



WELCOME TO YMCA WHITTLESEA CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS



Family Handbook

YMCA Whittlesea acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Wurundjeri-Willam people on whose land we build our community today



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WELCOME TO YMCA WHITTLESEA CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

YMCA Whittlesea strive to provide the highest quality programs at the heart and soul of our community.

We pride ourselves on our partnerships, ability to listen to our stakeholders and continuously work towards a can do attitude to provide the best opportunities, programs and life skills to our children.

We aim to provide opportunities for all families to share their individual cultural needs and beliefs within the program.

Our Education and Care programs are guided by the National Quality Framework.

We believe that each child is unique, capable and curious, with inbuilt strengths and tremendous potential to be a master of their own learning.

Our programs provide children with countless hours of fun. Children's senses are inspired as they explore and engage in motivating surroundings.

We believe children learn through play. We provide children with opportunities to discover learn and investigate using natural and open ended materials. Children's play involves taking calculated risks which is a part of children's natural development and an important life skill.

We believe in providing countless opportunities for children to demonstrate independence. We value its importance and see it as an opportunity for children to gain confidence, build on self-esteem and accept responsibility.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

YMCA Whittlesea strongly believes and recognises that all children and young people have the right to develop and reach their potential in an environment that is caring, nurturing and safe.

Our YMCA denounces all forms of abuse and neglect towards children and young people and works actively to provide a safe environment in all our programs. Any incidents of suspected child abuse will be acted upon immediately and appropriately.

We have made our commitment to keep children and young people safe our number one priority in all of our work. Our commitment extends beyond our facilities and programs to include our local community.

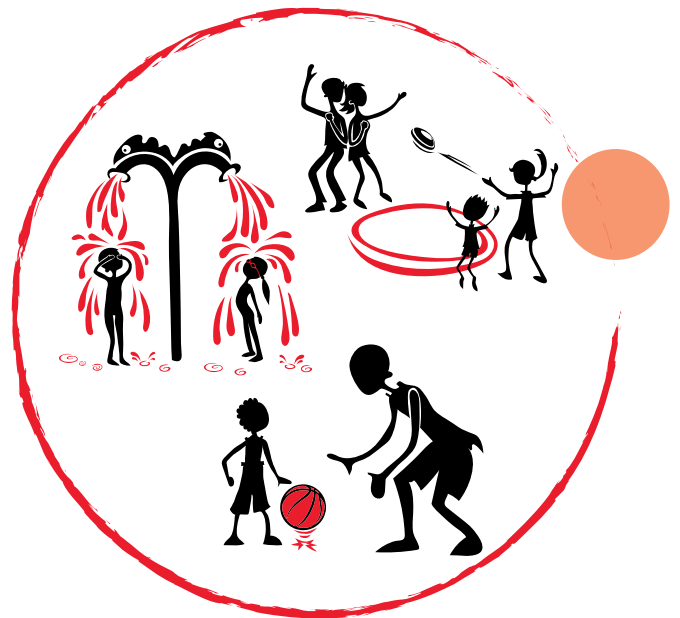


**YMCA Whittlesea is an accredited
safeguarding organisation
working in conjunction with the
Australian Childhood Foundation**

CODE OF ETHICS

The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics provides a framework for reflection regarding ethical responsibilities for early childhood professionals. YMCA Whittlesea Educators utilise these guidelines to monitor and set the standard for professional behaviour. A copy of the code of ethics can be accessed at the service or on the Early Childhood Australia website.

For more information visit www.uncief.org



CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

The YMCA supports the Australian Government's position that in our society every child and young person deserves the right to thrive, learn and grow, be respected and valued and enabled to become an effective adult member of the community. The YMCA supports the concept that a community in which the safety, stability, health, development and learning of every child and young person is protected and promoted throughout childhood.

At YMCA Whittlesea we:

- recognise that all children and young people have the right to develop and reach their potential in environments that are caring, nurturing and safe.
- consider any form of child / young person abuse, inclusive of emotional, physical, sexual abuse or neglect, as intolerable under any circumstances.
- acknowledge our legal, moral and Mission-driven responsibility to protect children and young people from harm and to ensure that any incidents of suspected child abuse are promptly and appropriately dealt with.
- Understand our legal and moral responsibility for ensuring that appropriate policies and practices are in place to minimise, if not eliminate, the risk of abuse of children and young people who participate in our services and programs.



Children who are allowed time to think
for themselves, learn to have faith in
their own problem solving abilities



INTRODUCTION

We are delighted that you have chosen the YMCA for your child's education and care.

This family handbook serves to provide families with an overview of how our centres are run, guidelines, policies and procedures for each family to be aware of before your child begins. Please ensure you read and understand all sections of this handbook.

If you require further clarification on any of the information contained in this handbook or our policies, or if you require information in languages other than English, please contact your Centre Manager or Coordinator.

At YMCA Children's Programs we believe today is about much more than just childcare and education. It's about enriching children so they can develop to their full potential, preparing them for a future where they confidently step forward into every stage of their young lives, with bright and inquisitive minds.

Since 1893 the YMCA has been committed to instilling positive and healthy attitudes, providing children and young people with a foundation for a healthy and happy life.

Children who do well in their early years, continue to do well throughout their schooling. YMCA Whittlesea's Children's Programs exist to help children get off to a great start and develop an enthusiasm for learning.

We are committed to providing inspiring programs for children based on the four pillars of safety, a local and responsive service approach, embracing holistic learning practices and keeping children healthy and active. We strive to instil healthy attitudes about things like nutrition and daily activity.

YMCA Whittlesea Children's Programs include early learning centres, before and after school care programs and school holiday programs.

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIPS

We invite all families to be active in making decisions about your child's wellbeing, interests and needs. The relationships between families and educators provides important information for us to form the Education and Care program that focuses on your child's strengths and provides a foundation for positive learning outcomes for all children.



OUR EARLY LEARNING CENTRES



Mill Park Heights
Child Care Centre & Kindergarten

Mill Park Heights Child Care Centre offers the following services:

Long day care, integrated 4 year old kindergarten.

Contact details:

31 Morang Drive, Mill Park 3082

p: 9436 7063 **e:** mphccc@ymca.org.au



Galada
Kindergarten

Galada Kindergarten offers 3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs.

Contact details:

10A Forum Way, Epping North 3076

p: 8457 0840 **e:** whittlesea.kinder@ymca.org.au



YMCA Leisure City offers the following services:

Occasional care, crèche, school holiday programs and the Junior Leaders program.

Contact details:

41-53 Miller Street, Epping 3072

p: 9401 2222 **e:** childrensprogramms.leisurecity@ymca.org.au



Thomastown Recreation & Aquatic Centre offers the following services:

Occasional care, crèche, school holiday programs and Junior Leaders program.

Contact details:

52-54 Main Street, Thomastown 3074

p: 9463 0700 **e:** childrensprogramms.trac@ymca.org.au



Orchard Road
Community and Early Learning Centre

Orchard Road Community & Early Learning Centre offers the following services:

Early learning (long day care) and sessional 3 and 4 year old kindergarten.

Contact details:

Corner of Orchard Road & Patience Avenue, Doreen 3754

p: 1300 153 332 **e:** orchardroad@ymca.org.au



Diggers Rest
Early Learning Centre

Diggers Rest Early Learning Centre offers the following services:

Early learning (long day care) and integrated 4 year old kindergarten.

Contact details:

10 Farm Road Diggers Rest 3427

p: 9740 0394 **e:** diggersrest@ymca.org.au



YMCA Plenty Valley offers the following services:

Occasional care and Childrens Programs.

Contact details:

Westfield Plenty Valley, McDonalds Road, South Morang, Victoria, Australia 3752

p: 1300 004 904 **e:** plentyvalley@ymca.org.au

BENEFITS OF PLAY

Young children's play allows them to explore, identify, negotiate, take risks and create meaning. The intellectual and cognitive benefits of playing have been well documented. Children who engage in quality play experiences are more likely to have well-developed memory skills, language development, and are able to regulate their behaviour, leading to enhanced school adjustment and academic learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2005).

Research suggests that play shapes the structural design of the brain. Secure attachments and stimulation are significant aspects of brain development. Play provides active exploration that assists in building and strengthening brain pathways. Play creates a brain that has increased 'flexibility and improved potential for learning in later life' (Lester & Russell, 2008, p.9).

Educational benefits include:

- providing a meaningful context for children to learn concepts and skills;
- making learning fun and enjoyable;
- encouraging children to explore and discover together and on their own;
- allowing children to extend what they are learning;
- encouraging children to experiment and take risks;
- providing opportunities for collaborative learning with adults and peers;
- allowing for the practice of acquired and new skills.

OUR OBJECTIVES

YMCA Whittlesea aims to work collaboratively with local communities, families and children to provide inclusive, accessible and flexible children's programs. Children and their families will have a place of belonging and feel connected to, and supported by, their centre community.

As we view the child as a competent and involved learner; our programs aim is to:

- inspire children to learn and to interact with others, showing care, empathy and respect;
- promote a sense of belonging to the community and encourage social responsibility and care for the environment;
- foster partnerships with families that embrace diversity and inclusion, to support each child's participation;
- support educators to work collaboratively with their peers and other professionals to provide rich learning environments.



We believe that each child is unique,
capable and curious, with inbuilt
strengths and tremendous potential to
be a master of their own learning



ENROLMENTS

Long day care

Enrolments for child care can be made by contacting the centre directly. Following a centre tour the Director will provide further instructions on how to enrol via the “my family lounge” log in at **www.childrensprogramms.whittlesea.ymca.org.au**

Child Care Centres accept enrolments for children 0-6 years of age.

Where limited vacancies are available the centre will comply with Department of Education, Employment and Work Place Relations - Priority of Access Guidelines.

Four year old kindergarten – sessional kindergarten

In the year prior to attending school, children can access a year of funded kindergarten. To be eligible, children must be 4 years of age by April 30 in their Kindergarten year.

Children are usually eligible for only one year of a funded Kindergarten program. Updated information regarding a second year of funded 4 year old kindergarten can be located at **www.education.vic.gov.au**

Following notification from Central Enrolments, the kindergarten will contact families to process group preferences via the “my family lounge” log in at **www.childrensprogramms.whittlesea.ymca.org.au**

Central Enrolment

The Central Enrolment system is managed by the City of Whittlesea for all 4 year old sessional kindergarten enrolments. Information about this process is available from the City of Whittlesea on their website or by contacting 03 9217 2170

Three year old kindergarten eligibility

Children are eligible to apply for the three-year-old program provided they turn three years of age before 30th April in the year they will attend kindergarten.

School holiday program

Enrolments for School Holiday Programs can be made via the “my family lounge” log in at **www.childrensprogramms.whittlesea.ymca.org.au**

School Holiday Program accepts enrolments for children 5-14 years of age.

Junior Leaders Program

Our Junior Leaders program is part of our school program, catering for young people aged 10–14 years. The program provides an opportunity for our ‘future leaders’ to actively participate in the community.

My family lounge account

Families can create and access their My Family Lounge account from our website at **www.childrensprogramms.whittlesea.ymca.org.au**

This makes it as easy as possible for families to access multiple programs across various YMCA sites without having to re-enter information at each site, provides families with an online system to update enrolment information at any time without having to physically notify someone at each site and offers both families and programs a convenient way to manage bookings.

OPERATING HOURS

All Child Care Services operate 50 weeks per year, closing for all gazetted public holidays and approximately for 2 weeks over the December - January period (this will be determined by community need). Fees are not charged over this break period.

All funded 4 year old sessional kindergarten programs will provide a minimum 15 hour program, per child per week. Programs will be offered in line with the school term and closed for all gazetted public holidays. Specific timetables are available at the centre.

School Holiday Programs operate for approximately 12 weeks a year in line with the end of each school term. Programs do not operate on gazetted public holidays. Specific program information is available 4 weeks prior to each program.

CENTRE CLOSURES

In order for educators to keep up to date with relevant and current early childhood practice it will be necessary for them to attend professional development. Where possible interruptions to program delivery will be minimised, however, there may be occasions that require the service to close. We will provide written information regarding any days the centre will be closed.

ORIENTATION

We acknowledge that the transition from home into child care or kindergarten can be unsettling for some children and families. We will work in consultation with you to ensure that orientation supports your children's needs and wellbeing. We recommend that you discuss this process with the educators.

We recognise that:

- Some children will settle well, while other children find it more challenging.
- It is natural for children to feel uneasy about separation.
- Families may wish to stay with their child for the first few sessions, if they prefer.

We will work with you to support a smooth transition for both you and your child.



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF CHILDREN

Arrival

Arrival at the program is an important transition for children. Help them adjust to the differences between home and the program by talking about the day ahead of time. Use the transition time to help Educators meet your child's needs by telling them anything useful or interesting about the previous night/day and by including educators and your children in these conversations.

Departure

Children must be collected by someone who has lawful authority to do so and is nominated on the child's enrolment form. If a different person is collecting your child, authorisation must be provided to the Educator or Program Coordinator before the child is released into their care. This person must produce current photo identification. This authorisation must be provided in writing.

Attendance record

The attendance record is a requirement under the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Each child is required to be signed in and out of the early childhood service. Please ensure that your child's full name is clearly recorded in the attendance record with the arrival time and signature of the person delivering the child. Similarly the time of departure and signature of the person collecting the child must also be recorded.

Other people collecting your child

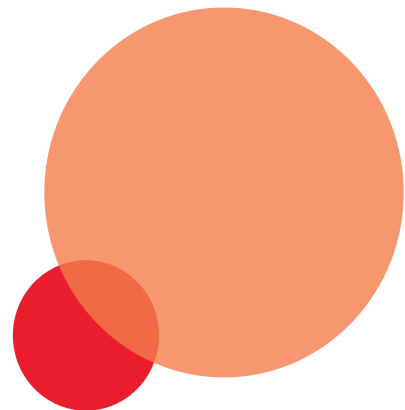
Educators are responsible for the safety of each child, so it is essential to notify staff (verbally and on the attendance sheet) if someone else will be collecting your child.

These people must also be recorded on the child's enrolment form. You can update your child's enrolment form at any time by logging in to your 'My Family Lounge' account.

Please be advised:

- No child will be allowed to leave any children's services with someone unless staff have been notified of the arrangement
- Educators must be notified in advance of the identity of the person collecting the child
- Any person unknown to staff will be required to show some form of photo identification
- An authorised person collecting your child must be over 18 years of age

It is important to remember that if someone else is collecting your child that you explain the drop off/pick up requirements to the person that you have authorised.



Late collection

Late collection can be stressful for children and Educators. We ask for your cooperation in ensuring that children are collected on time.

If you are unable to collect your child by the end of the session/closing time please arrange for someone else to do so and notify the service as soon as practicable (refer to the section above 'Departure', should you nominate another person to collect your child). Two Early Childhood Educators must always be with the child until collected.

If the child is not collected by the end of the session/closing time, a late fee may be charged.

The cost of the late fee is \$5.00 per minute, payable from the end of the session/closing time until the child is collected. This fee will be added to your account at a full fee rate.

Failure to collect a child/children

If a child has not been collected at the end of session/closing time, and the parent/guardian has not made contact with the service within the first 10 minutes after session/closing time, Educators will attempt to contact the child's parents/guardians. If unsuccessful the emergency contacts will be contacted and asked to collect the child. All reasonable attempts will be made to advise the parent/guardian that an emergency contact person has collected the child.

In the event that a parent/guardian or emergency contact has not responded to the service's attempts to arrange for collection of the child, Victoria Police will be contacted for further instruction.

Court orders

On occasions, a child attending the program may be the subject of a Family Court or other Court Order. The order may prescribe who is responsible for the child and who may or may not collect the child from the early childhood service. If a child has a specific custody and access arrangement in place, please inform the Early Childhood Educators. A copy of the current Court Order is required to be given to the service. The copy is attached to the enrolment form and will remain on file.

If the Court Order does not specify any formal contact arrangements, Educators cannot legally deny a parent access to their child.

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to provide information/documentation regarding changes to Court Orders.

Child safety

When arriving and departing please ensure the doors are completely closed behind you and never let other children exit the program unless accompanied by an adult/guardian.

ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

Any person entering a YMCA Whittlesea Children's Program is required to conduct themselves in a manner that does not pose a risk to the safety of children and/or educators of the service. If educators believe that the person poses a risk to children or others, the person will be required to leave the premises.

FEES

Payments

Fee payments will be processed via “Direct Debit.” Parents /guardians will have the choice to make payments via MasterCard, Visa or AMEX (additional fees apply) or via direct deposit from their savings/ cheque account. The completion of the Direct Debit form is required as part of the enrolment process. Exceptional circumstances will be considered and should be discussed with the program co-ordinator/director on an individual basis.

Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is the new way the Government will assist families with their child care fees. (This doesn't include Kindergarten)

Child Care Subsidy Eligibility

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy for a child. These include:

- the age of the child (must be 13 or under and not attending secondary school)
- the child meeting immunisation requirements
- the individual, or their partner, meets the residency requirements.

In addition, to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy the individual must be liable to pay for care provided, the care must be delivered in Australia by an approved child care provider, and not be part of a compulsory education program.

How does it work

There are three factors that will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy. These are:

- Combined Family Income
- Activity Test – the activity level of both parents
- Service Type – type of child care service

The Child Care Subsidy will be paid directly to providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families will make a co-contribution to their child care fees and pay to the provider the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.

The New Child Care Package will also provide targeted additional fee assistance for vulnerable families through the Child Care Safety Net.

Kindergarten fee subsidy (4 year old kindergarten)

The kindergarten fee subsidy allows children to access up to 15 hours of kindergarten delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the year before school for free or at low cost.

Your child is eligible in any of the following circumstances:

- if your child identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- if your child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more).
- or if your child holds or has a parent or guardian who holds, one of the following:
 - a Commonwealth Health Care Card
 - a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
 - a Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or White Card
 - Refugee or Asylum Seeker visa (200-204 or 866)
 - an ImmiCard

The centre director must be provided with a current copy of any of these cards for the fee reduction to be allocated.

Please excuse the mess...
the children are making memories!



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

National quality standards

The aim of the National Quality Standards (NQS) is to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in all education and care services.

The seven quality areas in the National Quality Standards are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities and
7. Leadership and service management.

The NQS are linked to national learning frameworks which recognise that children learn from birth and outline practices to support and promote children's learning.

Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

We are committed to strengthening the foundations of our community; ensuring access for everyone; nurturing the potential of children, teens and young adults; building strong families; promoting diversity and healthy living; fostering social responsibility; and supporting those in need.

Relationships with children

Educators support children to become active contributors to their world. Children's thoughts and feelings are recognised and acknowledged to support a strong sense of wellbeing. Relationships with children are based on respect, trust, and care.

Additional Support for Children

Some children enrolled may require additional support to maximise their participation and access to the program. The nominated supervisor of the program will consult with families, and where a child fulfils the criteria, will submit an application to the appropriate inclusion support programme for additional support.

Celebrations

Children are given the opportunity to become connected with, and to contribute to, their world by exploring the diversity of culture, heritage, community and tradition. In order for this to occur please let the early childhood service know if there are any celebrations or festivals that your family participates in. Educators will endeavour to include these in the educational program.

Excursions and special events

To enrich and complement the Educational Program, from time to time excursions and special events may be arranged. They provide an opportunity for children to experience and explore their world and the diverse elements of the environment.

Parent participation and involvement is always encouraged and welcomed.

Risk assessments are conducted to determine the appropriate safety measures required for the event; this includes child staff ratios, mode of transport, potential hazards, medications etc. These assessments are made available for consideration prior to the event.

Personal belongings

Children's interests help provide the foundation for the educational program. We acknowledge that sometimes, children like to bring favourite toys or special things of interest from home. Children will be encouraged to respect and share these items with the other children.

Educators will take every reasonable precaution to ensure that these items are not lost or broken, however this cannot be guaranteed.

Photographs/DVDs

YMCA Whittlesea acknowledges that the use of digital cameras and photos are an important part of documenting children's learning and collaborating with parents.

On enrolment, parents will be asked for their consent for photographs to be taken of their child. If consent is not given, all educators will be advised of this.

From time to time families of other children in attendance may wish to take photos of special events taking place at the service or on excursion. If you do not wish for your child to be photographed please ensure you note this on your child's enrolment and discuss with your child's Educators.



STAFFING

Employment of educators

YMCA Whittlesea employs Educators in line with the legislative requirements. We will consider the qualifications, skills, knowledge and personal attributes of each candidate in order to build a positive culture and professional learning community. We are an equal opportunity employer and value the diverse, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our educators.

Our Educators are committed to upholding and researching current practice and use a variety of methods/techniques to facilitate children's learning. They understand that each child has the capacity to be a confident and capable learner when supported to explore and discover the world around them. A variety of child initiated and intentional teaching methods are utilised to support children.

As educators we understand the importance of healthy living, providing children with opportunities to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from both educators and their peers.

At YMCA Whittlesea we are committed to our educators. We understand that we play a key role in the learning continuum for the education and care sector. We ensure the professional development experiences offered to our educators support current practices and are encouraged to go on to further education and qualifications.





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HEALTH & WELLBEING

Medication

If your child requires medication throughout the day, please ensure this is handed to a staff member on arrival (and not left in the child's bag).

Medication will be administered if:

- it has been prescribed for the child by a registered medical practitioner.
- it is in the original bottle or packaging with the original label that bears the name of the child to whom the medication is to be administered.
- it is in date (not passed expiry/best before date).
- a parent/guardian (as listed on the child's enrolment form) has provided written permission for staff to administer the medication
- it has been entered in the medication register or detailed in the child's medical management plan.
- the first dose has been administered by the parent/guardian at least 24 hours prior to attendance at the service in case of an adverse reaction
- two Early Childhood Educators are present to administer and supervise the correct dosage of medication.

Reminder: Medication is not to be left in children's bags.

If a child has a temperature and requires Panadol or Nurofen, they will be deemed to be too unwell to attend the program.

Medical conditions

If a child with a chronic illness or medical condition, for example but not limited to asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or anaphylaxis is enrolled, details of the medical condition must be recorded on the child's enrolment record. An individual risk minimisation plan will be developed in consultation with the family and a medical management plan prepared by your child's physician must be formalised prior to the child commencing at the service.

Should educators require any specialised training to assist them in the daily care of the child, this must be arranged prior to the child commencing at the service.

Any medication or equipment identified on the medical management plan must be provided to the early childhood service. If this is not provided or has expired then the child will not be able to attend the service until this is made available, so as to ensure the health and wellbeing of the child.

It is imperative that medical management plans are kept up to date. Medical management plans should be reviewed by the parent/guardian in collaboration with the child's physician annually and if changes are made to the plan then this must be confirmed in consultation with the child's physician and communicated to the service as soon as practicable.



The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence



Illness and infectious diseases

In the interests of the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and Educators, children who display signs of illness must be kept at home. If your child becomes ill while attending one of our children's programs you will be contacted and asked to collect your child or arrange to have your child collected as soon as practicable.

Please let the service know if your child is not attending because they have been diagnosed with an infectious illness. Educators are required to notify all parents when a child attending the service has contracted an infectious disease. This will be communicated via a notice displayed prominently in the entrance to the service. Fact sheets relating to the illness/infectious disease will be made available on request.

The Department of Health has published the 'Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary School and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts'.

This table is available from the following link and is displayed on the notice board at the service and is used to determine exclusion periods (if required).
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>

Early Childhood Educators will follow the advice of the relevant government body should specific measures be required following a notification of an infectious disease.

Immunisation – 'No Jab No Play'

'No Jab, No Play' is the name of legislation that requires all children to be fully vaccinated unless they have a medical exemption to be enrolled in childcare or kindergarten in Victoria.

Evidence of up to date immunisation must be provided prior to your child commencing at our service.

An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register can be used as evidence of up to date vaccination. An Immunisation Status Certificate from a medical doctor or a local council immunisation service may also be used.

Other immunisation records, such as 'homeopathic immunisation' or a statutory declaration from you are not acceptable.

Immunisation History Statements are available on request at any time by contacting Medicare:

- By telephone on 1800 653 809
- By email on acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au
- Online at **www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts**
- In person at your local Medicare service centre.



Accidents, Injuries, Illness and Trauma

Children may be involved in accidents or incidents while engaged in the program. Should your child become ill or be involved in an accident, incident or trauma during the program an incident report will be recorded.

Parents/guardians will be notified of any accident, incident, illness or trauma as soon as practicable and will be asked to sign the incident report on arrival.

Any accident, incident, injury or trauma that requires the child to seek medical attention, or requires the attendance of emergency services, will be reported to the Department of Education & Training- Quality Assessment & Regulation Division.

Safety & Emergency Procedures

Each early childhood service has an Emergency Management Plan which contains emergency evacuation procedures. These evacuation procedures are displayed and practiced annually. A variety of scenarios will be practiced throughout the year and educators will endeavour to inform you when a drill is planned.

Child Protection

YMCA Whittlesea follows the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Education and Training Child Protection Protocol, Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People, 2010. Educators will act on the advice and direction from the DHS regarding any Child Protection issues or orders.

All Educators employed by YMCA Whittlesea are required to undertake annual Safeguarding Children and Young People training as they have a duty of care to act immediately to protect and preserve the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care.

Sun Smart

YMCA Whittlesea supports the Sun Smart recommendations and adheres to a Sun Smart Policy that ensures all children and educators are protected from skin damage caused by harmful UV rays. It is implemented throughout the year, with particular emphasis between September and April. During this period a combination of sun protection measures are to be used for all outdoor activities.

Please provide a sun smart hat (legionnaire's or wide-brimmed hat) and apply sunscreen to your child prior to attendance at the program. Please advise an educator on arrival if your child does not have a hat for the day. SPF 30+ sunscreen will be available at the service for educators and children for subsequent applications. If your child is sensitive to sunscreen, please provide your own sunscreen and discuss this with your child's educators.

Smoke Free Zone

In support of healthy work environments for staff and children, all venues occupied by YMCA Whittlesea are smoke free environments. Legislation regarding the proximity of smoking areas in relation to children now apply.

Meals and Snacks

YMCA Whittlesea advocates healthy eating habits that promote good nutrition and physical activity. Children need well balanced and nutritional foods in order to sustain the continued growth and development of their bodies and minds.

If you are required to provide a snack/lunch for your child, keep in mind current healthy eating choices as well as being aware and sensitive to other children's allergies or dietary requirements. If you are unsure about particular foods please speak to your child's educator.

Children attending long day care will have their meals provided by the service. Special care and consideration is given to the planning of the menu. Your thoughts, feedback and input into the menu are always welcome and will be accommodated where possible.

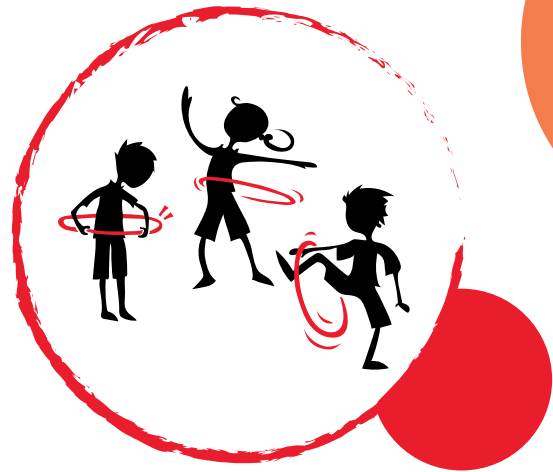
Children are born with all the curiosity they
will ever need. It will last a lifetime if they are
fed upon a daily diet of ideas

Charlotte Mason



If your child has particular dietary needs, please inform the Educators of their requirements. It is important that the Educators are informed in writing and up to date of any allergy or food requirements for your child.

Many children attending our programs have specific food restrictions due to medical conditions, cultural or religious beliefs. If you would like to bring in special celebratory food, please discuss this with the Educators prior to the event as some restrictions may apply.



Clothing

YMCA Whittlesea recommends the following clothing be worn or provided:

- Appropriate clothing that will allow the child to feel comfortable, relaxed and uninhibited while engaged in play
- Easy access clothing that allows children to increase their independence and competence in personal hygiene, care and safety
- Layers of clothing so children can adjust to changes in temperature and their activity levels;
- Footwear that enables the child to participate in physical activity
- A sun hat (i.e. legionnaire's or wide-brimmed hat with protection for neck and ears) needs to be supplied from September to April
- A warm hat, coat or jacket be provided in cold weather as outdoor play is a regular part of the program
- A complete change of clothes (for children in Long day care and kindergarten programs).

Please ensure all items of clothing are clearly labelled with your child's full name.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Communication

Effective communication and partnerships with families regarding the education and care their child receives is supported by ongoing two-way communication. Families can provide invaluable information about their child's interests, strengths and abilities as well as feedback that assists Educators to develop program plans that are practical and focused on meeting the individual needs and interests of all children and their families.

Parents/guardians can expect:

- warm, welcoming and friendly Educators
- open, honest and respectful communication
- confidentiality in discussing matters with Educators.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to:

- speak with Early Childhood Educators at the beginning and end of the day/session, to exchange information concerning your child
- advise Early Childhood Educators of any changes in your family situation that may affect your child
- provide feedback relating to the education program provided to your child
- support the children's program by sharing your interests and ideas, for example, music, cooking, craft work, gardening, dancing, storytelling, carpentry
- share cultural information
- initiate and/or support fundraising events
- provide feedback on policies, National Quality Standards; surveys and other requests from time to time
- discuss thoughts or concerns regarding the program with the Program Co-ordinator/Director or General Manager of Children's Services.



Fundraising

Throughout the year there will be fundraising opportunities for families to take part in. All families are encouraged to participate where possible in supporting the fundraising activities however these are not compulsory.

Fundraising events and social activities provide opportunities to develop friendships and networks between families, as well as improving outcomes for children and those in need in our local community.

Feedback

YMCA Whittlesea values your feedback about our programs. Feedback is seen as a compliment, a suggestion, or a complaint.

Compliments: Admiration, praise, or happiness in relation to the program or in the way educators undertake their work. Please share your thoughts with us on what is being done well.

Suggestions: Do you have any ideas on how our programs could be improved, or how things could be done differently?

Complaints: Dissatisfaction with the service provided or how work is carried out.

What to expect when you make a complaint:

- To be treated with fairness, respect and dignity.
- To have your complaint treated with sensitivity and confidentially.
- To have a response to your complaint within a reasonable time frame.

To provide any form of feedback:

- discuss your feedback/matter with the relevant Educator at the program
- discuss your feedback/matter with program co-ordinator/director
- discuss the feedback/matter with the Group Manager of Children's Services. Contact: 03 9407 6200.

Complaints alleging that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child is being compromised or that the law has been breached will be reported to the Department of Education and Training (DET) Quality Assessment and Regulations Division in the relevant region.



GENERAL

Our Commitment to Privacy

YMCA Whittlesea is committed to maintaining the privacy of all individuals according to the legal requirements relating to how we collect, hold, use, disclose, correct, transfer and dispose of information. Principally, we manage personal and sometimes sensitive information in accordance with the 13 Australian Privacy Principles identified in Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth); the Adoption Act 1984 (Vic); and the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic).

Parking

Parking is available at all locations however due to other patron access, places may be limited at certain times of the day. We ask parents/guardians to be aware of parking requirements at each location.



Disabled & Permit Parking

Disabled and Permit Parking bays are clearly marked at all locations. These bays are reserved for those with the prescribed permits. People found accessing these spaces without the correct permit may be subject to local laws infringement notices.




We believe in providing countless opportunities for children to demonstrate independence skills. We value its importance and see it as an opportunity for children to gain confidence, build on self-esteem and accept responsibility



 <http://childrensprogramms.whittlesea.ymca.org.au>

 (03) 9407 6200

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