



The YWCA Boulder County Children's Alley Parent Handbook

**eliminating racism
empowering women**

ywca

Boulder County

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A. Philosophy

The mission of The YWCA Boulder County Children's Alley is to provide affordable, flexible, quality childcare on a temporary, and/or emergency drop-in basis. We offer a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment that encourages the emotional, physical, behavioral, and cognitive development of the children we serve. Children's Alley welcomes *all* children and we look forward to working with parents to provide the care your family needs.

B. Hours of Operation

	Toddler/Preschool Classrooms	Infant Classroom	Children's Alley Office
Monday-Thursday	7:30am-8pm	8am-4:30pm	7:30am-5:30pm
Friday	7:30am-5:30pm		
Saturday	9am-5pm	CLOSED	CLOSED
Sunday	CLOSED		

Closures:

Memorial Day

Week of the 4th of July

Labor Day

Week of Thanksgiving

Week of Christmas

Week of New Years

File day and cleaning days (TBA)

Children's Alley may add other closures due to weather, Furlough, or other events; We will give families prior notice when possible.

Children's Alley closes at 4:00 p.m. the first Friday of each month for our staff meeting. The exact day will be posted on the Parent Bulletin Board at least 3 days prior. A list of closures is available at the front desk.

C. Services offered for children with special needs

We are happy to accommodate children with moderate special needs (developmental, physical, emotional, or behavioral) in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We strive to provide all children with a positive and play filled experience. Please spend some time with the Director discussing any special needs your child may have, including medications your child takes (even if they will not be administered at the center). We strive to work together with the family to enhance the strengths of all children and to ensure their success.

D. Admission and Registration

Registration of children at Children's Alley requires completion of **several forms including:**

1. Enrollment Form

2. Registration Form and annual registration payment
3. Health Appraisal (**to be completed by Health Care Provider within 30 days**)
4. Income Eligibility Form (IEF) related to the Federal Food Program
5. Immunization Card or copy or signed waiver
6. Emergency Medical Care Form
7. Proof of income – W-2, pay stub, or letter from employer

Infants require 2 additional form:

1. Formula Decision Form
2. Infant Food List

Language Interpreters

Children’s Alley is a bilingual (Spanish/English) program that can offer immediate services for families which communicate exclusively in Spanish. For all other languages, Children’s Alley has access to translator services both locally as well as internationally so that we may best accommodate every family that seeks our services. For more information please contact our front office staff.

E. Scheduling Children

Scheduling children begins every day **at 2 PM for the following day**. Children are scheduled on a first call, first serve basis. Parents may call the same day that childcare is needed; however, you are more likely to get space if you call the day before, beginning at 2 PM. **Saturday care can be scheduled any day and time of that week**. Pre-payment is required for Saturday care. You will be asked for your credit card number and the card will be charged on Friday after 1pm. Your spot will not be reserved unless you are able to get payment to us before Friday at 1pm.

If a spot is unavailable, you may opt to add your child to the waitlist.

F. Cancellation or Rescheduling Policy:

Children’s Alley recognizes that changes occur, but we request that you do not think of Children’s Alley as a back up. When we reserve a slot for your child (or children), we often have to turn away many other families who are in need of care.

- Parents must give **four hours notice for cancellations or rescheduling**. Without four hours notice, parents will be charged for the entire scheduled time. This applies to early pick ups. Parents may pick up their child (or children) before the scheduled pick up time, but without four hours notice, parents will be charged for the entire scheduled time. The four hour notice will allow Children’s Alley sufficient time to fill those slots.
- For Saturday cancellations or reschedules, **parents must make changes by 1 pm on Friday**. Changes made after 1 pm will be charged for the entire scheduled time.

Monday-Thursday evening hour changes to pick-up time must be made prior to 5:30 pm

- If your child is scheduled for evening care, please let the staff know of any pick up time changes prior to 5:30 pm that evening. This allows the staff enough time to accommodate your request.
- Changes requested after 5:30 pm may not be possible due to staffing and ratios.

G. Pick Up and Drop Off Policies

1. Authorized Pick-up of Children

Children will only be released to those adults listed on the enrollment form. In the event a person picking up children is someone **other** than those listed on the enrollment form, the parent or guardian must inform the center director/assistant director of the person's name and relation to the child. During check-in, type the person's name in the space provided using the computer located at the Children's Alley desk. The director/ assistant director will inform appropriate staff of the change. All persons authorized to pick up children, including those listed on the enrollment form and those given verbal consent by the parents, will be asked to provide photo identification at the time of pick up. **Children will not be released otherwise.**

2. Unauthorized pick-up of children

If a person not authorized to pick up children attempts to do so, staff must notify the director/ assistant director immediately. Authorized adults must be contacted to obtain verbal consent to release the child. Staff must also explain to the person attempting to pick up that only those people listed on the enrollment form are authorized to pick up children. Only the parents or guardians can give permission to release the children to other adults.

3. Late pick-up policy

Parents and/or authorized guardians must pick up their children at the scheduled pick up time. If you are going to be more than ten (10) minutes late collecting your children please notify us by phone. In the event that you are delayed more than fifteen (15) minutes without notifying us, we will proceed to call you first and then your emergency contacts. **If we are unable to reach you or your emergency contacts and you are more than forty-five (45) minutes late, your child will be considered "abandoned" by Colorado state law. At this point the director/ assistant director of Children's Alley as well as the YWCA Executive Director or her designate will be informed of the situation. Children's Alley reports cases of abandoned children to Social Services as required by law.** Children's Alley closes at 8:00 PM, Monday through Thursday, at 5:30 PM on Friday, and at 5 PM on Saturday. Our staff will wait for late parents for fifteen (15) minutes after closing time. If parents have not arrived after these fifteen (15) minutes, parents and emergency contacts will be called. If no one responds within five (5) minutes, the director will return to the center to resolve the situation. We ask that parents please respect our closing times and not constrain our staff to stay past closing with your child.

We charge \$1 for every minute late after closing.

Children's Alley charges per hour per child on the half hour. Parents are charged for the total time your child stays at the Center. Please respect our ability to facilitate care for a maximum of **30 children only** at any one time. **If you are late to pick up your children, we may be unable to admit other scheduled children, creating a childcare crisis for the next family. We reserve the right to charge a fee for late pickups.**

4. Early pick-up

Parents must notify Children's Alley staff **4 hours prior** to an early pick-up time of their children to receive a payment adjustment to their original scheduled time of visit. If children are picked up early without proper (4 hr) notification, the balance due will reflect the **entire time** your child was originally scheduled.

Children may already be on a field trip when you call to adjust the scheduled time of visit.

5. Late arrivals

If parents anticipate arriving later than your scheduled drop off time, please call to notify us. If you call **4 hours in advance** to notify us of the updated drop off time, you **will not be charged for more than the time your child is actually at the center**. If you have not arrived at the scheduled time of drop off and one hour has passed without notification, we will give your scheduled time slot to a family on our wait list. **Parents will be responsible for payment of the visit scheduled if you do not call to cancel.**

If a child arrives late and their class is away from the center on a field trip, the child may either stay in the office until the class returns, go into another classroom if there is room, or the parent may drop the child off at the site of the field trip.

****Please know that if a child's behavior at any time endangers the safety of the child, other children, and/or staff, we must contact the parent and have the child picked up immediately. Please see our Behavior Policy for further information.****

H. Signing children in and out

According to state licensing regulations parents/guardians are **required to sign children in and out on the sign-in/sign-out computer** (located at the Children's Alley front desk).

Dropping off procedure:

1. Click Dropping off child.
2. Type in child's first and/or last name. Click Search.
3. Select your child's name and press Continue.
4. Enter your information in the correct fields.
5. Enter pick-up person's name and phone number in the correct fields.
6. Sign your name on the signing pad.

Picking up procedure:

1. Click Picking up child.
2. Type in child's first and/or last name. Click Search.
3. Select your child's name and press Continue.
4. Click check out.
5. Sign your name on the signing pad and click **save**.
6. If you are not recognized by any staff member who has contact with you, **please expect to show ID**

I. Ages, ratios and class size

Ages of Children Accepted

The YWCA of Boulder County Children's Alley accepts children ages six (6) weeks through twelve (12) years.

Ratios and class sizes

- Infants: 6 weeks-18 months; 8 infants : 2 teachers Total of 8 infants
- Toddlers: 18 months-3years; 10 toddlers : 2 teachers Total of 10 toddlers

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- Preschool/School age: 3 years-12 years; 12 children : 2 teachers Total of 12 children

Lowering Ratios

Colorado State Licensing requires that Children's Alley follow specific teacher to child ratios depending on the age groups of each classroom. In the infant and toddler rooms, the ratio is 1 teacher to every 5 children (1:5), while the preschool room has a ratio of 1:8 if there are any children between 2.5 and 3 years old, or 1:10 if all children are over the age of 3 years. Every classroom is staffed with two lead qualified teachers, and often an additional teacher aid. By providing additional staff in classrooms we are sometimes able to lower the state mandated ratios so that we are better able to provide personalized care for the children. Although this is not a practice we can guarantee due to the drop-in nature of our program, it is something that we strive for on a daily basis.

Primary Caregiving

Children's Alley teachers are assigned to specific classrooms to allow for continuity of care for children that come on a regular basis. This means that children will have the benefit of building a relationship with the two teachers that are in their classroom, thereby increasing their sense of security and comfort. As children transition to older classrooms, we have the option to have the previous teacher(s) do the transition visit with the child. For children that have created a particularly strong bond with one teacher, this can help ease the transition to the new environment and new teachers.

J. Daily Routine and Meal Times

If possible, we request that you help us create smooth transitions in our daily routine by scheduling your child appropriately around nap and meal times.

Each classroom maintains their own schedule and routine depending on the age/ability of the children and the degree of structure that is developmentally appropriate. Example: Infants generally have individual nap schedules but toddlers nap from 12:30-2:30 pm. Many of the preschool/school aged children do not take naps. Please consult your child's teacher for a posted schedule of activities. All classrooms are served meals at the same time.

Snacks are served at 10:00 am, 3:00 pm

Lunch is served from 12:00 noon until 12:15 PM

If your child will not be eating lunch with us, please pick them up just before 12:00 pm – if you would like your child to eat lunch with us, please drop off a few minutes before 12:00 pm.

Dinner is served from 5:30 PM until 5:45 PM

If your child will not be eating dinner with us, please pick up just before 5:30 pm– if you would like your child to eat dinner with us; please drop off in time for dinner.

Please note that food is prepared for the exact number of children present during meal times. We are unable to serve meals after the scheduled times. We have no extra meals to send with children.

K. Contract Care

Children’s Alley is a temporary, drop in child care therefore our contract policies are made on a short-term, case by case basis. Contracts are offered based on classroom availability. The infant room has 4 contract spaces and four drop-in spaces. The guidelines for contract care are as follows:

1. Contracts are generally awarded for 6 weeks. Some longer term contracts may be available. **Contracts must be scheduled with the Director.**
2. It is helpful for contract times to remain consistent. You are responsible for payment of this time whether your child attends or not.
3. Payment for contracts is due each Monday for that week. All contract fees are non-refundable.
4. Any additional hours of childcare needed beyond what has been contracted must be scheduled and paid for according to Children’s Alley drop-in guidelines.
5. If a child has not arrived within one hour of the scheduled contract time and we have not received prior notification, the child will be removed from the day’s schedule and the parent will be billed for the full time that had been reserved.
6. If two days pass without notification, the child’s contract can be cancelled.
7. Only one contract per family is allowed per year. Exceptions and/or extensions will be made if special circumstances arise.
8. Because contracts are guaranteed reservations, payment is due whether or not the child is present at the center.
9. For special circumstances, please check with the Director who may be able to modify these guidelines.

Each family is normally allowed up to 10 visits per month. This policy may be modified according to availability in the classroom or by special arrangement with the Director. The goal of Children’s Alley remains temporary, drop-in care.

L. Fee Schedule

All new families will be charged a yearly registration fee of \$15. Daily childcare rates are based on **total** gross family income. Children’s Alley offers a sliding scale ranging from \$3.80 to \$13.11 per hour per child. There is a price break for families with three or more children (1/2 off the third child and any child after that) as well as a price break for families paying the highest rate who have two or more children (1/2 off). The following is a breakdown of total annual income and the corresponding fee for childcare.

Children’s Alley Sliding Scale

Annual Family Income

\$0- 5,999	3.80
\$6,000- 9,999	4.77
\$10,000- 14,999	5.23
\$15,000- 19,999	5.69
\$20,000- 24,999	6.73
\$25,000- 29,999	7.59
\$30,000- 34,999	8.23
\$35,000- 39,999	8.97
\$40,000- 44,999	9.43
\$45,000- 49,999	9.83
\$50,000- 54,999	10.93

\$55,000- 59,999	11.62
\$60,000-69,999	12.36
\$70,000+	13.11

We also accept payment from the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Please let us know if you need assistance to pay for childcare.

Note: If you do not provide proof of income you will be charged at the highest rate until such proof is provided.

◆ Paying for Childcare at Children’s Alley

Payment for your child’s visit to Children’s Alley is **due at the time of pick-up**. If you are unable to make payment in full, families do have the option of carrying a balance. The guidelines are as follows:

- 1. The maximum carried balance allowed is \$30.00.**
- 2. A balance may only be carried for a total of 2 visits maximum or \$30.00, whichever occurs first.**
- 3. On the third visit, a portion of the balance must be paid or the total balance can be paid. NOTE: the total balance carried may not exceed \$30.00**
- 4. The director reserves the right to revise the above-mentioned guidelines on a case-by-case basis.**

M. Procedure for identifying where children are at all times

Drop off and pick up times for children are recorded in our computer database. Any changes (early or late drop off/pick up, cancellation, or no show) to a child’s scheduled time of visit to Children’s Alley are recorded in this database. Staff members review the daily schedule and the class roster on a routine basis to be aware of children visiting for the day and to keep any changes updated. The teachers do a head count before and after going outside, as well as periodically throughout the day using their updated class list, which reflects all changes that are made throughout the day. At the end of the day, teachers verify that all children have been signed out and do a visual inspection of each classroom.

N. Discipline

Children’s Alley approaches discipline with a learning focus. We believe that children can learn to make positive choices for themselves when given appropriate guidance from adults. Redirection, positive choice making, anticipating conflict, and ongoing teacher contact are methods used at Children’s Alley. We also acknowledge, encourage, and reinforce positive behaviors while discouraging mistaken behaviors through problem-solving methods, distraction, and involvement, to name a few. We do not use a punitive approach of any kind. Time outs are used as a last resort with a one-minute per year-of the child’s age ratio. We have a cozy area where children can go to process and manage their emotions in lieu of a time-out. The cozy corner is different than a time out and is used as a preventative guidance measure. The methods and techniques chosen are relevant to the age and development of each specific child.

When appropriate, we will also involve parents in the process. At Children's Alley we continuously strive to strengthen our relationships with our children and their family. Through our continuous specialized trainings, our teachers are able to identify the individual needs of our children. While working with our families, we are able to provide each child with the specialized care that he/she may need within our classrooms. When a situation occurs that make a child's needs difficult for staff and parents to adequately address the family will be given information on how to access an Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist to support their child in all environments.

Behavior Policy

Our staff are well trained and work hard to identify the social, emotional and developmental needs of each child. However, there are times when children may need additional care that our staff are not able to provide. If we feel that your child's behavior endangers the safety of the other children, we will notify the parent and begin with a parent teacher conference. To better accommodate your child we would like to work with the family to develop a plan of action. A behavioral plan will be developed with input from the parents, teachers, Program Manager, and child, if appropriate. During that time, if the child is a danger to themselves or other children, we may choose to suspend your child for a discussed upon period of time. Once the child returns to our program, if the child is still a danger then we will discuss if we are the best persons to be caring for your child. Please refer to our detailed discipline policy for more information regarding the steps that are taken by our staff to work with children who are displaying challenging behavior. It is only as a very last resort that we would ask you to remove your child from care. Please refer to our Notification When Child Care Service or Child Is Withdrawn policy for more information.

O. Procedure for illnesses, accidents, and injuries

In the event that a child becomes ill or incurs an accident while at Children's Alley the following steps will be taken:

1. If a child shows signs of illness, a staff member will complete a symptom record form. Parents will be contacted depending on the severity of the illness.
2. If the child has a fever, is vomiting, experiencing diarrhea, or has more serious symptoms, parents will be contacted immediately and instructed to pick up their child **within the hour**. If a staff member is unable to reach the parents, emergency contacts will be telephoned.
3. If a child has a mild accident or injury, an accident report will be completed by a staff member. Upon pick-up the parents will be asked to sign the report, as will the director or assistant director and the child's teacher. Depending on the severity of the injury, or if the child sustains head trauma, the parents will be **notified immediately**. If a child experiences extreme discomfort resulting from an accident, parents will be contacted immediately and instructed to pick up their child. If a staff member is unable to reach the parents emergency contacts will be telephoned. **If necessary, Children's Alley will call 911.**

Parents: Please inform staff members at time of scheduling if any child of yours has incurred an injury at home or has had an illness or symptoms of an illness.

CHILDREN'S ALLEY CANNOT ACCEPT SICK OR CONTAGIOUS CHILDREN.
Your child must be free from fever or other sickness for at least 24 hours before coming to Children's Alley.

P. Health

The health and safety of your children is the primary concern of all Children's Alley staff. If your child is not feeling well, please keep them at home. Even if children have mild symptoms of illness, being around a large group of children and a lot of stimulation does not allow their bodies to rest and may aggravate symptoms. They may also be in a contagious state.

If children become ill at the center and they are not well enough to stay, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child. Parents are given 1 hour to pick up their child. During this time your child will be isolated from the other children. Children do not always have a fever when they are ill; sometimes the best indicator of illness is the child's inability to participate in normal activities i.e. outside play. Your child must be free from fever or other sickness for at least 24 hours before coming to Children's Alley.

Children will never be exposed to second hand smoke in Children's Alley's building or on our playgrounds. If visitors to the center smoke they will not be allowed to smoke in the building or on the playgrounds.

In the case of a communicable disease such as strep throat, pink eye or RSV, please notify staff immediately so we may post a notice for other parents.

Children's Alley offers FREE vision, dental, and hearing screenings (5.1a) twice every year. Notices will be sent out before each screening period, or parents may speak with the front office about details.

Referrals

At Children's Alley we recognize the uniqueness of every child. Teachers are trained in developmentally appropriate practices, as well as milestones of developing children. It is not uncommon for teachers to notice these milestones in our children, but it is also common for our teachers to notice when milestones are not being met. If a teacher has any concerns about the development of a child, a conference with the parent will be scheduled. Initially, teacher and parent will discuss what we have noticed, and strategies for moving forward. If the teacher and parent determine that the child could benefit from a screening from an outside professional, Children's Alley can assist the parent in connecting with the proper organizations for the child's age. If the child is accepted for services, Children's Alley can work with the family and child's therapists to utilize strategies recommended by the professional at Children's Alley. Children's Alley will continually work with the parent to seek out appropriate physical and mental health services in our community that best serve the child. If at any point the teachers or parent determines that Children's Alley is not able to provide the highest level of care for the child, we will assist the parent by providing resources for other appropriate centers.

Q. Emergencies

Children's Alley has clearly posted policies for handling emergencies and safety concerns (such as a fire). These policies are clearly posted by each entrance and exit to the classrooms. In the event of an emergency, law enforcement, safety services and/or the fire department are contacted once the children are out of the building. For any children with disabilities, limited mobility, or other special needs, a special plan for their care during an emergency will be made, based on their specific needs. During an emergency, the Assistant Director will be directly responsible for their safety. If the Assistant Director is not available, then the Program Manager will be responsible for the care of the child. Parents will be notified once the situation is contained. **(Policies are stated at the end of the handbook.)**

R. Field trips, video viewing, and special activities

Field Trips

Field trips taken by staff and children are to places within walking distance of Children's Alley (Barker Park, Pearl Street Mall). Infants and children younger than 18 months are transported in strollers, wagons, or infant backpacks. **Parents are required to complete the field trip permission statement located on the reverse side of the enrollment form.** Please be aware that if you come to collect your child earlier than your scheduled time the children may still be out on a field trip. Please let us know if you need to change your scheduled time so that your child will be at the center when you arrive to pick them up. First Aid kits and emergency contact forms always accompany the group.

Video Viewing

Video viewing is seldom used but may be reserved for the evening hours after 6pm or for the occasional Saturday. Following licensing policies, video viewing will not exceed 30 minutes per week, unless a special event is specifically communicated to parents. We encourage parents to speak with our staff if you have any concerns or personal restrictions regarding video viewing. **Parents are required to complete the video viewing permission statement located on the reverse side of the enrollment form.**

Special Activities

Occasionally Children's Alley offers special activities on holidays such as Halloween and Christmas. Special activities are advertised with signs posted at the center prior to the event.

S. Administering and Storing Medication (in compliance with the "Nurse Practice Act")

Children's Alley staff **cannot** administer **any** medications without a doctor's note and consent form (this includes over the counter medications and homeopathic remedies) All types of medications can only be administered between the hours of 7:30 AM and 5 PM Monday through Friday **only**. To administer medications we require the following:

- 1. A signed doctor's note that clearly describes the appropriate quantities of the medication and the times it should be given.**
- 2. A copy of the prescription (if it is prescribed medication) or a doctor's note for over the counter medication.**
- 3. A signed authorization to dispense medication from the parent or guardian**

4. Medication must be in the original labeled bottle or container. The label must correspond to the prescription and doctor's note.

NOTE:

Prescription Medications must come in a container labeled with: child's name, name of medicine, time medicine is to be given, dosage, the date medicine is to be stopped, and licensed health provider's name. Pharmacy name and number must also be included on the label.

Over the Counter Medication (including homeopathic remedies) must be labeled with child's name. Dosage must match the signed health care provider authorization, and medicine must be packed in original container.

Children's Alley staff will record the administration of medication in our medication logbook.

All medications brought into the center are kept out of reach of children in a locked storage unit. Medications must be signed in and out of the center each time they are brought and administered to your child.

Please do not keep ANY medications in your child's bag. Please alert staff if your child has any allergies requiring an EPI-pen or emergency medication. The same requirements (doctor's note, prescription, and labeled medication) apply to EPI-pens or emergency medications, as well as some additional authorization forms and care plans. All Forms, Plans, and Health Appraisals must be current before care can be scheduled.

T. Personal Belongings/ Clothing

Personal Belongings

We ask that valuable items (including **toys and money**) are not brought into the classrooms. Personal belongings must be stored and labeled in a cubby designated for your child. We ask that you bring only items that are needed for care. Please check your child's bag daily to ensure that it is free of Keep Out of Reach, Chokeable and other potentially hazardous items.

Standard belongings such as coats and diaper bags may be stored in the cubbies in your child's classroom. Unclaimed items are placed in our lost and found box at the end of each day. We hold items in the lost and found for up to **30 days**, after which time they will be disposed. **Children's Alley cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen items.**

Please label all belongings from home with your child's name.

Children may not bring cell phones or any electronic device that can be connected to the internet. If your child has any such item in his or her possession it will be held in the office until pick-up. If you need to contact your child please call Children's Alley. We will connect you with your child immediately.

In order to keep our children safe, no one may bring or use weapons of any kind on the premises for any reason. This includes knives, firearms, ammunition, and any other object that could reasonably be perceived as a weapon. Persons attempting to bring a weapon on the premises will be asked to leave. Failure to comply will result

in a 911 call to the police. Possession of weapons of any kind by parents or children may be cause for immediate termination of child care services.

Clothing

Children must be fully clothed when attending Children's Alley for sanitation and safety reasons.

Please dress your children appropriately for indoor and outdoor play. Shoes, socks, hat and a jacket of some type are good preparation. For cold and snowy days, please bring snow boots, a snowsuit, or other waterproof clothing, a jacket, gloves, hat, and a spare change of dry clothes. We will not take the children outside if the temperature falls below 30 degrees.

In the summer and for warmer days, please dress children in lighter clothing so they do not overheat. A short-sleeved shirt, shorts or lightweight pants are appropriate. A light jacket or sweatshirt may be needed. Swimsuits for water play are greatly appreciated, but children must have a dry change of clothes as well. Sunscreen will be applied to children with written permission.

U. Meals and Snacks

We are a **Peanut/Nut Free** facility. Please do not bring peanut/nut foods to Children's Alley. Children's Alley provides 3 meals a day and 3 snacks a day excluding dinner on Friday and Saturday. We can accommodate any allergies, special diets, and food restrictions. Please document your child's needs on the enrollment form and alert staff members of any changes or requests. **We discourage bringing food and beverages from home unless your child's diet requires it.** Please alert staff of any food that may be in your child's bag so that we can place it out of reach of other children.

V. Infant Care

Children ranging from six (6) weeks to 18 months are classified as infants at Children's Alley. Our ratio for infants per teacher is 4:1. Infants generally need a lot of one-on-one care and we provide that by meeting their needs for feeding, rocking and napping throughout the day. We offer a variety of infant toys including bouncers and saucers that give them an opportunity to work on their developing skills.

We ask parents to please provide diapers and formula (dry formula, not premade) or breast milk. We are a Breastfeeding Friendly center and encourage mothers to breastfeed: please see our breastfeeding policy at the end of this packet. We have extra diapers and formula in case parents forget these items; however, our supply is minimal.

We are happy to provide an assortment of pureed foods when your child is eating solid foods. Parents may also want to include something of comfort for your child such as a blanket or stuffed animal. These items may help your child to transition smoothly. We generally recommend that infants start with small increments of time at childcare and work up to lengthier visits, as they grow more comfortable here.

W. Diapering and Toileting

Specific staff members are assigned to diapering duty during different shifts each day. Our policy is to change diapers routinely every hour and a half to two hours and as needed. Each diaper change and use of the potty will be documented daily on the log sheet located in the bathroom. Preschool diaper changes will not be documented. Please alert staff to any toilet training routines children use at home and we will do our best to integrate this routine into their day at Children's Alley.

Children's Alley is not able to accommodate the use of cloth diapers. Please plan to provide disposable diapers during your child's stay at Children's Alley.

Please provide ample diapers, training pants, extra underwear, and changes of clothes in case of accidents.

We are unable to administer creams and medications to open, raw or bleeding diaper rashes.

X. Visitors

We ask all visitors to our center to introduce themselves and inform staff members of the purpose of their visit. Visitors are required to sign-in and sign-out on the visitor log at the front desk of the YWCA. We reserve the right to ask any visitor to leave the premises for any reason. Typically a visitor is accompanied by an administrator and may not be left alone with children.

Y. Parent and Staff Communication

Due to the drop-in nature of our center, we do not have structured parent-staff conferences for our drop-in families. However, you may be invited to a conference if Children's Alley staff has any concerns regarding your child's behavior, progress, and social and physical needs. If your child has a diagnosed illness, any developmental delays, or behavioral needs, please inform the staff. Parents should review a behavior plan and/or medication authorization form with the director/ assistant director if necessary. Our goal is to collaborate with families and employ strategies that are already effective so that we can manage any behavior issues successfully. By working together, we can do our best at Children's Alley to provide your child with a happy and successful visit.

The exception to this is for families enrolled in our full-day preschool program. These families will be asked to attend two conferences per year with the preschool teachers. These conferences will be scheduled in the Fall (September/October) and Spring (March/April) based on the availability of the families. Teachers will reach out to families to schedule conferences as they approach.

Occasionally we will provide **newsletters and surveys** to parents. Please read the newsletters, as they may contain valuable information as well as upcoming parent/child activities. We also greatly appreciate parents input in the form of the occasional survey. Parents should keep their own records of their child's visit to Children's Alley. The staff cannot provide historical data of the child's care.

Children's Alley seeks to create a welcoming and positive environment for all of our families. We understand that life places us all in stressful situations, but we ask that all

parents and guardians approach our office staff and teachers with respect. Children's Alley staff will work within our means to provide the support and care that you need during trying times; please be understanding of any limitations of our services. Threatening language and/or verbal abuse directed at any Children's Alley employee, family, or guests to the YWCA Boulder County will not be tolerated.

Lending Library

Children's Alley is pleased to offer a Lending Library for parents and children. Families can check out educational books covering topics of child development, parenting practices, and activity ideas. Children can check out toys, books, and clothes. Please ask the Children's Alley front desk for a list of available items, and access to the Check-Out sheet. All items should be returned within two weeks to allow all of our families to benefit from this resource.

Transitions

The children of our facility are placed in each classroom dependent on their age and development. Parents will be notified by teachers via in-person short conferences when the teachers feel that the child is ready to begin transitioning. The transition process includes a minimum of three visits to the new classroom, during which the new teachers will assess the child's comfort level and development. After each visit the new teachers and old teachers discuss how the visit went, and what strategies may need to be put in place if the child was not completely comfortable, for example: visiting during outside play rather than a meal, visiting around the child's nap time, or ensuring the child has familiar toys in the new room. This process is communicated to parents and suggestions or changes to the timeline are discussed. Once the parents and teachers agree the child is ready to fully transition, a hold spot may be placed in the old classroom if there is concern that the child may need to return. Each classroom assesses different developmental markers before or during the transition process:

- **Infant – Toddler Transitions:** The infant room is licensed for ages 6 weeks through 18 months, although children may begin transitioning to the toddler room at 15 months. Before an infant has a transition visit they **MUST** be walking without support or consistent monitoring from the teacher. Secondly, because the toddler classroom has one scheduled nap a day, teachers and parents work together to discuss a plan of action for getting the infant down from two naps to the one in the afternoon. Nap-time transition visits only occur when both the parents and teachers feel that the infant is reasonably ready to attempt a toddler nap routine.
- **Toddler – Preschool Transitions:** The toddler room is license for ages 1 year through 3 years, although children may begin transition to the preschool room at 2.5 years. Before a child transitions to preschool, the teachers assess their ability to socialize, problem solve, follow directions, and play semi-independently. Additionally, because the preschool room does not have nap time, teachers and parents together determine if the child is ready to try, or already skipping their afternoon nap. Transition visits to the preschool room can happy at any time during the day, but generally do not exceed 2 hours so as not to overwhelm the toddler.

- **Preschool or Out-of-Center Transitions:** Transitions out of the preschool room can occur at any time. Due to the nature of our program Children's Alley is not always aware when a child will be transitioning to another center or into Kindergarten. Because of this, we extend the invitation for all families to discuss with their teachers the point at which they anticipate transitioning out of the program so the teachers are able to support the child and parents throughout the transition.

Community Resources

As part of Children's Alley's mission to serve the families of Boulder County and beyond, we maintain a list of resources available in the area for services such as: housing, food, financial assistance, legal services, child development resources, and family health services, to name a few. A complete list of these resources is available at the front desk of Children's Alley. Additionally, our staff can assist in finding appropriate resources for the needs of any family.

Quality Improvement Plan

Children's Alley continuously strives to improve its practices so that we may best care for the families we serve. As part of this plan, we have a list of goals we have developed based on current early childhood research and best practices, results from our parent surveys, and observation of the children. These goals are available for parents to review in the front office.

Z. Parking

Parents are welcome to use the available drop-off parking space located on Mapleton Ave. north of the YWCA. **However, the parking time must not exceed 15 minutes as a courtesy to all other families using our services. Metered parking is also available in front of the building.** Parents will enter through the main doors facing 14th Street. Please do not park in the parking lot on the south side of the building

If your drop-off/pick-up time will take longer than 15 minutes, please park along Mapleton Ave. between the unloading signs. Sacred Heart parking lot is off limits for our clients.

AA. Complaints

Please speak with the Program Director regarding any concerns you may have about your child's well being during his/her visit to Children's Alley. Additionally, complaints about the safety and adequacy of the program may be made to the Colorado Department of Human Services by phone or in writing (contact information below). We request that you talk to us first so we may benefit from your input.

Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: (303) 866-5958

BB. Child Abuse Reporting

As childcare providers we are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Colorado Department of Human Services. The department will determine if further investigation is warranted. The telephone number to report child abuse is (303) 441-1000.

CC. Dropping your child off at Children's Alley

Dropping your child off at childcare can be a stressful, emotional event for both children *and* parents. We would like to offer a few helpful tips to support you in this important transition.

- **Try to visit the center with your child prior to the first visit.** You can call to set up an appointment to drop by for fifteen (15) or twenty (20) minutes. Your child can play, meet the teachers and get a feel for this new setting.
- **Talk with your child about the first visit.** Prepare them that you are going to leave them to play with new friends. You can remind them about all of the fun things they will be doing – indoor and outdoor play, using dress-ups, cars, puzzles, play-dough, maybe doing some art work or painting, perhaps going on a walk, or having snacks or meals. **Let them know that you will be coming back and help them understand when you will return** (check our daily schedule – for example, if you will return around 3:30 PM you can let your child know you will be back to get them right after snack).
- **Saying goodbye will take between five (5) and fifteen (15) minutes** depending on your child, his or her age, and their comfort level with being away from you. Please plan ahead so that you have time to help your child transition without the stress of being late. **DO NOT** sneak out of the room while the child is occupied; it may make you feel better but the child will become distrustful. When a drop off is calm and casual it will go more smoothly and save you time in the long run. The same applies for pick-up. It can be difficult for children to interrupt their play and rush off – they often want to play with you and show you what they have been doing all day.
- **Bringing a special toy or blanket from home** provides a transitional object that helps your child feel safe in a new environment. For very young children, we recommend bringing a blanket that you have slept on so that your baby can be comforted by your scent while they are here.
- **It can be helpful to develop a “goodbye ritual”.** Each time you drop off follow the same steps – ex: sign-in, read a story together or do a puzzle, and then say goodbye. **Consistency** with this ritual helps your child feel safe and secure.
- When you arrive at the center **check in with the staff** and let us know how your child's day is going. Help us get to know your child and we will do our very best to help them feel at home. The teacher will do a well child check – looking for signs of illness or fatigue. The teacher may question you on the child's previous night.
- Staff members gauge their responses to your child based on your child's behavior. We prefer to take things at the child's pace. Usually we will welcome your child by trying to engage them in play with other children and toys.
- **Once your child is beginning to settle, say goodbye and only say it once, then leave immediately.** Prolonging the goodbye can be confusing for the child. It is important for you to leave even when your child begins to cry. Teachers will lovingly help them self-soothe as they begin their time at Children's Alley. Sometimes parents are tempted to *sneak-out* to avoid the crying that can happen at drop-off. Although it

may be more complicated, an honest approach helps build a positive and trusting relationship between you and your child.

- **Please feel free to speak with any staff** about any concerns you may have with drop off – we're happy to help!
- **It is a normal and healthy part of development for children to experience separation anxiety.** Your child may cry when you leave. It usually only takes a few minutes for children to be consoled before they begin to play. We encourage you to call about ½ hour after you drop off so that you can check in and know that your child has begun to play and feels safe. Likewise it is a healthy developmental sign for children to cry upon your return, to refuse to go home, or sometimes to act as though you are not there. Children are simply trying to process the strong emotions they experience separating and reuniting with the most important person in their lives – you!

DD. Emergency Policies:

Please note that any and all firearms, weapons, drugs, and pets are not allowed on YWCA Boulder County premises including Children's Alley and it's playgrounds.

Inclement Weather

In case of a blizzard or excessively hot weather, staff may contact parents to pick up their children, and staff will be required to remain at Children's Alley until all children have been picked up. Children's Alley may close due to weather related building malfunctions if we are not able to provide water, heat, food, or circulating air. We will also close if staff is not able to get to our facility due to weather. If the weather conditions become severe, such as a blizzard or other harsh winter conditions, parents will be notified to pick up their children as soon as possible.

Children's Alley follows the same weather closings as Boulder Valley School District.

Fire Safety

Children's Alley has an automatic, fire department approved, operating fire alarm system to warn occupants of the existence of fire or to facilitate the orderly conduct of fire exit drills. Every exit is clearly visible and each escape path is clearly marked. Children's Alley has obtained written permission from the local fire department for the use of a security lock on the exit doors. Children's Alley does not use the lock while children are present at the center. Children's Alley holds fire drills on a monthly basis.

Infant room (North Classroom)

In case of fire: Children and staff will exit through the south exit, go south across the playground to the alley proceed down 14th St. to Pine. They will turn left and go to the steps in front of St. John's Church.

In case of tornado: Children and staff will go to the Men's Restroom outside the Infant Room door.

Toddler room (East Classroom)

In case of fire: Children and staff will exit through the east doors and go through the east playground, out into the alley. Proceed down 14th St. to Pine. Turn left and go to the steps in front of St. John's Church.

In case of tornado: Children and staff will go across the west hallway into the Preschool room and down into the downstairs area away from windows. This area includes the hall, part of the Edge room, and the bathroom. We will remain there until it is safe to go out.

Preschool room (West Classroom)

In case of fire: Children and staff will exit through the north entrance door in the classroom and proceed down 14th St. to Pine. Turn left and go to the steps in front of St. John's Church.

In case of tornado: Children and staff will go into the downstairs area away from windows. This area includes the hall, part of the Edge room, and the bathroom. We will remain there until it is safe to go out.

Lost Child Policy:

Staff follows strict security procedures with each venture out of the building. Teachers carry cell phones and emergency contact information with them and are sure to leave their phone numbers with the Children's Alley office.

If a child were to become lost, staff would follow these procedures:

1. Do a head count and make sure the other children are safe and with another staff member.
2. Notify the Director.
3. Do a search of any building and grounds that may be involved.
4. If not found, we will notify the parents and the proper authorities.

Medical Emergency

All staff members are First Aid/CPR certified. Children's Alley posts medical guide charts and keeps First Aid kits easily accessible. If professional medical attention is required, parents and 911 will be contacted.

EE. Notification When Child Care Service or Child Is Withdrawn

In the rare instance that child care service is withdrawn by Children's Alley, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing. If at any point a parent/guardian chooses to withdraw his/her child from care, please notify Children's Alley by telephone or in writing and be sure to collect all of the child's personal belongings and medications (if applicable).

FF. HEAL – Healthy Eating, Active Living

HEALTHY EATING BEHAVIORS and NUTRITION POLICIES

We at Children's Alley support your child's healthy food choices by:

- Gently encouraging children to try fruits and vegetables and giving positive reinforcement when they do.
- Role-modeling positive behaviors by eating fruits and vegetables in the presence of children.

- Observing and supporting hunger and fullness cues.
- Providing opportunities for nutrition education for parents and staff.
- During celebrations and holiday parties, our program will offer fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.
- Not using food as a reward.

We at Children's Alley understand the importance of providing age appropriate food and beverages and because of this:

- If a mother wishes to breast feed exclusively, the program will make every effort to provide breast milk to the child and supplement only when breast milk is gone.
- We will continue supporting families who are breastfeeding beyond 12 months.
- We will follow the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations and serve breast milk and/or iron fortified infant formula in a bottle until an infant is developmentally ready to accept purees or table food.
- We will only serve whole milk for children younger than 2 years old and fat-free or 1% milk for children aged 2 years and older.
- Water will be clearly visible and available to the children at all times (indoors and outdoors).

NUTRITION POLICIES

We at Children's Alley are committed to serving food that promotes children's health and wellbeing. Therefore:

- The meals and snacks we serve meet the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements, which are available upon request.
- We are a completely nut-free facility.
- We serve a variety of healthy foods with emphasis on plenty of whole grain breads and cereals, fresh fruits and vegetables and protein from both animal and vegetable sources. We serve reduced fat milk (1%) after age 2 years.
- We serve foods of high nutrient value. We limit high-fat, high-sugar foods that are low in nutrient value, in an attempt to help children learn to enjoy healthy food.
- Children need many chances during the day to eat to ensure that their small tummies do not get too hungry. Meals and snacks are offered to the children every 2-3 hours.
- Appropriate furniture, utensils and dishes will be used at mealtimes. Children will gain confidence in eating as they learn to eat successfully on their own.
- We serve family style whenever possible because it is important for children to learn to serve themselves. We never force, trick or coerce a child into eating. We honor the division of responsibility in feeding children, acknowledging that our role as care givers is to provide nourishing food and it is the role of the child to decide how much to eat.
- Children always wash their hands before all meals and snacks.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

We at Children's Alley are committed to your children's health. We recognize the importance of staff as positive role models for our children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore we will:

- Role-model positive behaviors by being physically active with children, indoors and outdoors.
- Encourage all children to try new physical activities and respond positively when they do
- Share our own positive experiences with physical activity and facilitate conversations with the children about their experiences
- Provide fun, engaging physical activity in our lesson plans
- Make safe equipment accessible in the classroom at all times (e.g. soft balls, push-pull toys, squishy mats, etc.)
- Not use physical activity as a punishment
- Re-direct children to safe physical activities and/or involve them in discussions about what to do when safety issues or other concerns (e.g. mud, arguments over play equipment, etc.)
- Children attending Children's Alley shall play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Time planned for outdoor play and physical activity depends on the age group and weather conditions. Activities shall include structured play (led by the teacher or adult volunteer) and free play (not led by an adult).
- Infants will participate in planned daily physical activity that is safe, engaging, and appropriate for each infant to support their physical development and health.
- Toddlers shall participate in 60 to 90 minutes per day of moderate physical activity.
- Preschoolers shall participate in 90 to 120 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- Children shall be dressed appropriately for the weather, including wearing appropriate seasonal clothing and footwear, so they can participate fully, move freely, and play safely.
- Child care providers will inform parents, caregivers and families that children need to be dressed appropriately for the current weather conditions to play outdoors.
- Children should wear clothing appropriate for the current weather:
- SNOW: heavy coat, waterproof boots, hat, and mittens
- RAIN: raincoat and waterproof boots
- DIFFERENT TEMPERATURES DURING THE DAY: layers of clothes
- Footwear should provide support for running and climbing, as do gym shoes, sneakers, and other shoes with rubber soles and closed toes.

HH. Breastfeeding Friendly Policy

Supportive Environment

- We provide an atmosphere that welcomes breastfeeding families. We support mothers who continue to breastfeed their infants/children as they return and continue to work.

- We have a private, designated breastfeeding room for mothers to breastfeed their children. We welcome mothers to breastfeed in the classroom as well.
- We maintain a breastfeeding supportive environment through posting and providing culturally appropriate breastfeeding support materials (pictures, posters, etc) not including those produced or supplied by commercial entities and/or manufactures of infant formula.
- We “check-in” with mothers for feedback and ways to continue providing support.
- Staff communicates the infant’s changing schedule (i.e., feeding, napping, etc.) so a mother can adjust her schedule for pumping and/or visiting to feed her infant.

Initial Contact

- We discuss breastfeeding support with all potential new families and share this policy and breastfeeding resources with them.
- We work with parents prior to their first day in child care to transition the infant to bottle or cup feedings.

Feeding and Handling Milk

- Staff follows storage and handling of breast milk as defined by Colorado Department of Human Services regulations.
- We discuss with all families how expressed milk is handled at our center/home.
- Freezer space is available for milk storage.
- Staff informs families on written procedures on the proper way to label and handle breast milk.
- Staff coordinates with parents about the quantity of milk remaining in containers to avoid waste.
- We feed infants on demand as we observe hunger cues and coordinating the last feeding of the day to meet the mother’s feeding needs (either to feed or await mother’s feeding).
- All caregivers hold infants when feeding them.

Staff Training

- Staff receives training at a minimum of once a year on feeding breast milk, breastfeeding policy, and supporting exclusive breastfeeding.
- Staff is monitored for compliance with breastfeeding policy and standards.
- Families have the right to request information about the content of breastfeeding training for staff.
- This policy is reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.