



# **CHILD WATCH**

## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

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# Welcome

Welcome to the Valley Shore YMCA. This handbook provides you with information on the guidelines and procedures for the Child Watch program. Please read this handbook thoroughly as it contains many important policies that pertain to the care of your child.

## What is Child Watch?

The Child Watch program is a drop-in childcare program serving children 6 weeks -12 years old. It is a benefit to the Valley Shore YMCA membership and can be used for up to 90 minutes at a time. Child Watch is not open to guests or nationwide members. The service is a benefit to family membership and provides parents with peace of mind knowing their child is in a safe, quality environment while they achieve their health and wellness goals.

## GENERAL POLICIES

### Toys and Other Personal Items

The Y recommends that toys, tablets, and electronic devices are NOT brought from home. However, if these items are brought in, then please abide by the following guidelines:

- The items should be clearly labeled with your child's name
- DO NOT bring in any items that pose a choking hazard to smaller children
- The Y is not responsible for lost or stolen items

Also, please note that if your child brings in a tablet or electronic device they will not be permitted to watch videos or log into any websites that are not appropriate for small children. If our staff discover that your child is logged onto or watching inappropriate material, then they will not be permitted to bring the item back to Child Watch.

### Proper Attire

Child's play can be messy work. Your child may be painting and participating in other messy activities. For safety reasons we recommend sturdy shoes that cover the entire foot.

### Behavior Expectations of Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are asked to remember that this is a child-centered program. The Y challenges staff and families to accept and demonstrate the four core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. We have a zero tolerance policy regarding bullying, threats, rude or aggressive behaviors. Inappropriate behavior or failure to follow the expectations of this handbook and the Y may result in expulsion from the Y programming and the facility.

## Behavior Expectations of Children

Children have the right to:

- Have a safe, calm, clean and orderly environment.
- Make mistakes without being ridiculed by others.
- Seek help from adults who are there to help
- Be treated with dignity and respect by everyone.

We encourage children to share our materials and to care for them accordingly. We do expect the children to clean up after themselves, and we ask that you encourage them to do so before leaving the Child Watch area. We encourage the children to model our Y core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

The following techniques are used to help modify children behaviors:

- Changing the setting
- Giving choices
- Encouragement
- Reinforcing positive behavior
- Giving reasons
- Setting limits
- Giving consequences
- Warnings

If redirection of the child and the time out are ineffective and serious behavioral problems continue to disrupt the program, the parent will be called to pick-up their child early.

## Late pick up policy

Child Watch is available to members for up to 90 minutes at a time. If a child is not picked up within the 90 minute period, then the parent is considered late. In the event that your child is picked up late, then you will be reminded of the 90 minute allowance. Parents/guardians who repeatedly pick up their child after the 90 minute period has expired risk losing their option to use the Child Watch program.

## Safety Procedures

### Sign in and Sign out process

Sign in process:

Parent/guardian who is dropping off the child into the Child Watch program must remain in the Y the length of time that the child is in the program. Additionally, we ask the parent/guardian to have their cell phone with them in case they need to be reached. Our staff will call the phone that is listed on your membership unit.

We encourage every member to check their name, email and phone number in our member system before dropping their child off into our program. Additionally, we will require photos of both the adult and the child in the program.

1. On the kiosk by the door please type in your child's Last name and then comma, then First name. (i.e. Last, First)
2. The adult with the child will click the picture of the adult dropping off the child, Once they are selected there will be a green check on their picture.
3. The adult with the child will select where the adult will be, from the drop down menu.
4. The adult will click the picture of the child(ren) being dropped off, once they are selected there will be a green check on their picture
5. They will type in a phone number where the adult can be currently reached. The adult will have the phone on them at all times.
6. They will select the check in button and confirm the child is checked in.

Sign out process:

1. Ring doorbell to be admitted to Child Watch.
2. The adult that dropped their child off must be the adult picking up the child.
3. When leaving, the parent will click on their child's picture on the kiosk by the door.
4. The child's adult will select their picture that they are checking out.
5. Finally, the adult will click check out.

## Maximum Capacities

Child Watch is bright, clean and safe, and spacious enough for staff to adequately care for the maximum number of children allowed in the room. Maximum occupancies are set based on space and local codes. Our maximum capacity will be 20 children.

## Procedure for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Our staff is required to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. If you suspect or have any questions/concerns about any misconduct or abuse, please contact the Membership Director at [vsymca@vsymca.org](mailto:vsymca@vsymca.org) or 860-399-9622.

## Diaper Changing

Child Watch associates are not permitted to change diapers for Child Watch participants. If your child needs a diaper change, a Child Watch associate will call you and you will need to report to the Child Watch area.

## Weather Policies

The safety of our members and staff is the most important factor in determining weather-related closings. If conditions warrant, the CEO may decide to close the YMCA early, delay opening, cancel programs or classes, or close the facility entirely on severe weather days.

Please check our website and Facebook page for updated status reports on delays, closings and cancellations due to weather or emergency conditions.

## Injuries, Illness and Emergency Procedures

### Injuries and Accident Reports

Unfortunately, even with the best safety guidelines in place, accidents do happen. In the event that your child is injured while in our Child Watch program area, Child Watch staff will notify you at pick up and ask you to sign an incident report.

### Sick Children

Our Child Watch program is not equipped to handle sick children.

We cannot permit children to remain in our care if they show symptoms of a communicable disease. Children who are ill should be excluded from care until:

1. A physician has certified the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent (a doctor's note may be required)
2. They are no longer a threat to the health of other children
3. Symptoms have subsided

If any of the below are yes, the child will NOT be allowed to enter Child Watch. The child must return home with their parent(s) or caregiver.

- *Today or in the past 24 hours, have you or any household members had any of the following symptoms:*
  - Fever of 100.0 or above, felt feverish, or had chills
  - Cough
  - Sore throat
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting)
  - Fatigue
  - Headache
  - New loss of smell/taste

- New muscle aches
- Any other signs of illness
- In the past 14 days, have you had close contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19

If the Child Watch associated determines that a child has developed any of the symptoms listed above while in our care, the parent will be called to pick-up their child early and asked to sign an incident report.

## Hand-washing and Cleaning Procedure

In order to reduce the spread of illness, we adhere to strict daily guidelines when cleaning the Child Watch program area. In addition, our staff are required to follow stringent hand-washing procedures for themselves and the children in their care.

## Medications

Only parents/guardians can administer medication to the children in our care. Child Watch staff can not administer medications to our participants; medications cannot be stored in our Child Watch program space.

## Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, the Membership Director will provide Y staff with specific instructions according to our emergency preparedness plans. Do not enter the Child Watch area to retrieve your child. Instead, meet the staff at the designated evacuation locations (the flag pole or the back of the parking lot) and sign your child out.

## Snacks and Food

At this time, no snacks or beverages are permitted in the Child Watch program area. Older children will be provided water as needed.