

Child Watch Parent Handbook

Arlington-Mansfield Area YMCA

Welcome to YMCA Child Watch!

Child Watch is a service provided to our valued members and guests while you enjoy our facility. Our goal is to provide a positive experience for children in a safe, healthy, and secure environment. Children have the opportunity to engage in age-appropriate activities, play, and programming led by our caring and trained staff.



PROGRAM BASICS

- Child Watch is available for children 6 weeks to 12 years of age.
- Children may stay for no more than 2 consecutive hours per visit, not to exceed 3 hours in one day.
- All children must be signed in and signed out by a parent/guardian. Pick-up wristbands must be presented at pick up.
- Parents/guardians must remain in the building while their child is in Child Watch and be easily accessible to staff.
- Drop-off is not permitted if you will be offsite (e.g., outside fields or parking lot). Please indicate your location at the time of drop off.
- For the comfort and security of our members and children, cell phones are not permitted in the Child Watch area.
- Please label your child's belongings and share any helpful information with staff (e.g., eating habits, sleeping needs, temperament, allergies).



FOOD & DRINKS

- Children may consume healthy food or drinks in Child Watch.
- We do not allow gum, hard candy, popcorn, or peanut products.
- Supervised bottle-feeding may be available.
- All beverages must be healthy and have a lid.



ACTIVITIES & ENGAGEMENT

Our primary goal is to actively engage children and provide a variety of age-appropriate activities, toys, games, movement opportunities, art, music, and programming to help keep them engaged and happy while you enjoy your workout.

Examples of activities include:

- Infants: rattles, busy boxes, music, books, sensory play
- Toddlers: books, puzzles, manipulative toys, building blocks, dramatic play
- Preschoolers: books, puzzles, blocks, dramatic play, art
- School-agers: books, board games, construction toys, art projects, group activities

Activities are chosen based on the ages, interests, and needs of the children in the room.



HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLNESS

- Staff will observe your child for any symptoms of illness or communicable disease.
- Children are not allowed in Child Watch with a fever (over 100.4°), vomiting, diarrhea, rash, drainage from the eyes, or yellow/green discharge from the nose.
- If your child exhibits any of these symptoms while in our care, we will call you immediately and ask that you remove your child from care.
- For safety and sanitary reasons, shoes or socks must be worn at all times.
- Infants must be in an infant carrier due to fire and safety standards.



DIAPERING & RESTROOM USE

- Children who are potty training must be in a pull-up while in Child Watch.
- Our staff will assist toilet-trained children with restroom needs.
- Please take toilet-trained children to the restroom before checking them in.
- If your child has an accident, we will contact you if additional assistance is needed. Please pack extra underwear and/or pull-ups.



SCREEN USE, STREAMING & MOVIES

- Television and streaming content may be used as one of the many tools to engage children in Child Watch.
- We use YMCA360, our national YMCA streaming platform, with age-appropriate, G- and PG-rated content.
- We offer only approved, G- and PG-rated movies and shows during Child Watch.
- Screen time is balanced with active play, toys, games, crafts, and other activities.
- Staff use their professional judgment to determine appropriate programming based on the ages, interests, and needs of the children in the room.
- We do not create individualized screen-time schedules or programming based on individual family preferences, as Child Watch is a group-care environment.



CHILD GUIDANCE

- Our staff use positive reinforcement and redirection to help children learn, play, and coexist in a group setting.
- If a child poses a danger to themselves or others, or displays ongoing inappropriate behavior, we will notify you immediately. This may result in removal from the program.
- We will share information about any behavioral concerns at the time of pick up and work with you to support a positive experience.



OUR STAFF

- The YMCA conducts annual background checks on all staff.
- Our teams are CPR, First Aid, AED and Oxygen administration certified.
- Staff are trained to recognize the signs of child abuse and symptoms of communicable diseases.
- Children are always supervised, and staff are never alone with a child.