



# **YMCA**

# **Early Learning**

# **Centers**

**2020-2021 School Year**

**Parent Handbook**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the YMCA Early Learning Center (ELC). We are very excited about having your child attend our center! We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

It is our goal to provide your child with the best learning environment as well as maintain a safe and comfortable environment where your child will grow and flourish.

Our center is designed around the needs of the children and supports the development of the whole child. Our classrooms have several carpeted play areas, child-sized tables and chairs, housekeeping areas, art and sensory materials, writing centers, construction areas, and lots of manipulatives, toys and learning materials. Our classrooms are viewable to parents through hallway windows and half walls.

Our outdoor play area is fenced with multiple play areas. We also have grassy areas and paved space for riding bikes and writing with chalk. In addition, our outdoor space includes sandboxes, bubbles, balls, and several other pieces of equipment to keep the children learning outdoors. We use large field spaces for structured physical education activities.

Please take a moment to read this handbook to become familiarized with some of our policies and procedures. We look forward to working with you and your child in a partnership of learning and fun.

We hope that your experience at our center is a good one. Please communicate with us regarding any questions or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

Angela Dudek

Executive Director of Childcare

# Philosophy

## *Work Without Worry . . .*

For the times parents can't be there themselves, the YMCA supports their efforts to nurture their child's healthy development. Well-trained staff provide safe, affordable, high-quality care so that parents can have peace of mind while they work to help their family succeed.

## *Age Appropriate Experiences . . .*

YMCA childcare provides children the chance to creatively and constructively develop their talents through the exploration of music, movement, art, character counts, and play, taking full advantage of all the YMCA has to offer. Our program is based on research and what is developmentally appropriate for each child. Kids experience what success is all about in an approach that says "everybody plays, everybody wins." Caring, well-trained staff know how to challenge children, and more importantly, how to listen to them.

## *Focus on the Family . . .*

No matter how many hours children spend in childcare, family is the most important structure in their lives. At the YMCA, good childcare is good family care. Like all YMCA programs, our childcare includes families with different shapes, sizes, social and cultural backgrounds. We provide more than just a place to play; we provide experiences to help the entire family unit cope, grow, communicate, and care for each other. Family is where values are formed, love is learned, self-image is developed, and lifelong relationships are established. YMCA childcare maintains and strengthens what starts at home, giving all kinds of families the support they need to succeed.

## *Mission . . .*

The YMCA of Frederick County's childcare program is dedicated to providing a safe nurturing environment where children will grow and learn through play. We believe in a program and atmosphere that applauds each child's uniqueness while promoting experiences that encourage the development of the whole child. We provide and promote developmentally appropriate opportunities that promote *physical development, personal and social development, language and literacy development, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, and the arts.* The individual needs and strengths of every child are continually assessed to make adjustments to the curriculum. We support the partnerships between each child, their parents, and teachers. We recognize these relationships as being the foundation for a positive, preschool experience while preparing each child for a successful transition to their formal education years ahead.

The staff are provided with many opportunities for personal growth, development, and training to stay informed on new research or changes in the education field.

Staff development training includes a core knowledge of MSDE trainings, early childhood education classes at Frederick Community College, age-appropriate assessment trainings, SIDS awareness, CPR and first aid trainings, and trainings in conjunction with Child Care Choices and the Office of Child Care.

The program is continuously evaluated by the Child Care staff, the YMCA administration, childcare parents, and the MSDE Office of Child Care through formal and informal evaluations, surveys, and inspections.

## **Early Learning Center Program Goals**

- Provide a safe, quality care environment where children feel secure and accepted.
- Plan school readiness activities that prepare the children for entrance into kindergarten.
- Enhance learning through hands-on activities.
- Provide field trips to enhance learning and experiences (upon MSDE Approval).
- Create an atmosphere of respect that promotes positive self-esteem.
- Recognize each child as a unique person with individual needs and interests.
- Give children opportunities to make choices among a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities in order to develop self-control, independence, and a sense of purpose.
- Provide opportunities that stimulate social development and respect for the rights and individual differences of others, using the "Character Counts" pillars of character development: caring, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, and citizenship.
- Work as a team with parents, maintaining open communication and mutual support.
- Involve families in the program and enhance parenting skills.
- Exceed the state-licensing requirement to ensure the highest quality of care by providing and maintaining an MSDE Accredited Center.
- Provide qualified, caring staff with ongoing training for continued growth as caregivers.
- Monitor and evaluate programs on a continual basis.
- Work in cooperation with public schools and other social agencies.
- Incorporate the programs and facilities of the YMCA as available to enhance the program.
- Provide year-round care through state-licensed childcare programs.

# **Policies and Procedures**

## **Accreditation**

The Downtown YMCA Early Learning Center is a MSDE (Maryland Department of Education) Accredited facility. Program accreditation is a process by which early care and education programs can significantly improve the quality of the services they provide. In this process, a program voluntarily pursues self-study, program improvement, and an external program review in order to achieve and publicly confirm that it meets state quality standards. This is renewed every 3 years.

## **Account Statements**

We will send out annual childcare account statements in January through email. If you would like a statement at another time during the year, please contact our childcare business department. They can be reached at 301-228-9225.

## **Admission and Registration/Activity Fee**

Children are accepted on the basis of available space in the program.

To register your child, you must fill out a registration packet, pay an annual non-refundable registration fee of \$125. The annual registration fee pays for activities, some special events, classroom supplies, and monthly pizza for our children who eat from our menu. A 1-week deposit is required once the opening is offered, typically 4-6 weeks prior to the space becoming available.

All enrollment changes and/or dis-enrollments **MUST BE REQUESTED IN WRITING** by the parent/guardian, using the YMCA "Enrollment Change" form. These forms are available on our website and at the YMCA front desk. A \$10 change fee will be applied for all changes with the exception of a room move up generated by the YMCA. A two-week notice is a requirement for dis-enrollment. Withdrawal of your child for any period of time designates a slot available for children on the waiting list.

The following forms must be completed before your child can attend the center.

Parents will be given an enrollment packet, which includes:

- Registration application form
- Child Care Tuition Parent Agreement
- Health inventory I and II
- Medication Authorization form
- Immunization form
- Emergency card- form available online

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/zenplannerwordpress-stack0/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2020/07/08192304/emergency-form-fillable-june-2020.pdf>

- Discipline policy
- Parent handbook receipt/ Permission slip (swimming and walking field trips)/Guide to Regulated Child Care

The following items will be given to you after you enroll:

- Inclement weather policy (after Oct. 1)
- The Parent Handbook is available online at [www.frederickymca.org](http://www.frederickymca.org).

## **Allergies**

Our center has a NO nut policy due to the high number of allergies to a variety of nuts and nut products. If your child has allergies, please make note of it on the appropriate forms and make sure to personally inform the teachers and the director. In extreme cases or if you feel it is needed, we may need to set up a meeting with his/her teacher to discuss how we can meet the needs of your child. We will also need an Allergy Action Plan completed by your child's doctor. Your child's picture will be posted in all classrooms on the refrigerator. Along with the picture will be a list of his/her allergies so that any teacher that works in the room will know about their allergies.

If your child has an allergy to milk, we will need a doctor's note that reflects this. You will also need to provide a substitute. If your child requires a special diet or has many allergies to many of the foods we serve, you will need to provide their breakfast and snack. We can give you a list of the snacks we serve and you may tell us which ones are approved for your child to have. The director can provide our weekly menu to look over and cross out food items that your child may not have.

## **Arrival**

During the COVID pandemic and as required by MSDE, check in will be outside of ELC. Parents are not allowed into the ELC area. You will be asked a series of questions related to COVID symptoms and can either take your child's temperature with a thermometer from home and show the child care staff the reading or have your child's temperature taken when you arrive on site with our touchless thermometer. If your child is able to be admitted to care that day, parents will sign in their child(ren) and staff will take the child(ren) directly to their classroom.

If restrictions are lifted from the COVID Pandemic and parents are allowed into the ELC area, please see below for our normal operating procedures to check in your child(ren).

Each day you must first sign your child in. Please place their items from home in their cubby and be sure all personal items are labeled with the child's full name. After arriving, please have your child wash his/her hands.

If your child arrives early and needs to eat before 8:30, please provide him/her with something to eat such as a baggy of dry cereal, granola bar, etc. We will provide milk and all the utensils needed.

In the morning for the first hour (2 yrs and up), all the children will be together in the "opening" classroom (the International Room-The Spiders). Your child's teacher may not be there at arrival. Try to get your child interested in an activity and the teachers will assist you in doing so. Please leave your child directly in the care of a staff person. Never simply "drop off" your child.

If you have anything you want to tell the teacher (like someone else is picking up or your child is leaving early) please fill out a "Note for the Teacher" form and leave it in the basket. You can find these forms by the sign-in sheets.

When you are leaving, please give your child a kiss and a hug, tell them goodbye and that you will be back. Linger around or sneaking out will not help your child adjust. They may cry when you leave, but will probably stop within a few minutes. Please feel free to call later and see if he/she has adjusted.

Please do not allow your child to enter or exit the center or classroom without an adult.

Infants' and toddlers' parents, please label all items and those that need to be refrigerated and place them in the refrigerator. Be sure to use a sharpie and masking tape (if needed) to write their name on each item. Bottles also need to be labeled with the full name and the date. Parents will need to fill out the parent portion at the top of the daily report. Please be sure to leave your child in a clean diaper (if applicable). If you need to change them please feel free to use our diaper changing table.

## **Babysitting**

It is against the YMCA policy for center staff to babysit for children they have met through the program. Please help staff to support our policies by not requesting their assistance outside of YMCA programming.

## **Behavior Management**

Children are expected to respect the YMCA property, toys, staff members, and other children.

**Discipline** is the process of teaching our children the appropriate way to behave.

**Punishment** is an unpleasant consequence for a particular behavior.

As stated in the definitions above, discipline and punishment are not the same technique. At the YMCA, our goal is to teach discipline. We believe the best way to do this is through positive reinforcement. To encourage these behaviors we use words, hugs, smiles, and sometimes rewards. When a child misbehaves, our goal is to teach or demonstrate "better choices" and help them problem solve to come to a better solution. Please refer to our Behavior Management Policy below for further details.

## **CHILDCARE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY**

- I. Behavior management means teaching. We attempt to teach acceptable behaviors, and to promote positive self-image in children by:
  - a. Preventing problems by offering positive suggestions or redirecting to a different behavior or activity.
  - b. Providing encouragement and giving positive attention frequently.
  - c. Developing rules with the children.
  - d. Discussing the situation and why the rule is needed.
  - e. Setting up a program that is suitable for the ages and needs of the children.
  - f. Offering choices and interesting activities.
  - g. Allowing for a cool down time to recompose with support and supervision, in a designated safe space.
  - h. Age-appropriate consequences such as teaching children to apologize for their actions, removing class job responsibilities (door holder, line leader, etc), and coaching children on how to express their feelings appropriately.
- II. Children and their parents must accept that the YMCA Child Care staff have definite expectations for behavior that must be met:
  - a. Children are to be respectful to other children and staff. Respect should be mutual.
  - b. Children are to listen to and follow directions given by the staff.
  - c. Children are to keep their hands and feet to themselves. (No physical contact.)
- III. Should a child refuse to follow these rules:
  - a. The director or teacher will communicate verbally with the parents and ask that the child be picked up for the remainder of the day.
  - b. The director or teacher will document the behaviors on a behavior report and review with parents.
  - c. The director or teacher will work in conjunction with the parents to develop strategies for behavior management. Behavior plans set in place at home and/or school will be implemented as applicable when shared by parents and school staff, as appropriate.
- IV. Should satisfactory progress not be made:
  - a. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> instance of unsafe behavior, the child will be sent home for the remainder of the day, child care is suspended for 1 additional day and a conference is set up with parents to strategize on the best way to support the family and to create a behavior plan.
  - b. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> instance of unsafe behavior, the child will be sent home for the remainder of the day, child care is suspended for 2 days and a follow-up conference is set up with parents to review the behavior plan and any follow-up findings.
  - c. On the 4<sup>th</sup> instance of unsafe behavior, the child is sent home and dismissed until unsafe behaviors can be addressed by a professional and it is deemed safe for the child to return.
- V. Should a child not be able to adapt to our program, he/she may be removed from the program, with up to a two-week period allowed for the parents to find alternate care.
- VI. Major offenses may result in immediate suspension. If a parent cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contacts. The Executive Director of Child Care or designee will be consulted and an Incident/Accident report will be completed. Someone will need to come immediately if the following behaviors occur:
  - a. Physically harming another person.
  - b. Threatening, harassing, or otherwise verbally abusing another person.
  - c. Endangering him/herself.
  - d. Intentionally destroying property.
  - e. Possessing or using any illegal substance.
  - f. Possessing or using any weapon.
- VII. These policies are intended as guidelines for behavioral or disciplinary concerns. Nothing in the Behavior Management Policy or the Parent Handbook (other than the Parent's Agreement) creates any expressed or implied contractual rights. The Handbook reflects the policies and

procedures generally applicable at the time of publication, and such policies and procedures may be changed by the YMCA. Please discuss this Behavior Management Policy and Agreement with your children.

## **Belongings**

Please have your child keep all personal items of value such as toys, jewelry, etc at home unless it is an approved show and tell day. Children tend to not want to share these items, and they may get lost or broken. Please be sure other items that your children bring are labeled with their name (lunch, extra clothing, pillow, pillowcase, blanket etc.)

## **Birthdays**

We encourage you to send in a special snack (NUT FREE- small cupcakes, brownies, cookies, or something healthy) for your child and his/her peers in order to help us celebrate his/her birthday. We are requiring that any baked item be store-bought with a list of ingredients labeled due to allergies. Please check with the classroom to see if there are any allergies that should be considered in addition to our NO nut policy.

## **Breakfast**

The Early Learning Center is a member of the MSDE Child and Adult Food Program which requires us to serve foods that meet the USDA standards. A nutritious breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m. which consists of a grain, a fruit, and milk for ages 12 months and up. Please make sure your child is in attendance by this time to make sure they will be provided breakfast. We will stop serving breakfast at 8:45 a.m. Parents of toddlers (12 months and older) must sign a food waiver before we can start providing food. Infants (6 weeks-12 months) will be fed according to the parent provided schedule with food brought from home. Infants will be held for bottle feeding until they are sitting up and can hold it for themselves in a highchair. Bottles in cribs are not permitted.

## **Centers (Child-Directed Play)**

The children will participate in center time for approximately 2-3 hours throughout each day and be able to select several centers to play in that day. These include, but are not limited to, sand and water tables, easel, dramatic play, blocks, writing, science, math, listening, and art. Staff will be busy interacting with the children, asking them questions, teaching them through play, and showing them how to use the materials. Children learn a great amount through play. The staff will also be working on curriculum with small groups of children during this time.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

As licensed childcare providers, the center staff are mandated by state law to report any cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the local Child Protective Services agency.

## **Classroom monitoring**

All ELC classrooms are monitored by video. The director will use recordings as a teaching tool and to monitor any behavior challenges.

## **Cleanliness**

To prevent the spread of illness, all toys and equipment are washed and sanitized as often as necessary but at least daily and after a child puts an item in their mouth. During COVID, our toys and equipment are being sanitized multiple times each day and are also being sanitized at the end of every day to minimize the risk of contamination.

When entering the infant room please remember to remove your shoes and enter with socks or use shoe covers. Please do not let siblings enter infant rooms. If you have multiple children, we recommend picking up your infant first and then proceeding to the other classrooms to gather your children. This will assist in minimizing the spread of germs with this delicate population.

## **Clothing**

Your child will be more apt to explore his/her environment if he/she is not worried about getting his/her clothes dirty. For this reason, clothes should be casual and easily washable. Shoes should have rubber soles. For your child's protection, sandals and flip flops are strongly discouraged. If your child likes to wear "dress" shoes to school, please keep a pair of old sneakers in his/her cubby.

Each child should have 2 complete sets of spare clothes (appropriate for the weather) in his/her cubby. This includes pants, shirts, socks, and underwear. Please mark each piece of clothing with your child's full name. These clothes will be used if his/her clothing becomes wet or soiled. Please bring in a replacement set of clothes the following day. If your child needs spare clothing and a set is not available, we will call you to bring suitable clothing. It is the responsibility of the parent to bring in replacement clothing to keep on hand.

## Communication

- Parents are invited to speak with the teachers about their child's progress at any time that is mutually convenient, preferably not when the teachers need to be supervising the children. Open lines of communication between home and school will make your child's experience meaningful. Parents are encouraged to share information about family happenings with their child's teacher. Special events at home (positive or negative) can influence your child's behavior and mood at school.
- Since we are open 12 hours a day, the teachers' work schedules are staggered. All teachers arrive by 10:30 and some may leave as early as 2:30. "A Note for the Teacher" forms are available by the sign-in sheets to leave a note for the teachers. Since the teachers are busy working with the children at pick up and drop off times, if you need extended time to talk to a teacher please call between 1:00 and 3:00 (naptime) to discuss issues that may need an extended amount of time.
- **Communication books/daily reports-** Infants-Twos programs use a daily report packet to communicate to parents directly while Threes and Fours programs use communication books or pages for communication with parents. The teachers will make comments in your child's book on a daily basis to let you know how their day was and the things they enjoyed, etc. Please read and initial daily and feel free to respond, if needed.
- The parent board or monthly newsletter are valuable resources to help you remember certain dates or events going on. Please check it on a regular basis.
- Your child will be assigned a "mailbox". Please check your child's box daily for information from the director and/or teachers, papers and arts and crafts done by the child, etc. During the COVID Pandemic, any important forms will be sent home daily. For accreditation purposes, some items will be used for display, and child portfolios will be stored at the center.
- Newsletters will be distributed on a monthly basis by email. Please make sure we have your correct email address in your child's file. One will also be posted on the parent board. If you would like a hard copy, please make the teachers aware. Please take a few minutes to read the newsletter to keep up to date on what is going on in the classroom.
- Parent Conferences (Threes & Fours classrooms) will take place in October/November with a sign-up sheet. We will discuss the progress of your child individually at this time. Conferences may also be requested by the parent at any time. If a child is having a difficult time adjusting to our program, the Director or Teacher may also request a conference.
- The classrooms can be reached at the below extensions or emails. Emails are checked regularly.

## **ELC Downtown:**

Inchworms— ext. 1265 [inchworms@frederickymca.org](mailto:inchworms@frederickymca.org)

Butterflies- ext. 1265 [butterflies@frederickymca.org](mailto:butterflies@frederickymca.org)

Dragonflies --ext. 1264 [dragonflies@frederickymca.org](mailto:dragonflies@frederickymca.org)

Ladybugs— ext. 1254 [ladybugs@frederickymca.org](mailto:ladybugs@frederickymca.org)

Bumblebees-- ext. 1252 [bumblebees@frederickymca.org](mailto:bumblebees@frederickymca.org)

Spiders -ext. 1253 [spiders@frederickymca.org](mailto:spiders@frederickymca.org)

Fireflies-- ext. 1255 [fireflies@frederickymca.org](mailto:fireflies@frederickymca.org)

Caterpillars—ext. 1256 [caterpillars@frederickymca.org](mailto:caterpillars@frederickymca.org)

## **ELC Green Valley:**

Please contact the center director at 301-607-6258

- The Directors at each site and The Child Care Business department can be easily reached at the numbers and/or email addresses below.

Director Downtown ELC: Krista Kaplan 301-418-6573  
[kkaplan@frederickymca.org](mailto:kkaplan@frederickymca.org)

Director Green Valley ELC: Tammy DeGrange 301-607-6258  
[tdegrange@frederickymca.org](mailto:tdegrange@frederickymca.org)

Child Care Business Dept: 301-228-9225

## **Complaint/Problem/Concerns Procedures**

When a parent has any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the program, we encourage them to follow the procedures listed:

1. Consult with the classroom teachers regarding their child or the program issue.
2. If unable to resolve an issue after an initial consultation with the child's teacher, a parent should contact the Child Care Director by phone or e-mail. A meeting can be arranged if needed.

Complaints will be addressed promptly and a response will be given to parents either at the meeting, by phone, or by email.

A Parent's Guide to regulated child care can be found on the following website.  
[http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child\\_care/licensing\\_branch/parent\\_guide](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/licensing_branch/parent_guide)

## **Curriculum & Assessments**

Weekly lesson plans will be posted on the parent board.

We use a variety of curriculum resources at our ELCs to create a well-balanced experience for our children. These resources include The Creative Curriculum, Healthy Beginnings, Houghton Mifflin, ABC teach, and thematic curriculum resources. Assessment tools used at our ELCs include the Ounce Scale as well as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQs). If developmental delays are indicated with an assessment, we can provide you with specialists for further evaluations, if they are needed. The YMCA will collaborate with other agencies to allow them to come during child care hours to work with your child.

**Infant classrooms-** your child will spend time on their tummy, given opportunities to sit, crawl, walk, enjoy the swing, the saucer, the bouncy seat, etc. We will use stationary tools as little as needed for only up to 20 minute periods of time.

**Toddlers-** the teachers will concentrate on a few words, books, fingerplays, songs, and activities each week. The children will work on animal names and sounds. Language development is encouraged with planned activities as well as spontaneous opportunities. Each week your child will also be exposed to Baby Sign Language. We will inform you of the signs we are working on. Please practice these signs at home with your child.

**Twos-** the teachers provide the children with a well balanced day including singing songs, reading books, art, math, music, sensory experiences, and outdoor activities.

**Threes & Fours -** The curriculum in this age group incorporates math, science, language and literacy, personal and social development, social studies, physical education, health education, and the arts.

## **Custody Information**

Be aware that any and all custody information regarding your child(ren) must be provided by you to the YMCA for the safety of your child. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep this information up to date. If no custody information is provided, the YMCA will follow its procedures regarding the release of your child and the release of information related to the care of your child.

## Daily Reports

**Infants & Toddlers**-On the top of your child's daily report there is an area for you to fill out in the morning before you leave. We would like to know how the night before went, when your child woke up, and when they last ate. This information is very helpful. The teachers will fill out a daily report which consists of:

- Feeding details
- Sleep schedule details
- Diapering and Potty visits (if applicable)

**Twos**-We use a daily report packet that lets you know details about your child's day.

**Threes & Fours** have a communication book or sheet (depending on the classroom) that the teachers make comments in on a daily basis to let you know how their day was and things they enjoyed etc. Please read and initial daily and feel free to respond, if needed.

## Departure

At the end of the day, your child may not be in his/her classroom. We do combine classrooms from approximately 5:15-6:30 depending on the numbers of children and staff. During the COVID Pandemic, we try to keep children in their own classroom in cohorts as staffing permits.

When picking up your child at the end of the day please read their communication book or daily report and initial that you have read it. Also, feel free to make any comments. Make sure to sign your child out and gather all their belongings. Please help us to remind your children that YMCA toys need to stay at school so that they are available for our friends each day.

Please help reinforce our school rules with your children while you are here at the YMCA and remind them to "Use walking feet". Running in the halls can be a disruption for other classrooms.

All authorized pickups for your children will need to be communicated in writing to the center by notification to the teacher or director of the pick-up person. This person will be required to show a photo I.D. and must be 16 years old or older.

Exceptions will only be made in emergencies when you have phoned and made special arrangements in advance.

Any authorized pickup person who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when he/she arrives at the center, will not be allowed to pick up and the authorities may be contacted.

These precautions are for the safety of your child and must be followed.

## **Diapering**

Children will be diapered on an as-needed basis throughout the day. The children will be checked on a regular basis to make sure each child is clean and comfortable. For sanitary purposes, the center requires the use of disposable diapers. Please bring a package of diapers and wipes to leave at the center. The teacher will let you know when your child is getting low on supplies.

## **Emergency Closings**

In the case of inclement weather see our Inclement Weather Policy which is updated annually by October 1st with the latest information.

## **Evaluations**

We will distribute parent online surveys during the year so you can let us know how we are performing as a staff and as a center. Feel free at any time to submit compliments or suggestions on the Open Line Online Survey. The program will also be evaluated by the MSDE Office of Childcare on a bi-annual basis. Our staff are evaluated on an ongoing basis and will have formal evaluations twice a year. The center will renew MSDE accreditation if applicable every three years.

## **Family and Emergency Information**

It is the responsibility of the parent to keep their child's emergency card updated with your current address, home phone number, cell phone number and business telephone. Any changes should be updated on the emergency form and sent to the Director. See link for updating Emergency forms <https://s3.amazonaws.com/zenplannerwordpress-stack0/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2020/07/08192304/emergency-form-fillable-june-2020.pdf> . Your emergency card must also list one local emergency contact person that can arrive within 15 mins. Please obtain permission from anyone you identify as an emergency contact.

## **Field trips**

Field trips are considered part of the Early Learning Center curriculum as approved by MSDE. They add a dimension of discovery! We use field trips to enrich and reinforce our classroom experiences, themes, and seasonal activities. Field trips usually follow theme-related topics. Typically, we try to schedule a fall trip to the pumpkin patch and a spring trip to the Petting Farm. Based on our current COVID situation, we expect that the current school year could look different than it usually

does for field trips. We will keep you posted as we stay in contact with MSDE to provide a compliant program.

1. We will send home permission slips for all field trips. These must be signed and returned by the set date.
2. We believe that field trips are special events for your preschooler. They love having Mom or Dad along for the adventure! Payments for chaperones should be made at the entry gate for the field trip. Some destinations charge for chaperones and some do not.
3. Three to four classroom teachers will accompany the children on the trip.
4. On the day of the trip, we will have the children wear a special "Y" armband.
5. All children must be safely buckled in a bus/car seat.

## **Fire drills**

We will have a practice fire drill once a month. The children will line up at the classroom door. Then they will follow the staff out onto the playground and sit along the blue border as the teacher takes attendance. We will also practice a "Shelter in place" drill. During this drill the children practice staying in the building away from the windows for a severe weather drill.

## **Flexible Spending Account**

If you need your flexible spending account information completed, please contact the child care business office at 301-228-9225 or bring the forms to the child care business office and we will complete it in person. Depending on the office staff schedules, please allow 24-48 hours for us to return it to you.

## **Food and Snacks**

Wholesome snacks are provided every morning and afternoon. Menus are designed using the regulations of the USDA and MSDE Office of Child Care.

If your child has any food allergies that we need to be aware of please include this in your Health Inventory packet and on the back of your child's emergency card. We do not serve snacks that have been manufactured with nuts. Alternative choices can be offered if your child has a documented allergy to any snack being served.

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/natural origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office  
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Finance and Administration  
Maryland State Department of Education  
200 W. Baltimore Street – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595  
410-767-0426 – voice  
410-767-0431 – fax  
410-333-6442 – TTY/TDD

## **Holidays**

The center will be closed for the below list of holidays.

Since our tuition is calculated on an annual basis, no reduction in tuition will be given during holiday weeks.

September 7, 2020- Labor Day

November 26 & 27, 2020- Thanksgiving Break

December 24 & 25, 2020- Christmas Break

December 31, 2020 & January 1, 2021- New Year's Break

May 31, 2021- Memorial Day

July 5, 2021 Independence Day observed

## **Hours of Operation**

The center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

## **Illness**

You will need to keep your child home if they aren't feeling well or if they have any of the symptoms listed below. When children come to the Y they need to be able to participate in daily activities. If they are not feeling well enough to participate in daily activities they should remain home until they are ready to join in all activities. Please let the teachers know that your child will not be attending. You may call and leave a message in the childcare office if necessary. Tuition fees are still due even when your child is absent due to an illness. If there is a special circumstance of an extended absence please discuss this with the Director and provide a doctor's note.

If your child isn't feeling well he/she may be contagious and we wouldn't want the other children exposed. Please do not bring your child or their siblings to the center if they are showing signs of illness including but not limited to:

- fever- has an armpit temperature of 99 F (37.2 C) or higher (this is the method that the YMCA uses to check for temperatures)
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- yellow/green nasal or eye discharge
- pink eye
- severe cough
- nits, lice
- sore throat
- unexplained rash

Your child will need to be symptom-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine.

If your child becomes sick during the day, we will contact you at home/work. If you cannot be reached within the hour, we will call your emergency contacts listed on your emergency card. You will have up to 2 hours to pick your child up.

If your child contracts or is exposed to any contagious disease including COVID, please notify the Director immediately. Notification will allow the director to initiate additional cleaning protocols to ensure the room has been sanitized appropriately.

If your child has or develops any allergies, it is your responsibility to notify the Director as well as the teachers.

Children that develop signs of lice (nits) will not be allowed to attend the program until they have been treated and no nits remain. You will be required to present proof of treatment.

During this COVID period, the following shall apply:

If your child is sent home due to the following symptoms, we require that your child be kept out of the center until they have been symptom-free for 72 hours and they require a doctor note to return. Should a doctor require a COVID test, children may return once the result is deemed negative and the health department approves attendance into the program.

- A temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Consistent cough
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat or shortness of breath
- Fatigue/malaise/headache or body aches
- Nausea, diarrhea or vomiting

If your child is sent home due to the following symptoms, we require that your child be kept out of the center for 24 hours without the aid of medication or until they are symptom-free:

- Unexplained rash - (Need Doctor note to return)
- Yellow/green nasal discharge

- Eye discharge -  
(Need Doctor note to return)
- Nits, Lice -  
(Provide empty treatment box)

## **Injuries/accidents**

The welfare and safety of your child is of primary importance to us, and we make every effort to see that accidents do not occur. However, young children are active and occasionally accidents do happen.

If your child gets hurt or there is an incident that occurs while your child is in our care, we will fill out an injury report. You will need to read it and sign that you were made aware of it.

If the injury is located on the face or head, or your child is bitten and it has broken the skin, you will receive a call right away, otherwise you will be informed at pick up time.

If a child requires emergency care, the following steps will be taken:

- We will contact 911 and attempt to contact the parents. If a parent cannot be reached, the center will contact those persons listed on the emergency card.
- The child will be transported to the hospital via ambulance if necessary. A staff member will ride with the child and stay with them until a parent arrives.
- All accidents causing injury to the child while at the center will be documented in a written report within 24 hours.

## **Late Payment of Tuition fees**

Late fees will be charged on past due accounts at \$25 for weekly payers, \$50 for bi-weekly payers, and \$100 for monthly payers. Accounts that fall 7 days past due may result in termination of child care. Failure to stay current on any payment agreements will result in disenrollment. After three broken payment agreements payment plans will no longer be permitted. Following all disenrollments, a \$125 registration fee will be required. (Fee will not be waived for CCS.)

The YMCA reserves the right to charge a fee for returned drafts. Upon the third returned draft, the account will need to be paid by credit card or money order on a weekly or bi-weekly basis

## **Late Pickup Fees**

Parents must have an emergency contact within 15 minutes of the childcare site to satisfy licensing regulations. If you are running late, please call the classroom to let the staff know you are on your way. If you find you will not be able to arrive by 6:30 p.m., please inform the center and find someone to come in your place (be certain that whoever picks up your child is listed on the emergency form). Many of our staff have other commitments after 6:30 pm., so timely notification is important. Children also become anxious when their parents are late.

A late pickup fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed for pick up past 6:30 pm. At closing, child care staff will call the emergency contacts as noted on the emergency card. If the emergency contacts cannot be reached in a reasonable amount of time, Child Protective Services will be called.

## **Lunch**

Each child is required to bring his/her own lunch from home.

Please be sure that your child's Ziploc bag lunch is clearly labeled with his/her full name and date. We are a NUT free center due to allergies. Please do not pack any items containing nuts.

We stress that the items in your child's lunch should consist of nutritious, healthy foods such as sandwiches, fruits, vegetables, yogurt, and other dairy and bread products. You will not need to provide a drink. We are required by licensing to provide milk for all our meals. If you do send in a drink, we will not be able to serve it to your child. If your child has milk allergies we will need a note from a doctor and then you will need to provide an appropriate substitute. Please do not send gum, candy or sugary snacks as this may have a negative effect on your child's ability to focus throughout the day.

The staff will assist your child in choosing the appropriate item to eat first. We also provide utensils and napkins. If there is something that needs refrigeration, make sure you label it with your child's name. Since we have a large group of children that we are assisting, please fully prepare your child's lunch at home. We will warm up small items for the children. Please do not pack large heat-ups such as TV dinners, etc. which require longer than 1 minute to heat up. All leftover contaminated food (food exposed to saliva) will be disposed of after lunch. It will not be sent home. Unopened food will be sent back home.

## **Milk**

We will provide whole milk to the infants (once they switch over from formula to milk) and toddlers and 1% milk to children 2 yrs and up.

## Medications

Please try to give your child his/her medication at home before coming to school each day. If your child needs to take medication (prescription or non-prescription) while at the center you must complete and sign a medication order form which can be obtained online on our website at

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/zenplannerwordpress-stack0/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2020/07/08192235/medication-authorization-form.pdf> or you can ask an ELC

staff for a form. A doctor must also sign the form for all medications. No medication will be dispensed without this form. The form must match the information on the bottle of medication. In addition, the first dose must be given at home and the child must remain at home for the first 24 hours. The medicine must be in the original container with the pharmacy label giving specific instructions and dosage amounts.

If your child needs an Epi-pen, it will need to come to us in the original container with the prescription label on it. It will be hung on the wall/cabinet labeled with his/her name and picture. If your child has blisters, a diaper rash, or open sores on their bottom, you will need to have a medication form filled out by the doctor for us to apply any kind of cream.

For sunscreen and diaper rash ointment to be used as a preventative measure the doctor does not need to sign off on the Medication Authorization Form only the parent.

## Naptime

**Infants** nap as needed. Your infant will always be put to sleep on their back until they are able to roll over. This has proven to help to prevent SIDS. If your child needs to sleep on their tummy or side, we will need a written note from the doctor with the reason why and an ending date. No infant will be placed in a swing, car seat or bouncy seat to sleep. Swaddling is not permitted unless a doctor writes a note approving this. If a child does fall asleep in one of these they will be moved to their crib. Bedding is washed daily or more often if needed.

**Older Infants/Toddlers**-As the children transition to the older infant classroom, and they are ready, we will try to wean them off of their morning nap. The children will be placed on a cot for naptime. Parents will need to sign a waiver allowing them to do so. They will rest from approximately: 12:30-3:00

**Twos and older**-The center is required by the MSDE Office of Childcare to provide a rest or nap time daily. Please bring a small travel-sized pillow, pillowcase, blanket and pack n play size sheet on Mondays and take them home on Fridays to be washed. Every classroom will have a quiet nap time. Each child will have a cot marked with his/her name. The children aren't required to sleep but are required to stay on their cot quietly for a short period of time. Children who do not sleep during rest time can quietly rest, look at library books, or listen to soft music. The

children will be given quiet activities to do if they haven't fallen asleep within 45 minutes. You may send something for your child to play quietly with at naptime.

Please refer to your child's classroom schedule for their specific nap time.

## **Outdoor Play**

An active outdoor program is present throughout the year. Except in inclement weather, the children will be taken outside based on our licensing guideline chart. Please furnish your child with sunscreen and a completed medication form. Please apply sunscreen in the morning, and the teachers will apply it in the afternoon. Please dress your child in appropriate outdoor clothing when he/she comes to the center. The children will play in a fenced area where they may climb, play in the sandbox, ride bikes, play with balls and other outdoor equipment. If a child is too sick to go outside, please do not send him/her to the center that day. Please send your child with shoes that allow them to run and climb safely. Avoid having them wear flip flops or any open-toed shoes for safety reasons.

## **Parent/Grandparent Involvement**

We do have an open-door policy that allows Parents and Grandparents to visit the center at any time pending COVID limitations. We invite your input and encourage frequent communication between home and school. We encourage you to share your ideas and special talents with your child's class. There are many opportunities within the school year to:

- plan special celebrations for the class
- spend part of your child's birthday in class
- chaperone on field trips
- participate in parent/teacher conferences
- be a guest reader
- share a special talent
- attend our special events such as our family picnic and Fall Festival Dinner

## **Volunteers**

During the school year, there may be some volunteers to come in to assist with program needs as needed. In order to assist in our child care area, they must complete a background check for volunteering as well as a medical clearance. Many volunteers are seeking additional community service hours above and beyond their high school or college requirements.

## **Parent and Staff behavior**

The YMCA is committed to creating a safe, nurturing, and caring environment. We speak to all children respectfully. We also believe in speaking to the parents in a

calm and respectful way and expect the same in return. We believe, because you have chosen the YMCA, you are also committed to these same principles.

## **Parking**

Please use the parking lots on the front or side of the building and refrain from parking along the yellow lines next to the building in the drop off area. The State of Maryland requires that all children be in a car seat. Please do not leave any children unattended in a car under any circumstances. Also, please don't leave your keys or purse in your car during pick up. The YMCA cannot be responsible for valuables left in your car. Please share this information with anyone who may be picking up your child.

## **Parties**

We have several parties throughout the year which may include Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Cinco De Mayo, End of the Year Picnic, and a Fall Festival Dinner, to name a few. Please feel free to sign up to bring something on these days but don't feel obligated. All items must be store-bought and list the ingredients due to allergies.

## **Personal Belongings**

Toys and other belongings should be left at home except on "show and tell" days. On these days children may bring one item from home to share. This item should not be a gun, any other violent toy, or a character that depicts violence or aggression.

Parents should clearly mark their child's name on any item brought to the center. Make sure your backpack, lunch box, pillow, blanket, and extra clothing are labeled with your child's full name. Please note that the center cannot assume responsibility for items brought from home.

## **Picture Day**

Pictures will be taken in the fall pending COVID restrictions. You may choose to purchase individual and/or group pictures. We will announce the date as soon as it is available to us.

## **Prayer**

Before each snack or meal, a short prayer such as the one below may be recited in your child's classroom. A sample prayer we use is: "God is great, God is good, and

we thank him for our food. By His hands, we all are fed. Thank you for our daily bread. AMEN”

If you do not want your child to participate in the prayer, he/she may sit quietly and not recite the prayer.

## **Ratios**

Staff to children ratios for each age group are as follows:

Infants and Toddlers 1:3

2 yr olds 1:6

3 and 4 yr olds 1:10

COVID regulations at this time restrict our classroom capacities to 15 people.

## **Registration**

Registration happens annually first for those currently enrolled and later for new participants. If your child will need care during the next school year you will need to fill out a registration packet and pay the non-refundable registration fee and 1st week's deposit.

## **Sample schedule**

- Arrival
- Free-play (children get to choose the table activities they would like to play)
- Breakfast
- Circle time (singing songs, reading stories, calendar and weather discussion)
- Academics
- Art/craft time (daily craft projects)
- Centers (certain centers are available including housekeeping blocks etc. Children may choose which center to go to)
- Outdoor play (when appropriate)
- Lunch
- Quiet reading
- Nap
- Snack
- Academics (numbers, letters, writing etc.)
- Outdoor play
- Free play/Centers
- P.M. Circle time
- Dismissal

## **Screen time**

It is the policy of YMCA that technology owned by the Center such as; TV/video and computers with learning games may be used to enhance the curriculum.

For children two years old and older children may view up to 30 minutes of age-appropriate, educational passive technology weekly. An occasional exception to the weekly passive technology viewing limit may be made for a special event or project, including a holiday event, or for educational content that is related to the child care's curriculum. Parents/Guardians will be informed of the title and duration before viewing whenever possible. Videos will be free of advertising and brand placement. Screen time will not be permitted during breakfast, lunch, or snack time.

## **Security Entrance**

You will be issued two cards for our 2 secure child care entrances once we are allowed to have parents enter the building again. There is a \$5 per card replacement fee. If your card doesn't work, please inform the teacher and/or the director.

## **Show and Tell**

Check with your individual classroom teacher to find out which day show and tell is scheduled.

## **Snack**

We serve a snack in the afternoon around 3:30 (ages 12 months and up). Snacks consist of fruit, vegetable, or grain along with milk.

## **Sprinkler**

The children will have an opportunity to play in the sprinkler in the summertime. Please send sunscreen, a bathing suit, and a towel on these days. Children become disappointed when they aren't able to participate because they have forgotten their water play items.

## **Staff qualifications**

We take pride in our highly qualified staff members. All staff members are fingerprinted and have received FBI and State of Maryland background checks as part of their hiring process. All of the staff attend an annual Code of Conduct training and a bloodborne pathogens class.

The YMCA teaching staff members have taken college-level courses in Early Childhood Development. Their education varies from possessing the 90-hour course

which includes Child Development and Activities for Young Children to having a degree in Early Childhood Development.

Our teachers attend 18- 24 hrs of training annually, well exceeding licensing standards (12 hrs per year). Our child care Aides take at least 6 hours of training annually.

We also require our staff to maintain First Aid and CPR certification. All staff are credentialed through the Maryland State Department of Education.

## **Sunscreen**

During the summer months, your child may need sunscreen. You will need you to fill out a medication form listing the exact type (Coppertone with SPF 30) before we can apply sunscreen to your child. You must supply and label your sunscreen for your child's full name. Please apply your child's sunscreen in the morning. It takes the staff quite a bit of time to put sunscreen on 20 children. We will re-apply it in the afternoon if needed, and before playing in the water.

## **Swimming**

At the Downtown Y, the 3 & 4-year-old classes will have swim time during the year pending COVID restrictions. Children should bring a swimsuit and a towel in a bag for swimming. With the exception of ear infections, if your child is too sick to participate in these classes, he/she should not be at the center. Swimming is usually in the morning. Please have your child come to the center with their swimsuit under their clothing and bring extra underwear.

## **Supervision**

- **Bathroom**-Children use the bathrooms in the classrooms in most cases. Teachers and aides are readily available for assistance when needed.
- **Naptime**-1-2 staff members will supervise the children.
- **Pick up**- During the COVID Pandemic, we will have staff stationed by the ELC entrance to retrieve each child as parents arrive for pick up at designated times. If you are coming to pick up your child earlier in the day please call 301-663-5131 Ext. 1256 once you arrive.

Once COVID restrictions are lifted as soon as you enter the classroom to pick up your child you are responsible for your child. Please help them to continue following the rules and stay in the classroom. Please do not let them run up and down the hallways or leave the classroom/playground without you.

# Supplies

Below is a list of classroom supplies by age group

## Infants

- Child's feeding, nap and diapering schedule
- Pre-made plastic bottles secured with a lid and labeled with name, and full date—first and last (Example- Sally Smith 8/4/2017)
- Baby food and cereal (new and unopened). Open unused food will be sent home daily
- Pacifier labeled with child's full name-if needed
- Diapers(disposable only)-large pack
- Wipes-large pack
- Diaper rash cream (with medication form)-if needed
- Sunscreen(with medication form)-if needed
- At least 3 changes of clothing with child's initials (include weather appropriate as well as socks and onesie /t-shirt)
- Family picture
- At least 5 fabric bibs **without** plastic backing (younger infants); 5 pullover bibs (older infants)
- Fitted crib sheet and blanket
- Inside shoes or slippers, as well as outside shoes

## Toddlers

- Lunch (12 months old and older) -Food should be "ready to go" (everything cut up and precooked) when you pack it in a plastic container. We will provide milk and reheat items.
- 1 pack *Take and Toss* sippy cups-to leave at the center
- Diapers(disposable only)
- Wipes
- Diaper rash cream (with medication form) if needed
- Sunscreen (with YMCA) form
- At least 3 large bibs, the kind that goes over the head
- At least 2 Changes of clothing with the child's full name (include weather appropriate as well as socks and onesie /t-shirt.
- Family picture
- Fitted crib sheet and blanket

## Twos

- Blanket/sheet and pillowcase/pillow-labeled with child's name
- At least 2 sets of extra changes of clothes with the child's full name on tags and placed in a Ziplock bag with the child's full name
- Diapers, wipes or Pull-ups (if pottyng)
- (2) -pocket folders(no prongs)

- Family picture
- Lunch (every day) Label all items and place them in a labeled gallon Ziploc bag. No lunch boxes. We will provide milk
- Sunscreen with an authorization form

### **Older Twos-Fours**

- Blanket/sheet and pillowcase/pillow labeled with the child's full name
- At least 2-3 pairs of changes of clothes (shirts, pants, underwear, and socks) with child's full name on tags and placed in a labeled Ziploc bag
- A large pack of pull-ups and wipes (if necessary)
- Composition book
- Sunscreen with an authorization form
- Family picture
- Lunch (every day). Please make sure the Ziploc bag is labeled. We provide milk.
- (4) hole punched plain non-poly pocket folders (no prongs)
- Wet flushable wipes

### **Tax Information**

Parents/guardians can access year-end tax receipts. Instructions will be given out once the forms are ready to access. Our tax ID number is **52-060-7953**

### **Teacher Appreciation week**

Early in May, we appreciate our staff by providing them with breakfast one day and lunch a different day, etc. There will be a sign-up sheet posted where you can volunteer to help out. Feel free to appreciate the staff at any time.

### **Toilet Training**

When your child starts showing signs of readiness, we will begin working together to toilet train your child. Please also work with this at home in the evenings and on the weekends. We will ask you to provide pull-ups during this process. Children should wear comfortable clothes that are easy for them to pull up and down independently. Clothes worn during these transition times should not have zippers, buttons, onesies, and overalls are not recommended. When you and the teachers feel that your child is ready to begin using the toilet, please speak to a teacher about your methods and practices at home. Together we can develop a plan that best suits your child. No child will be forced to use the toilet if he/she shows resistance. If your child has more than one accident during the day, he/she will be placed back in a pull-up.

If your child is still using diapers or pull-ups, you must supply the pull-ups and wipes as well as at least three changes of clothes including underwear and socks.

When your supply is getting low, the teacher will notify you in your communication log. Each child will also have a sticker chart to help motivate them.

## **Transitioning**

Your child will move to the next room once there is an opening and we also feel that the child is developmentally ready. When it is time for your child to move to the next age group you will be given a transition paper if this occurs during the school year. A typical transition plan when we are allowed by MSDE will be that your child will start by visiting the first two days in the mornings, the 2<sup>nd</sup> two days in the afternoons and then the fifth day he/she will spend all day in the new classroom. If one week of transitioning is not enough, we will transition a few more days, until the child is comfortable enough to remain in the new class. You will have an opportunity to meet with the new teachers before your child is moved. The teachers will also meet to talk before your child joins the new class.

## **Transportation**

If your child is transported in the YMCA bus for a field trip, you must sign a permission slip. Separate permission slips will be signed for each field trip. All children must be buckled in a seat.

## **Vacations**

Please notify the staff when your child will be on vacation. It will help them better plan for their day. Tuition payments are still due during vacation.

## **Withdrawal**

Parents may withdraw a child from the program at any time. A 2-week written notice is required. Parents not giving a two-week notice will still be responsible for tuition.

## **YMCA Sports/Aquatics/Gymnastics**

Parents at our Downtown Y location may sign their child up for YMCA classes throughout the morning hours only if they would like for their children to participate during the school day in Y Programs listed in the latest program guide. A Class Attendance Permission Slip will need to be filled out prior to the child attending class after you enroll at the front desk. This form includes the date the class will begin and end and also start and end times etc., in addition to a registration receipt. Children will be changed into their appropriate program attire, and dropped off and picked up after their activity unless you inform us otherwise.