Please Note: All YWCA Central Maine policies and procedures are subject to change in order to remain in adherence with the State of Maine’s guidelines/response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
YWCA Mission
The mission of the YWCA is to eliminate racism and empower women while promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Founded in 1878, the YWCA began as a service provider for women immigrating to Lewiston to work in the mills. The organization was originally known as the Women's Benevolent Association and offered housing, language classes, job training, and recreation that allowed working women to thrive in their new country. The YWCA’s history inspires us to provide programming that builds community through strengthening inter-cultural relationships and valuing the needs and contributions of all of our members.

Our programming is guided by a belief in and appreciation of diversity and equitable opportunity for all people in our community. All YWCA services work toward the realization of gender and racial equity through providing accessible and culturally appropriate resources for health and wellness, recreation, childcare, and advocacy. The advancement of women, people of color, and economic justice in Lewiston-Auburn is integral in all that we do. From affordable childcare that supports families and women in the workplace to free-of-charge therapeutic swim programs to anti-racist education and action, the YWCA strives to bring this mission to fruition in big and small ways every day.

YWCA Philosophy
YWCA Central Maine is committed to providing a healthy environment for all children while promoting self-esteem, enthusiasm for learning, and respect for oneself and others. The YWCA offers opportunities for growth through a variety of programs and activities, which may include:

- Freely expressing oneself through play, music, art, and dance;
- A love for reading;
- Nurturing the imagination;
- Gender equity;
- Learning to take care of basic personal needs;
- Listening and communication skills;
- Sharing;
- Cultural diversity;
- Promoting our local community through field trips and special visitors;
- Weekly structured swim;
- Nutrition and physical activity.

Expectations of Program Participants (Guardian(s) and Children)
In order to foster the atmosphere supportive of our mission for all program participants, the YWCA enforces some basic rules. These rules include:

1. Everyone will respect the personal space of all children and staff at the YWCA.
2. Everyone will use appropriate language at all times at the YWCA (e.g. no swearing, name-calling, or references to dangerous activities, drugs, alcohol, or sexual language.)
3. Everyone will be respectful of others’ property, including property that belongs to the YWCA.
Teacher-to-Child Ratio

Staffing ratios in our program are regulated by the State of Maine. The adult-to-child ratio for preschool depends on the age of the children in the classroom and is either one adult to every seven children (1:7) or one adult for every 10 children (1:10). The YWCA is licensed to care for children from 2.5 to 12 years of age.

Preschool Classrooms

The YWCA currently operates three preschool classrooms, named after popular Winnie the Pooh characters. Age ranges for the classrooms are general guidelines; children are placed in a room based on room availability at the time of enrollment and the individual needs of the child. Children move from one classroom to another as they get older, based on availability, teacher and parent input, and the discretion of the Director of Childcare Services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tigger’s Tree House</td>
<td>2 ½ - 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pooh’s Corner</td>
<td>3 - 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Robin’s Clubhouse</td>
<td>4 years - kindergarten enrollment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hours of Operation

The hours of operation for all classrooms are 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Guardians who require care for their children prior to 7:00 AM or after 5:30 PM may sign their child(ren) up for Extended Care (additional fee).

Arrival Time

Children may not arrive prior to 7:00 AM unless they are signed up for extended care hours (additional fee, see below). If you bring your child prior to 7:00 AM, you will have to wait with your child until programming begins. If your child is not planning to attend the YWCA for care on a scheduled day, please call the front desk at 795-4050.

In order that your child not miss any important programming (such as aquatics or circle time), and to prevent classroom disruptions, we request that you drop off your child by 9:00 AM each day. If you know in advance that you will not drop off your child by 9:00 AM due to an appointment or other circumstance, please tell your child’s teacher and/or the Director of Childcare Services at least one day prior. If you have an unplanned emergency that will prevent you from dropping off your child on time, please contact the front desk at 207-795-4050.

Pick-Up Time

All children must be picked up by 5:30 PM unless they are signed up for extended care hours (additional fee, see below). Please call the front desk at 795-4050 to notify staff if you will be unable to pick up your child up on time.

Extended Care

Families may access extended care for their child(ren), pending availability, from 6:30 AM–7:00 AM and 5:30 PM–6:00 PM. The fee for extended care is $15.00 per week for the morning and $15.00 per week for the evening. You may sign up for morning, evening, or both.
Late Fees
Families who are not signed up for extended care and pick their children up past 5:30 PM will be charged $10.00 for each child for each late pick up. This fee will be assessed and added to your invoice to be paid with the next regular invoicing period and is subject to the same conditions as regular tuition.

Permission for Pick-Up
All people with permission to pick up a child from the YWCA, including guardians, must be listed in the child’s enrollment paperwork. YWCA staff are instructed to check photo identification for any adults with whom they are unfamiliar. Please notify your child’s teacher and provide written permission in the event that someone who is not already listed will be picking up your child.

Early Closing/Delayed Opening due to Inclement Weather
The YWCA does not automatically close when local schools are canceled due to inclement weather. If the YWCA decides to open late or close early due to inclement weather, an emergency situation, or another reason, the notification will be broadcast on local television stations and social media. Please note that, if local schools are closed due to inclement weather or an emergency situation but the YWCA remains open for childcare, extended care hours are not offered (before/after care). Our hours will be 7:00 AM—5:30 PM.

Tuition and Fees
Children in the YWCA Central Maine Child Care Program are required to have an active YWCA Community Access Pass. This can be held as an individual pass or as part of a family pass. The current YWCA Community Access Pass fee is $40.00 and is valid for one year. Each child’s Community Access Pass must be renewed on an annual basis.

A $25.00 registration fee is required when a child is signed up for a new program (e.g. summer camp, enrollment in preschool, or school age child care).

Suspension and/or Involuntary Termination from the Program
Occasionally, a child will experience difficulty in acclimating to the center’s environment or abiding by the rules of behavior established by the center and/or required by the state.

If the rules and policies set forth are not followed, YWCA Central Maine reserves the right to suspend or terminate the childcare contract agreement at any time. In such an event, guardians will be billed through the end of the week in which such termination occurs and/or billed for the days of suspension. Possible reasons for suspension and/or termination from the program include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to comply with policies set forth in the guardians handbook;
- A child’s destructive or hurtful behavior that persists even with guardian cooperation in stopping the behavior;
- Inability to meet the child’s needs without additional staff;
- Non-payment of childcare or late fees and/or recurring late payments of fees.
To avoid termination or suspension, teachers and staff will meet with families to discuss the situation and available resources at the YWCA. The Director of Childcare Services (or the substitute program lead) may also recommend additional supportive services and/or make referral(s) for services when deemed necessary, which may include consultation, educator training, evaluation, and more. If a child is suspended or terminated after exhausting all opportunities for sustaining enrollment, the program will provide the guardian with the specific conditions in which the child may return, if any.

Please see the section in this handbook on “Discipline and Problem Behaviors” for additional information.

**Voluntarily Withdrawing Your Child from the Program**

In order to withdraw your child from care at the YWCA, *two weeks’ prior written notice* must be submitted in writing to: Director of Childcare Services

YWCA Central Maine
130 East Ave.
Lewiston, ME 04240

Or emailed to: cparritt@ywcamaine.org

Guardians will be billed their contracted rate (full-time or part-time) for the two weeks following the receipt of notice to withdraw, regardless of the child’s attendance during that two-week period. Please note that notices sent by mail will not be processed until received at our office; and notices received on weekends will not be processed until the next business day.

**Visitation and Guardian Questions**

At the YWCA, we encourage visitation and welcome you to visit your child at any time, in adherence with State of Maine COVID-19 Response Guidelines. Concerns about how conflicts are handled, or questions about routines and procedures, may be addressed with the Director of Childcare Service, your child’s teacher, or the lead staff member on site at pickup. In addition, you may contact the Director of Child Care Services (or the substitute program lead) to discuss YWCA policies, licensing questions, and rules associated with the child care programs.

**Clothing**

Please send your child to the YWCA with adequate clothing for the weather. Dressing them in, or providing them with, layers is recommended. The children spend a significant amount of time outside releasing energy and getting exercise. It is recommended that you label all of your child’s personal belongings with their name, as the YWCA will not be held responsible for any lost or stolen items. Children should have shoes that will stay on their feet during outdoor play. Providing an extra set of clothing in their backpack is recommended for all preschool children.
Aquatics
As water safety is an essential life skill, aquatics are a fundamental part of programming at the YWCA. Preschool students participate in swim two times per week, with one structured swim lesson and one session of free swim. Please confirm the date/time of preschool swim with your child’s teacher or the Director of Childcare Services. These days/times are subject to change during the year; however, any changes will be communicated to guardians in advance. **Please pack a bathing suit, towel, and water shoes for your child on his/her scheduled swim days.** If you can, please provide a Coast Guard approved life jacket (labeled with your child’s name) to keep at the YWCA during their enrollment in the program. The YWCA aquatics program provides a certified lifeguard who is on duty whenever the children are in the pool area.

Rest Time
Per Maine State Child Care Licensing Rules, preschool children are required to participate in rest time each day. The YWCA will provide children with individual mats. **Please send a blanket and/or pillow for your child to use during rest time.** It is expected that blankets and pillows are bought home to be washed each Friday and returned to the YWCA for use on Monday morning.

Food & Nutrition Program
The YWCA participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP is a federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers. **All children who attend child care at the YWCA will receive the same nutritious meals and snacks, regardless of income.**

**Breakfast**
Breakfast is served at approximately 8:30 AM to all preschool children on site at or around this time. If you drop your child off for care after 9:00 AM, please be sure to feed your child breakfast at home.

**Lunch**
Lunch is provided for all preschool children each day at approximately 11:30 AM. If you are picking up your child before or dropping off after 11:30 AM, please check with your child’s teacher to see whether lunch will/has been served.

**Snacks**
An afternoon snack is provided to all preschool children each day after rest time.

**Outside Food**
Treats for parties/celebrations must be store bought and in the original packaging. This is a safety measure for children with allergies. Please inform the kitchen staff, your child’s teacher, and/or the Director of Childcare Services if you intend to bring treats for your child to share. Healthy choices are appreciated, and a healthy treat suggestion list is available upon request.

As the YWCA focuses on providing healthy, nutritious snacks, water or low fat milk will be served and **sugary beverages are not permitted from home under any circumstances.**
Food & Nutrition Program – USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

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

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

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: How to File a 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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Food & Nutrition Program – State of Maine Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maine Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, religion, ancestry or national origin.

Complaints of discrimination must be filed at the office of the Maine Human Rights Commission, 51 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0051. If you wish to file a discrimination complaint electronically, visit the Human Rights Commission website at https://www.maine.gov/mhrc/file/instructions and complete an intake questionnaire. Maine is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Field Trips

Occasionally, children may go on trips to playgrounds, museums, beaches, or other fun, engaging, and educational places. Parents will be notified in advance of any planned trips and must sign a permission slip in order for their child to attend. The handling of medical conditions during these trips is governed by State law and requires forms and policies that will be explained by your child’s teacher and/or the Director of Childcare Services. There may be additional costs associated with field trips, such as admission or transportation fees.

Transportation

Children will not be transported to or from the YWCA without signed parental permission, except in the case of an emergency.
**Physical Activity**

Children attending the YWCA will participate in many physical games and activities each day. They will have an opportunity to swim twice per week most weeks, and children will go outside to play daily as weather allows. Gross motor activities will take place in the gym and/or classroom on cold or rainy days.

**Electronic Equipment and Toys**

Children are not allowed to bring video games or electronic devices of any kind to the YWCA. This includes, but is not limited to, tablets, Game Boys, PSPs, Nintendo DS, MP3 players, and cell phones. In an effort to prevent loss of and damage to personal toys, trading cards, and more, please do not send any of these items with your child. The YWCA will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items.

**Accessing External Resources/Services Online (COVID-19)**

Due to closures of external facilities and organizations offering resources used by some families, children may be required to use laptops to access distance learning, counseling, special education services, and more. Arrangements to store and/or use laptops/tablets during care should be made through the Director of Childcare Services (or the substitute program lead).

**Screen Time**

It is very important to the YWCA that the children spend their time here developing social skills, practicing problem solving skills, and engaging in physical activity. As such, no computer/tablet time will be offered for preschool children at the YWCA (unless to access services as described above). TV/movie time will be limited to special occasions or rainy days.

**Illnesses**

Please do not send your child to the YWCA if he/she is ill, vomiting, or has a fever. The YWCA does not have a nurse on staff, and the health and safety of other children and adults in the building is of utmost importance. Children attending childcare at the YWCA must be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play and swim. Below is a list of symptoms that may prevent your children from participating in YWCA child care programs:

- Fever (**must be gone for 24 hours without medication prior to returning to care**)
- Unexplained rash
- Persistent cough
- Profuse discharge of discolored mucus from nose or eyes
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Sore throat
- Head lice
- Other signs of contagious illness

If a child appears listless, feverish, or ill while attending the YWCA, guardians will be called and asked to pick up their child. If a guardian cannot be reached, an emergency contact will be called. Once a child is sent home sick, they may not return to the YWCA until they are free from the symptoms or concern. A doctor’s note may be requested.
Medication
In order for YWCA staff to administer prescription or over-the-counter medication to your child, a signed permission form must be on file for each medication. Medications kept at the YWCA must be in the original container with dosing instructions. Medications will be kept locked up and administered by authorized childcare staff only.

Sunscreen
Children may be asked to apply sunscreen on themselves multiple times per day on warm, sunny days. Please send your child with a labeled bottle of sunscreen to protect them from the sun’s harmful rays during outdoor play.

Managing Problem Behaviors
YWCA Central Maine’s Child Care Program concentrates on rewarding and reinforcing children’s creative work and positive behavior. The more opportunities a child has for building confidence and skills for self-expression in an atmosphere of approval, the better and more positive the experience will be for all children.

Guiding Principles for Discipline
There are three principles that guide consequences in the programs at the YWCA with regard to negative behaviors. These principles are:

Natural Consequences: Natural consequences are those things that happen in response to your child’s behavior without guardian/teacher involvement. These are imposed by nature, society, or another person. An example of a natural consequence would be a child missing out on the beginning of an activity because he or she was not listening to the instructions.

Proportion: The concept of proportion means that the severity of the consequence given for a behavior should match (be proportionate to) the degree of seriousness of the negative behavior. For example, a minor or unintentional shove will result in a less severe consequence (e.g. reminder about personal space) than hitting with the intent to injure (e.g. a time out).

Progressive Discipline: The nature of consequences will progress if disruptive behavior worsens or is not modified by typical strategies. If a child is unable to follow the YWCA’s basic rules, clear and firm reminders of expectations will be communicated to remind the child and to help redirect potentially disruptive behavior toward a more constructive solution. Simple reminders are used first, with suggestions of how to change and move toward the positive. More restrictive consequences are employed when simple reminders are not effective. General reminders of all rules are conveyed periodically within the entire program. If your child is having difficulty following the YWCA rules more than occasionally, a staff member will likely enlist your help in reinforcing these concepts at home to prevent further harm, disruption, and/or termination.

Property Damage
If a child damages property at the YWCA or in the community while in the care of the YWCA, that child’s guardians will be held financially responsible for the damage(s). If damage occurs in a community facility, their rules for covering damage(s) may also apply.
Removal from the Program

YWCA Central Maine reserves the right to withdraw a child from the program if all discipline options have been exhausted and/or upon demonstration of extreme behavior that may put other children and/or staff in danger. *The YWCA will not refund any paid tuition for those who are denied services due to disciplinary reasons.*

Coronavirus

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the YWCA will be instituting emergency policies and/or procedures that may differ from policies in this handbook. Changes will be shared with families in writing and will override those in this handbook.