



# Youth Development Family Handbook



# YMCA of Metropolitan Washington

The Y. For A Better Us.

# »»» Welcome

Dear Families,

Welcome to the YMCA's Youth Development Program and our YMCA family! The Y has been serving young people for more than 170 years, and every day, our dedicated staff provide a loving, nurturing, safe, and fun experience for all their students. Our mission is to help children of all backgrounds develop positive identities, values, social skills, and a commitment to life-long learning. We are so delighted that your child will be joining us soon!



Attached, please find our parent handbook, which outlines our philosophy, policies, and procedures.

Please read the handbook carefully, sign the acknowledgment sheet and return it to your Center Director, then keep it on hand for future reference.

If you have any questions, please contact your Director.

Again, welcome to our YMCA family!

Sincerely,

Angie L. Reese-Hawkins

President & Chief Executive Officer

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# »»» General Program Information

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## Arrival

The Y is unable to care for children prior to scheduled hours of operation. Please do not attempt to drop off before this time. All children must be signed in by the adult dropping them off. Children are not allowed to enter the center or classroom without an adult. Always leave your child with a staff member, do not leave them alone in an empty classroom or any area of the center.



In all Early Learning Programs, children should be signed in electronically upon arrival by the parent/ guardian. Families of young children should help their child with settling into the classroom, taking off coats, boots, etc., and putting away the child's belongings or backpack. All families should have their children use the restroom upon arrival/change them and ensure that their hands are washed, clean and dry. Be sure to say goodbye to your child before you leave.

In all School Age Child Care Programs, children will be signed in by a Lead Staff member upon arrival.

Arrival and pick up are busy times for teachers, if you need to speak at length with a staff member, schedule a conference through the Director.

## Pick Up

Please note the closing time of your program. It is important that all children are picked up on time. If a child has not been picked up by closing time, families and emergency contacts will be notified. If neither the family nor the emergency contacts can be reached, appropriate authorities may be contacted.

If your child is going to be picked up by anyone who is not their parent or guardian, notify the administrative team prior to picking up. A valid Government issued ID is required upon pick up to confirm Identity.

If there are court orders designating one specific parent pick up and drop off authority only, the center must have a copy of these in advance to confirm. These documents will be adhered to in accordance with the document itself.

Remember to check your child's cubby at the end of each day and let your child's teacher know when you are picking up your child. We encourage our families to have a brief pick up conversation at the end of the day with their teacher. Be sure to take home all nap items and artwork at the end of the week. All nap items should be washed at the end of the week.

## Late Pick Up Fees

If a child is picked up after scheduled operating hours of the center, a \$2.00 (per child) late pick up fee will be applied for every minute until the child is picked up.

## **Absences / Late Drop Off**

If your child will be absent from the program, please notify the Director via email. If we have not received verbal or written communication from families after one day of being absent, we will contact families to check-in.

## **Babysitting Policy**

Although Y program staff work well with children, employees of the Y are not permitted to have contact outside of the Y program, baby-sit, or provide transportation for families with children enrolled in Y programs.

## **Child Abuse**

State laws require the Y to report suspected or actual child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. The Y has strict reporting requirements and conducts a prompt and thorough investigation of any allegations of abuse.

- Any abuse on the part of employees is prohibited by the Y. Any employee that admits to or is found guilty of an incident of abuse shall be immediately terminated from employment.
- Any employee of the Y who has reason to suspect that a child is abused or neglected will report that matter immediately to his/her supervisor who shall make a report forthwith to the local department of the county or city where the child resides or where the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred. If neither locality is known, then a report shall be made to the local department where abuse or neglect was discovered.

## **Children at Risk**

Families who arrive at the YMCA in an incapacitated condition (i.e., alcohol, drugs) present a risk to their child and others. Y Administrative Staff will advise the family member or guardian of their options regarding the transportation of their child to his/her home. Some options that may be exercised are:

- Call another person on the child's emergency contact list
- Call another family member
- Call a car service
- Call a nearby neighbor/friend

If a reasonable conclusion cannot be reached, the family will be advised that either Child Protective Services or the Police will be called.

## **Communicating with the Y Staff**

Exchange of information between families and staff provide insight for both parties. The format may be formal or informal. It is vital that you inform us of changes happening in your family.



Changes at home include moving, hospitalization of a sibling or parent, changes in the familial relationship, etc. can influence the way in which your child relates to others. Administrative staff and teachers can better provide for a child's needs if they are aware of the situation. We will treat this information with the utmost confidentiality.



## Communication

Communication in our Youth Development program is done electronically. Please send all absences, questions, and other pertinent information electronically. All Directors will have continuous access to this e-mail address throughout the day.

## Contacting Your Child During Program Hours

Please do not call to speak to your child unless it is an emergency. If your child is experiencing problems, we will call you immediately. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your center's Administrative staff at any time. Early Learning participants are not allowed to have cell phones or any other electronic devices. Please speak with the Director or Assistant Director regarding educational electronic devices.

## Gratuities

Y employees may not accept gifts, tips, gratuities, or other benefits. A small token of appreciation or a small general fund distributed equally among staff is permissible. We encourage all families to reach out to the PAC (Parent Advisory Committee) to work with them on the Gift policy per classroom.

## Licensing

All YMCA Youth Development Programs are licensed by their local Licensing Jurisdiction. A copy of the licensing plan is available for your inspection at all times on the local Licensing Jurisdiction Website.

## Family Participation / Volunteerism

Families of enrolled children may visit at any time as per our open-door policy. We request, however, that visits of longer than ten minutes are scheduled with Administrative staff ahead of time to best accommodate classroom needs and capacity. We invite all families to attend special events put on by the children throughout the program year.

Families are always welcome in the program to volunteer either on a regular or occasional basis to share special interests, a helping hand, or expertise. Please contact the Administrative team to volunteer your services. All volunteers are interviewed and are required to complete a background check before working in any youth development program. Volunteers are not counted in teacher to child ratios and are not permitted to be left alone with children. All volunteers must undergo a YMCA Background check, jurisdictional background checks and an orientation prior to volunteering at the Y.

# »»» Expectations In Youth Development Programs

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## Staff Expectations

The Y is committed to hiring high quality, experienced teachers in all Y Youth Development Programs. Staff are selected based on their education, experience working with children, and alignment with Y core values. Y staff demonstrate sound judgment, dependability, responsibility, and the ability to create an environment, which reflects care, respect, and safety for all children. All Y staff complete a background check and receive initial onboarding orientation before working in any Youth Development program and working with children. Y staff participate in safety training (First Aid, CPR, Child Abuse Prevention, etc.) and continuing educational opportunities to further their skills in child development.



## Ratio, Supervision and Class Size

YMCA Youth Development programs operate as State Licensed Facilities. We operate within State Licensure ratios. These ratios are available for review on our Website. Staff must be within sight and sound of children at all times. Please note that although we make every attempt to never have a staff member alone with a child, there are certain periods of the day in which a staff member may be left alone in accordance with licensing regulations. These times include and are not limited to:

- Early Morning Arrival
  - Nap Time (Early Learning only)
  - Afternoon Pick Up
- \* Please note that if at any time we have mixed age groupings, we follow the youngest child's applicable ratio.**

## Inclement Weather Policy

Please note that we send all Inclement Weather Notifications via email and Tadpoles (Please also check [www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org) for routine updates as well. The detailed inclement weather policy is available on our website and posted in the center.

## No-Biting Policy

Incidents of biting are a relatively common, yet unpleasant, experience with infants and toddlers. These children have not yet acquired the verbal skills to express their frustrations or desires.

When the child is able to verbalize and teething is no longer a factor, the center will implement the No-Biting Policy. If an incident occurs, the family will be called and notified. If incidents of biting continue to occur, Administrative staff will schedule a meeting to work with families to achieve a common resolution or involve outside support such as Early Interventions or Strong Start.

## Bullying Policy

Bullying can occur in any age group and can be done, face-to-face, and by using technology, known as cyber bullying. Bullying occurs when one or more people acts with deliberate intentions of hurting another person (in any of the above ways).

In YMCA Youth Development Programs, bullying is inexcusable, and we have a firm policy against all types of bullying. Bullying interferes with a child's opportunities to gain self-confidence, make new friends, and learn. All incidents of bullying will be addressed in a prompt and thorough manner by Administrative staff. The Y is committed to giving every child the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe environment that is free from bullying.

## Behavior Guidelines

The Y provides a caring and safe learning environment for all children. The Y will address any incidents where a child demonstrates behavior that is not appropriate for the Early Learning program.

Inappropriate behavior will be addressed as follows:

- Positive and appropriate behavior will be reinforced.
- Staff will model positive behaviors and attitudes.
- Expectation and consequences will be explained clearly to children and posted in easy-to-understand terms.
- Children will be given clear guidelines for their behavior so that they develop internal control of their actions.
- Children will be allowed to express their feelings, both positive and negative. Y Staff will focus their efforts on showing children acceptable ways of expressing their feelings.
- Simple and clear rules will be established. These include rules for safety as well as rules for protecting the rights of others.
- Coercion is not used as a form of behavior management or re-direction in Y programs.
- Verbal abuse or derogatory remarks are not acceptable.
- Seclusion is not a form of behavior management and at no time should a child be left alone.
- Any child who is currently on an IEP, IFSP, 504 Plan or any other support plan should have a copy on file as well as an up to date inclusion form. If your child is currently in the referral or assessment process, please work with your Director on any supports needed to expedite that process.
- The Y will work with families on the assessment and referral process for any child who needs additional behavioral, emotional or cognitive support and requires additional evaluation.

If incidents of inappropriate or disruptive behavior occur, Administrative staff will schedule a meeting to work with families to achieve a common resolution. Our goal is to work with families to find success for their child in the program.





## Zero Tolerance Policy

Y Youth Development Programs have a zero-tolerance policy for serious or pervasive behavior infractions that interfere with a healthy, safe, and fun environment for every child. The behaviors below are grounds for immediate removal from the program for the remainder of the current day and additional days as deemed necessary by Administrative staff. Each incident will be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine if the child is capable of functioning in a group setting while in the program. Administrative staff will meet with the child's family to determine a course of action and the length of the suspension. Depending on the behavior, an internal investigation may be warranted to protect all children and staff. Expulsion from the Y program will only be considered after the Y has exhausted all other interventions and this decision is in the best interest of the child and the Y.

Serious behaviors that may result in immediate program suspension are: Any behavior that endangers the health and safety of children, staff, administrators or members

1. Leaving the program without permission, or refusing to remain with assigned group
2. Inappropriate touching of other participants or sexual misconduct
3. Theft, defacing or destruction of property belonging to the YMCA or others
4. Any kind of physical assault such as hitting, kicking, biting

Note that refunds are not given if a child is suspended or removed from the Y program.

## Program Location Policy

If a child leaves the designated Y program area without permission from staff, or refuses to leave when the rest of the group leaves an area, the following procedures will be followed:

**Example A: Child leaves the group while leaving the playground and/or refuses to join the group when they are leaving. Staff will alert the rest of the group (fellow staff) and will go after the child and bring the child back to the area.**

- Parent or Guardian will be contacted to pick up their child immediately.
- A meeting will be arranged between the family, child, and Site Director/Coordinator before the child can return to the program. The event will be documented.
- The child will no longer be allowed to attend the program if this is a repeated offense.

**Example B: If the staff member is unable to locate the child, the following procedure will be followed:**

- Police will be notified.
- Families will be notified and asked to come and aid in the search of the child. When the child is found, the family will be asked to take the child home.
- The child will no longer be able to attend the YMCA care program

## Field Trips / Family Chaperones

Field trips are important to the Y Youth Development program to expose the children to the community

and provide additional educational opportunities. Field trips are integrated in programming to stimulate interest in a subject as well as to extend information. Families are notified of scheduled field trips and may attend, if available. The Y provides transportation for field trips.

## **Personal Items, Toys, Money, Etc.**

The center is equipped with age appropriate toys and games. Please do not allow your child to bring toys, electronics or money from home. YMCA Youth Development programs are screen free. The children may bring specified items of special interest on show-and-share days or by special arrangement with the classroom. For identification purposes, label all of your child's belongings with their first and last name. The YMCA is not responsible for any lost, stolen, damaged or traded items. All items unclaimed are donated at the end of the month.

## **Transportation**

The Y provides safe and well-maintained vehicles for transporting children to/from school and for special events and trips.

Children are expected to follow these rules for bus safety:

1. Enter and exit in an orderly fashion
2. Sit in seat facing front with seat belt fastened
3. Keep body inside vehicle (no head, arms, etc., out the window)
4. Place all unsecured objects under their seats
5. No objects thrown in or outside the vehicle
6. Noise **MUST** be kept to a level as not to disturb the driver
7. Children shall not have body parts or items in the aisle
8. Code of Conduct for all participants must be followed

The rules **MUST** be followed for the safety of everyone. Should any of the bus safety rules not be followed, a student may be dismissed.

## **»»» Health Guidelines**

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### **Health Forms / Records / Immunizations**

By their start date in the program, all children must have a current physical exam on file. Physical examinations must be completed and signed/stamped by a child's physician. All immunizations must be current. Medical forms must be updated annually. For Early Learning, please visit our website to look at the specific schedule for your child's age. If the YMCA does not receive the updated medical form by their start date, your child will be removed from the program and you will forfeit your deposit.

All children must have up to date immunizations to enroll and stay enrolled in the Y's Youth Development program. It is the responsibility of the family to provide the center with up-to-date immunization records. Drop-off will be denied if health forms/records/immunizations are out of date.

If all required health documents are not provided, the child will not be able to attend the program until all required documents are up to date.

**\*\*Please Note:** It is the family's responsibility to make sure all phone numbers are up to date. It is very important that we are able to contact you in case of emergency.



## Accommodation Process

Consideration is given to the individual needs of every child and the ability of the program to meet those needs. Please inform the Y if you or your child has a physical or learning disability requiring accommodation during the enrollment process or prior to their first day in the program. You will be asked to complete a form at registration to provide us with additional information to support to your child and family within the Y's available resources. The Y is unable to provide one-on-one care or aides for children. When a child needs additional services in the areas of social, emotional, cognitive, language, and for motor development growth, a referral to a professional resource in the community may be made. If a staff member or the Administrative team suspects that your child may have a developmental delay or another cognitive need, the Y will provide referrals for intervention services through our relationship with local Referral and Intervention Services Programs. This process involves input from the child's family, doctor and the teachers at the Y. Prior to advancing to the referral stage, the Y will work with the family on any current services or current feedback that may be helpful to the child. The process for intake on any special needs are as follows:

1. Parent to provide a special education plan (i.e. an IEP, 504 plan, etc)
2. Parent fills out YMCA Inclusion Form
3. Teacher, Director meet with the parent to discuss the special education plan and inclusion form in advance of the start date.
4. Create an action plan for the student based on needs.
5. Re-evaluate monthly with parent.

## Allergies / Special Diets

The Y must be made aware of any child who requires a special diet due to medical or religious reasons. All allergies should be written on registration paperwork at the time of enrollment and kept up-to-date.

## Contagious Diseases

The YMCA follows all requirements and guidance from licensing, health departments and local governments in reference to contagious disease. If your child or any members of the immediate household are exposed to a highly contagious disease, please inform an Administrative staff member immediately. Highly contagious illnesses include: COVID-19, strep throat, stomach virus, influenza, pinworm, chicken pox, conjunctivitis (pink eye), scarlet fever, lice, scabies, whooping cough, impetigo, meningitis, hepatitis A, measles, mumps, salmonella, and shigellosis.

If your child experiences any of these illnesses, they need to be clear of all symptoms and have a note from their physician stating they are able to return to care. We do not offer tuition refunds or credits for any closures related to communicable disease transmission.

## Illness Policy

Children must be healthy enough to participate in the daily routine of the program. If there are indications of illness, your child will not be admitted or be allowed to remain at the center. If your child becomes ill during the day, they will be separated from the classroom and the family will be contacted immediately to pick the child up. If we are unable to reach you, or your child is not picked up within 45 minutes, we will call the next emergency contact listed on the Emergency Form. Each child's registration form MUST have an emergency contact person living in the area. A child picked up from the center because of an illness may not return to the center the following day. To return to the Y program, your child must be diarrhea free, vomit free and/or fever free for the past 24 hours without the aid of any medication while at the center. If your child has seasonal allergies, please notify the Administrative office and provide documentation of seasonal allergies. In the case that a child's symptoms are due to seasonal allergies, they may not need to be picked up. Please reference the Y's COVID-19 policies for additional information regarding COVID-19. If your child is on a restricted diet due to illness, they may not return to the Y program until they have been cleared of all restrictions. Please see Administrative staff for any additional questions you may have in regards to medication. Your cooperation is essential regarding our health policy. In order to continue to provide quality care for your children families are expected to:

- Recognize the signs and symptoms of illness in your child.
- Promptly pick up your ill child when called.
- Consult with a doctor about diagnosis and care during illness.
- Inform the center of any medication(s) your child is taking, including any possible reactions.

A child will NOT be permitted to attend or will be sent home one or more with the following:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees F. or above (may not return the following day).
- Any contagious disease (such as chicken pox, stomach flu, influenza, ringworm, impetigo, scabies/lice, conjunctivitis).
- Yellow or green nasal discharge
- Sores with yellow or green drainage
- Eye discharge/Conjunctivitis (may not return until on antibiotics for 24 hours)
- Unexplained rash
- Difficult or rapid breathing, severe cough, high-pitched croup or whooping sound after cough.
- Diarrhea/Vomiting: Three or more loose stools or one episode of vomiting.
- Significant ailment affecting your child's ability to participate in all school activities. (Indoors and outdoors).
- Any symptoms requiring one-on-one care or causing severe discomfort without the use of medications.

If your child experiences any of the above symptoms, please contact your physician.

A child taking antibiotics may not return to school until 24 hours after the first dose to allow the medicine to work and to make notice of any possible reactions to the medication. Upon discharge for the day for an illness, you will receive a sick form. This form will be signed by Administrative staff and may list any stipulations in detail for return.

## Accidents

All precautions will be taken to prevent serious health risks to all participants. In the event that a minor injury occurs, First Aid will be administered on site. The following procedures will be followed:

- First Aid will be provided and the incident recorded and filed. Teachers or Admin Staff will notify parents.
- The child will periodically be observed after First Aid has been applied.

In the event that a major injury or health problem arises and professional medical care is needed:

- 911 will be called.
- Immediate First Aid will be administered until professional services arrive.
- Parents will be notified immediately. If the family cannot be contacted, the emergency contact person(s) will be notified. Please keep your Emergency Contact information updated. If changes occur, please report them immediately.
- A member of the Administrative team or a teacher will accompany the child to the hospital and remain there until the parent, guardian, or emergency contact person arrives. (The Y is not responsible for any fees related to ambulance transportation).
- The incident will be recorded on an Incident/Accident Report Form and any first aid given will be documented.
- Appropriate reporting requirements will be followed.

## Topical Applications / Ointments

Children are not to have direct access to any creams, ointments, lotions, or sprays. All such items are stored out of the reach of children in a concealed location. Staff will document when creams or ointments are used. Please place all items in a Ziplock bag labeled with your child's first and last name. Families must fill out an authorization form, one form per topical medication, listing the specific name/brand any known adverse reactions.

## Medication

Y staff will accommodate the administration of medication(s) commonly prescribed by physicians for the treatment of short-term illness or prescribed daily medication. Prescription and "over-the-counter" medications will not be dispensed without written consent from the child's parent. Parents should:

- Complete the medication authorization form included in your registration packet. Please Note: We are not allowed by state to accept health forms from another Child Care Center. The YMCA Medication Authorization must be completed. If the medication is prescription (includes inhaler and EpiPen) it will have to have a doctor's signature on the form.



- Keep all medication in the original container with the prescription label/directions attached. Medication must be labeled with the child’s name, the name of medication, the dosage amount, and the time or times to be given.
- Hand all medication (including inhalers, and EpiPens) to an Administrative staff member. Children are not allowed to keep medications on their person, in their backpack or lunch bags.
- All medications are stored in a secured location and given to your child at the prescribed time.

Medications authorized are only valid for 10 days, at which time all unused medication will be returned to the parent or disposed of, unless a new form is completed. If a child is taking medication for an extended period, a note with these specifications, signed by a physician, must be submitted. We encourage you if you have a child that is on a long-term medication such as an inhaler, EpiPen etc. to have your doctor fill your form out with a start date of September through August. This will allow us to keep the same form on file the entire school calendar year.

Y Staff are not authorized to perform any medically invasive procedures such as glucose blood testing, diabetic injections, or the administration of suppositories, etc. When trained by a certified MAT (Medication Administration Training) trainer, the child’s physician or family member as to what procedures to follow, the staff may administer epinephrine to a child in a life-threatening situation.

We strongly encourage all parents to administer medication to children prior to drop-off and after pick-up.

## »»» Classroom Procedures

### Restroom / Diaper Procedures

All children will take trips to the restroom in groups. Children will use designated restrooms that have been inspected for safety by program staff. Children requiring to be changed will be changed in their designated classroom.



### Birthday Party Guidelines

Please remember to promote peanut/tree nut free healthy eating and try to limit sugar-filled foods. Birthday party invitations may not be distributed at the center unless ALL children are included. Please note that all YMCA Youth Development Programs are considered a “NUT FREE ZONE” which means no nut products are allowed. In addition, only bring in sealed store-bought products and NO party bags please.

### Meal Times

Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are provided daily (Early Learning). Afternoon snack should be packed for After School programs. Lunch, two snacks, and water bottle should be packed for Summer Camp.

## Nap / Rest Time Policy

Early Learning Programs will have nap time daily. Please refer to your Classroom schedule for the nap time for your child's classroom. To avoid any disruption, we ask that you please avoid dropping off or picking up children during these hours. Please notify the Administrative staff if you plan to arrive during nap time. Individual cribs or cots are provided for children. Families may bring a small blanket for their child's cot. Pillows and stuffed animals are not permitted during nap time for safety reasons.



## Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily schedule. This time allows the children to develop their large muscles, get fresh air, and be exposed to nature. We ask that children are dressed accordingly for changes in the weather conditions. All children will go outside daily, weather permitting. If your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor play, please keep them at home. We will also keep your child indoors as a precaution if your child is dressed inappropriately.

Please note on Code Orange or Red days, time will be limited according to the code.

- Code Orange: Children will not be outside for more than 15 minutes at a time.
- Code Red: Children will not be outside \*Summer Camps have limited outdoor play during code red and will take extra precautions to ensure a safe environment.

## Keeping Germs Out

Germs can travel on our feet and our strollers. Please use the mats at the front entrance and back entrance of the center to wipe your family's feet and the bottom of your strollers as best as possible upon entrance to the center. Additionally, please use booties to cover your shoes in both of the infant rooms.

## Emergency Drill Logistics

Fire drills will occur once a month and 2 emergency evacuation and shelter in place drills will occur during the school year (September-June).

Plans will be reviewed on an annual basis, or as each drill is performed. Plans will be updated and changed at this time if necessary. Staff will review/practice any necessary changes with all children.

Evacuation procedures/maps will be posted at the entrances of facility.

Emergency evacuation records will be kept on site. Each drill or actual emergency evacuation will be documented to include time of emergency, number of teachers, administrators, and children present, where children were located, length of time it took to evacuate and other relevant information.

Emergency numbers will be posted in a conspicuous place that will always be visible and available to teachers and families.

# Office Procedures

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## Confidentiality

A custodial parent/legal guardian must authorize access and release of records in writing. Custodial parent/legal guardian's access to the child's record will be available upon request. Records will be released without parental or custodial authorization when an official subpoena is issued from the court.

All forms must be completed and returned to the main office prior to a child attending a YMCA program. All information requested on the forms is necessary and are confidential.

**\*\*Please Note: YMCA Youth Development Policies and Procedures are subject to change in consultation with approval from all legal entities.**

**We are excited to have you and your family join the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington. We hope your time in our Youth Development program will be enriching and enjoyable. This handbook is to be used as a guide for you. Administrative Staff are available at all centers to answer any questions and provide additional information. The Y's team is committed to delivering a high quality educational experience to your children.**