



Learning Center
PLAY. GROW. THRIVE.



Child Care Handbook

Infants | Toddlers | Preschool | School Age

**Y LEARNING CENTER
LOCATION:**

125 Catherine Ave.
Muskegon, MI 49442

Welcome!

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The Y Learning Center operates within the philosophy and that of the National YMCA. Programs and activities within are both developmentally appropriate and strive to enhance social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth. Our programs foster curiosity, creativity and self esteem by taking into account children's abilities and interests. Child initiated and teacher supported play is an essential component of our program. Our Child Care programs attract children from a wide range of racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds by paying close attention to the needs of those knowing English as a second language; and socioeconomic groups by providing competitively priced programming, YMCA need based scholarships and working with DHS (Department of Human Services) clients. The YMCA Character Development program is a part of every YMCA program. This program focuses on the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The staff and all participants are encouraged to learn and model these attributes, making it a part of our daily life. Each child has the right to feel safe and well cared for. Together, staff and parents/guardians will work to provide a secure and loving atmosphere for all the children in our programs. The Early Childhood program strives to attend to the major indicators of quality: low child to staff

ratios, ongoing and frequent interactions between caregivers and children, small groups, trained and educated teachers, parent/guardian involvement, developmentally appropriate activities and expectations, fully qualified and reliable support staff and an experienced administrator. Thank you for your interest in the Y Learning Center through the Muskegon YMCA. We are proud to share our center with you and your family. We encourage your feedback and suggestions.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

The Y Learning Center welcomes children with individual needs into our program when reasonable accommodations can be made. All children have multiple opportunities to learn, develop, and form positive relationships while in our care. During enrollment, please identify any health concerns or individual needs your child may have so we can determine together what accommodations your child may need to be successful. To best respond to your child's needs, completion of an individual care plan and a meeting with the Site Director will be needed prior to participating in a program. We work collaboratively with families of children with special needs who receive specialized services and we partner with agencies and school districts to meet the needs of individual children.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The following goals guide our work:

Our primary goal is to provide a program for children that delivers consistent, high-quality early childhood education so children develop in all areas and become enthusiastic learners. We follow a developmental approach focusing on the whole child. We emphasize the importance of a safe and healthy environment. We recognize children need to interact with their physical environment and have “hands-on” experiences in order to understand themselves and the world they live in. The curriculum encourages children to be participants in their own learning and to pursue their unique interests within the classroom community. In addition, the social interactions between children and staff encourage children to develop an understanding of themselves and others characterized by warmth, mutual respect and sensitivity to individuality. Our staff facilitates interaction among children encouraging self-esteem, social competence, language development and intellectual growth.

To achieve this goal, our program addresses these five areas of development:

- **Social:** to help children feel comfortable, trust their new environment, make friends and feel they are part of the group
- **Emotional:** to help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence, self-control and have a positive attitude toward life
- **Cognitive:** to help children become confident learners by encouraging them to try out their own ideas and experience success; to help children acquire learning skills such as solving problems, asking questions and using words to describe their ideas, observations and feelings
- **Language:** to help children increase their ability to communicate through words, both

spoken and written, including listening and speaking, reading and writing skills

- **Physical:** to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do

We also strive to work in partnership with families to support the needs of children and to educate and support the families of young children. Family is the root of the Y Learning Center and we aim to involve the whole family in all aspects of our program and what we do for their children. Most importantly, all children deserve an early childhood education responsive to their families, communities, and racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Muskegon YMCA Y Learning Center is licensed to care for children birth (6 weeks) to 12 years old.

The program is licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS). The rules of the license are available for review in the Y Learning Center office. The license is posted in the Y Learning Center office. The program’s licensing records are available upon request from the DHS. This program is operated on a not-for-profit basis as a service to the families of Muskegon and the surrounding areas. The Early Childhood Program is mandated by the Child Protection Law and will report to the Department of Human Services any suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Child Protection Law and the Program’s reporting guidelines, please speak to the Director. The Early Childhood Program will not discriminate in the enrollment of a child based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin.



DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

The Y Learning Center operates year-round, five days a week:

Monday – Friday

Hours of operation:
7:00am – 5:30pm

See program calendar for a specific schedule.

HOLIDAYS AND OTHER FACILITY CLOSINGS

The program is closed for the following holidays:

- ✓ New Year's Day
- ✓ Memorial Day
- ✓ Fourth of July
- ✓ Labor Day
- ✓ Thanksgiving Day & Friday after
- ✓ Christmas Eve
- ✓ Christmas Day
- ✓ New Year's Eve

During the 2 weeks of Christmas and New Year's, we require a minimum attendance of 10 children each day to open. Please let the staff know of your vacation plans.

*We will also close for 2 days annually for teacher inservice. We will notify all families one month in advance.

If the Y Learning Center experiences an emergency that necessitates closing, staff will use contact information provided during enrollment to make contact with parents to arrange child pickup.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS

In the event of severe weather conditions, the Y Learning Center will make every effort to remain open. If conditions are so hazardous that it becomes dangerous to be out, closing announcements will be aired on local radio and television.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

All teachers at the Y Learning Center meet or exceed state licensing standards for teachers of young children. The teaching team consists of Lead Teachers, Teacher Assistants, and Teacher Aides. The teachers also work closely with the Y Learning Center Site Director. The quality of an early childhood program is determined by the staff's approach to child care and the effectiveness of the interaction with the children. Our staff members are selected on the basis of their training, experience and their desire to work within our philosophy of child care. We place high expectations on our teachers and encourage them to further their professional development through continuing education.

ADMINISTRATION & STAFF

When the program is in operation, an adequate number of qualified staff is always on duty to ensure the health and safety of the children. The program provides staff supervision meeting the requirements of the State of Michigan child care licensing.

The professional staff of the Y Learning Center promotes the physical, intellectual, communicative, social, cultural and emotional well-being of each child. Our staff of Lead Teachers, Teacher Assistants, and Teacher Aides are carefully selected for their education backgrounds, experience in early childhood education and passion for working with young children. Every teacher is thoroughly screened

and has completed a background check. All are qualified by education and experience.

The Y Learning Center Site Director acts as the Operating Officers of the program, and is responsible for all aspects of the program, including: children's health and safety, staffing and curriculum. The Site Director's paramount responsibility at all times is the physical, emotional and psychological safety and welfare of the children enrolled in the program. The Site Director works with all staff to coordinate and integrate educational activities into the full program and works with other staff to foster an atmosphere of goodwill, open communication and teamwork. Under this leadership, staff members are trained to express warmth, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of each unique child in the program.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF LICENSING NOTEBOOK

A licensing notebook containing all the licensing inspections, special investigation reports, and related corrective action plans for the last 5 years is available to parents during regular business hours. Licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and corrective action plans from at least the past 3 years are available on the department's child care licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare. A licensing handbook is available to parents on site but parents can also access these rules online at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Enrollment

ENROLLING YOUR CHILD

The Y Learning Center is open to children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. Children are enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis. Others are placed on a waiting list and accommodated as space becomes available. Admission of exceptional children is decided on an individual basis as qualified staffing permits. Please contact the Site Director for further information. To complete enrollment of your child we encourage you to visit the center with your child. You will need to fill out and return the following information prior to your child's first day:

- ✓ Registration Form
- ✓ Tuition Policy Agreement
- ✓ Child Information Card
- ✓ Health Appraisal Form
- ✓ Permission Form
- ✓ Child Placement Contract
- ✓ Enrollment Background
- ✓ Parent/Guardian Handbook Acknowledgment
- ✓ Sunscreen Permission Form

ALL FORMS MUST BE FULLY COMPLETED BEFORE THE 1ST DAY OF SCHOOL

Return these items and pay the registration and deposit fees as soon as possible to save your child a space as we do have limited class sizes. The medical statement can be sent at a later date but must be returned within 30 days of your child's first day of attendance to maintain your child's enrollment. All immunizations must

be up to date for your child's first day of attendance. After the initial health requirements children's medical documents must be updated following this schedule:

- ✓ Children 0-30 months- updated yearly
- ✓ Children 30 months and up- updated every two years

KEEPING RECORDS CURRENT

In order to provide emergency medical care to children, we require signed authorization by each child's parent or legal guardian. The Child Information Record contains vital information about each child such as parents/guardians' work and home phone numbers and addresses, and the name, address and phone number of the child's physician. This form must be kept current and on file as long as the child is enrolled. Please notify the child care office of any changes. Parents will be required to review the Child Information Record annually.

PRIOR TO FIRST DAY

If you enroll and visit with your child more than two weeks prior to the date they are to begin, we recommend that you bring them back and visit again closer to the first day of attendance. This will make your child more familiar with the program and lessen any anxiety and fears your child may have. Please talk to the center director or your child's teacher for various ideas on helping to provide a smooth transition for your child.

Financial Policies

TUITION

Tuition payments are due by 5:30 p.m on Monday or the first day of the week that your child attends. A late fee of \$15.00 per week will be charged if payment is not received by Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. Nonpayment or partial payment for two consecutive weeks may result in dismissal.

The Y Learning Center provides multiple payment options. Please see the following two options to choose which option works best for your family.

1) Automatic Draft via ProCare

Families have the choice of draft from a bank account or from a credit card through ProCare. Parents can choose to pay weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. In order to cancel this service or to use vacation credit the office needs a two-week notice.

2) Statement

Families may also choose to have a statement sent home on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis. Please return payment with the coupon enclosed to the child care office. We accept all major forms of payment (cash, check, money order, VISA, MC). Checks should be made payable to: Muskegon YMCA. Scholarships and payment plans are available upon mutual agreement with the Site Director.

REGISTRATION FEE

There is a one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$75 for each child (\$50 for each sibling) enrolled in the Early Childhood program. If you withdraw your child from the program, and then re-enroll within a three month period, the registration fee is waived.

ANNUAL SUPPLY FEE

There is an annual supply fee of \$25 for each child (\$15 for each additional sibling) enrolled in the Early Childhood program. This fee is non-refundable and will be used to enhance the learning environment with special equipment and materials.

ENROLLMENT

To enroll in the Y Learning Center, you must complete the registration and health forms and make the following payments: registration fee, deposit and prorated tuition for the month in which you enroll. At enrollment you will specify, in writing, your weekly childcare needs. This will be your set childcare schedule. If your needs change, you must give a written notice in advance of the change. Changes are easily made, provided there is space available. This policy applies to short- and long-term changes.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

Families enrolling more than one child will receive a 10% discount off the oldest child's tuition fee.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Written notice of intent to withdraw a child from the Y Learning must be submitted at least two weeks before the planned withdrawal date. You will be responsible for all tuition payments up until the termination date.

ABSENCES

The Muskegon YMCA is a not for profit organization. Operating costs are based on annual registration. In order to continually assure the highest quality of staff, equipment, and supplies, we cannot offer tuition reductions for absences due to short term illness. Should there be an ongoing illness or a long period of time out of the country or away from home, please contact the Director for possible solutions.

VACATION POLICY

Those enrolled in our full-time programs qualify for one free week, or "vacation week" per year. You will not be charged for a vacation week when you let us know two-weeks in advance and vacation is taken as a Monday-Friday block.

EXTRA CHARGES

1. Returned payments result in a \$25.00 minimum charge. Recurrent returned checks will result in automatic payment terms.
2. A late fee of \$15.00 per week will be charged if payment is not received by Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

Other Policies

ARRIVING AT THE Y LEARNING CENTER

The staff of the YMCA Early Childhood Program assumes responsibility for your child once you have signed them into our program each morning. Under no circumstances should your child be allowed to find their own way into the center or classroom. We insist that an adult, not a sibling, accompany all children to their classrooms. We suggest your family set up a routine to follow every day for arrival. This provides your child with a sense of security. We recommend you walk your child to the classroom, sign them in, help them put away clothing items in the cubby, greet the teachers and their friends and assist your child in joining in the current activity. When it is time to go, tell your child you are leaving and say good-bye. If your child is having difficulty separating, signal a teacher for assistance. If your child is upset when you leave, feel free to call us later and we will let you know how he or she is doing. All children must be signed in using initials and time of arrival.

LEAVING THE Y LEARNING CENTER

CHILD RELEASE POLICY

Y Learning Center cannot release any child to an unauthorized individual, it is critical to keep the contact information current.

Children will only be released to:

- ✓ The authorized parent or guardian
- ✓ Any person authorized (listed on the Child Information Record) by the parent and a picture ID.
- ✓ An authorized sibling, age 18 or older.

All children must be signed out by the person picking up using initials and time of departure.

State of Michigan licensing requirements stipulate any time a new person is authorized to pick up a child or when a person is no longer authorized to pick up a child, the notification of such must be made in writing and delivered by the parent to the program staff.

The needs of the child are placed first in all situations, including difficult situations such as divorce, separation, or remarriage. However, the Y Learning cannot legally restrict a non-custodial parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up from care unless the Y Learning Center has been furnished with copies of current legal documents, which will be retained in the child's file.

PARKING AND IDENTIFICATION

The entrance to the Y Learning Center is located at the corner of Ransom and McLaughlin. Pick-up and drop-off will occur from this location. The YMCA requests ALL users of this area to be mindful of the congestion during peak times. During winter and evening pick up, this area becomes very crowded. The YMCA suggests you use the parking lot in order to ease the congestion at peak times.

SECURITY

The Y Learning Center is a locked facility. There will be a doorbell system that will allow access to the building. If a secondary or emergency contact will be picking up your child, please make sure that they have a photo identification with them as this will be checked prior to entry to the building. This helps to ensure the continued safety of our center. Please be mindful of who might be entering the facility behind you, making sure the door closes. If at any time you have a concern about the safety measures being taken, please contact the Site Director.

Medical Policies

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with state licensing requirements, the YMCA requires that each parent/guardian submit a health appraisal form including an immunization record upon enrollment. These records are kept on permanent file at the YMCA and must be updated as your child receives immunizations.

MEDICINE

Y Learning Center will only administer prescription medication. Non-prescriptive medications, i.e. Tylenol, aspirin, cough medicine are not dispensed while your child is in our care. If your child needs to take medication while at the program, you must fill out and sign a medication form. Medication forms are available at the site. List any special directions, such as the need for refrigeration or other requirements.

In order for the Y Learning Center staff to administer medication, we must adhere to the following:

- ✓ All medicine must be in the original container
- ✓ The container must be labeled with the child's name
- ✓ All medicine must be labeled with the date
- ✓ The medicine must include directions on how to administer the medication
- ✓ Name of the physician prescribing the medication must be on the container

- ✓ All medications must have an expiration date and we cannot administer medication after the expiration date
- ✓ The medicine can only be administered to the child for whom it was intended
- ✓ The parent has to sign a medication form and include the dates and times for the Center to administer the medication.

Medications must be handed directly to the lead or assistant teacher. For the safety of all children medicine may not be transported in backpacks.

The center stores all medication in a locked box, well out of the reach of children. We maintain dated records, which include the amount of medicine dispensed and the name of the staff person who administered the medication. We will provide refrigeration when necessary. Medications will be returned to you or properly disposed of when they are no longer required by your child.

ILLNESSES

While precautions are taken to protect your child against illness, most children experience a normal number of infections and illnesses throughout the year. In such cases, we provide a quiet, calm place for the child to rest and will notify you if it is necessary to take your child home or to the doctor. Should your child become exposed to an infectious disease while in child care, we will notify you promptly. In return, we request that you report to us when your child has been exposed to an infection or disease outside the center.

MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

1. Staff will be trained to recognize the common signs of communicable diseases and other illnesses through First Aid training. All staff will be trained in the proper hand washing and disinfection procedures, as a part of their initial training.
2. A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to their parent or guardian:
 - a. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period).
 - b. Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
 - c. Difficult or rapid breathing.
 - d. Yellowish skin or eyes.
 - e. Conjunctivitis.
 - f. Body temperature of 100.4 degrees.
 - g. Untreated infected skin patches.
 - h. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
 - i. Stiff neck
3. A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children.

The director and or classroom teacher shall determine decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged.

 - a. Unusual spots or rashes.
 - b. Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.
 - c. Elevated temperature.
 - d. Vomiting.
 - e. Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation
4. Children who leave the program or remain home due to the provision of #2 or #3 will be readmitted 48 hours after treatment has begun and upon receipt of a physician statement indicating that it is safe for the child and the other children in the center for their return.
5. Any child who is suspected of having a communicable disease shall be isolated immediately in a space set aside for isolation and care of a sick child.
 - a. Upon identification of a child suspected of illness, a room or portion of a room not being used for child care shall be set up as an isolation area and shall be used for care and isolation of the sick child.
 - b. The sick child shall be provided with a mat and blanket for use until discharged to a parent/guardian. The mat shall be sanitized upon the discharge of the child.
 - c. An adult shall be within sight or hearing of a child who is isolated due to illness. No child is ever left alone or unsupervised.
 - d. A child who becomes ill during the day shall be discharged to the care of their parent/guardian as promptly as possible. If the parent/guardian is not able to come to the program to take charge of an ill child, the program may discharge an ill child to the person who has been designated by the parent/guardian to take charge of the child.
6. The parents/guardians will be notified verbally and by written notice on the program bulletin board of any communicable disease that is present in the program.
7. Those children experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified above, are classified as a mildly ill child. It is our policy to care for mildly ill children as long as the parent/guardian has been notified of the child's condition. The child will be watched for worsening conditions or symptoms that would result in the child's discharge.
8. Staff will not work in any capacity with children if they have symptoms of communicable disease unless a physician indicates that the illness is not contagious. A substitute or the Director will replace these staff.

READMITTANCE AFTER ILLNESS

Your child will be readmitted to class after they have been checked by a teacher or authorized person. There must be a 24 hour period free of symptoms, including fever, and without the aid of medicine before a child can return to the Y Learning Center.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

The term “universal precautions” is used by health care professionals and means all patients are treated in the same manner, regardless of a known or unknown infectious disease. The universal precautions used by YMCA employees, administering any type of first aid, ensure the health and safety of the child and employee. Any time any first aid is administered, all persons are treated as if they have an infectious disease.

PARENT NOTIFICATION PLAN: ACCIDENTS

An Accident Report form will be completed by staff in the event of minor injuries, such as scrapes, cuts and bruises, occurring during school hours. The teacher will notify the parent of the Accident Report form at the time of pick up. Parents will be given a copy of the form and a separate form will be filed in the child’s center file.

In the event of a more serious injury requiring emergency attention, one teacher shall remain with the injured child, will call 911 and contact the parent, and the other teacher will stay with the remaining children. If the parent is unavailable, the emergency contact person(s) will be notified. Your signed child information form gives us permission to seek medical treatment for your child if you and/or the persons you have designated are unavailable.

In the event parents need to be notified of an accident, injury, incident, or illness, the staff and/or manager will follow the following steps.

- ✓ Call the parents at the time of the event. If parents are unavailable, connect with parents at pick-up time unless the accident, injury, or illness is severe.
- ✓ In the event contact cannot be made with a parent or guardian for a severe accident, injury, or illness the emergency contacts listed will be called and asked to pick the child up.

IMPORTANT: Update all emergency numbers or contacts if they change during the course of the year.

Procedures / Plans

INCIDENTS

In the event an incident occurs during the day, parents of any child involved will immediately be notified. These incidents include but are not limited to lost child, or child-on-child touching or showing. The Site Director will also notify Licensing of the situation.

REUNIFICATION PLAN

In the case when children and staff of the Y Learning Center evacuate the building the following steps will be followed to reunite children with their families.

1. The Site Director will contact parents to inform them of the situation and of the alternate pick up location. In the event the Site Director is not on site at the time of the incident, the Lead Teacher will contact parents.
2. Staff will only release children to the approved people on the Information Record.
3. The Site Director will keep parents informed on the status of the center.

SPECIAL NEEDS PLAN

The Y Learning Center accepts all children including those with a special need. In the event that there is a child in the center who needs accommodations for their disability the Y Learning Center will make every effort to provide support to them in the center (i.e. Give medication as needed, making classrooms wheelchair accessible, soft spaces and rest areas) and with partnering with outside

organizations and consultants (i.e. Allowing therapist to come into the center, following IFSP's and IEP's, and meeting with IFSP/IEP teams to work on plans). If a child's needs become more than what the center can accommodate then the family and the center will work together to find another institution that can meet the needs of the child.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY PLAN

The Y Learning Center does not discriminate against race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin. We welcome all families into our community and respect the differences of each. We show the cultural competency of our center and our staff by integrating our classrooms with diversity. For instance, our dramatic play area has materials such as multi – ethnic foods. We often have multicultural dolls that represent people of different ages, abilities, genders, and ethnicities. Classrooms have books that show people of different ages, abilities, genders, ethnicities and non-traditional roles and families. The Y Learning Center provides books that represent the similarities and differences in the world. We engage the children in music from various parts of the world but specific to the nationalities of the families presently enrolled. Our teachers attend training yearly to continue to grow in cultural competency for the Y Learning Center.

Schedules & Routines

SCHEDULES & ROUTINES

Our daily schedule offers a balance between the following types of activities:

- ✓ Active and quiet times;
- ✓ Large and small group activities;
- ✓ Time to play alone and time to play with others;
- ✓ Indoor and outdoor play times; and
- ✓ Self-selected activities and teacher-selected activities.

Sample Infant/Toddler Schedule

This schedule is flexible, we follow the children's cues. Infants have an independent schedule, based on child's specific needs.

7:00am – 8:30am	Arrival, free choice, diaper checks	12:00pm – 12:45pm	Lunch, language arts, transition to nap
8:30am – 9:00 am	Breakfast, free choice	12:45pm – 3:00pm	Nap/rest
9:00am – 9:30am	Diaper checks, free choice	3:00pm – 4:00pm	Transition from nap, diaper checks, PM snack, free choice
9:30am – 10:15am	Circle Time, large and small group activities, sensory, music	4:00pm – 4:45pm	Outdoor play, small and large group activities, sensory
10:15am – 10:45am	Diaper checks, AM snack	4:30pm – 4:45pm	Diaper checks
10:45am – 11:45am	Outdoor play, gross motor	4:30pm – 5:30 pm	Free choice, music, dismissal
11:45am – 12:00pm	Wash hands, diaper checks, lunch prep		

Sample Preschool/Pre-K Schedule

7:00am – 8:30am	Arrival, free choice, diaper checks	12:00pm – 12:45pm	Lunch, language arts, transition to nap
8:30am – 9:00 am	Breakfast, free choice	1:00pm – 2:30pm	Nap/rest
9:00am – 9:30am	Bathroom, free choice	2:30pm – 3:00pm	Transition from nap, bathroom, PM snack, free choice
9:30am – 10:15am	Outdoor play, gross motor	3:00pm – 4:00pm	Outdoor play, Small and large group activities, sensory
10:15am – 10:45am	Bathroom, AM snack	4:00pm – 4:30pm	Bathroom, fine motor activities
10:45am – 11:45am	Circle Time, large and small group activities, sensory, music	4:30pm – 5:30 pm	Free choice, music, dismissal
11:45am – 12:00pm	Bathroom, wash hands, lunch prep		

Education, Food & More

PRIMARY CAREGIVING

The Y Learning Center has primary caregivers in the classrooms. Primary caregiving allows the children and their primary teacher to develop a nurturing relationship over time. We allow the children in the classrooms to begin the bonding process before the primary caregivers are assigned. Our infant and toddler classroom will have primary caregiver assignments posted.

FIELD TRIPS

The Y Learning Center supplements and enriches the program offered to your child through field trips into the community. Many walking field trips are possible. Parents/Guardians are welcome to attend any field trip. Prior notification to the teacher is appreciated.

CURRICULUM

Our program uses **The Creative Curriculum** as its curriculum. The Creative Curriculum uses a whole-child approach to teaching supports and nurtures all areas of children's development and learning—from social-emotional and cognitive skills to literacy, math, and science understanding—and is a powerful strategy as preschool children transition to kindergarten. It encourages children's learning and thinking by being responsive to children's understandings, interests, and abilities, allowing them to deepen their natural curiosity and their eagerness to want to discover and learn more.

The Creative Curriculum uses 38 objectives to define the path the teachers take with the children in their classroom. The objectives for development and learning span from birth through third grade. They enable teachers to see children's development and learning along a progression across the whole of the early childhood years. The objectives cover 10 areas of development and learning. Many objectives also include dimensions that guide teachers' thinking about various aspects of that objective and help clarify what it addresses.

The 10 areas of development and learning are:

- ✓ Social/Emotional
- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Literacy
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Science and Technology
- ✓ Social Studies
- ✓ The Arts
- ✓ English Language Acquisition

PARENT/GUARDIAN-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are a means of giving parents/guardians an overview of their child's developmental progress during the preceding months. We take this time to answer any questions or concerns parents/guardians may have regarding their child's time in the program. These conferences also enable parents/guardians and teachers to work closely to meet each child's specific needs. Parents/Guardians and teachers are free to request conferences anytime they feel there is a need.

RESOLVING PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONCERN

It is important that parents/guardians familiarize themselves with the program. All concerns about your child's care should be promptly resolved with the teacher and/or the director.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

We encourage parents/guardians to visit the program any time during the course of the day. Parents/Guardians should feel free to observe and/or interact with their child. When arriving to visit or observe, we ask that the parent/guardian notify the classroom teacher of their presence. Please keep your child's classroom schedule in mind, while scheduling a visit.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Parents/Guardians and volunteers may accompany the children on field trips and offer assistance on special projects throughout the year. Volunteers go through a screening process

similar to the process used for our staff. Please contact the Director if you or someone you know would like to be a trained volunteer for any of our programs.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

We believe that children need to become independent, self sufficient individuals with the ability to engage in active problem solving; therefore, we encourage the development of self-discipline skills by:

1. Setting realistic limits for children based on their individual developmental needs.
2. Planning an environment that encourages children to develop responsibility and independence within developmentally appropriate limits.

In rare cases where children exhibit inappropriate behavior, we redirect the child's activity or remove the child from the situation to speak with a teacher for a very short time — about 2 minutes.

We also believe that a warm touch or hug, if initiated or requested by the child, will assist in alleviating inappropriate behavior. The following approaches are unacceptable:

1. Using physical restraint to confine children.
2. Humiliating and/or shaming children.
3. Using profane language or other verbal abuse.
4. Imposing restrictions on children because they fail to eat, sleep or have toileting accidents.
5. Placing children in isolation.
6. Using unusual or harsh and/or cruel punishments.
7. Delegating discipline to any other child.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

Your Child's safety and well-being are paramount in the Early Childhood Program. The following precautions are taken:

1. All common and reasonable efforts to ensure safety must be made at all times.
2. When going up and down stairs, handrails must be used.
3. When walking near the driveway, extreme caution must be taken.
4. Children must always be spotted using any equipment that is off the floor.
5. Emergencies and accidents will be handled as requested by the parent/guardian per emergency forms. Minor accidents will be treated by Red Cross trained and approved staff members
6. We would like to be informed by phone of children who are absent from class due to illness.
7. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised.
8. There is immediate access at all times to a working telephone in the child care office.
9. We have seasonal fire drills at varying times of the month.
10. There is a Fire Emergency Plan posted in each classroom, which explains action to be taken in case of fire. The plan includes a diagram showing evacuation routes.
11. When an accident or injury occurs the center shall complete an incident report, which will be kept on file at the center, and a copy given to the parent/guardian for their signature.
12. The use of spray aerosols is prohibited when children are in attendance at the center.
13. A child care staff member shall immediately notify the Department of Human Services when the child care staff member suspects that a child has been abused or neglected.
14. In the event of a tornado, each classroom teacher will walk their children to the basement of the building and have each child sit along the hallway with their heads down. Tornado drills will be held regularly

NUTRITION / FOOD SERVICE GUIDELINES

At our Early Learning Centers, we provide your child with nutritious snacks and meals, and establish good eating habits that encourage healthy development and promote life-long well-being. Our staff work with you to exchange information regarding family eating patterns, introducing new foods, food intolerances and preferences, special dietary requirements for your child and feeding requirements for your infant, toddler, or child with special needs. Your child receives a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack each day. Meal patterns, components, and serving sizes follow guidelines set by the Child & Adult care Food program (CACFP) of the US Department of Agriculture which are approved by a nutritionist. Parents/Guardians, if you prefer to provide your child with food from home, you need to provide a note explaining what foods your child may have, with regard to personal preferences and food allergies. The foods provided need to be healthy choices per CACFP guidelines. Please note that some Y programs are peanut-free based on the current allergies of children in those locations.

INFANT FEEDING

Your infant will be fed according to their schedule. As they grow and start eating solid foods, and eating needs change, eating times will be adjusted to fit with the group schedule. During lunch, infants not yet eating table food will be served cereals and jarred food. As your infant becomes more adept at eating and using fingers for eating, we'll help her/him learn to use infant utensils. As your infant starts eating cereals, jarred foods, and table foods, we'll look to you for guidance regarding what your child can eat. We recommend that your infant try new foods at home first, after which you can add the new food to the classroom list. At the stage where they eat table food, if your toddler has a food allergy or food intolerance, please let us know immediately and provide a doctor's note explaining what foods cannot be given to your child so we know when food we're serving for a meal cannot be given to your child. If your child has an allergy or an intolerance, please provide an appropriate food substitute for your child.

BREASTFEEDING

The Y Learning Center supports breastfeeding and so it accepts and serves expressed breast milk in ready to feed sanitary containers.

- ✓ The container or bottle will be labeled with the child's first and last name (not initials), the date, and the contents (breast milk) upon arrival.
- ✓ Breast Milk must be brought in daily, the Y Learning Center does not have storage space for frozen breast milk.
- ✓ Caregivers are able to store the milk for up to 48 hours (24 hours if it was previously frozen).
- ✓ Staff will be sure to gently swirl, not shake, the milk before feeding to ensure its highest nutritional components are preserved.

Mothers are welcome to breastfeed their infant at the center. You may elect to breastfeed your child in our classroom, or you may choose to have a quieter, more private space located in the main office.

BOTTLES

Bottle-fed babies receive the same personalized attention as breast-fed babies. All babies are held for bottle feeding. The feeding schedule is individualized to accommodate your child's needs. We feed infants when they're hungry. Parents/Guardians of bottle-fed babies need to provide labeled bottles with nipples and lids each day. If you're breastfeeding your child, breast milk needs to be dated and labeled with your child's name. Fresh breast milk can be stored for 24 hours in our refrigerator or up to two weeks in the freezer. Milk exceeding this time frame will be discarded. Only breast milk, formula or water can be placed in your child's bottle. Bottles will not be served containing cereal or any other products. Juice can be served from a sippy cup. To avoid "hot spots" in the formula or breast milk, bottles are warmed up by a bottle warmer. If your child is breast fed and you forget to provide breast milk, we'll call you immediately. Any formula or breast milk that is provided but not completely consumed will be discarded after one hour.

OLDER INFANTS AND TODDLERS FEEDING

Children 12 months and older are served lunches and snacks to eat and whole milk to drink. Older infants sit in chairs with trays or at a small table with chairs. Toddlers sit at tables to eat their meals. Children in the toddler room use sippy cups or regular cups and use utensils. Our goal is to work cooperatively with you regarding your child's routine. Food is never used as punishment or reward. Your child is encouraged but not forced to eat their food. Sufficient time is provided for your child to eat.

CHOKER FOODS

To help ensure the safety of your child, we prohibit some foods in our early childhood programs. These foods are potential choking hazards for small children: popcorn, grapes, raisins, gummy bears, fruit snacks that are “gummy” in texture (sticky, chewy, slimy), hot dogs.

FOOD ALLERGIES/DIET MODIFICATIONS

If a child requires diet modifications for health reasons (such as allergies or intolerance) we must have written approval from a physician or registered-licensed dietician. The Y Learning Center will make every attempt to accommodate special dietary needs, however, if a child requires a special diet beyond what the Y Learning Center can provide, the parent must provide food from home. Parents must provide healthy alternatives based on the USDA My Plate. Any food or beverage brought from home must be approved and labeled with the child’s name and date. In addition, parents must sign a statement that the Y Learning Center is not responsible for the nutritional value of the food brought from home or for meeting the child’s daily food needs. Please make us aware of any food allergies your child may have. A list of children and their allergies is posted.

BIRTHDAYS

Every child’s birthday is a special time and we always try to help celebrate it at the YMCA. However, please save all edible birthday treats for home. If you would like to share a special gift with your child’s classroom please consider donating a book or toy to our program in honor of your child’s special day. You may also be planning a birthday party outside of the YMCA and want to invite some of your child’s classmates. If you are going to invite all of the children in your child’s class, you are welcome to

place the invitations in the children’s cubbies at the program. But, if you only want to invite a few, please send the invitations through the mail so that no one feels left out.

DIAPERING

Diapers are changed whenever they become soiled. Diaper are checked for soiling every 2 hours or less. A designated diaper change area is used in each classroom. One hand is kept on the child at all times. Teachers wash their hands and gloves are disposed of after each diaper change. The child’s hands are washed after each diaper change. The diapering area is cleaned with a 3-step process after each use. Soiled diapers are placed in a hands-free trash can, which is closed except when in use.

HANDLING OF BODILY FLUIDS

At times there are accidents other than diapering that require cleaning and sanitizing. When a teacher handles a child’s bodily fluids, nitrile gloves are available for their use. Proper cleaning and sanitizing is then conducted using the 3-step process. Teachers and staff will follow universal precautions (do not touch bodily fluids, wear gloves, dispose of gloves properly) to prevent contact with and the spreads of disease causing organisms when cleaning up blood, vomit or other bodily fluids.

INFANT SAFE SLEEP POLICY

To ensure a safe sleeping environment for all infants and to ensure parents are given consistent information regarding the child's safe sleep, it is our policy teachers will adhere to the following safe sleep guidelines.

- ✓ Infants will be placed on their back for resting and sleeping, even if they can roll over by themselves.
- ✓ Infants will rest or sleep alone in an approved crib, with a firm mattress and a tightly-fitted sheet.
- ✓ Infants' faces will be kept uncovered during sleep to ease breathing.
- ✓ Infants will sleep in a smoke free environment.
- ✓ Infants will be dressed in as much or as little clothing as adults are wearing, in order to avoid chills or overheating. Sleep sacks may be used.
- ✓ Infants will have nothing in their crib (no blankets, pillows, comforters, stuffed animals, etc.)
- ✓ For infants unable to rest or sleep on their back due to disability or illness, a parent will provide written instructions, signed and dated by the child's physician, detailing an alternative safe sleep position and /or other special sleeping arrangements for the infant. Caregivers will assist in the rest/sleep of the infant in accordance with the physician's instructions.
- ✓ Caregivers will provide daily opportunities for supervised "tummy time" for awake infants.

INFANT PLAY AREA

In order to keep the infant play area as clean as possible for the child who crawls or plays on the floor, shoes are not permitted in the infant play area. Disposable foot coverings are provided to cover the shoes of anyone entering the play area, or those entering may elect to remove their shoes entirely provided socks or stockings are worn.

ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING

All Y Learning Center staff members are mandated reporters. The law requires we report all suspicion and signs of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The Y Learning Center teachers and staff are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed, whether this information involves a student or parent. Your information is private. The federal privacy regulations protect your identifiable information. If you authorize us to use your information, we will protect it as it is required by law.

USDA NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter

containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

Persons with disabilities who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have read the Parent/Guardian Handbook and I am aware of the Y Learning Center philosophy, policies and procedures.

I have read and understand the fee arrangements and conditions detailed in this handbook.

This acknowledgment must be placed in our files. Please sign this form and return it to the Child Care office.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Site Director's Signature

Date

