a copy of the Down East Family YMCA Early Learning Center Parent Handbook. I have read and understand the policies and procedures stated above as well as the information included in the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date