



# **HASTINGS FAMILY YMCA**

## **Preschool Parent Handbook**

Dear Parents,

Thank you for selecting the YMCA for your child's care; we are so excited you are here. I hope this handbook will empower you to participate with us in the care of your child. I am a strong advocate for open communication and strive to create a team-based approach between parents, staff and myself. Our ultimate goal is to provide a safe learning environment where your children can grow and thrive. If you ever have any questions, concerns or recommendations for our program please do not hesitate to reach out to any staff member or myself.

In addition, we are committed to encouraging individuals to develop values and behavior that are consistent with Christian principles. We strive to help each child grow socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Our preschool program has recently achieved Level 5 in the Step Up to Quality which ensures your child is receiving a high-quality program that can have a lifelong positive impact on them. Quality early learning builds a solid foundation for skills needed in school, work and life.

Please save this handbook for future reference. It will provide you with necessary information concerning policies, procedures, and parental expectations. I look forward to working with each of you and your child(ren).

Christine Bischoff

Child Care Director  
Hastings Family YMCA  
1220 W 18th Street  
Hastings NE 68901  
402-463-3139  
Email: [christineb@hastingsymca.net](mailto:christineb@hastingsymca.net)

**Mission Statement:**

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

**Philosophy:**

Our purpose at the YMCA Preschool is to provide an atmosphere for children to develop...

- Spiritually through the teaching of God's Word.
- Intellectually through activities that stimulate cognitive development.
- Emotionally through recognition of their own feelings and those of others.
- Physically through gross motor and fine motor activities.
- Socially through encouragement of cooperative play with other children.

**YMCA Leadership:**

CEO: Troy Stickels 402-463-3139 / [troys@hastingsymca.net](mailto:troys@hastingsymca.net)

Child Care Director: Christine Bischoff 402-463-3139 / [christineb@hastingsymca.net](mailto:christineb@hastingsymca.net)

YMCA and AC After School Site Coordinator: Shelly Veronee  
[acdiretor@hastingsymca.net](mailto:acdiretor@hastingsymca.net)

Lincoln After School Site Director: Alyssa Zulkoski  
[lincolncoordinator@hastingsymca.net](mailto:lincolncoordinator@hastingsymca.net)

The Child Care Department falls under the CEO.

### **Curriculum:**

Children learn best by doing and playing. In order to allow children to learn, time needs to be allowed for a variety of activities. Boys and girls at the YMCA child care will be given the opportunity to participate in:

- |                     |                                  |                   |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| -Christian Stories  | -Fine and Large Motor Activities | -Swimming Lessons |
| -Dramatic Play      | -Blocks                          | -Arts and Crafts  |
| -Science Activities | -Math activities                 | -Music            |
| -Field trips        | -Books                           | -Manipulatives    |

The curriculum that we have chosen to use is Learn Everyday Preschool Edition by Kaplan. This curriculum meets all of our early childhood education standards, as well as incorporates the Early Learning Guideline Domains.

### **Procure Software:**

The YMCA uses Procure software for billing, communication, check-in/check-out, and registration. Parents are required to use Procure. Procure can be utilized via an app on your phone. For payment you will need to turn in a Tuition Express form, or visit MyProcure.com to set up your own billing account. Billing statements can only be accessed on MyProcure.com and not on the app. It is your responsibility to ensure the app is up to date on your phone; if you ever experience technical difficulties please contact staff to let them know.

### **Daily Schedule:**

Each classroom has their own class schedule that is posted in their room. At the start of the program year your child will be given a daily class schedule. Every month, newsletters and monthly event calendars will go home with your child as well as be posted on the parent communication board. Procure is our number one communication tool, so please keep an eye on the messages and newsletters.

### **School Closings:**

We will always do our best to remain open during various forms of inclement weather; however, the safety of your children and our staff are of utmost importance and each situation will be assessed individually. If the public schools close due to weather, we will not have preschool class that day; however, we will offer extended care for the preschoolers. In addition, we will be open for the school

age children enrolled in the programs. If the decision is made to close the YMCA, you will be notified via Procure messaging as soon as the decision is made. It is imperative to keep the app up to date so that you receive important notifications in a timely manner. The final decision to close or remain open is made by the CEO.

### **Holidays:**

The YMCA will be closed on the following holidays: New Years Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Friday after Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas. If any of these holidays fall on a weekend, we will be closed on either the Friday before the holiday or the Monday following the holiday.

### **Clothing:**

While attending the preschool program, your child will be involved in a variety of activities throughout the day. Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing suitable for indoor and outdoor play as well as art and creative activities. We do require all preschoolers to wear tennis shoes with non-marking soles while attending our program. Socks are required as well as they are a requirement to play on the adventure challenge. Please label all hats, coats, gloves, swimming items, sweatshirts, etc. with your child's name. The YMCA is not responsible for any lost or damaged clothing or items.

### **Immunizations:**

Proof of a current immunization record is required for each child enrolled in YMCA childcare. We MUST have immunization records prior to the start of care. You may provide us with a photocopy of the most current records. An updated copy needs to be provided each year of care. Immunization records can be faxed directly to us from your child's healthcare provider; they cannot be emailed. Our fax number is 402-462-9443.

### **Illness:**

In order to maintain a safe and healthy environment, we expect you to not send your child to school/extended care if he/she is showing signs of a contagious disease or illness in the past 24 hours. Examples include: a fever over 100.4 degrees, vomiting/diarrhea, sore throat, severe coughing, reddened or pink eye, skin rash or sore, earache, etc.

A child may return to school/extended care after being fever free for 24 hours without medication. If your child is diagnosed with a communicable (contagious) disease you must notify your child's primary teacher or the director as soon as you are aware of the diagnosis. We are required to notify other families if there is any

potential exposure to other children, thus the importance of communicating with staff as soon as possible.

We do not give or provide any medication unless it accompanies a doctor's note. If the dispensing of medication is needed, the medication must be in the original prescription container that is provided by the pharmacist. We do not give or provide over the counter medications such as Tylenol, ibuprofen or allergy medication unless prescribed by a doctor with a written note.

If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be contacted immediately and we will ask that you make arrangements to have him/her picked up within one hour. We will make every effort to make your child comfortable until you arrive. If you are unable to be reached or are not present to pick up your child within the hour, we will contact the next contact person in your child's record. When your child is ill, staff will complete a sent home sick form; all procedures on this form will be followed including when the child can return to school/extended care. We will follow the procedures outlined on the sent home sick form. As an additional reminder, children MUST be fever free for 24 hours before returning without fever-reducing medication. In addition, a child must also be symptom free for 24 hours before returning.

### **Accident Reports:**

If a child sustains any form of an accident or an injury, staff will complete an accident report. Parents will be notified via Procure and/or a phone call depending on the severity of the injury/accident. A copy of the accident report is provided to the parent at pickup; an additional copy is kept in the child's record. Any accident or injury that a child receives during our care is reported on an accident form, sent to the parents through Procure, and a copy is left in the child's file.

If the injury/accident warrants more than a bandage/ice pack, parents will be contacted via phone call. If the child is in need of emergency medical care, 911 will be contacted which may result in the child being transported to the local hospital. If this occurs, staff will be in constant contact with the parent.

If a hospital/doctor visit happens after an accident/injury, the director must be notified immediately by the parent as it must be reported to DHHS.

## **Parents Responsibilities:**

It is the parents responsibility to let the staff know if their child has any medical conditions or special food allergies. If your child has an allergy we need to have a doctor's note stating they have been diagnosed with said allergy. If the allergy is food related and we do not have a doctor's note stating such an allergy/intolerance exists, we will be required (per DHHS) to serve that child what is on the menu; thus, the importance of a doctor's note. Low-fat dairy milk is served with each meal; if a milk substitution is needed a doctor's note must be provided and then the food program specialist will provide you with what substitutions we can provide.

Each preschooler needs their own bag/backpack as they have daily papers and activities to bring home each day. In addition to a backpack, please also provide one full change of clothes in the event of an accident. This should include a shirt, pair of pants, socks, underwear and an extra pair of shoes if possible. We do have some extra clothes on site; however, these are limited and may not be the appropriate size your child needs. If there are no extra clothes available, you may be contacted to bring a change of clothes for your child. Please attempt to keep your child's clothes appropriate for the season and the correct size.

If you have any change of phone number or address this needs to be reported to staff as soon as possible. In the event your phone number is incorrect or no longer in service when we need to contact you, we will contact those listed on your child's emergency contact list. In the event no one can be reached on your child's contact list, state authorities may be contacted depending on the situation. Correct addresses are imperative to receiving end of the year statements in a timely manner.

Per State of Nebraska law, all children under the age of 8 (regardless of weight) must ride correctly secured in a federally-approved child safety seat. We do provide a federally-approved child safety seat to use in our mid-size buses and vans. Preschoolers are typically only transported during field trips; if we do not have enough child safety seats we may ask for you to provide a seat for your child. You do have the option of transporting your child to the designated destination if you choose. ALL CHILDREN are REQUIRED to follow this law and there will be no exceptions. If you choose, you may provide your child's transportation to our destination.

Spending time playing outside is very important for children to gain and strengthen advanced motor skills. In addition, spending time outdoors can help boost immune systems and moods. At the YMCA, children will play and spend time outdoors everyday unless the weather is unfavorable. Please dress your child for the weather and make sure they have a coat especially in the cooler/winter months.

When you come to pick up your child or drop them off for the day, we ask that you refrain from using your cell phone. Your child looks forward to seeing you at the end of the day and desires your full attention. In addition, your child's teacher may have information to share with you. If you arrive on your phone during drop off or pick up, you will be kindly asked to end your call before your child's teacher brings your child to you.

In regards to pick up and drop off, please enter through the Child Enrichment Center doors located on the north side of the YMCA building. The first set of doors will be unlocked during business hours. The second set of doors will be open during normal drop off times, 7:30 am-8:30 am, and pick up times, 4:30-6:00. The second set of doors will be locked from 8:30 am-4:30 pm and you will need to be let in by a staff member. This is for the safety of your children and staff. When you arrive, you must check your child in or out at the front desk. It is your responsibility to check them in and check them out.

A permission slip is issued for your signature before your child can attend any field trip. If, for any reason, a child cannot go on a field trip, he/she is to be kept home. Please inform the teacher if your child cannot attend a field trip.

For any questions, concerns, or grievances you may contact the Child Care Director, Christine Bischoff at either the YMCA 402-463-3139 or [christineb@hastingsymca.net](mailto:christineb@hastingsymca.net)

### **Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect:**

One of Hastings YMCA's top priorities is to ensure all children are safe and protected while enrolled or participating in any Y programs. All allegations or suspicions of abuse are taken seriously. Please be aware that all persons residing in Nebraska are mandated child abuse/neglect reporters and it is against the law to not report. If staff suspect any form of abuse or neglect, they will be required to contact the Nebraska Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline. The hotline will determine if a formal investigation is warranted.

### **YMCA Preschool Preparation:**

All garments and items should be labeled with your child's name. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Tennis shoes must be worn at all times except when in the Adventure Challenge at which time socks are required. Socks must be provided in order for your child to play at the Adventure Challenge. No black soled shoes are allowed on the basketball courts. Please be sure your child's name is on their shoes in a visible spot.



Paint shirts are provided for your child to use while painting, however some paint still might get on their clothes. Treat as a blood stain by soaking in cold water before laundering. Our preschool does only use washable paint.

At the YMCA Preschool students are required to be potty trained to attend. If your child has a special bathroom need, you must let the teacher know. We go to the restroom often with the children, but they need to be able to communicate when they need to go. If your child has multiple accidents multiple days in a row, we will need to have a conversation. Potty training also means being able to wipe themselves with little to no assistance.

If your child attends extended care, they will have rest time. You are responsible to provide a blanket for your child to use. In addition to one blanket, your child may also have ONE stuffed animal and ONE small pillow. All bedding is on a weekly wash schedule and will be washed weekly. If you prefer to wash your child's bedding you may take it home with you to do so and bring it back. No child is put in pull-ups for rest time.

### **Preschool Supplies:**

A list of supplies will be provided for you on what your child needs to bring at the beginning of the program year. Supplies may be brought on the first day of class or during the open house. Purchasing school supplies is not a requirement; however, it is a great way for you to participate in your child's education.

### **Parent Assistance:**

PARENT ENGAGEMENT IS NEEDED! Parents are encouraged to visit at any time without prior notice as you are a critical piece to your child's education and care. There are times you may have the opportunity to volunteer to attend field trips, swimming days and other events as they arise.

### **Preschool Snacks/Lunches:**

In our Preschool class we have a snack helper each day; if your child is a snack helper you will be notified at the beginning of the month they are assigned. We ask that you provide a healthy snack and bring enough for your child's class. Due to our participation in the federal food program and Step Up to Quality, we are unable to allow cookies, cupcakes, donuts or other sweet treats. We understand birthday treats are fun to bring for classmates; however, please consider bringing a healthier treat. Healthy options that are acceptable for snack and/or birthday treats include but are not limited to: fresh fruit, vegetable sticks, yogurt, cheese sticks, crackers, etc. If you forget, or cannot help with providing a snack on their assigned day

please let us know. If you have any questions when it comes to snacks please do not hesitate to reach out.

If you wish to pack a lunch for your child you may do so; however, it needs to be a balanced, healthy meal. The lunch should include protein, dairy, fruit, vegetable, and grains. Please refrain from packing sugary sweets in your child's lunch. Soda and fast food meals are prohibited. If you have any questions please feel free to ask, we are happy to help.

### **Enrollment Policies:**

- All forms must be completed and brought to the Preschool by the identified due date.
- Immunization records must be on file at the Preschool for each child enrolled.
- If it is necessary for the child to cease attending the school for any reason, a written two weeks notice of this intention is required. We reserve the right to ask withdrawal of any child who, in the judgment of the Lead Teacher, along with the Child Care Director:

A. Is not benefiting from the Preschool experience.

B. Creates a danger to self or others.

- Applications for financial assistance need to be approved prior to the first day of Preschool. Forms are available from the Welcome Center.

### **Payment Policies (UPDATED):**

All programs are billed out on a weekly basis and you must pay your balance each week. Billing will be completed each Monday for the previous week of care.

Example: Your child attends program the 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of the month; your bill for those five days will be sent out on the following Monday the 27th. You are required to pay your balance in full by that Wednesday (so in the example, the very last day to pay would be the 29th). There will be no exceptions made in regards to billing and payment.

Below is the Childcare collections policy for unpaid accounts:

- A. The Childcare Director will run an outstanding balance report on a monthly basis by the 5th of each month. Upon review, the Childcare Director will notify the business office of any delinquent accounts.
- B. The business office will then send a letter to the debtor (parent) requesting payment within 30 days.

- C. If the debt is not paid within 30 days of the letter, the debtor (parent) will be turned over to collections

You are encouraged to make payments via Tuition Express. Tuition Express is synced to Procure and automatically withdraws your balance; the withdrawal would occur when billing is completed on Monday, but may not reflect in your account until 24-48 hours after. In order to utilize Tuition Express, you must complete a form that authorizes the automatic withdrawal. This form needs to be completed and turned into staff. If you use a credit or debit card for Tuition Express there is a 2.75% interest charge per transaction; if using a bank account there is no charge.

If you choose to decline utilizing Tuition Express you may pay online via myprocare.com or you may bring in cash or check. Checks are to be made out to Hastings Family YMCA.

It is important to note, you can NOT pay your balance through the Procure app nor can you see your balance. This MUST be done on the website: myprocare.com.

All balances must be kept up with or the above collection policy will be followed and your child will not be able to attend until your balance is paid in full. If you are ever unsure what your balance is or have complications in paying your balance, please communicate with staff or the director as soon as possible.

Costs are as follows:

**Preschool**

5 Day Class - \$65 Members & \$70 Non-Members

4 Day Class - \$55 Members & \$60 Non-Members

Extended Care \$24/day (normal day) \$27/day (on no class days)

Pre/Post Care \$35/Members & \$40/Non-Members Monthly fee

**Preschool Arrival and Departure:**

As previously mentioned, parents are to sign their children in and out every day at the front desk. For your child's safety, only those people designated in writing will be able to sign your child out. In an emergency, verbal authorization may be granted to someone else but the parent must contact the Director or Program Coordinators to arrange this. Anyone not on the list for picking up a child, will need to show ID; there will be no exceptions to this. Your child will not be released to an unauthorized person.

No child will be allowed to be dropped off prior to the starting time of their Preschool class unless they are paying for the pre-care service. Please be punctual when dropping off and picking up your child. If you are more than 5 minutes late to pick up your child, a \$5.00 late fee will be charged for each 15 minutes you are late

that day and each day after (ie... 5-15 min. late =\$5.00 fee, 16-30 min. late=\$10 fee, etc.). This late fee will be reflected on the next bill and has to be paid in full. We understand circumstances happen which are beyond your control, please communicate promptly if you are running late.

### **Parent Pickup:**

All morning classes are dismissed at 11:30. The afternoon class is dismissed at 3:10. All parents will need to wait by the front doors in the commons area until their child's class is dismissed. Parents are not to enter classrooms or roam throughout the premises. Children will be dismissed with their class into the commons area. Please be patient as your child is brought to you and please remember to check them out at the front desk for the day.

ALL TEACHERS WILL HAVE THEIR ATTENDANCE CLIPBOARDS WITH THEM AND WHEN THEY SEE A PARENT/GUARDIAN AND RELEASE THE CHILD TO THE PARENT/GUARDIAN THAT IS PICKING UP FOR THE DAY THEY WILL ADD A CHECK MARK IN THE CORRECT COLUMN ON THE ATTENDANCE SHEET.

### **Transportation:**

Per State of Nebraska law, all children under the age of 8 (regardless of weight) must ride correctly secured in a federally-approved child safety seat. We do provide a federally-approved child safety seat to use in our mid-size buses and vans. Preschoolers are typically only transported during field trips; if we do not have enough child safety seats we may ask for you to provide a seat for your child. You do have the option of transporting your child to the designated destination if you choose. ALL CHILDREN are REQUIRED to follow this law and there will be no exceptions. If you choose, you may provide your child's transportation to our destination.

We ask that parents work with their child/ren and teach them how to buckle themselves on the van/buses. We will help them, but if you are able to help them learn it makes pick up go faster.

When transporting, our drivers are focused on the road, and not on the children. We will have a second staff member on the bus and vans at all times to help with the children. We want to ensure everyone's safety; therefore, children need to be taught that they need to sit nicely on the van/bus, not yell or be disruptive, and listen. If a student is refusing to buckle, or is disruptive the child will go back into the school and it will be the parents responsibility to get the child. If this behavior happens once on the route, parents will be notified once we are at the Y. If these

behaviors continue your child will no longer be allowed to utilize our transportation service.

### **Electronics/Toys:**

Children **are not allowed** to have any electronic devices out while in our care. If there is a homework assignment that requires a device they will have to do that once they are home. Electronic devices include smart watches. If electronics are brought out by a child, they will be asked to put them in the backpack or staff will take the item and hold onto it until the child is picked up.

Please leave all toys at home. Toys brought from home can be disruptive to our program and could also be lost, stolen or broken. The only exception to bringing a toy to school is show and tell.

If you need to contact your child for any reason you need to call the following numbers:

- **For the YMCA Site 402-463-3139**

### **YMCA Fire Safety:**

All emergency fire routes at the YMCA Child Enrichment Center are posted in the commons area. Fire drills are completely on a monthly basis so that children are familiar with what to do in the event of a fire. All classrooms have two exits and the commons area has two exits as well. Facility occupants will exit their nearest exit as outlined on the fire route and will meet outside on the west end of the parking lot at which time roll count will occur. Occupants will remain outside in the west parking lot until it is declared safe to go back into the building by the fire department or if needed, parents will be contacted to pick up their child. All special needs children will be assisted as needed during evacuation. If evacuation is necessary and we are then able to re-enter the building, all parents will be notified via Procure messaging.

### **YMCA Tornado Safety:**

All tornado safety routes at the YMCA Child Enrichment Center are posted in the commons area. Tornado drills are conducted four times per year during the months of March through September. Building occupants will relocate to the womens/girls locker room and will take shelter under the benches in the locker room. Roll call will be conducted to ensure all children and staff are present and accounted for. We will remain there until either we get the all clear to return back to the classrooms or parents come to pick up their child/children. We will assist any special needs children as needed. If we are required to take shelter in the locker rooms and we

are then able to return to the classrooms, all parents will be notified via Procure messaging.

### **YMCA Emergencies:**

Parents will be contacted in the event of an emergency via phone call. It is critical that you keep your address, phone number and place of employment up to date in your child's record so that you are able to be reached without delay. If you, or the listed emergency contact persons cannot be reached, we will call the physician identified by you on the child's medical form. In case of a serious emergency requiring immediate medical attention, the closest hospital will be used via ambulance transportation.

In the event of a natural or man-made disaster that requires evacuation, we will leave the building to the safest location; either the west parking lot or Hastings Senior High School depending on the circumstance. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible if evacuation is required. We will assist any special needs children as needed.

If we need to transport children due to the event of an emergency all families will be notified of our location and where to pick up their child.

Please keep your Procure App up to date with us so you do not miss out on important messages.

### **YMCA Lockdown:**

Please see the lock down sheet attached.

### **Childcare Behaviors:**

In our childcare programs we all understand that it is important for there to be structure, routine and consistency. We understand that all children are unique, have their own needs, and are at different developmental stages. We will always do our best to work with each child individually and meet them where they are at. If your child has known behaviors that may negatively impact other children, it is important to communicate this to staff when enrolled. We are more than willing to meet with parents to discuss a behavior plan to help minimize any negative behaviors the child may exhibit while in the program. As previously mentioned, we desire a team based approach between staff and parents in order to best serve your child; communication is imperative.

It is of utmost importance that children and staff feel safe at all times. If a child becomes destructive and unsafe during program to the point staff is unable to

de-escalate or keep everyone safe, action steps will need to be taken. We have a three strike policy for continuous destructive behaviors. Parents will be notified each time your child receives a strike. If your child reaches three documented strikes, we will request a meeting with the parents to identify a plan moving forward which may necessitate expulsion from our program.

The following behaviors are unacceptable in our program and may result in a strike depending on the severity of the offense:

- Cursing
- Bullying
- Disruptive behavior
- Disrespectful behavior
- Other behaviors that may arise

The following behaviors will result in a strike as they cause an unsafe environment for the child displaying the behavior and the other children in attendance:

- Harming staff or other children (i.e. hitting, kicking, biting, pulling hair, etc.)
- Throwing objects
- Running away from staff
- Harming self

We ultimately ask that you as a parent work with us to best serve your child. We as staff will do everything in our power to mitigate behaviors before they happen; the absolute last thing we want is to dismiss your child from the program. Any decision to dismiss a child will be made by the preschool coordinator, director and CEO.

### **IEP's**

If your child has an Individualized Education Plan, we are more than willing to help implement strategies to assist your child in achieving their IEP goal(s). We do request a copy of the IEP goals so that we have all necessary information. Having an IEP does not exempt a child from the behavior policy listed above.

Dear Parents,

Please sign the statement below stating you have read this handbook in its entirety and return this form to the center. If you have any questions regarding any contents of this handbook, please feel free to contact me.

Thank You,

Christine Bischoff

Child Care Director

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the YMCA Parent Handbook. I have been given a copy of this handbook for my reference.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date