



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

GROWING TOGETHER

2011-2011 Great Escape



**Parent Handbook
State licensed
Serving Stevens Point & Plover
Public Schools**

IF A CHILD....

If a child lives with criticism,
he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility,
he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule,
he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame,
he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance,
he learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement,
he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise,
he learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness,
he learns justice.
If a child lives with security,
he learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval,
he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
He learns to find love in the world.

Author unknown

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Welcome to the YMCA Great Escape Program

This information was prepared to answer most of your questions about your child's school age care program. Please read the information carefully. If you still have questions, please contact the Stevens Point Area YMCA Child Development Office at 715 342 2999.

The YMCA Great Escape Program is designed to offer well-supervised, safe, and quality care for school age children. Our program is set up to accommodate both working and non-working parents. It offers children an opportunity to grow and develop in an enriching, multi-choice, encouraging, and pressure-free environment.

In a semi-structured setting, our program will help children to:

- Grow personally and increase self-esteem
- Clarify issues
- Improve relationships and parent involvement
- Appreciate diversity
- Become better leaders and supporters
- Develop specific skills
- HAVE FUN

The Stevens Point Area YMCA is a non-profit, charitable organization that is dedicated to the development of the whole person: Spirit, Mind and Body. No child is ever denied membership or participation due to financial need.



FAMILY LIFE AND GREAT ESCAPE

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The Stevens Point Area YMCA is committed to family life and to helping individuals grow and function in their family unit.

We recognize the uniqueness of each family and its own make-up, whether it's a traditional two-parent home, single-parent family, or extended family. Whatever your situation may be, the YMCA supports and respects your values and goals as a family.

The family is still the place where values are formed, love is learned, self-image is developed and approaches to Human relationships are established. Great Escape acts as an extension to your family with caring, positive role models and an encouraging environment in which children thrive. It is a significant way that the YMCA continues its commitment to families. Every child has the right to a healthy, happy childhood. To make children aware of their rights, we have created a Bill of Rights for School Age Children.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

- You have the right to express your thoughts, feelings and desires.
- You have the right to be safe and have your body respected.
- You have the right to have your feelings respected and not to be teased, frightened or embarrassed.
- You have the right to be treated fairly and to receive the same privileges and considerations as everyone else.
- You have the right to your privacy.
- You have the right to have your work and possessions respected by others.

ADMISSION

- Any child ages 5 to 12 years is welcome.
- The Stevens Point Area YMCA will not discriminate by race, color, sex, origin or creed.
- In order to ensure that each child's individual needs can be met within the scope of our program, all children who register for Great Escape do so with the understanding that during the first two weeks of attendance, each child will be assessed to determine if they can successfully function within the parameters of our program.
- If this initial assessment questions the likelihood that the child's individual needs can be met in our program, a conference will be set with parent/guardian to further assess the situation.
- Every effort will be made to provide reasonable accommodations for each child as long as the child's participation in the program does not require an inordinate amount of one-on-one staff time that would not allow for safe and quality care of the other children in the group.
- Parents who have not been contacted for a conference within the first two weeks of attending the program can assume that their child's needs can be met within the scope of our program.
- At any time thereafter, if the staff have reason to question the compatibility of a child's continued participation in our program, a conference will be set with the parent/guardian to further assess the situation.

ENROLLMENT

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- All enrollment forms must be completed at the time of registration.
- All forms must be completed and submitted a minimum of **three working days** prior to the requested start date.
- Updating all information, including additional immunizations, changes in address, telephone number, or family situation is the responsibility of the parent.
- It is the Great Escape policy to try to accommodate as many families as possible. However, due to enrollment capacity regulations, we are capable of serving a limited amount of children during any given a.m. or p.m. session. Therefore, registration priorities will be as follows:
 - * Current Great Escape families will have the opportunity to register prior to new families.
 - * Registration for schedules consisting of all a.m. and/or p.m. sessions will be processed prior to other schedules.
 - * A limited number of variable schedules may be allowed at each site.

Refer to the Registration Information Summary Sheet for registration dates.

SCHEDULING

- Your child will be scheduled to attend according to the weekly schedule that you indicated on the registration packet.
- Termination requests and monthly schedule change requests must be submitted in writing to the Child Development Office **15 days in advance**. All refunds are subject to a \$5 cancellation fee.

SCHEDULING

- Variable schedules and payment must be submitted to the Child Development Office by the 20th of the month before care is needed. Schedules may be submitted by dropping off, mailing or e-mailing to the Child Development Office. Failure to notify may result in the discontinuation of the variable schedule option for your child. You will be charged for all scheduled sessions. Failure to submit a schedule could deny your child access to Great Escape for that session.

- Adding sessions beyond the schedule option you've selected requires prior approval from the Child Development Office. In accordance with our licensing policies, approval is based upon the number of children scheduled to attend any given a.m. or p.m. schedule. It is in your best interest to request added sessions at least two business days in advance. Payment is due at the time the session is scheduled.

- Please call the YMCA Child Development Office 715 342 2999 to advise of any absences. A message may be left on our voice mail. **Do not call the site telephone number.** This is to avoid risk of missed messages for the Great Escape staff.

- If a child who is scheduled to attend an afternoon session is absent, and the absence has not been reported, staff will contact parents, school staff, and/or other emergency contacts to determine the child's whereabouts. Therefore, to avoid unnecessary searching, it is important that the Child Development Office be notified of absences.

HOURS

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Morning Session

6:30-8:55 a.m.

Operates on all days school is in session during the morning and/or full days.

Afternoon Session

3:35-6:00 p.m.

Operates on all days school is in session for the full day.

- We ask that you not bring your child to the program before 6:30 a.m. and that your child is picked up by 6:00 p.m.
- Great Escape runs concurrent with the Stevens Point Area Public School District Schedule.
- The Days Off program is available at the YMCA for most school days not in session for Stevens Point Area Public Schools. Pre-registration is required at the YMCA Child Development Office.
- The Snow Days program is available at the YMCA for full school days cancelled due to inclement weather. Pre-registration is required at the YMCA Child Development Office.
- There will be no Great Escape afternoon sessions if schools are dismissed early due to weather conditions.



FEES AND PAYMENT

- **Registration Fee:** There is a non-refundable \$15 registration fee per child due at the time of registration.
- **Payments:** To simplify payments, Great Escape payments have been divided into 9 equal payments. Although specific dates included in each periods may vary from month to month, the payments are equal amount and are due the 15th of each month prior to attendance for 9 months.
- **Payment Schedule:** The first Payment is due at the time of registration, and the final payment is due April 15th, 2012. Any family with fees not paid by the 1st of the month of care may not return until fees are paid in full, including late fees.
- **Payment Options:** You may make payments by bank draft, credit card draft, cash, check, or credit card. You may mail or drop off your payments at the YMCA, 1000 Division St., Stevens Point, WI 54481; or call 715 342 2999 with credit card information. Please put your child's name on all correspondence.
- **Late Fees:** Payments not received by the 15th of each month prior to attendance will be assessed a late fee of \$10.00. A \$15.00 fee will be assessed for returned checks.
- **Financial Assistance:** If you receive financial assistance, you are responsible for all co-payments. If your child is registered for Great Escape, Days Off or Snow Days and does not attend, you will be responsible for the full tuition amount. We will not receive funding if your child is not in attendance.

- **Late Pickup:** Children must be picked up by the closing time of 6:00 pm or an overtime fee of \$5.00 for each additional 15 minutes will be charged. Time will be determined by clock in the room. Chronic tardiness may be grounds for termination.

- **Schedule Changes and Terminations:** All cancellations and schedule changes must be received **in writing 15 days prior** to the change. Notify the Child Development Office by one of the following methods: mail your notice to 1000 Division St., Stevens Point, WI 54481, fax it to 715 342 2987, e-mail it to childdevelopment@spymca.org, or drop it off directly at the YMCA. Additions to the schedule will be made based on availability.

Cancellations for Days Off or Snow Days less than 15 days in advance may not receive a refund if your child's spot cannot be filled.

All refunds are subject to a \$5 cancellation fee.

- **Add a Session:** If you need to add a session, you must call the Child Development Office prior to your child attending the Great Escape Program and get approval. Each added session must be paid for in advance. Switching one session for another is not allowed.



TYPICAL DAY AT THE GREAT ESCAPE

Morning Session

6:30-7:30 a.m. Free Choice/Homework

7:30-7:45 a.m. Bathroom Break/Snack

7:45-8:00 a.m. Group Time

8:00-8:30 a.m. Activity of the Day

8:30-8:55 a.m. Outdoor Play

Afternoon Session

3:35-3:55 p.m. Homework/Reading Time

3:55-4:15 p.m. Bathroom Break/Snack

4:15-4:45 p.m. Outdoor Play/Large Motor Activity

4:45-5:00 p.m. Group Time

5:00-5:30 p.m. Activity of the Day

5:30-6:00 p.m. Free Choice

The schedule of activities may vary depending on arrival and departure time of the majority of the children.

Activities include games, sports, arts and crafts, group discussion, music, special projects focused on a weekly theme, and most of all, fun!

The program also offers a quiet/study area, space for a few friends to play together, and a relaxed environment in which children can prepare for the start of a new day or unwind after a busy day.

NOTE: A curriculum plan for specific daily activities is posted at each site.

Y KIDS FIT

The YMCA is proud to offer Y Kids Fit at our before and after school program. Trained YMCA staff will lead this no-cost program for 30 minutes twice a week.

The addition of Y Kids Fit is prompted by the nation wide epidemic of childhood obesity. Y Kids Fit will focus on game play and making physical activity fun. It's a great opportunity for kids who aren't interested in traditional sports to learn about alternative ways to stay active.

One session per week will be dedicated to organized games and team building activities. The second session will include obstacle courses, the ladder climb, and other coordination and strength building activities.

Y Kids Fit is offered at and Madison school for the 2011-12 school year. We hope to be offering this great program at more sites in the future.

For more information on Y Kids Fit or other Healthy Kids programs offered at the YMCA, call Nicole Proulx, School Age Director ext. 342, or Brandy Proctor, Fitness Director ext. 306, at 715 342 2980.



ARRIVAL

- Parent/Guardian or other authorized person must sign child (ren) in by indicating time of arrival for the morning sessions.
- Site staff will sign the children in after school.
- Great Escape's responsibility for your child begins when he/she enters the Center's door and ends when your child leaves the Center's door.

DEPARTURE

- Parent/Guardian or other authorized person must sign child (ren) out by indicating time of departure for afternoon sessions.
- Only authorized persons may sign a child out of the program. Please be prepared to show identification.
- It is your responsibility to return our form listing each authorized person, their relationship to the child, address, and telephone number to be kept on file at the Site. No child will be released without the individual showing identification. Any updates regarding authorized pick up must be submitted in writing to the Child Development Office.
- Parents or authorized persons shall pick up children by 6:00 p.m. A late fee of \$5 per 15 minutes will be charged after this time.
- If your child is not picked up by 6:15 p.m., staff will contact individuals listed as emergency contacts to pick up the child. If unsuccessful, staff shall contact the police and/or social services to pick up your child.

- Chronic tardiness may be grounds for termination from program.
- If a parent or other authorized person appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs or exhibits behavior that gives staff reasonable concern for the safety of the child, staff will attempt to contact another authorized person listed in the child's file to come pick up the child. If all attempts to contact another authorized person have been exhausted, staff will contact the police and/or social services for assistance.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

If your child will be participating in special activities while attending Great Escape (breakfast, Scouts, clubs, athletics...) it is essential that parents complete a Special Activities Form prior to the first day that your child will be participating in special activities. Forms are available at the Great Escape site and the YMCA Child Development Office.



NUTRITION

Morning Session: A snack will be provided for all children during the morning session. Snack will consist of crackers/ cereal and milk.

NOTE: Please remember this is only a snack and it is important for your child to eat breakfast prior to attending Great Escape.

Afternoon Session: A snack will be provided for all children shortly after arrival. The snack will consist of crackers, fruit snacks, cereal products, and/or other nutritional items, as well as milk. Snack time is an opportunity for the children and staff to sit and relax together, share the experiences of the day, and to plan future activities.

*A snack menu is posted at all of the Great Escape Sites.



HEALTH

Please take time in the morning to check your child for the following symptoms: fever, diarrhea, rashes, vomiting, and any signs of communicable diseases. If any of these symptoms are present, do not bring your child to Great Escape.

- If a child develops any of the above symptoms while at Great Escape, he/she will be placed in temporary isolation and parents will be notified to pick up the child.

- If the staff requires assistance with a sick child, they may consult with the school's nurse or other school personnel.

- Any child at Great Escape shall be considered well enough to participate in all outdoor activities. A written doctor's excuse will be needed if an exception is to be made.

- A notice shall be posted if any child comes down with a communicable disease. Please notify us if your child has been exposed to or develops any communicable disease.

- Medication will only be administered when an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form is on file. All medicine (prescription and nonprescription) must be in its original container and must be labeled with the child's name, dosage, time and date. All medications administered are documented in the child's file and the Site's Medical Journal.

***Do not supply your child with any prescription or nonprescription medication to take on their own at Great Escape.**

INJURY

If your child is injured at Great Escape, the staff will take whatever steps that may be necessary to obtain emergency medical care. These include but are not limited to the following:

1. Attempts to contact the parent/guardian
2. Attempts to contact the parent/guardian through emergency contacts
3. Call 911, an ambulance, or paramedic

A written Incident/Accident report will be filed at the YMCA and the Site's Medical Journal. For all minor injuries parents will be notified of the incident/accident upon end of day pick-up if not contacted earlier.



DISCIPLINE

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In our Great Escape program, our goal is to provide a fun, fair, multi-choice environment for all participants at all times. In order to ensure a supportive, trusting environment, that promotes positive attitudes, our program implemented a discipline policy that incorporates the YMCA Character Development Approach based upon the YMCA four values.

YMCA Values: Honesty, Responsibility, Caring, and Respect

We challenge our participants to accept and demonstrate these positive values. Values clarification is meant to help children think more independently and critically about values. While attending our programs, children are expected and encouraged to adhere to the Children's Rights and to practice and demonstrate behavior that is consistent with the YMCA Four Values. If a participant fails to behave in accordance with the Four Values, he/she will be subject to our discipline policy which is as follows:

- 1. Staff will attempt to redirect the child to behave appropriately, phrasing it in light of the Four Values.** For example, if a child repeatedly fails to follow staff directions, the staff member may respond in this manner, "You need to show me and the other children respect by listening to and following directions when asked. This way we can move onto the next activity without interruption." Each day children start the day with a "clean slate" in regards to past behavior challenges.
- 2. If the behavior continues to cause a problem, staff may remove the child from the group for a one-on-one discussion.** At this time, staff will warn the child that if the behavior continues, they may need to speak to a parent/guardian. This could happen at pick-up, the next morning, or if the behavior is extremely disruptive, a phone call

3. The Stevens Point Area YMCA and the child's school will exchange and share information related to the child including: YMCA reports, behavior plans, school psychological evaluations, social work reports, IEP's and related evaluations/reports.

4. If the behavior is threatening to the child or other children attending the program, the following behavior steps will be followed:

1st Occurrence: Call/notify parent of the situation. They will be informed that if there is another situation to that degree or more, child will be suspended for 1 day.

2nd Occurrence: Child will be suspended for 1 day. Parents will be informed that if there is another situation to that degree or more, child will be suspended for 3 days.

3rd Occurrence: Child will be suspended for 3 days. Parents will be informed that if there is another situation to that degree or more, child will be terminated from Great Escape, Days Off and Snow Days.

5. At any time, a conference may be scheduled by staff or the parent to assess the situation and develop a plan to help the child succeed in the program.

6. Chronic behavior problems may lead to termination from the program. Every effort will be made by staff to enlist the cooperation of the child and the parents to solve each problem.

TERMINATION

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Parents register for Great Escape with the understanding it is for the full school year.

Parent Termination: A two week written notice is required if a parent decides to withdraw their child from the program. Two weeks tuition is charged from the date the notice is received by the YMCA Child Development Office.

*All refunds are subject to a \$5 cancellation fee

Mutual Termination: When parents and staff agree that placement of a child into the program has been inappropriate and is not in the child's best interest, the child may be withdrawn without penalty to parents or Center.

Center Termination: A parent may be asked to withdraw their child when:

- It is evident the child cannot adjust to the program's environment
- A child's behavior becomes emotionally or physically detrimental to the other children enrolled
- A parent fails to complete and submit required forms
- A parent fails to pay the fees
- A parent fails to observe the program's regulations including, but not limited to, departure rules or excessive unreported absences

Center termination must be approved by the School Age Director or Administrator.

YMCA=QUALITY

The YMCA Great Escape Program is licensed by the State of Wisconsin. All of our staff meet or exceed the state requirements for their positions. They possess a genuine interest and commitment to providing quality care for your child.

Training is provided to all staff to incorporate the YMCA's mission of developing Spirit, Mind, and Body so each child can reach his/her fullest potential. Training in regards to character development is provided to all staff to ensure they are demonstrating positive examples of Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, and Caring for all participants.

All state licensing regulations, the YMCA School Age Care Programs Licensing Policies, and your child's personal records are available for your inspection at your child's Great Escape Site. Our school age program receives the full cooperation from the Stevens Point Area School District.

Please accept our open invitation for parents to always feel welcome to visit and/or participate with the child at Great Escape.

The YMCA Great Escape staff welcome and encourage any comments, questions, or concerns you may have. We encourage all families to make suggestions or bring in ideas that will enable us to provide a program that meets as many needs as possible.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

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Character Development is at the heart of what we do in the YMCA and at Great Escape. The YMCA asserts that the best long-term solution for many social problems in our country is challenging people to accept and demonstrate positive values. It is our intent to provide a school age program that will help young people to build character development through the four YMCA values:

CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, & RESPONSIBILITY

We are dedicated to providing a fair and positive program for all children. We want your child to succeed!

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.





FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA Child Development Office

1000 Division Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715 342 2999
childdevelopment@spymca.org

Child Development Office Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

School Age Director

Nicole Proulx
715 342 2980 ext 342
nproulx@spymca.org