WELCOME TO THE GREENPOINT YMCA EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER!

Thank you for choosing the Greenpoint YMCA Early Childhood Program! What sets our school apart from others? YMCA teachers approach each day with imagination, innovation, and research-driven practices. It is our mission to educate children in a hands-on, stimulating, and safe learning environment with a focus on healthy lifestyle choices.

To our returning families, we look forward to spending another great year with you and your family. We are also excited to welcome our newcomers and hope that you and your family enjoy being part of our program.

Please feel free to contact us at any time, for any reason, as our door is always open. We strive to make the preschool experience a wonderful one for each child in our program and appreciate you being willing to provide feedback to help us improve. Our teachers and I are very excited to share in this journey with you and your family. Welcome and here’s to a great school year!

Linda Leahy
Early Childhood Director
212.912.2267
lleahy@ymcanyc.org

MISSION STATEMENT
The Greenpoint YMCA Early Childhood Center is committed to providing young children with a safe, supportive and stimulating environment in which all children are recognized as individuals, are loved, and are respected.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY
Our curriculum is designed to promote the growth and development of the “whole child.” The program focuses on the social-emotional, cognitive, and physical development of each child as an individual. Children learn from hands-on experiences with materials and from interactions with their peers and teachers. Activities are child-centered and developmentally appropriate to foster learning through exploration, experience, and play. Children are encouraged to make choices, ask questions, and to problem solve. Our ultimate goal is that each child has a positive first school experience.

LICENSING
The Greenpoint YMCA Early Childhood Center is licensed by the New York City Department of Health.

REGISTRATION
Our program currently has a waitlist. The waitlist opens on September 1 of every year at 8 am for the following school year. The waitlist for the 2019-2020 school year will open on September 1, 2018. Each February and March any available slots are offered to incoming families for the following school year. If you are offered a seat in the program, a non-refundable, non-transferrable deposit equal to one month’s tuition is required to hold that spot in the program. Children must be at least two years of age and must be potty-trained by September 1st of the entering school year to enroll.

TUITION
Tuition is due the 15th before each month of care. For example, September’s tuition is due on August 15th. All payments must be made at the Greenpoint branch located at 99 Meserole Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11222. Automatic drafts can be set up to help facilitate this process and to avoid making an unneeded trip to the branch.

REFUNDS AND CREDITS
If the need arises for you to leave the program, a minimum of two months written notice is required. Deposits will not be refunded and cannot be transferred.

INFORMATION AT A GLANCE
Greenpoint YMCA Early Childhood Center
176 Java Street, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11222
(212) 912-2267
Hours of Operation: 8 am – 6 pm

Early Childhood Center Program: September – June
Early Childhood Camp: July – August (8 weeks)
Ages Served: 2 years – 5 years
COMMUNICATION

The key to a successful early childhood experience is the connection between school and home. We strive to notify our parents of their child’s development on a daily basis. Please do not hesitate to contact your child’s teacher or the director at any time. Teachers check individual classroom voicemail routinely. Email is checked as frequently as possible.

Please let us know...

- If your child will not be at school.
- If your child has recently been ill.
- If there is a change in your child’s schedule.

Please understand that it is important for our teachers to be fully present in the classroom. Frequent, unnecessary phone calls can be disruptive to the learning environment. The best form of contact for your child’s teacher is via email. In emergencies or time-sensitive situations, please call the early childhood office to be transferred to your child’s classroom. If no one is available in the office, please call our front desk at 212.912.2260 to be transferred.

Contact information for individual classrooms will be distributed at parent orientation. It will include your child’s class assignment, classroom phone extension, teacher name and teacher email.
DAILY LOGISTICS

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES
Upon arrival at the center for drop-off you should:
- Take your child to the restroom to use the potty and to wash hands.
- Sign your child in.
- Inform your child’s teacher of any pertinent information for the day.
- Place your child’s belongings in their cubby.
- Drop off begins at 8 am and concludes promptly at 9 am.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES
Upon arrival at the center for dismissal you should:
- Remain in the hallway and wait for the teacher to dismiss your child (for 3 pm dismissal only).
- Check your child’s backpack for artwork and class notices.
- Please sign your child out on the class sign in/out sheet.

All parents/guardians will receive an authorization for pick up form in their orientation package. All those authorized to pick up your child must be 18 years of age or older and MUST present valid picture ID.

Please keep in mind that children will only be released to authorized family members and caregivers. Please notify your child’s teacher in advance and in writing if you would like to make additions to your authorized pick-up list. Family members and caregivers are required to present identification at dismissal for verification. Habitual lateness will not be tolerated and may result in termination from the early childhood program.

Children cannot be dismissed or dropped off anywhere except at the Early Childhood Center (2nd floor) at 176 Java Street. Please ensure that your child is supervised fully while moving throughout the building during drop-off and pick-up.

ELEVATOR PROCEDURES
Please do not leave your child in the elevator unattended. In order to secure the floor, the elevator will be locked between the hours of 9 am–3 pm. The elevator will be open for use between the hours of 8 am–9 am, at 3 pm, and between 4:30 pm–6 pm.

DOOR CODE
For security reasons, access via the stairwell requires a 4 digit code. The code will be distributed to parents by the director. The code will be changed from time to time. New codes will be distributed via email.

SEPARATION ANXIETY
We will make every effort to help make the adjustment to school as seamless as possible for you and your child. Throughout the program, and especially at the start of the school year, we will try to foster a connection between home and school with pictures and activities. It is important that you prepare your child ahead of time and that you consistently speak about school in a positive light. If your child feels that you are confident about school, the transition will be an easier one. For instance, framing conversations at home with questions like “What was your favorite part of the day?” can help to reinforce positive feelings about school.
It is important that you say goodbye to your child, tell them you love them, and remind them that they will be well cared for at school. We recommend that drop-offs be short and routine. If reading a book helps your child to settle in, please feel free to sit in the classroom together. However, from day one, it is important to only implement a routine if you are able to be consistent with that routine. Please allow ample time in the morning for smooth drop-offs. Feeling rushed can often elevate feelings of anxiety.

We have an open door policy and you are welcome to come to the center at anytime. For some children this is a very positive experience. For others, it can be very difficult to separate more than once throughout the day. Your child’s teacher can help you decide if a midday visit is best for your child.

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

CLASSROOM RULES
Each teacher will have a set of group guidelines posted in the classroom which they will review with children on a consistent basis. Guidelines may include “use inside voices”, “use gentle hands”, or “use walking feet”. All rules are positively worded and reinforce the Y’s core values of honesty, caring, responsibility, and respect.

EMPHASIS ON THE POSITIVE & YMCA/HOME PARTNERSHIP
We realize that the single most effective behavior management tool at our disposal is an emphasis on positive behavior. Our teachers are trained to provide consistent, positive feedback to reinforce positive behavior. Common reinforcements include: verbal praise, a high-five or hug, and/or classroom wide recognition. As often as possible, teachers will share incidents of positive behavior with parents. At times, you may be working to modify a specific behavior at home. Our staff welcomes the opportunity to support these efforts, so please do not hesitate to share with your teacher any concerns or ways in which you would like us to support your efforts.

TOILET TRAINING
Children enrolled in the Greenpoint YMCA Early Childhood Center must be toilet trained prior to admission to the program. Two year olds still struggling with naptime or bedtime wetting may wear pull-ups or diapers at naptime.

DISCIPLINE POLICY
Our discipline policy is one of “redirection.” If a child is having difficulty in one area of the room, the child is given a verbal cue to adjust his or her behavior. If the child is unable to cooperate after a verbal reminder, he/she will be directed to another area of the room. The child may re-enter the previous play area once he/she has regained self-control. The teachers will address the inappropriate behavior while reinforcing positive alternatives. Should more serious discipline issues arise, a conference will be scheduled with the parents, head teacher, and the school director to discuss possible strategies. All discussions will be strength-based and will focus on the best possible outcome for the student.
THE PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE

WHAT TO WEAR
Please send your child in weather-appropriate clothing. Children must wear closed toe shoes (preferably sneakers), as they will be physically active on a daily basis. Please label your child’s belongings, clothing, and backpack with their full name.

EXTRA CHANGE OF CLOTHES
Please send in a set of extra clothes and underwear in a large Ziploc bag clearly labeled with his/her name for accidents/spills. In most cases, these will remain stored inside the child’s cubby. We will send a reminder to change out these items seasonally.

BEDDDING
All students will need bedding for naptime. Please send a fitted crib sheet and a light blanket to school each Monday. Bedding will be stored in the classroom and sent home each Friday to be laundered. Please do not send pillows, stuffed animals, or large sheets.

DAILY SCHEDULE
Our daily schedule includes learning centers, circle time, music and movement, indoor and outdoor play, snack and swimming. Since we believe that children learn through play and hands-on learning experiences, learning centers or “center time” is a vital part of our day. Each classroom is arranged in areas or centers to promote learning opportunities – dramatic play, block building, art, library, manipulatives, science/sensory, etc.

“Center time” is an opportunity for children to choose their own activity. During circle time, the teachers and children plan the day’s activities, read stories, do finger plays, share experiences from home through Show & Tell, and recap the day’s events. Music and movement happens throughout the day, at transition times, in the classroom, and in the multipurpose room. Every morning and afternoon, the class will have an opportunity for large motor development either in the multipurpose room or neighborhood parks. Morning and afternoon snacks are served each day. Each classroom has an individual schedule, which reflects activities for the day.

LUNCH AND SNACK
A lunch should be brought from home each day. Each child will be assigned a snack day for the classroom 1–2x each month. When packing your child’s lunch and snacks please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Lunches should be packed in a lunch box or bag, labeled clearly with the child’s name.
- Lunches cannot be refrigerated on site, so please include a cold pack if packing perishable items.
- We are able to warm up lunches on site in microwaves.
- We stress good nutrition at our center. We believe that healthy food will help children grow and develop to their fullest potential. We encourage you to send healthy food with your child and avoid “junk food” whenever possible. Please do not send any candy nor chips and limit the amount of desserts whenever possible. Popcorn poses a great choking hazard to children and will not be permitted. Grapes and hot dogs are also a choking hazard but will be permitted as long as they are sliced.
- The YMCA is a nut-free environment.

Snacks should include a carbohydrate, a protein, and a fruit or vegetable. Please include enough items to serve each child twice (once in the morning and once in the afternoon).
THE PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE (cont.)

DAILY ACTIVITIES

LARGE GROUP LEARNING
Large Group Learning is a fun way for students to start and end each day. It provides consistency to each day and allows teachers to introduce a specific focus or concept for the day. Some large group activities may include exposure to calendar counting, days of the week, seasons, singing songs, talking about the day’s weather, theme related books and stories, hands-on learning opportunities, and science experiments.

CENTERS
Centers are a wonderful learning opportunity during which children are given the option to visit a particular station. Some of the daily centers choices may include:

- **Discovery Center**: science and exploration
- **Dramatic Play**: self-expression through play and pretend
- **Creative Art**: sometimes directed, sometimes free activity (skills used may include cutting, coloring, painting, gluing or stamping).
- **Language/Writing**: self expression and communication through writing and reading
- **Blocks**: encourages fine motor skill development and creativity as well as language and math skills

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT
Children participate in singing songs, moving creatively along to music and making music with instruments.

REST TIME
Each child has an opportunity for a 1-1 1/2 hour rest time each day. Your child will need a thin blanket and fitted crib sheet to rest on. Bedding should be clearly labeled and will be stored in your child’s cubby. Bedding will be sent home each Friday and should be returned the following Monday.

OUTDOOR PLAY/GYM
Each class has time daily set aside for outdoor play. Please send your child to school in sneakers so that he/she may play freely and safely. When the weather prohibits outdoor play, the classes will utilize the hallway space which will be made into a "playground-like" environment where the children will be able to exercise and expend their energy.
THE PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE (cont.)

OTHER ACTIVITIES

SWIMMING

Children 3 years and older will receive thirty minutes of instructional swim weekly in the fall and spring. We do not swim during the winter months. Swim lessons will take place in our heated indoor pool at the Y branch. We will walk from the Early Childhood Center to the Greenpoint YMCA at 99 Meserole Avenue. On your child’s assigned swim day, please send your child to school with the following:

- Comfortable clothes which your child can easily manage (pull-up pants or shorts).
- A bathing suit under his/her clothes.
- A separate Swim Bag that includes all swim day articles.
- A towel.
- Pool shoes to wear to and from the pool (Flip Flops are not permitted).
- Underwear
- All clothing and items must be clearly labeled with your child’s name.

Parent volunteers are essential in maintaining our 3:1 ratio in the pool. Please speak to your teacher or the Early Childhood Director about volunteering.

BIRTHDAYS

Children’s birthdays are usually celebrated at snack time. The class will sing “Happy Birthday” and celebrate with a family-style snack. Please check with your child’s teacher in advance if you would like to bring in a special snack. The teacher will let you know the number of children to be included. Please be aware that goody bags and treat bags are not necessary.

TRIPS

Each class may take trips throughout the school year. These walking trips will provide opportunities for children to explore places of interest in the neighborhood. We appreciate and welcome parent participation in planning and attending class trips. Parents who wish to chaperone class trips should speak to the teachers. You will receive advance notification if you are selected to attend a class trip.

FIRE DRILLS AND QUIET DRILLS

The Greenpoint YMCA Early Childhood Center conducts fire drills and shelter-in-place drills once each month in accordance with the Department of Health requirements. During fire drills, teachers simulate having to leave the premises as quickly and quietly as possible. During quiet drills, children will be asked to remain in their classrooms. The simulations are necessary to allow children to understand what is expected of them in instances of an emergency.
THE PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE (cont.)

VISITORS
Parents, family members, and caregivers are welcome to visit the Greenpoint YMCA Early Childhood Center at any time during the course of the instructional day. Scheduled visits can be made by calling ahead and arranging a time with the early childhood director and classroom teachers. All visitors coming to the early childhood center are expected to sign in at the office.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT
Parents are an integral part of our Early Childhood Program. A strong home-to-school connection allows us to address the whole child and to understand each child on a deeper level. We strive to work as closely as possible with each child’s caregivers. We need your interest and involvement to provide the highest quality care for your child.

Here are some of the ways parents and caregivers can contribute to the child’s early learning experiences:

- Attend scheduled school activities.
- Attend scheduled Parent/Teacher Conference
- Offer their special talents (music, cooking, dancing, and woodworking) to be shared with their child’s class.
- Volunteer to participate in scheduled fundraising activities.
- Openly communicate with your teacher about struggles, challenges, and successes you are having at home with your child.
- Review teacher updates on our school weebly page each week so that you can discuss classroom activities with your child. This will help you get beyond the “how was school?” “it was fine” conversation at home.
- Participate in our Early Childhood Parents Association.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS
Parents are encouraged to volunteer their time, skills and talents whenever possible. Volunteer opportunities are open to all parents, caregivers and family members. Volunteers are always selected in an unbiased manner. In the beginning of the year parents will be asked to complete a family survey which will help teachers match families with potential volunteer opportunities.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION
This committee consists of parent and guardian volunteers who assist the Early Childhood Director in fundraisers, planning and feedback on school activities.

- There will be one parent representing each class
- Monthly meetings are held throughout the year.
MEDICAL INFORMATION

Medical Forms
A current completed medical must be submitted for your child before he or she begins the school year. The completed medical must include your child’s immunization record, a physician’s signature, and a physician’s stamp.

Registration Forms
Please ensure that registration forms are completed accurately and comprehensively. All students must have a completed registration packet.

Severe Allergies
Please note any known allergies on the registration form, the medical form, and inform your child’s teachers. Allergy lists are posted in the classroom and reviewed by all staff.

Medication
Our staff cannot administer medicine during the school day. All children should be given medication before or after school. Parents may come to the school administer medication if necessary during the school day.

Parents may submit an epi-pen or asthma inhaler if needed. If your child requires an epi-pen or inhaler, please see the school director, as further documentation is needed for these items.

Children with food allergies are required to bring their own snack which will be stored according to our guidelines. This will ensure the safety of your child.

The YMCA is a peanut-free and nut-free environment.

ILLNESS & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If a student becomes ill during the school day and is unable to participate in activities, the parent/guardian will be notified. If a student is hurt, a member of the staff or an authorized person will administer immediate first aid.

If the situation should require immediate medical attention, the program director or a member of the staff will attempt to contact and inform the parent/guardian as soon as possible. In the event that the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be called. The program director or another staff member will call the designated physician and/or local emergency unit for treatment and/or transportation to a hospital. A staff member will accompany the student to the hospital and stay until the parent/guardian arrives and signs the student into his/her custody.

Children should be kept at home if they show any of the following symptoms and should not return to school until they have been symptom free for a full 24 hours. Temperatures will only be taken on the school’s thermometers.

- temperature over 98.6 degrees
- thick, yellow nasal discharge
- any undiagnosed rash
- diarrhea or vomiting
- sore or discharging eyes or ears
- under the weather or not himself/herself
If your child has a fever, please be sure to keep them home until they have a “normal” temperature (98.6 degrees or lower) without medicine for 24 hours before returning to school. When returning to school, your child can only be dropped off at the scheduled arrival time 8:30am to 9:30am or 2:00pm-2:30pm (2:30pm for infant/toddler and 2’s classroom as the children nap until 2:30pm).

We realize how difficult it is to arrange home care for a sick child, but this policy protects the health and well-being of all the children in the program as well as keeps us in compliance with Department of Health. We expect and appreciate a prompt response to our calls so please make sure you always have backup plans for these kinds of situations. This is our policy and the expectation from the Health Department. Please do not challenge our staff when you pick your child or insist that “she looks fine now” or bring your own thermometer to make sure she has a fever.

Parents must notify the center if their child has a contagious disease, such as conjunctivitis, impetigo, or chicken pox, etc. A notice will be posted informing parents that their child has been exposed. Before your child can return, a physician’s note must be provided indicating that your child is no longer contagious and may return to school.

Due to child/teacher ratio, all children who attend school are expected to participate in outdoor activities and swimming, if applicable. If your child is well enough to attend school, then they are well enough to swim or go to the park. Exceptions will be made at the discretion of the director.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Early Childhood Director at 212.912.2267.

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**OUR CAUSE**

We are a powerful association of men, women and children joined together by a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility. We believe that lasting personal and social change can only come about when we all work together to invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors. That’s why, at the Y, strengthening community is our cause. Every day, we work side-by-side with our neighbors throughout the five boroughs to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

**AREAS OF FOCUS**

**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

All kids deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve, therefore, we focus our program delivery to NYC children and teens so they cultivate the values, skills and relationships that lead to positive behaviors, better health and enhanced educational achievement.

**FOR HEALTHY LIVING**

The Y enjoys the capacity and the scale to make a positive and measurable impact upon New York City’s health and well-being. We recognize our unique responsibility by offering programs that encourage healthy lifestyles, bond families closer together, and strengthen connection with others.

**FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

As we have for more than 160 years, we continue to listen and respond to our communities’ most critical social needs, with a focus on New York City’s most vulnerable citizens and underserved populations.
I have received, read, and understood this manual and will adhere to the procedures and policies of the Greenpoint YMCA Early Childhood Center.

I will review the policies and procedures with my child. If I have any questions or concerns, I will discuss them with the Early Childhood Director.

________________________________________  ______________________
Parent/Guardian’s Name                    Child’s Name

________________________________________  _____________
Parent/Guardian’s Signature                Date