

**BECAUSE KIDS  
WILL HAVE FUN  
AND BE SAFE**

**CHILD WATCH PROGRAM**  
VALPARAISO FAMILY YMCA

REVISED MARCH 2024



# WE CARE ABOUT THE LITTLE THINGS

## CHILD WATCH PROGRAM

VALPARAISO FAMILY YMCA

### WELCOME!

The YMCA is unique! Our staff strives to provide children with safe, fun-filled opportunities to develop physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Emphasis is placed on character development and Christian values. Important life skills such as making new friends, gaining self-confidence, learning good sportsmanship, and respecting others are encouraged through all activities. The child watch program is a service provided free of charge to our Valparaiso Family YMCA members with a family or single parent membership while they workout or participate in other programs for brief periods of time. Staff will strive to provide a safe and secure environment for children to engage in creative play and simple activities.

### OUR MISSION

To be a charitable non-profit organization that improves the quality of life in our communities through programs and services that strengthen the spirit, mind, and body for all.

### ABOUT OUR STAFF

Our child watch staff are certified in First Aid and CPR. Our child watch staff meets regularly to discuss ways to serve your families and build healthy relationships. We strive to provide a safe and enriching environment through non-structured, age-appropriate play activities in an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment.

CHILD WATCH HOURS	
MONDAY-FRIDAY	8:00 AM - 7:00 PM
SATURDAY	8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
SUNDAY	CLOSED

## CHILD WATCH AGES WE SERVE

Care is provided for children ages 6 weeks up to 9 years old. The YMCA of Valparaiso reserves the right to limit the number of infants in our care at one time for safety reasons. Children are placed in one of three areas:

**MAIN AREA:** 1 year to 9 years  
Confident walkers

**INFANT AREA:** 6 weeks to 1 year  
Smaller toddlers and  
non-confident walkers

## REMINDERS

- A picture ID may be requested at drop off and pick up.
- All parents must fill out an Emergency Information Card, which provide staff relevant information concerning your child. (Ex. Allergies, phone numbers of individuals allowed to pick up your child, etc.)
- Parents may not leave the building unless participating in an outdoor Y program or quickly running outside. If parents want to leave the facility, there is a paid drop-off program available.
- All bags and belongings must be labeled.
- Children in diapers must be clean, dry, and recently fed when you drop off
- Leave an extra diaper and wipes
- Children must wear socks and/or shoes in child watch
- Toys from home are prohibited.

Child watch is available for 2 hours per day, per child, per Valparaiso Family YMCA member family. After the 2-hour time limit and grace period have expired, a \$10 late fee is charged, and regular drop-off rates will go into effect.

## PARENT'S LOCATION

Parents must remain on YMCA property while their children are in child watch. If you are enrolled in an outdoor YMCA class or running outside, parents must list "outdoor class" on the sign in book, and a cell phone is required for parents while participating in this class. The cell phone needs to be in working condition, and the number will be verified by staff. A drop-off service is available to Valparaiso Family YMCA members for a nominal fee. This service is provided so parents can run errands, etc. outside the Y facility.

## ITEMS FROM HOME

Snacks and juices **MAY NOT** be brought from home during your 2-hour limit without approval from coordinator. Water bottles are permitted but must be labeled. Infants from 6 weeks to 12 months may have bottles and food. Blankets and pacifiers are permitted. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Please leave all toys, games, expensive clothes, or unnecessary items at home.

**\*\*Electronics may be brought in and used but the YMCA is not responsible for these items.**

## DRESS

All children should be appropriately dressed (Shirt, pants, socks, and shoes). Children that are not walking need to have socks on.

## TIME LIMIT AND FEES

Children can play and socialize in the child watch area for a maximum of two hours per day. This service is free for YMCA members only. Pass users can utilize child watch area for up to two hours per day only while in the facility for the drop-off rate. **PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PICKING UP CHILDREN ON TIME.** When a parent exceeds the two-hour daily time limit in child watch, a **\$10 LATE FEE** will be charged and drop off rates will go into effect until the child is checked out.

**\*\*A 7-day suspension of child watch privileges will result in the third time a parent is late in a one-month period.**

**Your child watch privileges may be revoked in the event any of the rules stated in this handbook are violated. Privileges can be reinstated after meeting with the Childcare Director.**

## RESERVATIONS

Members **MUST** make a reservation for your children to use child watch during peak hours. Walk-ins accepted on first come, first serve basis until capacity is met. This includes both the 2-hour exercise time or the 2-hour paid drop off time. These 2 hours cannot be combined to use a total of 4 hours. There is a 2-hour limit per day. If you do not make a reservation, you may be turned away. You may call 219-462-4185 Ext. 240 for staff to make a reservation for you OR you may make a reservation yourself online.

### How to reserve online:

- Visit [www.valpoyymca.org](http://www.valpoyymca.org)
- On the Home page, please click "My Account" to log-in
- On "My Account" page, please log-in to your account. If you do not yet have an online account, you can also create one via this page.
- Once you are logged into your account, you will see your membership home page. This page displays your membership unit and all members associated with your unit.
- On your Membership Account home page, please click "My Account" and select "Schedule a Visit" in the drop-down menu on the right-hand side.
- You will then select which area your child belongs in by age or if the reservation is for paid drop off, then you will select "Child Watch Drop Off Care \$\$. "
- After you have selected an area for each child, you can then choose a date and time and select "Book Appointment."

### A few key items to keep in mind:

- You can book up to 6 total visits at any one time (for each child).
- You can check in up to 10 minutes prior to your reservation.
- If you do not arrive within 15 minutes of your reservation time, the spot may be lost.
- You may cancel your reservation at any time by calling us or going through the same steps above to make a reservation. Once you get to the page of selecting the time and date you will see "Cancel this visit time and book a new one". This will cancel your current reservation and make it available for you to make a new time but is not required.
- If you are a Nationwide Member, there is not a way for you to make a reservation in our system. If we have available spots to take your children, we will do so. But if there are no available spots at the time, you will be turned away.

## PARENT DROP OFF/PICK UP

- Parents will walk into the main lobby area of the child watch room. Parents are welcome to hug and talk with their children in this area. Parents cannot enter the gated area.
- The staff monitoring the gate will greet each family as they arrive at the gate. Parents will then wait for staff to open the gate for their child to enter. Parents stay in the lobby area.
- The other staff will greet the child and help transition them.
- The gate staff will monitor and facilitate the scanning of each YMCA member's card and the handwritten Sign-In Book.
- Parents must scan their card into the computer system as well as sign their child into our care before leaving the main lobby area.
- The parent must write down in the Sign- In Book their full name and where they will be in the Y each day.
- The gate staff are responsible for verifying that the information is complete. This will be the same procedure at pick up for parents and gate staff.

## CHECK-IN SPECIFICS

Parents must scan their membership card at check in. Providing complete information is required and parents will sign children in at the check in counter with the following: child's full name, age, parent's full name, location in the YMCA, and allergies/special Instructions.

Children entering the child watch area must be freshly diapered or have just used the restroom. Children who are in diapers must have the appropriate diaper changing items (diapers and wipes). All items must be labeled, including diaper bags. Child watch does not provide any supplies for infants or toddlers.

## CHECK-OUT SPECIFICS

The same adult that checked-in a child should be the adult that checks-out the child. In the event someone else picks up your child they **MUST** be on your family membership OR child's emergency card and show photo ID. Only an adult 18 years and older may drop off and pick up a child from child watch. No child will leave child watch with someone who is **NOT** on the emergency card.

Parents must take all their child's belongings with them at check-out. Due to the amount of people served daily and our storage capacity, we will not store diapers/bags/clothes/etc.

**\*\*All items left with be placed in Los and Found located outside of Childwatch.**

## SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Staff will do their best to accommodate feedings and other special instructions. However, due to the nature of child watch, it is not always feasible to accommodate specific requests. Should your child have allergies or special needs, it is imperative that the staff be informed of this upon each visit to child watch.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

The child watch behavior management policy will be followed at all times. When a child watch attendant comes to get a parent concerning a child, the response needs to be immediate. Parents will be asked to remove their child from child watch while consoling them when the child has been crying for 10 minutes uncontrollably and a child watch attendant has made every effort to console the child or when a serious behavior issue has occurred.

## PHILOSOPHY

The YMCA strives to maintain a positive approach to always managing children's behavior. "Discipline" is the process of teaching self-control and the ability to live within limitations and agreed upon guidelines. The staff and children in the child watch establish expected behavior guidelines.

## COMMUNICATION REPORTS

When the child is not successful in correcting the behavior, or the behavior is of a serious nature, a behavior communication report will be written. This report will be discussed with the child and parent and requires a parent's signature. If a child receives three reports in a one-month period, a parent conference is required.

## REMOVAL FROM THE PROGRAM

If the above process has not resulted in corrected behavior, the child may be removed from the program.

## BEHAVIOR RELATED ISSUES

- No staff member will ever strike, swear at, abuse, or threaten with physical intimidation, either a child or parent.
- No staff member will allow a child to be struck, sworn at, abused, or physically intimidated by anyone else in the program without addressing the issue.
- No child will be allowed to continue in the program that becomes a safety hazard to him, herself, or others.
- No staff member will ever solicit or accept gratuities in consideration for any treatment of a child.
- When a child has a serious discipline problem, on any one occasion, the parent may be asked by staff to pick up the child. Biting another child or injuring another child or staff member are examples of serious discipline problems.

Should it be decided by YMCA staff that a child poses a serious discipline problem; the child will be suspended from the program for a period of 7 days. Upon return to the child watch program, the child's behavior will be reassessed. Depending on the seriousness of the behavior the child may be removed from the program entirely.

## CHILD WATCH HEALTH REGULATIONS

Your child's health and safety are of importance to the child watch staff. Please advise the staff at time of check-in of any special health problems or concerns that we should be aware of (asthma, allergies, etc.) Please also be sure your emergency card is complete with current information on each child.

In consideration of other children and the staff, children who exhibit any of the following symptoms will not be allowed in child watch or be asked to leave.

- Fever of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Green nasal discharge
- Eye discharge or pink eye
- Head lice
- Diagnosis of an illness the child watch guidelines stipulate as contagious.

Children may NOT return to the program until they have been fever/symptom free for 24 hours with Child Watch Coordinator approval.

If medication has been prescribed, a full 24 hours of treatment must be completed before returning, depending on the diagnosis. No medication of any kind will be administered by child watch staff. Please notify child watch staff as soon as possible if your child contracts any communicable disease and when it appeared. Suspected exposure to any communicable disease in child watch will be posted notifying parents of disease and dates of exposure. This is for the health of all children who use child watch.

Thank you for your cooperation.

### EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of a fire, all children will be taken out of the building through the emergency exit. They will walk to the Gathering Area, which is the southwest corner of the parking lot in front of the building. Parents will not be allowed to check-out a child from the child watch during the transition to safety. All parents must wait until attendance has been taken by staff in the Gathering Area. We appreciate your patience to ensure the safety of all children. We prefer parents wait until all children return to the building and attendance is again taken by staff. Parents would then check-out their child as stated above.

In the event of a tornado, staff from child watch will move all children into the Child Care hallway.

### POTTY TRAINING

- When your child is to a point in their potty-training process that they can go through the motions independently, we will be more than willing to work with them. Please provide clean clothing for children that are newly potty trained.
- The child must be able to communicate to the child watch staff that they need to use the restroom.
- In the restroom, the child can independently pull down their pants, get on and off the potty by themselves, wipe, and pull up their pants.
- The child watch staff can assist with helping the child wash their hands if needed.

**If these steps are not yet met, children must wear a PULL-UP in the event of an accident.**

## CHILD WATCH DROP OFF REGISTRATION GUIDELINES

The registration guidelines are as follows:

- Regular drop off is available Monday–Friday 8:00–6:00pm. This service allows Valparaiso YMCA members (not available for Nationwide members) to leave their child at the YMCA child watch for a variety of reasons. A 2-hour maximum time limit applies per day.
- A drop off agreement must be completed in full and signed by the parent.
- A bill will be given to you in child watch upon pick up of your child. Payments are to be made at the front desk before taking your child from childwatch. If payment is not made at that time, you will be unable to utilize drop off until your balance is paid in full.
- Please label all items with your child's name. Child watch does not provide any supplies for children.
- A late fee of \$10 will be charged and Drop Off rates will continue for any parent picking up their child(ren) after the 2-hour maximum time limit has expired or after 7pm.
- If you have any additional questions or comments, please feel free to ask a child watch staff member.

## CHILD WATCH DROP OFF RATES

All Drop Off will be billed in 30-minute increments by rounding up to the nearest ½ hour after 5 minutes.

- Regular Drop Off fees: \$8 an hour per child. (1 hour minimum)

**If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact our Child Watch Coordinator at 219-462-4185 x244**