



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



THE THOMAS HARGROVE & ANITA GROVER, M.D. CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

# **RAINBOW STATION INFANT-PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK AND POLICIES 2022-2023**

NEW CANAAN YMCA

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# WELCOME TO THE NEW CANAAN YMCA TOM HARGROVE AND ANITA GROVER, M.D. CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER!

Thank you for allowing us to serve your child in our program. We look forward to the year ahead and hope this information answers many of your questions. If you need further assistance, please contact Suzy Pfeifer, Senior Director of Childcare, at 203-920-1649 or [spfeifer@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:spfeifer@newcanaanymca.org). As always, we appreciate your feedback and look forward to getting to know you and your family!

## NEW CANAAN YMCA MISSION

Enriching all people in spirit, mind, and body... The New Canaan YMCA is committed to providing programs and services that promote the health and well-being of our members and our community. We are founded on Christian principles and are guided by our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

## YMCA FOCUS

The Y is a cause-driven organization with three areas of primary focus:

Youth Development: Nurturing the potential of every child and teen.

Healthy Living: Improving the community's health and well-being.

Social Responsibility: Giving back and providing support to our neighbors.

We believe a strong community can only be achieved when we invest in our children, our health, and our neighbors.

## WHY OUR Y?

At the New Canaan YMCA, we are more than just a preschool. Throughout your child's experience in the Y's Child Development Center, he or she will interact with many people at the New Canaan YMCA. Our programs are unique because of the rich diversity of our YMCA facility, members, staff, and the programs to which your child will be exposed. We believe these opportunities and special offerings enhance each child's school/program experience.

## PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Tom Hargrove and Anita Grover, MD Child Development Center at the New Canaan YMCA operates on the premise that children's natural curiosity and desire to make sense of their world are motivate them to become involved in learning activities. A child's self-esteem improves when they experience success, encouragement, challenges, and freedom of creativity. In such an environment, learning is enhanced and the foundation for future learning is developed.

We offer children spacious, bright, age-appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces to explore and learn through a play-based curriculum. Our goal is to create a stimulating environment, with opportunities and learning experiences for the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of the preschool child.

Our staff is dedicated to caring for the whole child. The staff provides a well-rounded curriculum and offers many different learning experiences in the classroom, including art, science, cooking, dramatic play, outdoor activities and more.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Encourage communication between parents and teachers about each child’s overall development.
- Create an environment where children feel safe, secure, and accepted.
- Provide children with opportunities to collaborate with peers and develop meaningful relationships with YMCA teachers and caregivers, to promote a sense of community within the group.
- Develop each child’s awareness of themselves and those around them—focusing on respecting differences, being responsible for their actions, being honest, and caring for one another.
- Create an environment and program where the child’s natural desire to learn is stimulated through meaningful, appropriate, and playful learning experiences, one that meets the needs of each child as an individual.
- Provide opportunities for children to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings; listen to and appreciate other points of view; and to be an integral part of a group—both as a leader and active member.
- Develop a curriculum and program environment that incorporates each child’s natural interests, curiosities, and developmental levels.
- Encourage each child to solve problems independently.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULUM

The Child Development staff organizes a curriculum on a weekly basis with each week being planned around a specific theme. Daily plans are designed in a variety of curricular areas, each of which concentrates on developing specific skills.

Throughout the day, children participate in various types of activities, including:

large group activity, small group activity, and self-exploration and discovery through guided free-play activity. Teachers prepare an environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.

Large group activities, such as gym games and outdoor play, are planned daily, so children can develop gross motor skills, learn about outdoor environments, and express themselves loudly and freely.

The children work in small groups with teachers on daily projects and learning activities from among a variety of learning areas prepared by the teachers. Children are provided concrete learning activities with materials relevant to their own life experiences. Areas may include blocks, books, dress-up, games and puzzles, housekeeping, music, etc. These activities provide the children with opportunities to develop important social skills, such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and problem solving.

Teachers move among the areas to facilitate children’s involvement with materials, activities, and others, by asking questions, offering suggestions, or adding more complex materials or ideas to a situation.

A typical day could include Bouncing Bears (gymnastics), swimming lessons (3 & 4-year-olds only), circle time, art, science and nature, health and nutrition, music, as well as free play and snack time.

### **Our child development program encourages young children to be:**

Explorers • Creators • Communicators • Problem Solvers • Thinkers • Responders • Interactive • Socializers

## PROGRAM CLASSROOMS

Every age and stage of development is exciting and new. We embrace all milestones with you and have your child's positive development at the forefront of everything we do. Brief descriptions of the developmental objectives in each classroom are below:

### **Choo Choo Room (Infants)**

The first year of life is a critical time of exploring and understanding a new world of sights, sounds, feelings, and thoughts. Supportive, responsive, and knowledgeable staff members guide the children through these new explorations while supporting their physical and emotional needs. Each infant follows their own schedule based on their personal needs, which are coordinated closely with parents. Parents are highly encouraged to visit their children throughout the day for feeding or just to play.

Infant Room Email: [RSInfants@newcananymac.org](mailto:RSInfants@newcananymac.org)

### **Little Engine Room (Early Toddlers)**

Transitioning from a developmental stage of dependence on caregivers, our early toddlers are developing independence and a need for social interaction. However, newly independent early toddlers still require lots of comforting and attention to physical needs. Our young toddlers nap just once during the middle of the day which. Teachers are constantly interacting with the children to encourage gentle and appropriate behavior between peers. Frequent outdoor time, singing, and rotating new and exciting toys are just some of the ways we adjust the environment to meet the developmental needs of our young toddlers.

Little Engine Room Email: [LittleEngineRoom@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:LittleEngineRoom@newcanaanymca.org)

### **Circus Car Room (Toddlers)**

Our toddler room focuses on encouraging children to engage in group activities. They are introduced to stories, songs, and games through activities like circle time. Older toddlers are encouraged to practice their newly acquired language skills to problem solve together. Early concepts such as shapes and colors are introduced, as well as self-help skills, social skill building, gross and fine motor skills, an early literacy and counting. Many children will be able to identify their name by the time they finish the school year. Teachers embrace the learning differences within this age group and work to best prepare each child for success when they arrive in preschool the following year.

**\*Toilet training is emphasized in this classroom, as it is necessary for children to be out of diapers and toilet-trained before they transition into our 3's class.**

Circus Car Email: [CircusCar@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:CircusCar@newcanaanymca.org)

### **Hopper Car (Threes)**

Preschool children are presented with a wealth of opportunities to cultivate their growing sense of independence and build on their language, social and logical thinking skills. Preschool children are exposed to more classroom activities involving arts, music, cooking, science, preliteracy, math, and fine motor skills in a play-based format. Gross motor skill building is highlighted in during outdoor time in the morning and afternoon, as well as in physical education class, music and movement, and Bouncing Bears and swim lessons.

Social development is also highly emphasized, and children are encouraged to make good choices, learning from their mistakes as they mature in their friendships with peers. Children are learning how to problem solve throughout the day in almost everything that they do. This provides an age-appropriate play-based learning experience for three year old children.

We require all children entering the 3's class to be out of diapers and are fully toilet trained (i.e., they can independently use the toilet, wipe, and flush). We understand toilet training is often a work in progress; therefore, teachers will work with the children in a supportive manner with a positive approach. If a child experiences more than 2 accidents a day, for 3 consecutive days, we will conclude the child is not toilet trained and you will be asked to remove your child until they are toilet trained to our standards.

Hopper Car Email: [HopperCar@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:HopperCar@newcanaanymca.org)

### **Caboose Room (Fours)**

A confident child who finds learning fun will enter kindergarten prepared and excited for the next step in their education.

Our 4-year-old classroom builds upon each child's previous learning experiences, bringing skills and concepts together into a program that highlights a kindergarten readiness curriculum in a play-based and appropriate manner.

Using various methods of instruction while still emphasizing the importance of play, our preschool children participate in early literacy activities, as well as early mathematics, science, music and arts, and fine and gross motor skill building activities. Each activity involving kindergarten preparation is paired with opportunities for building social skills and character values. Children are required to be fully toilet trained in our 4s classroom.

The curriculum in our 4s class is enhanced with "special visitors" and/or field trips. Parents will be made aware of these opportunities in advance.

Caboose Room Email: [CabooseRoom@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:CabooseRoom@newcanaanymca.org)

## **WEEKLY SPECIALS**

### **Music**

We know children enjoy movement and singing as well as instruments and props, which in turn promote individual creativity and enhance fine, gross motor and beat-sense skills. By learning about many types of music and instruments, we hope to stimulate each child's love for music.

### **Bouncing Bears (Toddlers, 3s and 4s)**

Bouncing Bears, our movement education program, provides participants with a safe, fun, child-oriented environment, full of challenges for growing muscles and minds. Gross motor skills are enhanced as participants experience a variety of bouncing, tumbling, swinging, balancing, rhythm, and body awareness activities, with gymnastics skills developed along the way. The curriculum for this program combines creative weekly themes with age-appropriate activities that will enhance imagination, strength, balance, body movement and control. Social and emotional growth, direction following, and fair play are also developed. Through this program, it is our goal to increase each child's physical and creative confidence.

### **Swim Lessons / Free Swim (3s and 4s)**

Under the direction of our trained and certified YMCA aquatic staff, our preschoolers work to become confident and comfortable in the water; ready to make advancements to learn to swim independently. They learn swimming basics, stroke development, and water safety in a fun, safe, and instructive environment, providing them with a foundation for swimming/water safety. **\*It is a Rainbow Station and YMCA Aquatics policy that a child will not be permitted to swim if they have a bowel movement accident the day of swimming or the day prior.**

## PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

### Communication

To provide the most beneficial program for everyone – children, parents, and teachers –it is important that we work together and have open, effective communication. Understanding that everyone communicates differently, we do our best to share information in a variety of different ways. Our main form of communication will be done via email. Each classroom has an email address, as well as a laptop to access emails frequently. Each email is listed below with the respective class name. Please let us know if you are not receiving communication in a way that is effective for you and we will work to implement a plan that meets everyone’s needs.

Each classroom maintains a bulletin board and distributes a weekly and/or monthly newsletter to help keep families informed of classroom activities, Y, and community events, as well as articles and information pertinent to parenting.

Parent/Teacher conferences are held by request. Teachers are always happy to schedule informal conferences and meetings throughout the year. If you feel at any time that a conference is needed or desired, please contact our Director to make arrangements.

Please let us know about problems or concerns right away. Of course, positive feedback is always appreciated as well.

### Classroom Emails

Infant Room: [RSInfants@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:RSInfants@newcanaanymca.org)

Early Toddlers: [LittleEngineRoom@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:LittleEngineRoom@newcanaanymca.org)

Toddlers: [CircusCar@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:CircusCar@newcanaanymca.org)

Three’s: [HopperCar@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:HopperCar@newcanaanymca.org)

Four’s: [CabooseRoom@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:CabooseRoom@newcanaanymca.org)

### Involvement

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate at our Center. Feel free to visit at any time. Volunteers are the heart of the YMCA and enrich all our programs. Volunteering in your child’s classroom and/or at the YMCA is a wonderful way to get to know the YMCA and our creative and enthusiastic staff and volunteers. As a volunteer, you will play an active part in your child’s early education, enrich our program, and assist our teachers. Please let us know if you have special skills, talents, family traditions/heritage that you would like to share. We understand that by working together, we can best meet the needs of your child and your family.

## DRESS YOUR CHILD FOR PLAY

Children should be dressed for active play in washable and comfortable clothes. Daily activities may include messy arts and crafts, cooking, gym, swim, and outdoor activities. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather, so that outdoor play can be enjoyed year-round. Sneakers are required for walking children. Children must wear sneakers to play on the Toddler and Preschool playgrounds and Preschool children must have sneakers to participate in gym activities.

## **Gym Days**

Sneakers are necessary. Children should be dressed in comfortable pants or sweatpants so that they can climb, swing, roll, crawl and jump easily. A t-shirt (layered with a sweatshirt or sweater in colder months) is recommended, as the children can get warm in the gym.

## **Swim Days**

Please help your child (and his or her teacher) by sending them in easy-to-manage clothes on swim days. Pull-on tops and bottoms are best. Shirts with lots of buttons, overalls, and tights are very difficult for the children. We want to encourage independence, a feeling of

accomplishment, and self-confidence; easy-to-manage clothing helps us do this. One piece bathing suits are highly recommended for the children to independently take on and off.

## **GENERAL POLICY INFORMATION**

Our policies are designed to ensure that each child is safe, healthy, and happy in our Center and at YMCA programs. We are proud of our high standard of care, our enriching programs, our dedicated staff and our attention to each child and family. It is our belief that a physically and emotionally safe environment facilitates a higher degree of learning and fun. If you should have any questions regarding our policies, please contact the Director of the Center. While we have tried to list our most important policies and procedures, please note that the YMCA reserves the right to make decisions not covered in this handbook as deemed necessary for the safety and welfare of all children and the program. It is our expectation that these policies and procedures will be followed by all families enrolled. Failure to adhere to policies, may be grounds for dismissal from any of our Y programs.

## **Y Membership**

Participants of Rainbow Station must have a current YMCA Youth membership or be part of a Family Membership. Membership must be paid prior to the start of the program and remain active throughout the child's time at Rainbow Station.

## **Days/Hours of Operation**

We are open from 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM, Monday - Friday, year-round. \*

## **Parking**

For the safety of the children during drop-off and pick-up times, there are designated areas for Rainbow Station families to park, marked by signs. These areas directly in front of the preschool classrooms' windows and in the side parking lot. These reserved parking spots are for temporary parking and should only be used for pick-up and drop off.

## **\*Rainbow Station Program Closings/Early Release**

Labor Day: September 5, 2022

Memorial Day: May 29, 2023

Thanksgiving break: November 24-25, 2022

Independence Day: July 4, 2023

Holiday Break: December 26-30, 2022

Shutdown Week: August 23-25, 2023

Good Friday: April 7, 2023

First day of school: August 28, 2023

## FOOD AND CELEBRATIONS

### Peanut/Tree-nut Free

Rainbow Station is a peanut and tree-nut free program. Breakfasts, snacks, lunches, and drinks must be completely free of these allergens. This includes all nuts, including peanuts, almonds, cashews, Brazil nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts (Nutella), hickory nuts, macadamia nuts, and pecans. This policy is to protect and keep safe children with allergies.

### Snacks

Children require well-balanced meals to meet their daily energy needs and to build a strong and healthy body and mind. We strive to provide all participants with a nutritious and healthy snack twice per day. The snack calendar varies from week to week to ensure the children receive a well-balanced diet. The children are offered snack, but they will not be forced to eat.

### Birthdays

We love to celebrate your child's birthday with them and their classmates. The Center will provide fruit popsicles as a special snack for birthdays. **NO FOOD FROM HOME WILL BE PERMITTED.** The birthday boy or girl will be the snack helper for the day. Special paper products may be brought from home.

### Field Trips and Special Visitors

To supplement the learning experiences of our curriculum themes, field trips may be scheduled and/or special visitors may be invited into our classrooms. Parents will be notified in advance, in writing, of all field trips. Permission slips signed by the parent/guardian must be on file for participation in each field trip. These permission slips are included in the child's information paperwork.

## WAITLIST POLICY, REGISTRATION, TUITION & BILLING

### Waitlist

- Due to space limitations, every age group/classroom has a waitlist. Families should notify the Child Development Director as soon as they know they would like a spot. All families (current or new) will be added to the waitlist at no cost.
  - Siblings of current Rainbow Station or Kids Unlimited participants and YMCA Staff are given preference and moved to the top of the waitlist.
- Enrollment can happen at any time space becomes available.

### Registration Fees (As of 8/2022)

- \$500.00 non-refundable deposit is required to hold a spot in a classroom. Current Rainbow Station families do not pay a deposit.

### Monthly Tuition (As of 8/2022)

- \$2,417.00 Infant / Toddler monthly tuition
- \$1,911.00 Preschool monthly tuition

### Tuition

- Tuition payments are required when a spot becomes available.
- If **NEW** families accept a spot but choose to not start on the day it is available, the family will be required to pay the full tuition (effective from the day the spot is available) to guarantee their child's place.

- i.e., if a spot is available for a September start but a family does not require the spot until December, that family must pay the full tuition starting in August (for September services).
- If families of current Rainbow Station/KU participants/staff accept the open spot for a new child, the family will be charged 50% tuition starting the day the spot becomes available, through three (3) months. After three months, the family will be charged 100% tuition. This only applies to a new child, not a currently enrolled one.
- Tuition is required, regardless of absence due to illness, vacation, or other cause because the Center is guaranteeing the child's spot in the program.
- The Center reserves the right to increase tuition. Increases typically occur in August.

## **Billing**

- Tuition is billed monthly.
- Tuition is charged monthly 15 days prior to the first of the month for the following month (i.e., we will charge in August for September, September for October, etc.).
- It is a family's responsibility to pay the tuition, in full, when it is due.
  - Credit card payments are preferred and will be applied in an automated billing system.
- If tuition is not received by the 25th of the month, a finance charge of \$25.00 per month will be charged. If payment is not received by the first Monday of the following month, the child will not be permitted to attend the Center until payment is made.
  - Tuition assistance may be available. Contact the YMCA's Front Desk for further information.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

- 45-day written notice (email is preferred) of withdrawal must be submitted to the Child Development Director to terminate responsibility for monthly payments.
- Payments will not be prorated

## **MEDICAL PAPERWORK**

State law requires that the Center always maintain a current health form for all children. The form must reflect that an examination was received within the last 12 months for it to be considered current. If your child's medical form is due to expire within the year, please make an appointment with your physician to secure an update. No child will be admitted to the Center without the completed medical form. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure that all medical paperwork is up to date.

**All children MUST have a new health form on file within 30 days of the current physical expiring. Failure to comply will result in a child not being permitted to attend the Center, and no refund will be provided for days missed due to this oversight.**

## **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION**

For medication to be administered at the center, a signed Administration of Medication form must be filled out and signed by a physician and parent, indicating the dosage, and times the medication is to be administered. Prescribed and over the counter medications must be brought by the parent or guardian only and handed directly to the program staff. Administrations of Medication forms are available through the Director and copies may be requested to keep at home, so they can be taken to the pediatrician when the child has an appointment (at which medication may be prescribed).

## TOILETING AND DIAPERING POLICY

### Diapering

Diapers are checked frequently, and children are changed as often as necessary. Changing tables are available for diaper changes. Families are required to supply diapers, wipes, and diapering ointment. These can be stored in reasonable quantities at the Center. Parents are also asked to provide two extra sets of clothing for the child.

Disinfecting and hand washing procedures are used after each diaper change.

### Toileting

Bathroom facilities are in each classroom. Children will be offered the opportunity to use the bathroom every two hours (or more if training) and upon request. Children will be taught to flush the toilet and wash their hands after using the bathroom.

The center staff will cooperate with the parents in toilet training when the child shows emotional and physical readiness. Above all, the staff will be positive and pleasant during the child's attempts. Center staff will work hard to maintain close communication with the parents, to insure consistency between the home and childcare environments. Parents are requested to bring an ample supply of clothing to the center during the training process. The Center does not recommend switching back to diapers as it can be confusing for the child.

Toileting accidents will be handled calmly and matter-of-factly. The child will be given assistance in changing his/her clothes and will be thoroughly cleaned. Clothing will be sent home in a sealed plastic bag.

Disinfecting and hand washing procedures will be used by the child and teacher, after each toileting session.

## PICK-UP PROCEDURE

Participants of Rainbow Station must be picked up by the end of the program day (6:00 PM) by an authorized person from the "Pick Up/Emergency Contacts Form" which must be filled out and submitted prior to starting the program. Authorized persons will be asked to show photo identification before a child is released to him or her. It is the family's responsibility to make sure the list is current.

### Plan for a Left Child

The daily closing time for the center is 6:00 PM. All participants must be picked up by that time. If a child remains at the center past closing time, every effort will be made to contact one of the child's parents. At least two Rainbow Station staff (of at least 18 years of age) will remain at the center with the child.

- If the parents cannot be reached, one of the three emergency contact persons will be called to pick up the child. These are names provided by the child's parent and indicated on the child's "Pick-Up/Emergency Contact" form. Photo identification will be required prior to release of the child.
- Families will be informed via email, voicemail, or text message that their child has been released to one of the three contacts. A note will also be posted on the door if a parent arrives and find the Center closed.
- The teacher will continue to call the parents or emergency contacts until someone has been reached.
- If the Center cannot contact the parent(s) and emergency contacts within two hours of the center closing, the child will be considered abandoned, and the police will be called. If this occurs, the Center may consider expelling the family from the Center.

- If police involvement is necessary, an email, voicemail, or text to the parent and/or a note will be left on the YMCA entrance door indicating the location of the child.

### **Late Pick Up Policy**

A late pick-up fee will be charged to any parent/guardian arriving after the end of the program day. The late fee will be \$35.00 per child after 6:05pm. After the first charge of \$35.00, \$1.00 will be charged per 1 minute interval or any part thereof. If possible, as a courtesy, please call and let the teachers know if you anticipate being late on any given day. Parents/guardians who are consistently late may be required to find another program which better meets their schedule needs.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

### **Behavior**

The safety and well-being of each child in our care is our number one priority. When behavior expectations are not met, YMCA staff will implement our behavior management policy to help correct the undesired behavior. Listed below are the steps utilized by our staff:

1. Verbal warning given explaining why behavior is inappropriate and shown positive alternatives rather than being told "no."
2. Show children how their actions affect others and remind them of the rules.
3. Encourage children to talk to the others about the situation.
4. Teach children to take time to refocus and redirect.
5. Report issues through verbal communication with parent.
6. Parent conference with director.
7. If inappropriate behavior continues, child may be suspended from program for up to one week.
8. Prolonged disruptive and inappropriate behavior will result in dismissal from the Rainbow Station.

**\*Extreme Behavior Issues:** In extreme cases, a child's behavior may warrant immediate suspension or expulsion from the program. Such cases include the use of profane or abusive language, any aggressive behavior which threatens or causes physical harm to other participants or staff, or elopement (running away).

### **Discipline**

The Discipline Procedures used at the Tom Hargrove and Anita Grover, MD Child Development Center:

Rainbow Station is based on the teachings of the National Association for the Education of Young Children as outlined in "A Guide to Discipline, Helping Children Learn Self-Control." When children exhibit anti-social behavior:

1. They are shown positive alternatives rather than just told "no."
2. They are shown how their actions affect others and are reminded of the rules.
3. They are encouraged to talk to the other person(s) if others are involved (and if age is appropriate).
4. They may choose a "break" period, only to last as long as the child feels is needed to calm down before discussing the situation. Breaks can be taken anywhere in the classroom as long as they are in sight of teachers. Children will, the majority of the time, be directed to the reading center where it is quiet.

Good behavior is consistently rewarded during the day with words of praise and an occasional sticker. The staff will establish fair, simple rules and enforce them consistently. The children (toddlers and older) play an active role in the development of classroom rules.

We believe these procedures help children feel more in control of their own emotions and better able to handle anger.

The following are behavior management techniques that **will never** be employed at the New Canaan YMCA Thomas Hargrove and Anita Grover, M.D Child Development Center:

- Staff will never use hard or abusive tone of voice or language towards children.
- Staff will never employ any form of physical or corporal punishment.
- Physical restraint will not be used unless it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the child or others.
- Children will never be deprived of food, and food will never be used as a punishment device.

All the above and any other form of discipline which could be physically or emotionally detrimental to a child will never be employed at this center.

## ILLNESS POLICY

The Center staff strives to maintain a healthy environment all children and staff. The following Illness policy was established based on licensing requirements and consultation with a pediatrician.

### **A child will be sent home if he/she shows evidence of any of the following:**

- Is unable to participate in usual daily activities (must be able to go outside and engage in all activities)
- Excessive crankiness or irritability
- Axillary temperature (under the arm) of 100.0 degrees or more
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea, defined as an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern, with increased stool water and/or decreased form
- Persistent cough
- Open sores that cannot be covered
- Any contagious disease or infection including a rash, drainage from the eye and head lice

### **The child may return to the Center when:**

- Temperature has been normal (child has been fever-free) for 24 hours-one full day\*
- Diarrhea has stopped for 24 hours-one full day\*
- Vomiting has stopped for 24 hours-one full day\*
- A pediatrician has checked a persistent cough
- A pediatrician has checked a questionable rash
- 24 hours after medication for strep, conjunctivitis & any other infectious disease
- After treatment with a head lice medication and staff has determined that the child is lice and nit free
- Children with chicken pox may return after their pox have scabbed over and are no longer open sores.
- Upon request at the Director's discretion, a physician's note is provided to the Center

**\*IF A CHILD IS SENT HOME FROM THE CENTER, THEY MUST BE OUT FOR ONE FULL DAY. EXAMPLE: IF A CHILD IS SENT HOME ON MONDAY, THE EARLIEST THEY COULD RETURN WOULD BE WEDNESDAY AND ONLY IF THEY HAVE BEEN SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS.**

If a child contracts a communicable disease (including COVID-19), the parent must immediately notify the Director. A physician's note stating the child is no longer contagious is required to return to the Center.

**Note:** Please let the teachers know when your child will be absent due to illness or vacation. Each classroom has a phone and email address, or you may leave a message with the Director.

## **Illness Examples**

### Fever

For purposes of childcare, a fever is: 100.0 degrees axillary (armpit)

Reason for taking a temperature:

- Child exhibits outward signs of illness
- Child is flushed, has chills, or feels warmer than usual
- Child is irritable or lethargic for a length of time

Because a fever may indicate other health concerns a child must be fever-free for 24 hours-one full day\* before returning to the Center. Upon return, child must be able to participate in all classroom activities including outdoor play.

\*The teacher will determine if a child has a fever while at the Center, and whether he/she must be sent home.

### Vomiting

Child will be sent home if he/she vomits. Child may return to the Center after he/she has not vomited for 24 hours-one full day\*

If blood is present in the vomited content, immediate medical attention is necessary.

### Cough

Child should be referred for evaluation if he/she has a frequent cough which prevents eating, sleeping, playing or which is or is not accompanied by other illness symptoms. In such cases, the teacher and/or Director may require a doctor's note before the child can return to the Center.

### Rash

Child with an undiagnosed rash will be sent home for any of the following reasons:

- Rash is spreading over a period of time
- Rash is widespread
- Rash appears to cause discomfort and/or is accompanied by fever
- Rash persists for more than two days
- Rash contains or consists of blisters
- Rash looks like bleeding under the skin
- If symptoms do not improve or worsen, re-evaluation may be required.

**Child will be excluded from childcare until a physician's note is provided confirming the rash is not contagious.**

### Mouth Sores

A child unable to control his/her saliva or unable to eat or drink due to mouth sores may be excluded from Center. Parents may provide a physician's note confirming the condition is not Coxsackie virus or another contagious illness. (See Coxsackie virus under Contagious Illnesses.)

## [Concussions](#)

Head injuries are taken very seriously. A concussion can affect a child in many ways: cognitively, physically, emotionally, and can disrupt their sleep. The signs and symptoms of a concussion can be apparent immediately right after an injury or may not appear/be noticed until hours or days later. If a child shows symptoms of a concussion at the Center, the parent(s) will immediately be notified to pick the child up and return will be dependent upon a physician's stating the child is healthy to return to school with NO accommodations relating to concussion.

## **Contagious Illnesses**

### [Diarrhea](#)

Child will be sent home for diarrhea that occurs three or more times per day for children under the age of one that is not contained by diapers and two or more times per day for toddlers and preschool children that is not contained by diapers or toilet use.

Child may return to childcare when diarrhea (as described above) has not occurred in 24 hours-one full day\*. If there is an incidence of diarrhea on the day the child returns, he/she will be sent home.

If there appears to be blood present in the stool, parents will be notified that immediate medical attention is necessary.

Diarrhea of two weeks' duration necessitates medical evaluation, and a physician's note will be required for return to the Center.

**\*All diarrheas are a health concern in the classroom.**

### [Cold](#)

Child may be sent home with any of the following symptoms or complaints:

- Nasal congestion/runny nose
- Chills
- Postnasal drip/sore throat
- Red, watery eyes
- Neck, head, muscle aches
- Sneezing
- Cough/hoarseness
- Breathing difficulty
- Listlessness/loss of appetite
- Fever
- Profuse or yellow-green nasal discharge
- Ear drainage

### [Coxsackie virus/Hand Foot and Mouth Disease](#)

A diagnosis of Coxsackie virus by the child's healthcare provider requires exclusion from the Center until mouth lesions and sores on the hands, feet, and/or body are dried up and no longer contain any fluid. Child is permitted to return when he or she can eat and drink, has been fever free for 24 hours-one full day\* (without the use of fever reducing medication) and the lesions/blisters have dried up.

### [Herpes Virus](#)

A diagnosis of herpes requires exclusion from the Center until lesions appear dried and no longer active (indicating they are non-contagious) or can be covered by a bandage. The recurrent nature of herpes makes it necessary for the Center to follow these guidelines with each successive episode.

### [Impetigo](#)

Child may return following 72 hours (three full days) of treatment (may include topical or oral) and with a physician's note stating treatment has taken place. Draining lesions should be covered with a bandage (i.e., Band-Aid). Children will be excluded from swimming until they no longer have signs of Impetigo.

### [Molluscum Contagiosum](#)

Parent must provide a physician's note confirming bumps/rash they have are in fact Molluscum. Once confirmed, children must have all bumps covered by a watertight bandage.

Children will be excluded from swimming until all bumps are dried up and do not contain fluid.

### [Pink Eye \(Conjunctivitis\)](#)

Child will be sent home if either eye is draining cloudy or has colored discharge.

Child may return to childcare when:

- He/she has been on antibiotics for 24 hours -1 full day
- A physician's note is provided stating that the drainage is caused by a non-contagious condition (such as a blocked tear duct).

**If the child returns to childcare and symptoms do not improve or should worsen, reevaluation may be required.**

### [Ringworm/Tinea](#)

Child may return to the Center after one treatment provided lesions can be kept covered by clothing or bandage and a physician's note confirms treatment has started. Children will be excluded from swimming until they no longer have signs of ringworm.

### [Roseola](#)

Child may return to the Center after 24 hours-one full day, and the fever is resolved. A physician's note must be provided stating the child has resolving roseola and is not contagious.

### [Strep Throat](#)

Child must be on an antibiotic for 24 hours-one full day before returning to the Center. Child must feel well enough to eat, drink, and participate in all classroom activities.

### [Thrush](#)

Child may return to the Center after 24 hours-one full day, one treatment, and with a physician's note confirming treatment, provided the child is able to eat, drink, and participate in all classroom activities.

### [Chicken Pox](#)

Child may return to the Center after seven days from the onset of the rash or when all lesions are crusted over. A physician's note is required.

### [Lice](#)

Child may return to the Center when nits (eggs) can no longer be found on the child by the childcare staff. A physician's note be required before returning to school.

## [COVID-19](#)

The below policies pertaining to COVID-19 have been developed based on guidance from the CT Office of Early Education, the New Canaan Department of Health, and the Rainbow Station nurse.

- Parents must notify Director when a child tests positive for COVID-19.
    - **Children 2/older** who test positive are required to stay home for at least 5 days. Children may return to school on Day 6 as long as fever-free for 24 hours (one full day) and other symptoms are significantly improved. Individual should wear a mask when around others up to Day 10.\*
- \*If a child is unable to wear a mask correctly and consistently, they must isolate for 7 days, returning on day 8. This isolation period is per the guidance of the New Canaan Health Department.
- **Children under the age of 2** must isolate for at least 7 days, returning to Rainbow Station on day 8 as long as fever-free for 24 hours (one full day) and other symptoms are significantly improved. This age group has a longer isolation period since they cannot wear masks. This isolation period is per the guidance of the New Canaan Health Department.
- Upon notification of a student or staff positive case, Director will inform Rainbow Station parents.
  - Classrooms will not be closed due to a positive case.
  - Those who were in class the same day as an individual with a positive case:
    - Quarantining is not required.
    - These individuals are required to have a negative test (at-home is acceptable) before returning to Rainbow Station and should test again on day 5 after last exposure. Director must be notified of a positive test result. Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days are not required to take a test.
    - Children 2/older should wear a mask for 5 days.
    - Parents should monitor for symptoms and should keep children home if any symptoms develop.

## ["Out-of-Sorts" Children](#)

Child will be sent home for a change in behavior that requires constant holding and attention, including inconsolable crying for an extended period of time, etc. Children should feel well enough to participate in all classroom activities, including outdoor play.

## **Administration of Medicine**

- Fever-reducing and anti-diarrhea medicines will not be administered by parents or teachers while children are in the Center.
- Teachers can administer prescription drugs with proper CT State Form.
- Prescription drugs must remain in their original container and be accompanied by the required and correct paperwork per the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood.
- Teachers must administer the medication as stated on the container.
- Parents will be required to provide a proper measuring utensil with the child's medicine.

## **Procedures For Caring for A Sick Child**

When a child becomes ill or develops signs of a communicable condition while at the Center, he/she will be moved to an isolation area. The Director or classroom teacher will contact the child's parent to take the child home. A staff person will be with the child until he/she is picked up by the authorized person.

**\*The child MUST be picked up within an hour of the family being contact by the Center.**

- If the child's parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact names will be used. These names have been provided to the center by the parents; and a signed release/permission form is on file at the Center.
- The emergency contact person will be asked for photo identification before the child is released.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure phone numbers of emergency contacts, authorized pick-up persons and physicians are kept up to date. This is of the utmost importance in case of an emergency.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

The Center will adhere to the YMCA's decisions regarding closures; therefore:

- If the YMCA is closed, the Center will be closed.
- If the YMCA is opening at regular hours, the Center will open at regular hours.
- If the YMCA has a delayed opening, the Center will open and operate on the same revised schedule and will be open until our regular 6:00pm pick up time.
- If The YMCA opens by 1pm, the Center will be CLOSED.
- If the YMCA closes early, due to weather or loss of power, the Center will close at the same time

If we must close early, parents will be notified via email (power permitting) and a phone call from a staff member. We do not follow the New Canaan Public Schools with respect of closures.

**\*Children MUST be picked up no later than an hour after the parent was first contacted by the teacher and/or director\***

## NAPTIME AND SLEEPING PROCEDURES

### Infant/Toddlers

Each infant will have his/her own crib for sleeping which will be for their exclusive use. Toddlers and preschoolers will each have their own cot for naptime. Infant parents will provide crib sheets and sleep sacks. Toddler and preschool parents will bring a crib sheet and blanket (pillow if desired) for their child's cot. These can be kept at the center on a weekly basis and will be sent home on Fridays to be laundered. Cribs and cots will be labeled with each child's name. Cots will be stored and brought out each day at naptime. Cribs and cots are disinfected daily.

### Preschool Children

Rest/nap time is from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. During this time, the children will be encouraged to rest on their cot with a book or a coloring book for approximately 45 minutes. However, if your child elects to sleep versus color/read, he or she will be permitted to do so. Children who do not fall asleep during that time are permitted to partake in quiet activities in designated areas of the classroom. Activities may include books on tape, puzzles, sensory experiences such as playdough, sand, colored rice, etc., and art projects separate from their lesson plans. The room will be kept quiet and dimly lit, so those who need to nap can, but others can be stimulated and engaged. At 3:00 pm, the rest period will be over. Teachers will allow children to sleep until either: they have an extracurricular class to attend or rest period is over.

## **LUNCH AND EATING PROCEDURES**

All food (except morning and afternoon snack) will be provided for the child from home. Apart from children in the Infant Room, every Early Toddler, Toddler, and Preschool child's lunch box must have an ice pack. This is a state requirement. In the preschool classrooms, food that is placed in the correct designated refrigerator (on specific days) will be heated up using the microwave. However, we strongly encourage thermoses and containers that the children can open themselves to practice independence and self-help skills. Staff members sit and interact with children during mealtimes.

## **DAILY REPORTS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS**

A daily report will be completed each day. Information on feeding, sleeping, toileting, as well as any developmental milestones observed, will be included. The child's favorite daily activities will also be mentioned. The Center views daily reports as an important communication between teachers and families.

## **OUTDOOR TIME**

The child development teachers will ensure that the children enrolled have an opportunity to have two outdoor periods per day, weather permitting.

These outdoor times may include a walk around the grounds or surrounding neighborhood, or time spent on the playground. Infants are placed securely in double strollers and taken on walks or spend time outside on a blanket with their teacher.

In the playground, there will be at least one teacher for every four infants/toddlers and one teacher for every eight preschoolers. Teachers will spend the outdoor time interacting with the children as they play on the climbing equipment, in the sandbox, with riding toys, etc. Children on the climbing equipment will always have a teacher in close physical proximity.

Children will be taken outdoors if the temperature is over 32 degrees and there is no precipitation.

## **YMCA PRESCHOOL SPORTS & BOUNCING BEARS CLASSES**

Rainbow Station preschoolers (children enrolled in either the 3-year-old or 4-year-old class) may participate in Preschool Sports and Bouncing Bears & Beyond preschool classes offered by the Y. These extracurricular classes are not affiliated with Rainbow Station, and the children are not supervised by Rainbow Station staff. The classes are not included in the tuition for Rainbow Station and prices per class vary. Registration is done through the front desk, and you can find the schedules/prices of the classes and any additional information in a copy of the most recent New Canaan YMCA Activity Brochure.

Rainbow Station staff will bring your child to and from their extracurricular class between the hours of 1:00 pm and 3:15 pm only. The parent must arrange pick up for any class that finishes after 3:15 pm. Confirmation of enrollment in the activity (a receipt of the purchase of the class) must be given to your child's teacher

## POLICY AGREEMENTS

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Policies and Procedures Agreement**

By signing below, I acknowledge that I received, discussed, read, and agree to abide by the Thomas Hargrove and Anita Grover, M.D Child Development Center: Rainbow Station Parent Handbook and fully understand the program philosophy, polices, and procedures.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Peanut and Tree-nut Free Policy**

I have received, discussed, read, and understand the Peanut and Tree-nut Free Policy.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Birthday Celebration Policy**

I have received, discussed, read, and understand the Birthday Celebration Policy.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Late Pick Up Policy**

I have received, discussed, read, and understand the Late Pick-up Policy.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Illness Policy**

I have received, discussed, read, and understand the Sick Policy. I will follow this policy for the safety and well-being of all children in the childcare program.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

I have received, discussed, read, and understand Inclement Weather section of the handbook.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Waitlist, Registration, Tuition, Billing & Withdraw Policy**

I have received, discussed, read, and understand Waitlist, Registration, Tuition, Billing & Withdraw Policy section of the handbook.

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Parent Signature

---

Date

## **Behavior Management and Discipline Policy**

### **Behavior**

The safety and well-being of each child in our care is our number one priority. When behavior expectations are not met, YMCA staff will implement our behavior management policy to help correct the undesired behavior. Listed below are the steps utilized by our staff:

- Verbal warning given explaining why behavior is inappropriate and shown positive alternatives rather than being told "no."
- Show children how their actions affect others and remind them of the rules.
- Encourage children to talk to the others about the situation.
- Teach children to take time to refocus and redirect.
- Report issues through verbal communication with parent.
- Parent conference with director.
- If inappropriate behavior continues, child may be suspended from program for up to one week.
- Prolonged disruptive and inappropriate behavior will result in dismissal from the Rainbow Station.

**\*Extreme Behavior Issues: In extreme cases, a child's behavior may warrant immediate suspension or expulsion from the program. Such cases include the use of profane or abusive language, any aggressive behavior which threatens or causes physical harm to other participants or staff, or elopement (running away).**

### **Discipline**

The Discipline Procedures used at the Anita and G. Thomas Hargrove Child Development Centers:

Rainbow Station is based on the teachings of the National Association for the Education of

Young Children as outlined in "A Guide to Discipline, Helping Children Learn Self-Control." When children exhibit anti-social behavior:

- They are shown positive alternatives rather than just told "no."
- They are shown how their actions affect others and are reminded of the rules.
- They are encouraged to talk to the other person(s) if others are involved (and if age is appropriate).
- They may choose a "break" period, only to last as long as the child feels is needed to calm down before discussing the situation. Breaks can be taken anywhere in the classroom as long as they are in sight of teachers. Children will, majority of the time, be directed to the reading center where it is quiet.

Good behavior is consistently rewarded during the day with words of praise and an occasional sticker. The staff will establish fair, simple rules and enforce them consistently. The children (toddlers and older) play an active role in the development of classroom rules. We feel by using these procedures help children will feel more in control of their emotions and better able to handle the anger.

The following are punishment behaviors that will never be employed at the New Canaan YMCA Thomas Hargrove and Anita Grover, M.D Child Development Center:

- Staff will never use hard or abusive tone of voice or language towards children.
- Staff will never employ any form of physical or corporal punishment, including the following: spanking, hitting, shaking, grabbing, punching, or any form of physical restraint.
- Physical restraint will not be used unless it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the child or others.
- Children will never be deprived of food, and food will never be used as a punishment device.

All the above and any other form of punishment which could be physically or emotionally damaging to a child will never be employed at this center.

I have discussed, read, and understand the above Discipline and Behavior Policies and Procedures

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Procedures For Handling Biting Behavior in Young Children**

The childcare program will maintain the required ratios (1-4 infants & toddlers; 1-8 preschool) to facilitate adequate supervision in an attempt to prevent biting behavior.

Staff will visually observe the children at all times, and will verbally warn and redirect the child who is attempting to bite

If a child is successful in biting another child, he/she will receive verbal reprimand and will be removed from the situation. The offended child will receive comfort and first aid.

A written record will be kept at the center of any biting incidents.

The incidents of biting will be reported to the parents of the child that bites and to the parents of the child who receives the bites. The identity of the child that bites will not be revealed.

If a child exhibits repeated biting behavior (beyond the ability of staff to control), a meeting with the parent, teachers, and center director will be scheduled. A plan will be devised between the center and home to attempt to eliminate the undesired behavior.

I have discussed, read, and understand the above Procedures for Handling Biting Behavior in Young Children.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# WHAT IS “GROOMING”?

Grooming is a tactic where someone methodically builds a trusting relationship with a child or young adult, their family, and community to manipulate, coerce, or force the child or young adult to engage in sexual activities.

## WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS THAT A PERSON MAY BE EXPERIENCING GROOMING AND/OR ABUSE?

- Extreme mood swings and changes
  - Sleep disturbances, such as nightmares
  - Inappropriate and/or excessive sexual behaviors, conversations, or knowledge
  - Avoidance or fear of specific places, people, or activities
  - Decreased interest in school, work, friends, or hobbies
  - Isolation from family and friends
  - Change in academic performance or behavior
  - Increase in unexplained health issues, such as frequent headaches or stomach aches
  - Being overly or fearfully obedient to other caretaker or people in positions of power
  - Pain or infection to the genital areas of youth, especially if this occurs frequently
  - Regressive behaviors, (e.g., thumb sucking or bedwetting in youth)
- Unexplained gifts and tokens

The person grooming identifies vulnerabilities, erodes the child's or young adult's boundaries, and builds up to acts of sexual abuse and control while convincing the world around the child or young adult that they are safe in their care. Typically, by the time abuse occurs, the individual has gained trust from the family and community and has access to alone time with the child or young adult. Due to the manipulation, children/young adults struggle to recognize and/or report the abuse. The secrecy around the relationship that the grooming has led to and the power imbalance allows for the abusive behaviors to continue. Because of its stealthy nature, grooming often goes unnoticed. Some survivors of sexual abuse explain that the grooming process was just as harmful to them as the abuse itself.

Grooming can take place in any type of relationship, often where there is a power imbalance. Grooming is discussed in the context of child sexual abuse but happens whenever one person takes advantage of another's vulnerability due to age, role, situation, or capacity to consent. These relationships include, but are not limited to, adult/child, teacher/student, employer/employee, mentor/mentee, or doctor/patient relationships. It also occurs in the context of human trafficking or teen and adult abusive intimate partner relationships.

**“IT’S NOT LIKE HE WORE A SIGN SAYING, ‘I’M A SEXUAL PREDATOR.’ HE WAS THAT COOL UNCLE.”**

-Adam, RAINN Speakers Bureau, [rainn.org/survivor-stories](http://rainn.org/survivor-stories)

“HE WAS SOMEONE WHO WAS ALWAYS ON MY SIDE. WHEN I WOULD GET IN TROUBLE WITH MY PARENTS, HE WOULD TELL THEM THAT I SHOULD COME OVER TO HIS HOUSE FOR THE NIGHT. MY PARENTS COULD SENSE SOMETHING WAS OFF—IT SEEMED ODD THAT I WAS SPENDING SO MUCH TIME ALONE WITH AN ADULT. THEY EVEN ASKED ME ABOUT IT, BUT I TOLD THEM THAT EVERYTHING WAS FINE. I NOW REALIZE THAT THIS WAS ALL AN EFFECT OF GROOMING.”

-Pierre, RAINN Speakers Bureau, [rainn.org/survivor-stories](http://rainn.org/survivor-stories)



## WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT GROOMING AND ABUSE?



If you suspect that child abuse has already occurred, it is your personal responsibility if you are a mandated reporter to make a report to the DCF careline at 1-800-842-2288.

You should not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse or evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations as a condition for reporting. Become familiar with that responsibility as well as any other reporting mandates or policies that exist given your role.

There may be situations in which you may identify boundary crossing or potential grooming behaviors, but do not have reason to suspect abuse has occurred. In these situations, it's important to know how to intervene and how to create safe communities for preventing sexual abuse.

## WHAT ARE SOME RED FLAGS THAT SOMEONE IS GROOMING?

- ▶ Targeting a specific individual or “type” of individual (*particular age, gender, appearance, etc.*)
- ▶ Showing favoritism or special treatment to someone
- ▶ Building trust with families & communities to gain increased access to the child or young adult
- ▶ Building trust with the child or young adult, including positioning themselves as a particularly strong and safe presence in that person’s life, sometimes focused on a perceived vulnerability or need.
- ▶ Finding excuses to spend time alone with the child or young adult
- ▶ Isolating a child or young adult from caretakers, peers, and friends
- ▶ Requesting that the child or young adult keeps secrets from other caregivers and friends
- ▶ Beginning to erode physical boundaries through unnecessary physical contact with the child or young adult (*back pats or massaging, putting an arm around them, etc.*)
- ▶ Exposing the child or young adult to sexual and/or age-inappropriate conversations, media, and behaviors
- ▶ Giving gifts to the child or young adult without an appropriate occasion for doing so
- ▶ Frequent contact with the child or young adult via social media or text
- ▶ Expressing unusual interest in youth’s sexual development, such as comments on body during puberty
- ▶ Emotionally identifying with youth, including excessive interest or engagement in children’s media or spending an excessive amount of time around youth

# CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS



## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

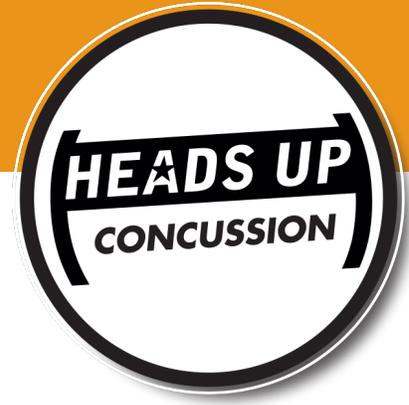
You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION?

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs of a concussion:

### SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"



### SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS/ GUARDIANS:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes



## DANGER SIGNS

Be alert for symptoms that worsen over time. Your child or teen should be seen in an emergency department right away if s/he has:

- One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) larger than the other
- Drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Increasing confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Unusual behavior
- Loss of consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

1. **SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY**  
A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to regular activities, including sports.
2. **KEEP YOUR CHILD OUT OF PLAY.**  
Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon - while the brain is still healing - risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
3. **TELL YOUR CHILD'S COACH ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS CONCUSSION.**  
Coaches should know if your child had a previous concussion. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION OR OTHER SERIOUS BRAIN INJURY?

- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly and be well maintained.
- Wearing a helmet is a must to reduce the risk of a serious brain injury or skull fracture.
  - However, helmets are not designed to prevent concussions. There is no "concussion-proof" helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for kids and teens to avoid hits to the head.

## HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL SAFELY AFTER A CONCUSSION?

Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed
- Spend fewer hours at school
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments
- Receive help with schoolwork
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer

Talk with your child's teachers, school nurse, coach, speech-language pathologist, or counselor about your child's concussion and symptoms. As your child's symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually.



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