



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

MEADVILLE FAMILY YMCA

**Early Learning Academy
YCare**

Pre-K Counts

PARENT HANDBOOK

<https://www.meadvilleyymca.org/>

Revisions since publication 7/19/2023

*Ashley Downor named as Childcare Finance Director 9/5/2023

*Inclusion of Refund Policy 10/3/2023

Dear Parents,

Welcome to YMCA Child Care. We are thrilled to have you as part of the YMCA family. We hope to form a partnership with you for your child's well-being. Please get to know us. You're encouraged to visit at any time, share in your child's swimming and field trip experiences, to become a Room/Site Parent, and to help with the growth of our program.

The Meadville YMCA has been offering childcare and summer day camp for over 30 years. We serve as many as 400 to 450 children throughout the school year and summer and we are excited to have your child experience what the YMCA has to offer.

Throughout this handbook we have tried to answer the questions most asked by parents and kids. However, if you have any additional questions after reviewing this manual, please feel free to ask your child's teacher or contact us in the office.

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WHO WE ARE

YMCA Mission

The YMCA is a Christian based organization that strives *“To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.”* Our focus in the childcare program is to encourage children to accept and demonstrate the character values of *Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility.*

Non-Discrimination & Inclusion Policy

We welcome children with all abilities and believe that all children are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging. No child will be discriminated against no matter the gender, age, race, disability, or ethnicity. It is essential that we have all pertinent information about the child's needs from the outset of enrollment. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation based on their capabilities and needs. We believe that each child is unique and works in partnership with families and other professionals to support every child to reach their full potential. If services have been received from an outside agency such as Sarah Reed, Achievement Center, Barber Nationals Institute or the IU5, or local schools, please notify us. Our enrollment process includes:

- Observation of the child in a classroom setting
- Assessment of the staff's ability to handle various special needs and consider whether additional training, the cost of which is not unreasonable, would assist the staff in confidently handling needs and behavior circumstances.
- Observation of the child's adaption to the group of children
- Discussion of child needs with staff person
- Trial enrollment – not to exceed two weeks
- Discussion with family of possible and necessary accommodations that are reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the group atmosphere of the program
- Notification to the family if the Y is not able to accommodate the child's needs because of unreasonable modifications or somehow alters the groups dynamic in the program. If a proposed accommodation is prohibitively costly or would fundamentally alter the nature of the group, the Y may propose an additional cost or propose the presence of a teaching aide at the family's expense at which point the child may enroll for a trial period to determine whether the child will thrive in the classroom environment.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible individuals with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aids, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

The Meadville Family YMCA is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences to support full access and participation of each child. We support families that are linguistically and culturally diverse. If your child's first language is not English, we will work to support your child's communication needs through gestures, communication devices, sign language, pictures and support in the use of his/her home language with materials. Teachers may ask you to help with basic translation and/or to provide a list of common words to aid communication with your child.

We are committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences, that support full access and participation of each child. We strive to promote participation in all learning and social activities. By including children who with disabilities, those children will have a higher success for learning and their development can be impacted significantly. Children enrolled in our programs get a high level of support from our staff and their peers. For the families enrolled in our programs, we provide family engagement and connections to community resources to help families as their child grows. If you need help with contacting resources, please contact the Child Care Operations Director.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals of the YMCA Child Care

Our goal is to provide each child with a positive growing experience while recognizing their individual needs and abilities. Through their activities and experiences, we want them to develop and support Christian values and positive self-esteem while having fun.

We are a developmental program and follow guidelines for early childhood education established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Daily experiences help children build skills that will enable them to succeed in school and in life.

- Help children to develop a healthy self-esteem
- Allow children to learn through play and discovery
- Offer developmentally appropriate activities that help children develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, and spiritually.
- Provide space; equipment; and, most important, teachers and leaders that aid in children's development.
- Allow children to develop warm relationships with adults.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHAT TO BRING

- Infants
 - Cuddle or security item
 - Diapers and Wipes
 - Change of clothing ~ at least 2
 - Baby bottles labeled with your child's name
 - Pacifier or teething rings if necessary
 - These must be labeled with your child's name ~ a short piece of ribbon with the name in permanent marker works well
 - If you plan to provide formula/breast milk and or baby food from home each item must be dated and labeled with your child's name
- Toddlers:
 - Complete change of clothes
 - Diapers, pull-ups, wipes
 - Blanket or sheet w/sleep toy for nap time
- Preschool / Pre-Kindergarten
 - Complete change of clothes
 - Pull-ups and wipes if necessary
 - Blanket or sheet w/sleep toy for rest time



YOUR CHILD'S ROUTINE

Maintaining a routine for your child to include regularly scheduled naps helps your child thrive in our educational environment. During the day we participate in many activities from painting to walking. Please make sure your children are in clothes that you don't mind getting dirty or stained and make sure your child is wearing closed toe shoes such as sneakers to prevent injury from walking and running. Children, preschool and younger will have daily rest time. Children in the infant room sleep in their own pack and play and linens are washed weekly or as needed. Toddlers, Preschool, and PreK children rest/sleep on individualized and labeled mats or cots. Children who do not sleep are given quiet activities on their cot after a certain period of time.

DIAPERING

According to the Office of Child Development, our state licensing agency, children must have a diaper inspection hourly and changed every two hours, minimum. Please make sure that you have an adequate supply of diapers (provided by the parent) and wipes for your child weekly. It is required to remove stool and urine from front to back and use a fresh wipe, or a dampened cloth or wet paper towel each time you swipe.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

All children will go outside daily unless we are experiencing severe weather – defined as a wind chill of 25 degrees or less and a heat index of 90 degrees or higher. Please send your child appropriately dressed for the weather (hats, gloves, boots etc.).

SUNSCREEN

All children ages 6 months and older must have sunscreen for outdoor excursions. Sunscreen is provided by the parent. No child will be permitted to go to the beach or outdoor pool without sunscreen. Included in this handbook is a form authorizing the application of sunscreen; we are only allowed to use sunscreen for the child it is intended for.

BABYSITTING

We view babysitting children enrolled in our programs as a conflict of interest for our staff. Please honor this policy and do not invite any of our staff to privately babysit.

Sick Policy (Illness and Infection)

Because the well-being of your child is our foremost consideration, we adhere to the following state regulations pertaining to illness and follow guidelines as directed by the American Academy of Pediatrics *Caring for Our Children*. These include, but are not limited to:

- If your child has three (3) consecutive diapers or episodes of diarrhea during their time with us the parent will be notified, and the child is to be picked up. The child may return 24 hours after the last episode.
 - If the child has diarrhea for 2 or more consecutive days, regardless of number of diapers or episodes the parent will be notified, and the child is to be picked up. The child may return 24 hours after the last episode.
- If your child runs a fever of 100.4 or higher and exhibits abnormal behavior the parent will be notified, and the child picked up. The child may return 24 hours after the fever breaks and does not need fever reducing medication to control it.
- If your child vomits due to illness or infection the parent will be notified and the child picked up. The child may return after 24 hours of the last vomiting episode.
- If your child is found with nits or lice in their hair the parent will be notified, and the child picked up. The child may return the next day but must be checked by a YMCA employee and be found nit free.
- If a child is found to have a fungal infection (ring worm, scabies, impetigo) the parent will be notified immediately, and the child picked up. The infection must be treated for 24 hours and be covered before the child can return.
- If the child is suspected to have pink eye (red, itchy, pussy) the parent will be notified, and the child picked up. The condition must be treated for 24 hours before the child can return. We are able to administer medication as long as the medication form is filled out.
- If an enrolled child exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease or infection that can be transmitted directly or indirectly and which may threaten the health of children in care, he/she will be excluded from attendance until the YMCA receives notification from a physician that the child's condition is no longer a threat to the health of others. The notification shall be retained in the child's file.

Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to daycare, if the child shows any signs of illness or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular childcare program. Sick children will expose all children and staff members who they come in contact with. Because this is disruptive to other children and their families, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important.

Medications

Medication during childcare is strongly discouraged. It is suggested that every effort be made to schedule medication around early learning hours. You may wish to consult your physician regarding alternatives which would allow medication to be given only at home. If, however, medication is found to be absolutely necessary while at camp our policy states that the following conditions be met:

Medication must be given directly to the staff.

A prescription medication will only be accepted in its original container with the prescription label attached.

- If the medication is in pill form, it is preferred that only a single dose per container be delivered each day.
- If the medication is in liquid form parents must provide a measured spoon for administration of the medication.

The label of the container shall identify:

- the name of the medication
- the name of the physician who prescribed the medication
- the name of the child for whom the medication is prescribed
- administration instructions - dosage and times.

A non-prescription medication will only be accepted in its original container with the child's name written on the container.

- Written instructions from the physician must accompany the medication.

The guidelines stated above must still be met.

A staff person will accept and administer the medication only if a parent has completed an "Authorization for Administration of Medication" form that can be obtained from the camp site or from the YMCA office. Medication, both prescription and over-the-counter, will only be administered according to the doctor's instructions. A medication log will be completed each time medication is dispensed. Parents may review the log at any time.

Reduction of Suspension and Expulsion Policy for the Meadville YMCA

Align with federal policies

Individuals with Disabilities Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, and the Civil Rights Act are all federal and state laws that we embrace and comply with. Any family, at any time can enroll their children at a Meadville YMCA facility that best suits their family's needs. We have an open door policy. Enrollment or continued enrollment is based on the interests and needs of the family. The following are layers of quality that are in place to ensure suspension and expulsion are reduced to only rare instances that occur due to factors outside of the Meadville YMCA's control.

Recruiting and Retaining a Highly Skilled Workforce

In order to find highly qualified staff, the Meadville YMCA utilizes many methods, such as job applications online, public job postings at every branch/offsite and shared through public sources like our website, job search engines, job fairs and the newspaper. Placement preferences of the potential employees are taken at the time of application to ensure that staff are placed closest to the communities in which they live and connect with. Current employees are always given the opportunity to transfer to a new center community when job vacancies occur.

After employing highly qualified community members, professional development is required, offered and tracked through individual professional development plans. Each branch and offsite location has a site director that assists the Director in tracking and reviewing individual staff PD plans as they expire and renew each year. **Any training that is identified as a common need by the majority of staff will be added, by the STARS Coordinator, to a continuous quality improvement plan for all of the association's teachers.** Each early childhood education staff is required to individually maintain a set amount of professional development hours to retain employment and must choose from approved PQAS trainings or accredited college course work that fulfill the STARS standards set forth by the state. Topics of required trainings included cultural competence, implicit bias, developmental milestones, child development, teaching social & emotional development, high quality positive interactions and classroom management.

From the required cultural competence and implicit bias trainings, directors are required to add guided discussion related to race, gender equity, homelessness and English language learners to the staff meeting agenda. Together, the director and staff can discuss actions that can be taken in their facility to reinforce acceptance, support classroom inclusiveness, or self-reflectiveness on their own biases. They may use the following links to find resources for talking points and focus each month. Websites will be reviewed, added or deleted by the STARS Coordinator on a yearly basis. Site directors will be asked to share stories related to their experiences at their center and the STARS Coordinator will help to guide them in their CQI goals based on their monthly input.

We utilize the Pyramid Model, which is an evidence-based practice that is used to promote the social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of young children. One tool of this system is Behavior Incident Report that is used by collecting data to determine the cause of behavior issues and find ways to help redirect to proper behavior.



<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/>

<https://www.tolerance.org/>

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/safe-and-healthy-students/school-climate>

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2016/moving-beyond-anti-bias-activities>

Screenings and Assessments

The Meadville YMCA strives to retain our staff by providing them with necessary trainings, curriculum resources and tools, peer support and guidance from support staff. Our school utilizes the Creative Curriculum Framework to write our lesson plans that follow Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. Our Screening and Assessments are completed 3 times per year using Teaching Strategies Gold to accurately assess each children's milestones. The Meadville YMCA has a Supervision Policy that assures appropriate child to staff ratios. All staff are encouraged to continue their education. We support them by offering instructions on how to apply for Rising STARS tuition reimbursement, T.E.A.C.H scholarships and CDA application waivers as they work toward their goals.

Teachers will do monthly notes on the children and will do assessments utilizing Teaching Strategies Gold in January, May, and September. This will be followed up with Parent Teacher conferences to allow parents and teachers to work together for the development of each child.

Strong Family Partnerships

To support teacher-family relationships, the YMCA has developed multiple processes to intake parent input and align it with CQI goals. The following are examples of how we strive to have strong teacher-family relationships:

- parent meetings at enrollment with tours of the facilities
- family open house events
- parent satisfaction questionnaires in which data is collected and reviewed
- family getting to know you forms at time of enrollment
- parent-teacher conferences offered 2-3 times a year
- parent communication via the ProCare Parent Engagement
- family fun events that are offered association-wide

Childcare Provider Rights

It is the intent of the Meadville YMCA to support the overall development of all children in our programs by utilizing the criteria described in the above sections. With that commitment, we ask that our parents/guardians participate in the process and are willing to work with our staff to set and attain child goals. We retain the right to suspend or expel a child if the parent/guardian is not willing to support these efforts.

FAMILY EVENTS

Family is important to all of us! Our center provides special opportunities for families to get together for special lunches or picnics, graduations, etc. More information about these events will be provided at the appropriate time.

FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the year the YMCA plans several field trips for preschoolers and school age children. These trips are meant to supplement the curriculum in a fun and educational way.

Since all teachers will be on the field trip, it will not be possible for children to remain at the YMCA instead of attending the field trip. If for some reason your child is unable to attend the trip, please make alternate arrangements for childcare that day.



EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Your YMCA Early Care and School-Age Enrichment Center programs support families with additional services and amenities that help ensure that your child can learn, grow and thrive.

CARING AND WELL-TRAINED STAFF

Our staff nurtures the healthy, successful growth of every child by emphasizing values such as caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Annually staff continues their education with courses in child development, first aid, water and fire safety and CPR. All classroom lead teachers hold post-secondary education degrees or Child Development Associate Credential, the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STANDARDS

The Y has committed to adopting new standards for nutrition and physical activity in our Early Learning and School-Age Enrichment programs. The standards:

- Establish a minimum of expected physical activity for children of different ages enrolled in our programs;
- Define food and beverages offerings, including designating water as the primary beverage during snack times and offering fruits and vegetables as snack options;
- Limit the amount of screen time (watching TV, playing video games, using computers);
- Encourage breastfeeding of infants in our care; and
- Commit to conducting parent education to encourage healthy behaviors at home.



MEALS AND SNACKS

Nutritious meals including breakfast, lunch, and snack are served daily at no charge and are in accordance with the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. The YMCA does not discriminate against anyone for admission, meal service, or use of the facility. All meals are served regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. Due to the potential of a child being enrolled in the program with food allergies, we ask that parents refrain from bringing outside food into the facility without first consulting with a staff person. When a child has food allergies or other conditions requiring special diets prescribed by a physician or dentist, the child shall receive the specified diet in the amount and variety required. A licensed physician or dentist shall specify such requirements in writing. Parents must also provide a note stating that we may follow this prescribed diet.

The Y offers age-appropriate meals to all infants, including formula and table foods. We ask parents to complete an infant food form and provide us with a typical feeding schedule. Our list of formulas will be discussed at enrollment.



The Meadville YMCA Child Care programs offers healthy meals to all enrolled children as part of our participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP provides reimbursements for the healthy meals and snacks served to children enrolled in childcare.

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, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior credible activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or 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 discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) 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.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Involvement in and out of the classroom is important to us at the Y. Throughout the year, you'll be presented with opportunities to volunteer in the classroom as well as family opportunities for giving back. We invite you to consider volunteering in our Parent Advisory Committee which helps guide decisions in our Program Centers, staff development and community collaborations.

EASING THE TRANSITION

COMMUNICATION

We believe communication between parents and our staff is crucial in assuring a positive, enjoyable experience for the child. Therefore, the Y provides written notices regarding changes in policy, scheduling or special events. In our program centers there are generally parent communication logs or bulletin boards for your daily reading – or something may come home in your child's book bag. It is the responsibility of the parent to check for communication daily. You may also use these communication centers to give specific instruction/notes about your own child.

CHILD OBSERVATIONS

During the first 45 days of enrollment all children will be given a developmental screening tool called Ages and Stages Questionnaire. Teachers will also utilize the questionnaire on a regular and periodic basis to continue to assess your child's progress. This tool will help teachers identify children who may have developmental or social-emotional delays at a young age. Annually after that preschool age children will work with a portfolio and assessment will be based off of daily record keeping and the utilization of the Work Sampling System. Toddler children and younger will utilize the Ounce Scale.

CLASSROOM AND PROGRAM TRANSITION

The relationships that children are involved in from birth to age 3 are critical for your child's growth and development and to provide a strong foundation for learning. This is one reason we have adapted the Continuity of Care practice, where children stay with age-appropriate classes and teachers throughout their time at the Y. By staying connected and working with a core group of teachers and staff, children are able to develop strong bonds with others, their developmental progress is smoother and steadier, and we, as a school, are able to offer a more family-like atmosphere where there is a strong partnership between teachers and family members.

When it is time for your children to transition, based on age and development needs, we like to think of transitions as a celebration – or graduation – for your child. We know that transitions can be uncertain or scary for children and parents alike. Therefore, we have put together some general guidelines we follow during the transitioning process:

- When it is nearing time for your child to progress to the next classroom or site, we will notify you personally and with a follow up letter. You will be given important information about your child's new room and teachers.
- During the transition process, your child will be given short periods of time in the new classroom every day to adjust to the new setting. The process will be based on your child's adjustment needs.
- If your child is transitioning to another program, you may request a copy of your child's file to give to the new provider.
- Should you have any questions or concerns about your child's transition, please talk with your teacher and/or the childcare director.

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

Teachers in our pre-kindergarten classrooms work with you to make your child's entrance into kindergarten as easy as possible. We will help to notify parents when it is time to register for school in the spring. If you wish, your child's teachers can provide input concerning a child's readiness for kindergarten. We will discuss the YMCA School Age Program with you and answer any questions you may have.

During the month of August, we will provide a Parent Night for After School Care-Questions and Concerns.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PLAN

To ensure your child's safety, your child will only be released to persons listed on the child's application form as authorized release persons. We will ask for photo ID to verify the pick-up person. All release persons must be at least 16 years old. Anyone under 18 years may require written permission from the parent in advance. Anyone not listed on the application for service, as a release person may not pick up the child.

The Y requires all parents to be listed on the application. Should you not want the child's mother/father to be an authorized release person you must provide the Y with a court order stating the custody arrangement and/or a protection from abuse (PFA). The Y is required by law to follow the court ordered arrangement. Should you have questions about this policy and law, please see your Program Director.



Upon arrival and departure, please sign your child in/out using the computer on the Procure Program. Due to the learning time & education opportunities, all children must be dropped off by 9 am.

It is the responsibility of the parent or caretaker to provide transportation for the enrolled child to and from the Y's program. Persons designated or authorized to pick up an enrolled child must be listed by name, address and phone number on the child's application form. Each parent or caretaker must provide at least one designated person authorized to pick up an enrolled child.

It is the responsibility of the parent or caretaker to assure that whoever picks up the child is mentally and physically competent to do so and is not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In the event that a pick-up person arrives who appears to be mentally or physically incompetent and/or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the Y staff shall have the right to take any one or more of the following steps:

1. To contact others on the child's application form regarding pick-up
2. To arrange alternative transportation at the parent's expense
3. To notify the police

LET'S GET STARTED

EASING FIRST DAY JITTERS

We encourage parents to schedule an appointment with your Program's Director and/or classroom teacher prior to their first day so that you and your child can ease those first day jitters, have any last-minute questions answered and ensure that all of your paperwork is complete for a smooth start.

DON'T FORGET!

1. Completed application form
2. Fee services agreement
3. Child's immunization record
4. Child's health assessment (physical form signed by doctor)
5. Application for Food Program
6. Special Needs Plan (if needed)

Incomplete forms will be returned for completion prior to the child's first day of attendance.

FOR ALL - SPECIAL NEEDS PLAN

We welcome children of all abilities and in order to provide the best experience for you and your child, we require a one-on-one appointment PRIOR to their first day. It is essential that we have all pertinent information about the child's needs from the outset of enrollment. If services have been received from an outside agency such as Sarah Reed, Achievement Center, Barber Institute, IU5, or local school, please notify us. Our enrollment process includes:

- Observation of the child in a classroom setting
- Assessment of the staff's ability to handle various special needs and consider whether additional training, the cost of which is not unreasonable, would assist the staff in confidently handling needs and behavior circumstances
- Observation of the child's adaption to the group of children
- Discussion of child's needs with staff person
- Trial enrollment - not to exceed two weeks
- Discussion with family of possible and necessary accommodations that are reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the group atmosphere of the program.
- Notification to the family if the Y is not able to accommodate the child's needs because of unreasonable modifications or somehow alter's the groups dynamic in the program. If a proposed accommodation is prohibitively costly or would fundamentally alter the nature of the group, the Y may propose an additional cost or propose the presence of a training aide at the family's expense at which point the child may enroll for a trial period to determine whether the child will thrive in the classroom environment.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If weather conditions warrant, our program centers may close without prior notice. If there is any doubt about attendance, please check the Procure Parent Engagement App, listen to the radio, TV news, visit Meadvilleymca.org or our Facebook page.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

This letter is to assure you of our concern for the safety and welfare of children attending Meadville YMCA Child Care. Our Emergency Plan provides for responses to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- *Immediate evacuation:* Children are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc.
- *In-place sheltering:* Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate

that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.

- *Evacuation:* Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to relocation facility at **First Baptist Church for the YMCA** for the downtown locations, **McDonald's** for the YMCA Vernon location or the **St. Phillips Church** for our Linesville location.
- *Modified Operation:* May include cancellation / postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a severe storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children, but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Please listen to **KISS (98.7)/ FROGGY (100.3)** radio stations for announcements relating any of the emergency actions listed above.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Please be sure that your Program Director has your current work, home and mobile phone numbers. Please be sure that the people you have named as "In Case of Emergency" are available during the Program's hours, have transportation and be willing to pick up your child in the event of illness or emergency.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

FEES AND PAYMENTS

Fees are determined at time of enrollment.

- A discount will be extended to all parents paying private rates who are members of the Meadville Family YMCA.
- Contracted fees are due in advance by Friday for the following week.
 - Care will be suspended for any account 2 weeks or more in arrears.
- Contracted fees will be charged regardless of attendance. Parents wishing to change contracted hours or days of care should notify the YMCA office in advance.
- For families who qualify, financial assistance may be available through the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) office. Call 337-8055 for more information.
- Payments must be paid in advance of care. If you would like to pay monthly, you must pay for the 4 proceeding weeks.
- Payment (check or money order only) may be made directly at the site your child is attending.
 - Credit card payments can be made on ProCare computers and by calling 814-336-2196 ext 231.
 - Parents may also choose online banking or an EFT to automatically draft their bank account on a bi-weekly or monthly basis.
 - Payments may also be made at **myprocare.com**. This website will allow you to see your entire account history, including tax information and invoices.
- Parents paying private rates may submit a written request for non-bill status. This includes but is not limited to vacations, illness, school closures for up to two weeks during the calendar year per child. Additional weeks may be considered with a written request

received in the billing office with 3-weeks prior notice. If a written form is not received, you will be charged for the week. If a child is out more than 3 days with a doctor's excuse, (This cannot apply to families receiving ELRC) a credit may be given. For parents receiving ELRC, you will need to contact ELRC to alert them to an upcoming vacation and they will notify us that you will be out for a period of time. Your copay will only be suspended if we are advised from ELRC.

- There will be a \$25 fee for returned payments.
- Accounts over 2 weeks due with no payment arrangements made will be charged a \$15 late fee.

PAYMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Parents are responsible for the full cost of the program. Should you receive any funding through ELRC, the Y's Sliding Fee and Scholarship Program or any other source, you must comply with the funding sources guidelines including timely reporting of wages, employment schedules, child support, payment of weekly fees/copays and deposit.

Should you run into difficulty meeting your payment responsibility, please contact your Program Director BEFORE becoming delinquent. Because Y programs are for everyone, the Y offers many different types of financial assistance. Financial assistance is available for working families needing help through Pennsylvania Early Learning Resource Center - call 814-337-8055.

Y's Annual Campaign fund, which was generously donated by staff, members and the community.

LATE PICK-UP FEE

In fairness to your child and our staff, it is important that your child be picked up on time. If you are late, past closing time, we will charge \$10 for the first 5 minutes and then \$1/minute per child in a late fee due at the time of pick up or before drop the following scheduled day. If you will be later than your normal pick-up time, please call.



WITHDRAWAL

- If you wish to withdraw your child from a Y program, written notice must be given to the Billing Director within two weeks of the child's last day. You are responsible for fees during the notice period. We also request written notice in order to obtain copies of your child's records.

If the Y deems it necessary to withdraw your child, we will consider the following grounds for withdrawal:

- Delinquent fees & failure to maintain the contracted payment schedule, including excessive returned payments
- Failure to comply with Department of Public Welfare regulations
- Failure to comply with the policies in this handbook
- Adults acting with inappropriate behavior or disrespectful actions toward other participants or staff in our program
- Failure to submit a physical exam within the approved timeframes
- Child's needs not being met by the Y.

Refund Policy

For your convenience, our childcare fees are billed and due on a weekly basis. To ensure accurate billing the below information must be followed...

- 1) Notify us in writing 2 weeks in advance of vacations so billing can be adjusted. You are allotted 3 vacation weeks per calendar year.
- 2) If a child is out due to illness more than 3 days, we can offer a credit to the account with a doctor's note.
- 3) If you decide to withdraw from the program, we require a 2-week written notice. You are responsible to pay your contracted rate, whether or not you continue to bring your child for those 2 weeks.
- 4) If you choose to pay in advance, that is fine but is not required.

If after withdrawing from a childcare program, there is a credit left on your account this will first be applied to any back balances, fees, or charges owed to the Meadville Family YMCA including memberships & programs. Refunds will be processed by check only. Because of this, please allow a minimum of 3 to 5 days to process. Any remaining credit over \$10, will be mailed to the primary payor on the account and the address on file. Any credit under \$10, will be applied to our YMCA Childcare Scholarship Campaign.

This policy applies to private pay rates only. If you receive ELRC funding, you must follow ELRC rules & guidelines and notify us of any changes.

GRIEVANCE

Even in the highest quality program, you may have questions or concerns about your child and the program. Here at the Y, we believe that communication is essential. If you have an issue or concern, please take the following steps

- Talk with your child's teacher
- Talk with the Facility Director/Program Director
- Talk with the Child Care Operations Director
- Talk with the CEO

HOLIDAYS

- Meadville YMCA Early Care & School-Age Enrichment Centers observe the following public holidays and will be closed in observance: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day After Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve Day. Additional closings are site/program specific and the intent to close will be posted for all closings a minimum of two weeks in advance.



NO SCHOOL DAYS

We offer our School-Age Enrichment Program on days the children do not have school during the regular school year (Kindergarten & up) at our Downtown location for all schools that we provide care in. There may be an additional fee for Christmas Break. You must sign your child up in advance for all No School Days. We staff according to the number of children enrolled each day; if your child is not signed-up in advance, your child will not be able to stay for the program.

EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS

We offer our School-Age Enrichment Program on days that the school district dismisses prior to their ordinary dismissal time. Advance sign-up is required for this service too.

VACATION LEAVE FOR CHILDREN

Families are eligible to not be billed for a 3-week period for vacation, illness, or in case of school closures where they do not wish to take advantage of care Downtown. This schedule runs on a calendar year and must consist of a full week off. Families wishing to not be billed must submit a Vacation Request Form into the Child Care Finance Director 2 weeks prior to their scheduled vacation. If a written request is not turned in prior to 2 weeks, the account will be billed and payment due.

HOLDING FEE

Beginning in August 2023, if a family chooses to pull their child for the summer (or an extended period of time throughout the year ie...Maternity leave, loss of job) there will be a fee charged to hold their child's spot for the fall or until they return. The rate charged will be 50% of the child's current rate, this is a per child charge, and begins at the date the hold begins. This hold charge will not be applied toward any future tuition fees. This is a holding fee, to guarantee your child(ren) will have a spot for the following school year/at the end of the leave.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Because Y programs are for everyone, the Y offers many different types of financial assistance. Financial assistance is available for working families needing help through Pennsylvania Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC). ELRC shares the concern of parents that programs and centers in Pennsylvania meet health and safety standards. Through their Certification Services Bureau, they certify and register facilities to make sure they meet specific standards. In Erie, our CCIS office is located at:

Early Learning
Resource Center of
Crawford County
378 Chestnut Street
Meadville, PA 16335
Phone: (814) 337-8055
Toll Free Phone: 1-800-682-6118
Fax: (814) 337-8085

It is the policy of the Y that no person be denied membership or program participation by reason of inability to pay fees. Funds made available for scholarships are provided by the Y's Annual Campaign fund, which was generously donated by staff, members and the community. Speak to your YMCA Early Care & School-Age Enrichment Center Director for more information.

Children are like sponges – they watch and absorb knowledge, skills, and values from everyone and everything around them. At the Y, we believe the values and skills learned early on are the building blocks for quality life and future success.

Babies develop trust and security, preschoolers experience early literacy, and learn about their world, and school-age kids make friends, learn new skills and do homework.

YMCA character values – caring, honesty, respect and responsibility help kids – even our youngest- discover who they are and what they can achieve.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Children will benefit from experiences that encourage:

- Self-esteem & positive self-image: Provide experiences that enhance each child's sense of identity, independence and support his/her group identification
- Social interaction: Provide opportunities for each child to interact with both peers and adults. Develop a sense of responsibility and respect for self and others
- Self-expression and communication skills: Provide activities that enhance and develop language skills. Learn to give as well as receive affection
- Creative expression: Provide opportunities for each child to be original
- Large and small muscle development: Provide opportunities for each child to participate in activities to enhance muscle development
- Intellectual growth: Provide opportunities and resources for each child to develop cognitive skills for more effective communication and interaction



PENNSYLVANIA KEYSTONE STARS, PRE-K COUNTS, EARLY HEAD START



KEYSTONE STARS

The Meadville Family YMCA Early Learning and School Age Enrichment Programs participate in the Keystone Stars initiative which is dedicated to improving, supporting and recognizing the ***continuous quality improvement*** efforts of early learning programs.

Y programs are licensed by the Office of Child Development and meet YMCA of the USA Quality Check Standards. Like a hotel ratings system, Y programs are accredited by the Pennsylvania Keystone Stars program. That's important to you as a parent because you can be sure your kids are thriving in the highest quality learning environment with qualified, certified teachers who annually seek continuing education and certifications in Pediatric CPR/ First Aid, Water Safety, Fire Safety & Child Development.

All Y programs participate in Keystone STARS. Each stars designation has its own research-based performance standards. These standards measure areas of childcare and education.

What you can expect from the quality rating is:

- Professional development and training for our teachers; half to two-thirds of the staff have completed or are enrolled in credentials or degrees
- Literacy activities including reading, story-telling and encouraging written and verbal communication
- Parent and community resources are used effectively in the quality delivery of the program
- Business, organizational and staff compensation practices are maximized
- A review of the program center by a nationally recognized environment rating scale that indicates a high-quality score

WHO WE ARE

At the Y, we are committed to nurturing the potential of every child and teen, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

The Y provides services to all families without regard to race, religion, or national origin. Financial assistance is available.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

The Meadville Family YMCA Early Care & School-Age Enrichment program welcomes all children. Programs will be made accessible to eligible individuals with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods. We will talk through our options with you. All meals served to children under the Child and Adult Care Food Program are served at no extra charge.

OUR MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

OUR FOCUS

Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility

OUR CAUSE

At the Y, strengthening community is our cause.



pennsylvania
PRE-K COUNTS

For A Brigher Future



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Meadville Family YMCA Early Learning/School Age strives to ensure that all family members are given resources so that every member of the family thrives. When appropriate, we can refer family members to community partners for needs including social/emotional development, mental health, continuing education, wellness, and medical services. Below is a list of the agencies that may benefit families that we frequently work with. A full comprehensive list is available by request or by visiting our website.

Crawford Central School District

11280 Mercer Pike
Meadville, PA 16335
(814) 724-3960

Crawford County Early Intervention Program

18282 Technology Dr
Meadville, PA 16335
(814) 373-2607

Northwest Tri County Intermediate Unit #5

252 Waterford St
Edinboro, PA 16412
(800) 677-5610

Child Care Information Services

378 Chestnut St.
Meadville, PA 16335
(814) 337-8055

Meadville Public Library

848 North Main St.
Meadville, PA 16335
(814) 336-1773

Adult & Child Care Food Program (CACFP)

For more information on the CACFP –

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/cacfp/aboutcacfp.htm>

MEADVILLE FAMILY YMCA

EARLY LEARNING & SCHOOL-AGE ENRICHMENT CENTERS

Meadville YMCA Early Learning Academy

356 Chestnut Street, Meadville, PA 16335

Phone # 336-2196

Fax # 336-6012

YMCA Vernon Early Learning Academy

16864 Conneaut Lake Rd., Meadville, PA 16335

(Church of the Redeemer next to McDonald's)

Phone # 807-1006

Use the handicap entrance at the rear of the facility

West End

12742 Brooks Road

Meadville, PA 16335

(814) 337-0899

Conneaut Lake

630 Line Street

Conneaut Lake, PA

(814) 720-8044