



*You'll love the  
way they grow!*

# Family Handbook

YMCA Acacia Ridge

Early Learning Service



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## Welcome

On behalf of the YMCA of Queensland, we welcome you and your child/ren to our YMCA Acacia Ridge Early Learning Service. The Family Handbook provides an overview of the Early Education Program we deliver and what you can expect for your child/ren. It is also a valuable resource you can access during your time with us.

The YMCA Acacia Ridge Early Learning Service provides Early Education programs and activities for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years of age. Our Educators work hard to ensure children are cared for in a welcoming, supportive and stimulating environment. Educators provide a range of culturally diverse activities to support their development.

The YMCA of Queensland follows the National Quality Standards for Early Education including the National Early Years Learning Framework. Your input and feedback is valued to ensure the service continues to achieve high standards.

## YMCA Contact Details

### **YMCA Group Manager Children's Services**

Level 1, 25 Harvton Street,

Stafford QLD 4053

M. 0418 879 632

E. [michele.meredith@ymcaqueensland.org.au](mailto:michele.meredith@ymcaqueensland.org.au)

### **Department of Education, Early Childhood Education and Care**

Upper Mt Gravatt (Metro City)

T. 07 3028 8064

E. [metrocity.ecec@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:metrocity.ecec@qed.qld.gov.au)



## The Y Belief and Approach to Learning

**Belief:** We believe in the power of inspired young people and the every child and young person should be given a real chance to develop in body, mind and spirit

**The Y Approach to Learning** is based on three fundamental principles, which are essential for providing the best possible programs, environment and services for children and their families

**Building Capacity:** The Y has a role in building the capacity of those whose lives we touch and work with.

**Developing the whole child:** The Y strives for the highest quality education and care, assisting each child to maximize their learning outcomes.

**Providing high quality, evidence-informed practice:** They Y enable children to identify their own learning interests and needs and support them as they develop and grow.

## The Y Values

As part of the worldwide YMCA movement we embrace the values of:

- ▼ Care
- ▼ Honesty
- ▼ Respect
- ▼ Responsibility



## The Y Commitment

- ▼ The delivery of high quality care and services including rich and diverse early learning experiences with access to quality resources that consider each child's individual need.
- ▼ Our program is measured against the National Quality Standards and includes a continuous improvement process.

## The Y Philosophy

We believe in:

- ▼ The dignity and intrinsic worth of all people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or belief.
- ▼ The whole person, consisting of a body, mind and spirit, each of which is of equal importance.
- ▼ Healthy communities based on relationships between people that are characterised by love, understanding, mutual respect and a sense of belonging.
- ▼ Equality of opportunity and justice for all people.
- ▼ The diversity of people, communities and nations.
- ▼ Acceptance of personal responsibility.

Each child will be afforded opportunities and encouraged to gain a sense of self-worth, and a respect for the worth, dignity and rights of others. Each member of The Y Early Learning Service community accepts responsibility for provision of a safe, friendly, non-judgemental, stimulating and educational environment for the care of children.

We provide a visionary service far beyond the usual, where we ensure children have a childhood that is full of play, adventure and investigation.

Our aim is to provide a warm, caring atmosphere where all the children feel welcome and secure. We assist them to become confident learners, and to take part in their own learning process by providing them with the opportunity to develop a sense of worth and help them to feel valued as capable individuals.

We strongly believe in the importance of developing consistency between home practices and the care environment to enhance the child's feeling of security, which is the key to a successful learning environment. We recognise parents as children's first educators.

We help to create a community where the adults and children experience a sense of connection and new possibilities for making the world a better place.

Our care environments are valued as an important part of the learning process and the children are encouraged to choose their activities and move freely between play experiences. We provide opportunities for whole group participation of all children and to promote their self-expression and develop self-esteem by incorporating aspects of different cultures into our curriculum.

## Hours of Operation

The YMCA Acacia Ridge Early Learning Service provides care for children between the ages of 6 weeks and 5 years of age. The Service operates 51 weeks a year and are closed only for gazetted Public Holidays and between Christmas and New Year. Operating hours are between 6.30AM – 6.00PM.



## Enrolment

- Prior to commencing at the Service, the parent/guardian is required to thoroughly complete a The Y Enrolment Form with accurate/up to date information. This information will be kept in a secure location at the Service.
- It is essential to ensure all parents/guardians have completed all the sections fully, signed and dated the enrolment form and any attachments.
- Enrolment forms must be updated whenever there is a change to personal details. It is crucial the Service has correct information, particularly contact numbers, in case of an emergency involving a child.
- As part of the enrolment process, it is vital to ensure any special requirements are recorded with details. Please discuss these requirements with the Service Director. For example; allergies, medical conditions, behavioural issues, emotional issues and parenting orders.

## Bookings

Bookings must be made for permanent days each week. If vacancies exist, casual days can be booked by contacting the service by phone or email, prior to the day/s care is required.

## Changes to bookings

**Two (2) weeks prior notice in writing** must be received by the Service to make any changes to a permanent booking. This will be confirmed by the Service Director and is subject to availability.

## Cancellation of bookings

**Two (2) weeks prior notice in writing** must be received by the Service Director for the cancellation of ALL care from the Centre.

## Absences from the Service

The service must be contacted if your child will not be attending care that day:

☎ 07 3277 6333

💻 arels.reception@ymcaqueensland.org.au

If a child is absent from the service on a booked day, fees are still payable.

Each child is eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for up to 42 absences a year. These absences are for one child across all approved child care services. These absences can be taken for any reason and do not require supporting documentation. Should a child use more than 42 days per year, full child care fees will be charged as no CCS will be paid.

## Fees

- Accounts will be issued on a weekly basis and payment is due by Thursday of each week.
- Fees are to be paid for the days child/ren are booked into the service including times when the child/ren is absent due to illness, holidays etc.
- Fees are payable on all gazetted public holidays.
- Payments can be made via BPay, EFTPOS or Debit Success. The preferred option for all families is Debit Success.
- If a family leaves the service and still has fees owing, Debit Success payments will continue to be debited until fees are paid in full.
- Collection of children after licensed operating hours, will incur the following fees:
  - For the fifteen (15) minutes after closing, or part there of - \$15.00 per child;
  - After the initial fifteen (15) minutes, \$1 per minute.
  - If late collection occurs on three occasions within a three month period, the families ongoing enrolment will be reviewed and cancellation of enrolment may occur.

**THE YMCA IS CONSCIOUSLY SUSTAINABLE - FOR THIS REASON ACCOUNTS WILL BE EMAILED WHERE POSSIBLE.**

## Holiday discounts

Families are entitled for up to four weeks of their regular booking pattern at 50% of full fee. Entitlement is recalculated each financial year.

## Overdue Fees

Refer to Fee Schedule for current conditions in relation to overdue fees.





## Child Care Subsidy

YMCA Acacia Ridge Early Learning Service is an Approved Service and registered to administer Child Care Subsidy entitlements. The easiest way to claim CCS is for the family to start their application on line. To do this the family will need to have a **myGov** account linked to Centrelink. If families don't have a **myGov** account they will need to set one up by calling Centrelink on 136150.

For further information on how families claim CCS please refer them to the following link: <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/claim-child-care-subsidy>

## Signing Children In and Out

Parents/guardians are required under CCS regulatory compliance to sign their child/ren in and out of the service at the time of arrival and departure.

Parents/guardians are requested to notify an educator of their arrival and departure for safety reasons.

Children will not be released to anyone not authorised by the parents/guardians. Persons unknown to the Service will be asked for identification, and confirmation sought from the parent/guardian if no prior approval is on record.

Children will not be released to a person under the age of 18 years of age unless that person is the child/rens parent/guardian.

## Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood and Care

The Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education and Care is responsible for administering the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011 and the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 that relates to the Service Approval of children's services in Queensland.

The role of the Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education and Care includes:

- Service Approvals for children’s services in Queensland;
- Monitoring Approved children’s services. Early Childhood Education and Care Authorised Officers make both announced and unannounced visits to services to ensure they are operating in accordance with the Legislation;
- Providing advice and support for families, children’s services and the community relating to child care.
- Investigating complaints or concerns lodged with the Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education and Care relating to the provision of an Approved Service;
- Providing professional advice on planning, design and establishment of new services.

Further information relating to the role of the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care, visit <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au>

## Australian Government Priority of Access

The demand for child care sometimes exceeds supply. The Australian Government has determined guidelines for allocating places in such circumstances. These guidelines apply to Child Care Services. They set out the following three (3) levels of priority:

- Priority 1 – A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect;
- Priority 2 – A child of a single parent, or of parents who both satisfy the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act;
- Priority 3 – Any other child.

## Settling In/Orientation Procedure For Children

All children need the opportunity to settle into the Service. They all react to situations and changes in different ways. Children may experience some anxiety about going to a new place for the first time. It is important that both parents and the early childhood educators work together to build a special relationship needed for successful adjustment. If it is possible, it is beneficial if both parent and child visit the service together, prior to commencement of care.

## Inclusion Support Subsidy

The Y offers programs which are socially inclusive. A number of factors are taken into consideration to meet the needs of each individual child. This is done in consultation with parents/guardians, our educators and the Inclusion Support Agency.

Our program may be eligible to receive an Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) which can assist with the inclusion of children with additional support needs. For further information concerning ISS, please speak to the Service Director.

## Community Diversity

We adopt an attitude of respect for all children and their families and educators regardless of background, physical capability or cultural diversity. This is encouraged by fostering high self-esteem and a positive self-concept in children by exploring similarities rather than differences.

The program will present positive experiences for the children which are based on gender equity. The service and educators aim to create an atmosphere where all children feel comfortable, secure and happy.

Parents/guardians from Non-English speaking backgrounds are invited and encouraged to contribute knowledge of their own culture to enhance the support we can provide to their child as well as benefiting the overall program.

Where a child has additional needs we will make every reasonable effort to overcome any barriers to provide access to care and ensure a positive and meaningful inclusion to the program.

We will engage the support of advisory agencies, visiting entertainers, members of the community and parents to support the program and enhance children's understanding of other cultures and people with additional needs.

We encourage parents/guardians and approved persons to participate in the program by utilising their talents, ideas and suggestions that will enhance the interaction and activities of the children at the Service.



## Staffing Structure/Management Structure

The YMCA of Queensland, is overseen by a Volunteer Board and Executive Management Team.

Each individual Y Early Education Service is managed by a Director who reports directly to the Group Manager Children’s Services. This structure is supported by the YMCA of Queensland, which is reportable to the Board and Executive Management Team.

## Staffing

The Y prides itself on employing suitably qualified educators to all positions to meet the legislative requirements. Our Educators Qualifications include Certificate 111, Diploma, Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care and Early Childhood Teaching ensuring the delivery of quality early education programs for children in care. Some transitional arrangements are made for educators that are in the process of qualifying.

All educators must complete a comprehensive recruitment and induction process to be part of the Y team including working with children’s checks, criminal history check, reference checks, 100 points of identification check. These checks establishing a person’s character and assessing capabilities to provide exceptional care and education in an Early Education setting.

Educator to Child ratios will be adhered to at all times and are as follows:

Age	Ratio
▼ 0-24 months	▼ 1 Ed: 4 children
▼ 24-36 months	▼ 1 Ed : 5 children
▼ 3 to 6 years	▼ 1 Ed : 11 children



## Child Protection-Safeguarding Children

The Y Director, educators and anyone engaged by the service will have a duty of care to protect the safety and wellbeing of the children using the service.

The Y supports the Government's position that in our society every child and young person deserves the right to thrive, learn and grow, be respected, valued and enabled to become an effective adult member of the community.

The Y supports the concept that a community in which the safety, stability, health, development and learning of every child and young person is protected and promoted throughout childhood.

The Y is entrusted to ensure that the people who care for children and young people act in the best interest of the child and take all reasonable steps to ensure the child's safety

The Y:

- Recognises that all children and young people have the right to develop and reach their potential in environments that are caring, nurturing and safe.
- Considers any form of child abuse including emotional, physical and sexual abuse or neglect as intolerable under any circumstances.
- Has a legal, moral and mission driven responsibility to protect children and young people from harm.
- Is required to ensure that any incident of suspected child abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.
- Ensure all educators hold a Positive Notice (Blue) Card in accordance with the YMCA of Australia's *Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy*. All Early Childhood Educators are mandated to report any suspected child abuse.
- All Y Child Care Services are accredited by the Australian Childhood Foundation.
- A copy of our full Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is available at the front counter, we are able to provide a copy on request. We also have child and young people-friendly versions available at <https://www.ymcaqueensland.org/about/safeguarding-children>

## Program and Activities

Programs and activities are developed for each child relevant to their age, interest and abilities. There are written educational plans that are well prepared, organised, resourced and co-ordinated.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is a National framework incorporated into every Y Early Learning Service. For information regarding this framework, please speak to the Director or visit <https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/>

We encourage parents/guardians, extended family members and children to be involved in the planning of these programs to ensure that individual needs (e.g. age, cultural diversity, developmental stages and interests) are being met.

Programs are developed and displayed weekly in the rooms, information regarding the programs is available to all parents/guardians.

A range of equipment is provided to meet the Early Education developmental needs of each child.

The equipment and other materials utilised will be suitable, safe and well maintained.

Through play based learning we aim to assist in the development of each child as an individual.

## Food and Nutrition

The Y Acacia Ridge Early Learning Service has a experienced cook employed to provide nutritious meals for all children attending. A weekly menu is displayed in the foyer for parents, educators and children to view. Pureed vegetables are provided for younger children and variations to the menu occur for children as required. If your child has a special dietary requirement, ensure this is documented on the enrolment form and discuss with the Director.

The Y Acacia Ridge Early Learning Service accesses the following resources and training to ensure quality menus are developed for children in care including but not limited to:

- ▼ Staying Healthy in Child Care
- ▼ Smart Choices
- ▼ Nutrition Australia

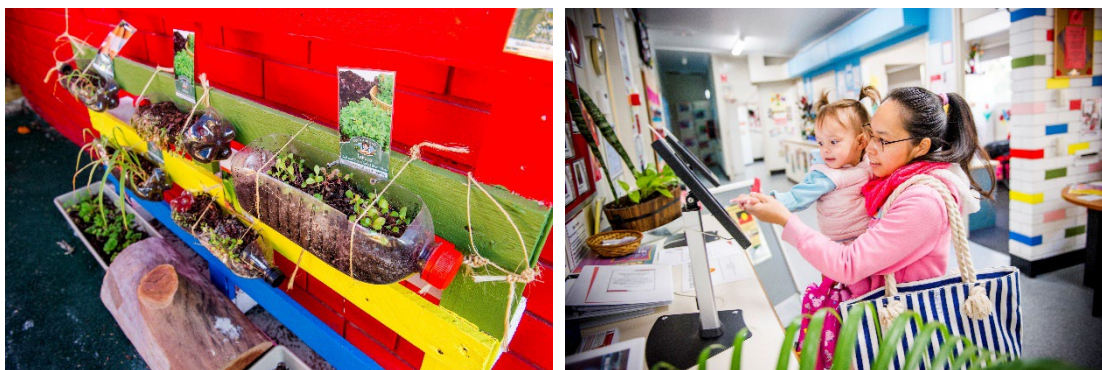
We offer a healthy and nutritious morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea based on the five food groups. Educators use meal times as an opportunity to discuss the nutritional content of the food provided. Children are given the opportunity to develop their self-help skills through food preparation, serving themselves and they are encouraged to use best practise in regards to food safety measures.

Educators aim to provide an eating environment that assists with the sharing of family and multicultural values. Educators aim to create an atmosphere which is calm and incorporates the teaching of appropriate social skills.

## Additional Dietary Requirements

The Y Educators will endeavour to provide assistance and support to any child with additional dietary requirements. Parents/guardians must inform educators upon enrolment about such requirements and provide all necessary information with the enrolment form. Discussion regarding meals will be made in consultation with parents and staff. Where food requirements cannot be met by The Y, parents/guardians and educators will develop strategies that will ensure the child receives appropriate food choices. The Y will also endeavour to meet the religious beliefs, regarding food for individual families.

The Y child care services are peanut/tree nut free zones. It is requested that food bought from home does not contain nuts as children attending may have allergies. In the event that a child brings food containing nuts to the service, staff will collect, store and return the food to the family at the end of the day. Staff will provide alternative food for the child.



## What To Bring Each Day

Each child is individual and unique; however the following provides a guide as to what is required to be brought to the Service each day your child attends:

- Hat – a wide brim hat that covers ears and back of neck;
- Change of clothes (clearly labelled);
- Sheets for rest time – a single size sheet is best;
- Bottles and formula premeasure, and provided separately;
- Water Bottle, clearly labelled;
- Pacifier including a named container if required (no beaded pacifier chain);
- Comforter – if required to assist your child during the day;
- Nappies – enough for the whole day (generally 6-7 nappies).

## Emergency Procedures

To ensure the safety of the children, emergency procedures will be practised on a minimum quarterly basis, however endeavour to undertake monthly. Procedures are consistent with other

disaster plans used by the Service. Procedures are also in place in case of harassment and/or threat to the children by persons known and unknown to the service.

## Sun and Heat Protection

Outside play is a valuable component of all Y programs. Although weather conditions determine if outdoor programs continue, parents/guardians should expect that if it is not raining the children will go outside and therefore require a hat daily. Where possible this play will take place in a shaded area, however The Y employs a Sun Protection Policy – ‘No Hat Shade Play’.

## Clothing

Parents/guardians are asked to send children to the service in clothes that are appropriate to the activity they will be participating in. Simple play clothes and running shoes allow children to participate without limitations or worries that their clothes will get damaged. Shorts, T-shirts, jeans and jumpers with closed in shoes are recommended. For sun safe reasons parents are asked not to send children in singlet tops or thin strapped dresses. A spare set of clothes should also be sent in your children’s bag daily.

## Personal Items

All personal toys and devices including handheld games are not to be brought into the service unless previously discussed with the Director. The Y takes no responsibility for belongings which are lost or stolen during Early Education Centre programs.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are an important part of a child’s life. You may choose to send a cake or alternative to the service for your child’s birthday so that we can celebrate together. Please discuss with Director prior to the birthday and be aware that some children have food allergies so cakes, etc. should not contain any nuts or nut products.

## Smoke Free Zone

Smoking is not permitted in the service or its surrounding buildings, grounds or facilities.

## Parent/Guardian Communication

All Services’ recognise the importance of parent/guardian involvement within the program. We realise for many working parents/guardians time is limited and therefore we aim to provide a variety of opportunities for parents to participate according to their availability. Some of the ways in which a parent/guardian can become involved is by providing feedback in StoryPark, completing



surveys, social functions, input into weekly programs/menus, policies and procedures and fundraising. Parents/Guardians will receive regular communication from the service with any updates / current information.

## Custody and Access – Court Orders

If a parent/guardian is experiencing problems associated with custody and access, please discuss this with the Director. A copy of a current Family Court Order is required and we will do our utmost to abide by this. If there is any likelihood of problems associated with the collection of your child, it is the parent/guardians responsibility to advise the educators and to provide information about any change to court orders, during the year. Please note a Parenting Plan is not a Court Order.

## Behaviour Management/Code of Behaviour

In order for the children to feel safe, secure and know the limits of their behaviour, the educators ensure the children experience a consistent approach to behaviour management. This involves developing each child's awareness of what is appropriate to do, what is not appropriate, what is safe, what angers or hurts others while developing the child's capacity for self-discipline.

No child will be subject to punishment that humiliates, frightens or threatens them.

A child may be excluded from the program for consistent, unacceptable behaviour which puts the health and safety of children and educators at risk.

A copy of the *Behaviour Management Policy* is available at the Service.

## Confidentiality

The service protects the confidentiality and privacy of individuals by ensuring records about educators, individual children, families and management are kept in a secure location and are only accessed by, or disclosed to, those people who need the information to fulfil their responsibilities at the service or have a legal right to know.

All confidential conversations will be conducted in a quiet area away from children, parents and educators.

The service is required to keep records about educators, parents and children to fulfil their legal responsibilities. Personal forms and information will be stored in a locked cabinet/cupboard.

## Illness, Accident and Infectious Disease

If a child becomes ill while at the Service, the parents/guardians will be contacted. If the parent/guardian is not able to be contacted, the emergency contact person will be notified. Every effort will be made to make the child comfortable until the parent/guardian arrives.

In the event of an accident/incident occurring, first aid will be provided. Educators have a current first aid certificate including CPR, Anaphylaxis and Asthma at each Service.

If the parent/guardian is not contacted at the time of a minor incident, they will be informed when they arrive to collect their child. Details about the incident/accident are recorded on an online system, and as needed appropriately managed.

In order to protect the health of both educators and children, it is necessary to minimise the risk of cross-infection of infectious diseases. The service will be guided by health authorities as to any exclusion for specific infectious diseases. A list of infectious diseases is displayed at each Service. Parents/Guardians and the Department of Health will be notified of any reportable infectious diseases.



## Medication

If a child requires medication whilst in care, parents/guardians must complete an *Authority to give Medication Form*, clearly stating the name of the medication, the dosage and the time it was last administered. If the form is not filled out completely and signed by the parent/guardian, the medication will not be administered.

Medication must be in original packaging. Prescription must have the pharmacy issued sticker clearly visible, stating the child's name and the prescribed dosage. Medication will not be administered if it is not in its original packaging or if it's past its expiry date.

Educators will not administer medication at a higher dosage than is prescribed or more frequently than is prescribed on the packaging.

All medication will be stored away from the children in a locked location.

Parents/guardians are advised that Panadol cannot be administered to children whilst in the care of the Y, unless accompanied by medical authorisation form.

Parents/guardians are advised that Non-prescription medications such as nappy cream, insect repellent and sunscreen do not need medical authorisation, however we require parents to complete and sign the Non-Prescription authorisation form. The items must be clearly marked with the child's full name, (a prescription/chemist label if preferred) and will be administered in accordance with the instructions on the packaging.

It is at the discretion of the Director to determine which non-prescription medication requires medical authorisation.

The use of Amber beads to assist for teething is not supported by our service at any time due to potential hazard of choking or strangulation.

## Policies and Procedures

The Y Early Learning Services hold policies and procedures for all areas of the National Quality Standards and Service Approval. These are reviewed regularly with feedback from children, families, educators and The Y management.

If you would like to read more about The Y's policies and procedures a complete manual is available from the Director.

## Immunisation

Upon enrolment, parents/guardians are required to show the service the child's immunisation records from their health record book. The Director will take a photocopy of the immunisation record as proof of immunisation. This information will be kept in the individual child's file.

From 1 January 2016 parents who do not fully immunise their children (up to 19 years of age) will cease to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy.

Conscientious objection and vaccination objection on non-medical grounds will no longer be a valid exemption from immunisation requirements.

Parents/guardians are required to advise the service when they update their child's immunisations. The service, educators and families can obtain up-to-date information on immunisation from the Immunise Australia website.

Should an outbreak of a communicable disease occur in the service, parents/guardians of non-immunised children and children with out-dated immunisation records will be contacted immediately and will be instructed to remove their child from the service, even if their child is well, until there is no risk of them contracting any illness.

## Guidelines for Exclusions

Children showing symptoms of an infectious disease will be required to be collected immediately. Educators showing symptoms will be asked to leave the service immediately.

If an infectious disease is diagnosed, the infectious person will be excluded for the appropriate period. It may be necessary in some cases for a doctor's certificate to be issued prior to re-inclusion into the service. In determining exclusion periods the YMCA Acacia Ridge Early Learning Service will refer to the current edition of "Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing infectious diseases in child care" (December 2005) issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

## Head Lice

In the event of head lice, the child's parent/guardian will be contacted and encouraged to collect and treat the child. The child will be permitted to return after treatment. All children with long hair are encouraged to wear their hair tied back.

## Customer Feedback Procedure

The YMCA of Queensland views customer feedback as an opportunity for improvement and uses these events as an opportunity to not only improve the service provided but to build stronger relationships and loyalty with individual customers who have taken the time to let us know how they are feeling.

All customer feedback received is kept for improvement and marketing purposes.

## Complaints

The Service Director will be happy to discuss any concerns and answer any questions you may have about the program or Service.

If the feedback is a complaint, please approach the Service Director. If there is a continuing issue, or it concerns the Service Director, contact can be made to the YMCA Group Manager – Children's Services. If you feel this process has not met your needs, complaints can be directed to the Department of Education and Training Early Childhood Education and Care.

## Anonymous customer complaints

Anonymous complaints can be lodged with Y on the following link [Contact - YMCA Queensland](#)

Responses to all anonymous customer complaints are to be assessed and reviewed and actions recorded with the complaint.

## Customer Feedback

All feedback from customers is encouraged and can be provided to the Service Director or Educator directly or via the Y link [Contact - YMCA Queensland](#)

This ensures the highest quality of service is reached. Feedback received from these sources allows constant review of the Services increased customer satisfaction and therefore, increased positive feedback within the community.





**YMCA Acacia Ridge Early Learning Service**

07 3277 6333

[arels.reception@ymcaqueensland.org.au](mailto:arels.reception@ymcaqueensland.org.au)

[www.ymcachildcare.com.au](http://www.ymcachildcare.com.au)