

Downtown Berkeley YMCA

Childwatch Parent Handbook and Policy Guide

*The safety, health and happiness
of your child is our #1 goal
at Childwatch.*



Downtown Berkeley YMCA
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Program Information

Childwatch Hours:

Monday - Friday

8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Saturday and Sunday

8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

On certain holidays, Childwatch will operate with reduced hours.

Contact Information:

Childwatch Phone: (510) 665-3237

Program Director: (510) 665-3241

Ages

The Childwatch service is for children/guardians of Full Service members 8 weeks through 7 years old (up until their 8th birthday).

Childwatch may accommodate children ages 8-10 years old during off-peak hours from 11:30 AM -2:30 PM. This may only be allowed when Fit Kids is not available and when Childwatch staffing and program areas allows for additional older children.

Fit Kids is a free child watch service for children of Full Service members ages 6 - 13 years old. See appropriate flyers for more information.

Eligibility

Unfortunately, the following are NOT eligible to use Childwatch services:

- Grandparents or other family members or friends.
- Program members or children of program members.
- YMCA guests not accompanied by a Childwatch member.
- Children whose parent or legal guardian is NOT present in the YMCA building – all children signed into Childwatch must be signed in by a parent/guardian and ensure that a parent/guardian will remain on site throughout their child's stay.
- Children/guardians of full service members in excess of 2 hours per day – Childwatch is designed to be a short term, drop-in program. Full day, child care is not available.
- Parent/guardians who leave the facility at any time during a child's stay.

Location

The Childwatch Center is located on the main floor, near the pool viewing area.

Our Purpose

The Childwatch center exists for the convenience of our Full Service members while they enjoy the YMCA facilities. At Childwatch, children enjoy positive social experiences in a secure and happy environment. Our primary responsibilities are the emotional and physical safety of the children in our care. We strive to provide a warm and friendly environment where children can engage in a variety of age appropriate activities.

Staff Information

Our Staff

Childwatch is staffed by a combination of staff and volunteers. We are a wonderfully supportive and unique community. Members, staff and volunteers share ideas, joys and challenges of nurturing children. You are welcome to join the discussion. All paid Childwatch staff are trained in First Aid and CPR. The staff's performance is reviewed regularly to ensure the highest standard of care. Staff meetings and trainings are conducted on a regular basis.

Our Ratios

Childwatch uses low ratios so that your child receives quality attention and care. The ratio guidelines of children to staff is as follows:

- 1 Staff person to 2 infants (ages 8 weeks to walking)
- 1 Staff person to 4 toddlers (ages walking to 3 years old)
- 1 Staff person to 6 school age children (4 to 7 years old)

Despite our best efforts to avoid it, there are times when a waiting list is needed. During unusually busy times or transitional periods, the front desk staff will use their discretion to start a waiting list.

Financial Information

Fees

Hourly Option

\$2.50 per half hour per child. The fees are calculated by the half hour from the time that you sign in. After ten minutes into the next half hour, you will be charged for the additional half hour. Your account will be credited/debited for services rendered.

- There are no refunds for unused credit on your Childwatch account.
- A guest fee of \$16.00 will be assessed for every guest you bring.

Monthly Bank Draft

A monthly electronic billing service in the amount of \$45.00 per child per month is also available. This option may save you money! Talk to the Childwatch staff to determine which option is best for you.

Financial Assistance

The Downtown Berkeley YMCA offers financial assistance for Childwatch monthly electronic bank draft fees for your child(ren)'s participation in the Childwatch program.

Completed financial assistance applications must be submitted no later than 10:00 PM on the 1st and 15th of each month.

YMCA membership is required of all Childwatch financial assistance applicants. Financial assistance awards cannot be applied toward the cost of a membership or other YMCA programs and are only available for monthly electronic billing payments. Financial assistance is not available for Childwatch hourly rate payments. Childwatch Financial Assistance Applications and additional information are available at the Welcome Desk or at Childwatch.

Payments

For hourly charges, we accept cash, check, and credit card payments. Cash and check payments are made in Childwatch and credit card payments are made at the Welcome Desk. Please return the credit card receipt to Childwatch so your account can be properly credited.

Late Charges

The Childwatch Center closes promptly at:

2:30 PM and 8:00 PM Monday - Friday

2:30 PM Saturday and Sunday

A late charge of \$5.00 will be assessed for every 10 minutes the parent is late or exceeds the two hour limit.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety

In the interest of your child's health and safety, and the well-being of the other children, we stress the following:

- If your child is contagious or feels ill, tired or unusually warm, you may not use the service for that day. If your child has had a fever due to illness, please wait 48 hours after the fever has stopped to use the service.
- If your child has been vaccinated you must wait 24 hours before bringing them into Childwatch. If the vaccine was "live", you must wait 48 hours.
- If a child is ill or cannot be consoled and has been left at Childwatch, parents will be notified, and will have to pick the child up at that time.
- If your child contracts a contagious disease and has been in Childwatch while infectious, let the Childwatch staff know immediately so they can inform the other parents.
- There is always a staff member trained in First Aid and CPR on duty.
- For safety's sake, please make sure that if your child is under 2, they stay in the infant/toddler room at all times.

Diaper Policy

Childwatch staff will change your child as needed, and will use a diaper provided by Childwatch. Diapers are included in your usage fees. It is always important to leave your child in a dry diaper. Due to both safety concerns and space limitations, diaper bags and supplies are not allowed inside Childwatch.

Chokeables and Glass

Please help us keep Childwatch safe! Remove hair pins, barrettes, and clips from your child's hair before entering Childwatch. Often clips can be left behind and most are chokeable size. Also, glass or porcelain jars, bottles, or dishes are not permitted in Childwatch program areas.

Handwashing

Childwatch encourages frequent hand washing. Hot water and soap are available in both the Childwatch bathroom and staff sink area. Purell and other hand sanitizers are not permitted inside Childwatch program areas.

Fragrance-Free

Due to health concerns, including allergies, arising from exposure to scented products, Childwatch is a fragrance-free environment.

Discipline

Staff are trained to discipline in a caring and respectful manner and are encouraged to apply positive discipline techniques, when necessary. Positive Discipline is a kind and firm approach to working with children and families that strengthens relationships, helps children take responsibility and learn life skills and helps adults and children effectively problem solve. When necessary, a "time-out," or break time, may be applied. Staff will inform you of the situation when you return and if necessary, problem solve solutions.

Special Needs

If your child has any special needs, please inform the Director at the time of enrollment. If the YMCA cannot serve your child due to a lack of expertise or resources, we will try to recommend an alternate summer program.

Snack and Playtime

Snack Time

Outside food and snacks are welcome in Childwatch and can be a fun and social part of your child's experience. Staff supervise snack areas and can assist children with snacks, however, please only bring snacks that are not chokables, do not require refrigeration or heating, and that your child can handle easily and without mess. Please do not bring:

- ▶ Uncut grapes
- ▶ Nuts (of any kind)
- ▶ Popcorn
- ▶ Carrots, including baby carrots
- ▶ Uncut hotdogs
- ▶ Candy
- ▶ Gum
- ▶ Peanut Products

Due to severe allergic reactions, peanut products are not allowed inside Childwatch. Snack bars processed in facilities that manufacture peanut products, and nut butters, other than peanut butter are permitted. However, please LABEL the type of nut butter so that staff can easily identify that it does not contain peanut products. For example, Johnny – Almond Butter sandwich. NO GLASS CONTAINERS are permitted in Childwatch, including glass baby food jars or baby bottles.

Strollers

Please don't bring strollers into Childwatch — they cause traffic jams! Please fold all strollers and store them away from the window overlooking the pool.

Outside Toys

We have many toys, books, and crafts to discover and explore in Childwatch, so please leave toys at home; they could get lost or broken and often cause conflict. If the toy is a needed comfort item, please label it and take special care to remember it when you leave. Money, balloons, and small toys are not permitted.

Lost and Found

Childwatch staff are not responsible for items left in Childwatch. Please check with a Childwatch staff if you are looking for a lost item.

Donations

Childwatch and Fit Kids accepts donations of new or gently worn clothes, toys, baby items, or art supplies. All donations to the YMCA are tax deductible. If you would like an acknowledgement letter, please make sure to leave your name and contact information.

First Visit and Orientation

Before Your Child's First Visit

You are responsible for:

- Reading the Childwatch Parent Handbook and Policy Guide.
- Signing a waiver and acknowledgement that you have read and understand the policy information.
- Completing an emergency card. You will need the names and phone numbers of three people whom we may contact in case of emergency or major catastrophe. One of these people should live at least 100 miles away.
- Selecting a 4-character pin code. You will use your 4-character pin code to sign your children in and out of Childwatch on the computer.
- Paying a deposit of \$10 per child, if you choose hourly billing, or setting up a monthly bank draft account.

We suggest you visit Childwatch with your child, during our less busy hours, before you leave him/her for the first time and keep your child's first few visits short (30 minutes to an hour). Remember, don't be discouraged, it sometimes takes a few visits for a child to acclimate.

Sign In Procedure

- Put a nametag on your child (include important information on the nametag).
- Label and put away clothing and snacks. Put snacks in snack area and bottles in the bottle holder.
- Check your child's diaper for dryness and take older children to the bathroom before leaving them.
- Get your child settled and share specific information with the staff regarding teething, allergies (especially food based), and stage of toilet training. Also relay any special health concerns. All Children under 2 years old must be dropped off in the infant/toddler area.
- Write your name, child's name and age, your location, approximate time of return and important information on the dry erase board.
- Leave your ID card.
- Sign in on the computer: click on the screen to begin, enter code, click on child's name, click Finished," and make sure to see the "Thank You" screen.

We have a 2 hour per day limit that you may leave your child at Childwatch. PARENTS MUST STAY IN THE BUILDING AT ALL TIMES. It is essential that the Childwatch staff know your whereabouts in the building. Staff need to be able to locate you quickly in case your child is distressed or needs you.

Frequently Asked Questions

What Happens If My Child Cries While In Childwatch?

Childwatch staff work hard to comfort children should they cry or appear upset. However, if we are unable to soothe your child after 5 minutes, we will come and get you using the information you left on the sign-in board. Parents are encouraged to inform staff of any tips or helpful hints that may help your child feel more comfortable and to share with staff any additional information related to how to help us work with your child should they become upset.

Who Will Be Caring For My Child While They Are In Childwatch?

Childwatch is staffed with a combination of part time volunteers and paid staff. All staff are fingerprinted and reference checked and receive regular training and performance reviews. The staff team is responsible for program areas rather than specific kids so that children may move about freely. To help us best realize your children's needs, please:

Write helpful hints on the Dry Erase Board, or share them directly with staff.

- Include important information on name tags.
- Try using Childwatch on the same days and at the same times. This way your children will get to know staff and vice versa.

When Is The Best Time To Bring My Child To Childwatch?

Childwatch can feel very different depending on the time and day of your visit. If your child is more comfortable in a less stimulating environment and/or may need more individual attention, we advise that you try to come during slower times. The afternoon hours between 12:30 PM and 2:30 PM are slow, since most toddlers are napping at that time. That can be a great time to bring infants. The hour between 4:00 - 5:00 PM is also a slower time. The busiest hours are 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM every day, and 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM on weekday evenings.

May I "Hang Out" With My Child At Childwatch?

While we encourage you to come and acclimate your child so they are ready, Childwatch is a childcare facility for members to use while they are working out. It is not designed to be a drop-in family play area. To ensure quality and safety, we ask that parents only "hang out" for approximately 15-20 minutes and when they are acclimating new children to Childwatch during our less busy hours.

Are guests permitted to use the Childwatch program?

The Childwatch facilities are for the children/guardians of YMCA Full Service members and staff only. However, YMCA guests may use Childwatch under the following conditions:

- Both the parent and the child must be registered at the Welcome Desk as a guest.
- Both the parent and the child must be present inside the YMCA.

Guests must complete and sign all Childwatch enrollment forms, including a waiver of liability and emergency card. Guests will be charged a non-refundable flat fee of \$16.00, each time that they visit. This charge includes account set-up and use of Childwatch for a maximum of two hours. Only parents or legal guardians may sign a child into the Childwatch program. Other adults may be indicated for pick-up, however, parents must always remain in the building. This policy is not negotiable.

