



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# PARENT HANDBOOK

## Child Care Programs

YMCA of Delaware – Central & Walnut Street Branches



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# Welcome

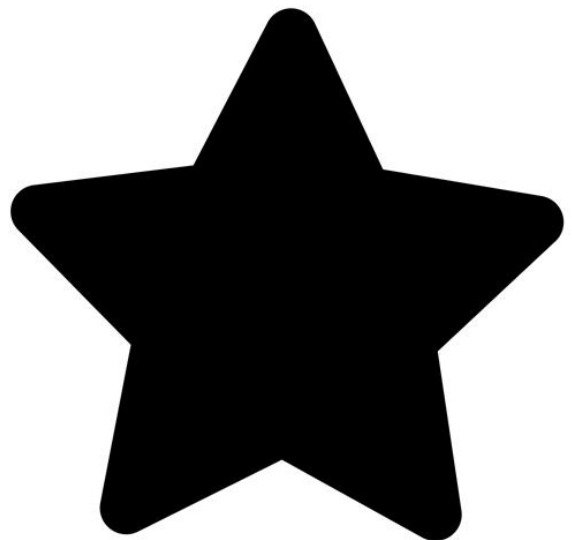
Our centers are part of a worldwide organization devoted to excellence in early childhood education, before and after school enrichment, and summer camping opportunities. We believe that every child should be able to grow and thrive. Our programs provide opportunities for your child to build-self esteem, try new things and develop at their own pace all while making new friends and receiving care from compassionate and competent staff.

We seek your help in partnering with us for the care of your child. This handbook is meant to serve as an introduction to our programs and to extend a warm welcome. We hope you find it informative and refer to it often during your time here. We welcome parents to actively participate in our program and encourage your thoughts and suggestions at any time.



# General Information

The information in this section of the Parent Handbook contains information that guides the operation of all of the Child Care Programs offered at the Central & Walnut Street YMCAs. Detailed information on each program is contained in the sections dedicated to the individual programs.



# Administrative Information

## Our Mission

The YMCA of Delaware is an association of people of all ages, ethnic groups, and religious affiliations that strive to cultivate the human potential, self-esteem and dignity of all people. Our organization exists to develop and practice the Christian principles of love, caring, inclusiveness, justice and peace...and to enrich the emotional, physical and social life of all individuals, families and our community.

## Governing Body

The Central and Walnut Street YMCAs are branches of and governed by the YMCA of Delaware. As a non-profit charitable organization, the YMCA of Delaware is managed by a volunteer board with members from our local community. Officers of the YMCA of Delaware include:

Deborah Bagatta-Bowles, Chief Executive Officer  
Jim Kelly, Vice President/Chief Operating Officer  
Gregory Maziarz, Chief Financial Officer  
Bev Martin, Vice President of Human Resources  
Linda Kurtz Risk, Vice President of Marketing & Communication

## Child Care Leadership Team & Contact Information

The Central & Walnut Street YMCA branches are located in Downtown Wilmington and function as one operation. Our leadership team consists of professionals dedicated and trained in the many different areas of our operation. We have a team of staff dedicated to our Child Care Programs. This team includes:

Name	Title	Phone	Email
Lee Bunting	Senior Executive Director	302-254-9622 x169	<a href="mailto:lbunting@ymcade.org">lbunting@ymcade.org</a>
Kristina Woznicki	Associate Executive Director	302-472-9622 x115	<a href="mailto:kwoznicki@ymcade.org">kwoznicki@ymcade.org</a>
Krystina Schneider	School Age Child Care Director	302-472-9622 x217	<a href="mailto:kschneider@ymcade.org">kschneider@ymcade.org</a>
Jackie Rudloff	Child Development Director	302-254-9622 x171	<a href="mailto:jrudloff@ymcade.org">jrudloff@ymcade.org</a>
Jill Quinn	Assist. Child Development Dir.	302-472-9622 x 224	<a href="mailto:jquinn@ymcade.org">jquinn@ymcade.org</a>
Lanette McCaskill	Membership Coordinator	302-472-9622 x219	<a href="mailto:lmccaskill@ymcade.org">lmccaskill@ymcade.org</a>
Zina Washington-Pressey	Child Care Secretary	302-254-9622 x172	<a href="mailto:BpWASHINGTON@ymcade.org">BpWASHINGTON@ymcade.org</a>

## Our Child Care Staff Team

Our dedicated teachers, assistant teachers, group leaders and volunteers strive to make a positive difference in the lives of children. We hire individuals who have experience working with children and are committed to educating the children they care for. Each staff person brings and shares unique talents and interests with the wide range of children that we serve. All of our staff members meet the State of Delaware's requirements for the positions they are serving in. We provide our staff with 18 or more hours of training in topics relevant to their classroom or group each year. In addition, all of our staff are trained and certified in First Aid, CPR and AED and complete training in Child Abuse Prevention, Sexual Harassment Prevention and Blood Borne Pathogen Management. We are proud of the work our team does each day as your child learns and grows.

## Strong Kids Campaign

Each branch of the YMCA of Delaware sponsors an annual giving campaign known as the Strong Kids Campaign. With your help, kids and families in need have the opportunity to participate in nurturing and value-based programs, such as Child Care and Summer Day Camp. Over 90% of the children served in the Child Care Programs at Central & Walnut Street receive assistance from the Strong Kids Campaign. If you would like to make a gift, please stop by our membership desk. All contributions are tax deductible. Our campaign continues to grow each year thanks to the hard work of many volunteers who are willing to represent the YMCA and spread the word about the work of the campaign. If you would be willing to help with this fundraising program, please speak with a member of our leadership team.



**Inclusion Policy**

We recognize that the community in which we serve has a variety of needs and cultural backgrounds. We strive to ensure that all members, visitors and residents are treated with mutual respect and foster a sense of community that goes beyond the front door.

We embrace an inclusion approach that strives to provide opportunities for all children to actively participate in all aspects of our program. We support the inclusion of children who require additional support because of a physical, cognitive, social or emotional need . We make changes to our daily program when possible to meet the needs of each child. We respect and value input from parents and encourage them to be part of the decision making process for their child. We request that families share the IFSP/IEP and/or behavioral plan with us.

In addition, we welcome children whose primary language is not English. The Center Director and program staff will work to learn key phrases and simple conversational words to make communication easier with children and families we serve.

We support families by consulting with early intervention professionals when possible. All of our Early Childhood Teachers and most of our Early Childhood and School Age Assistant Teachers have knowledge and training in inclusion best practices within 90 days of hire. The goal is to create an environment in which all children are valued and respected in order to support their optimal learning and development.

**Equal Opportunity Provider**

The YMCA is an equal opportunity provider. Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, religion, sex, cultural heritage, disability, marital status, economic status, national origin or other protected class. We celebrate diversity and know that our children benefit through an enriched learning environment.

**Lost & Found**

If your child is missing anything, please inquire with the classroom teacher or group leader as soon as possible. Remember to label everything. Unclaimed items are given to charity after a reasonable period of time. We strongly encourage parents not to send their child to school with money, jewelry, electronic devices, cell phones, expensive clothing or other valuables. We are not responsible for any lost items.

**Enrollment & Children’s Records**

**Enrollment Periods**

New participants are enrolled throughout the year on a space available basis. Parents are encouraged to take a tour of our programs before enrolling a new child. The tour gives parents and children an opportunity to meet the Center Director and classroom or program staff and to learn more about the specifics of the program.

Each of our programs holds an enrollment period each year in which current families are required to update their children’s files to ensure that we have the most current information. During this time, each family will need to fully complete a registration packet to maintain enrollment in the center. The annual enrollment periods for each program are:

Central YMCA’s Child Development Program	September
Walnut Street YMCA’s Child Development Program	September
Walnut Street YMCA’s Before & After School Program	May – August
Walnut Street YMCA’s Summer Day Camp Program	February – June

**Waiting List**

We maintain a waiting list for each classroom or age group that reaches capacity. To place a child on the waiting list, we collect the parent’s name, phone number, email, child’s name, date of birth and payment method. Siblings of current participants receive first preference for new openings. Enrollment from the waiting list depends upon a number of factors including age of the child at the time of the opening, timing of other classroom transitions, space availability on specific transportation routes (if applicable) and the willingness of families with multiple children to enroll one child ahead of siblings if

a space is only available for one. When an opening becomes available, the Center Director will call the parent. Parents have 2 business days to accept the opening and enroll the child. If the contact information is no longer valid, a parent chooses to not enroll the child or the parent fails to respond to voicemails or emails regarding the opening, the child will be removed from the waiting list. Parents must check in with the Program Director at least every 4 months to confirm they wish to remain on the waiting list.

### **Enrollment**

Prior to enrollment, a member of our staff team will meet with you to complete the enrollment paperwork, provide basic center information, and to introduce you and your child to the classroom staff (if available). During this meeting, parents are encouraged to ask questions, inquire about volunteer opportunities and become familiar with our surroundings.

In order for your child to start their experience, your child's file must include the following:

- Child care registration form
- A current physical with up to date immunizations, signed by the physician
- Child and Adult Food Program Enrollment Form (Central & Walnut Street Child Development Programs only)
- First payment (prorated if starting after the first of the month for Child Development Programs; not pro-rated for School Age Child Care or Summer Day Camp)
- If applicable, Purchase of Care authorization form

### **Placement**

Your child will join a classroom or group with children of similar age and developmental level. Many factors are taken into consideration when choosing the best classroom or group placement for a child. We look at all of the child's developmental areas, age, level of maturity and previous experiences in a group child care setting.

### **Change of Address/Phone Numbers**

If, at any time, your address or any phone numbers change, please **inform the administration and your child's teachers immediately.** It is extremely important for both teachers and the office to have your current information to be able to reach you at all times.

### **Physical Examination**

An annual physical and up-to-date immunization record are required for all children at the time of enrollment. Children over the age of 1 must also have a documented lead screening on file. Please help us keep your child's file up-to-date with shots received throughout the year. Children in our Full Day Child Care programs must have proof of a physical every 12 months. Children in our School Age & Camp programs must submit a current physical at the time of enrollment and are encouraged to submit annual physicals.

### **Confidentiality**

Your child's records are confidential. The staff will not share your child's records with anyone without written parental consent or court order except when employees of the Office of Child Care Licensing are performing official duties or when requested by other entities with statutory responsibilities for issues relating to the health, safety and well-being of children. Parents have access to their child's records upon request and may request additional relevant information be added to the records.

### **Assessment of Child Progress**

All age groups are assessed formally and informally to ensure that the teachers plan their curriculum goals and activities to support individualized learning. Our teachers observe, record and document children's development, participation and learning throughout the year. The assessments are ongoing, systematic and gathered from natural play activities and realistic setting that reflects children's actual performance. Our center uses variety of methods such as observations, checklists, rating scales, and individually administered tests. The assessment results are used to benefit children by informing sound decisions about

children, teaching, and program improvement. When assessments identify concerns, appropriate follow-up, referral or other intervention is used.

Our formal assessments are done three times a year. All our assessments are kept in the child's file, which follows the child from group to group to show the progress in cognitive, language, physical social and emotional areas of development that are consistent with our program curriculum and philosophy.

Our families are part of assessment process with regular communication, partnership and involvement. Once the formal assessments are completed the head teacher will schedule a parent conference.

### **Dropping from Enrollment**

Parents are required to provide a minimum of 14 days written notice to the Director prior to removing their child from enrollment. If you fail to provide the required 14 day notice, you will still be responsible for tuition for the final two weeks plus any unpaid balance due. Unpaid balances may be sent to collections and/or reported to Purchase of Care. Parents will be contacted when their child is absent for more than 5 consecutive days without notice to determine the circumstances. In the event that we are unable to reach anyone regarding the extended absence, we will consider the child to have voluntarily ended care without notice.

### **Dismissal from the Program**

While we work hard to ensure that each child in our program is successful, we reserve the right to disenroll any child at any time when we believe that disenrollment is in the best interest of the child and/or the program. Our first priority is to provide quality care and education for all children enrolled in our programs but on rare occasions there may be a need to remove a child from enrollment. Some of the reasons for involuntary dismissal might include:

Failure to adapt – Most children adapt to a new program within a few weeks. If a child fails to adapt to our program, even though an effort has been made by parents and the staff to integrate him/her into the program, the child may be disenrolled so that his or her parents can find alternate care for their child.

Aggressive/disruptive behavior – If a child is aggressive, or hurtful to others or if a child's behavior is disruptive to the good order of the classroom or group, we will make every attempt to teach and train the child to respect others and to behave appropriately. If these behaviors continue the child may be disenrolled at the discretion of the center. Please refer to specific information on our behavior management procedures on page 22.)

Failure to pay tuition – We may immediately remove any child from enrollment whose tuition is not paid per facility policies. Please refer to specific information on our payment procedures on page 11.

Abusive/disruptive behavior by parents – We reserve the right to disenroll any child whose parent behaves in a manner that is destructive, disruptive, abusive, or malicious through their statements or actions toward the staff, their own child or other parents/children in the center.

Irreconcilable differences – Every parent has expectations regarding the care and education of their child. If it occurs that we are unable to meet a parent's expectations, we reserve the right to disenroll the child in order to allow the parents to find an environment that better meets their needs.

Failure to maintain required paperwork – Parents are responsible for ensuring that the information in their child's file is complete and accurate at all times. This includes accurate phone numbers as well as ensuring your child has a current physical on file. Failure to keep us informed of changes or failure to submit required paperwork will result in your child's dismissal from the program.

Excessive late pick-ups – Children must be picked up by the time each program ends. While rare emergencies (such as a flat tire, car accident or parental miscommunication) may cause you to be late, repeated late pick-ups will result in your child's dismissal from the program.

## Center Transitions

We recognize that changes in schedules can be stressful for both parents and children. For this reason, we provide opportunities for families to get to know us prior to starting our program and during the year.

An open house for new and returning families will be scheduled once per year for each program. Parents and children will have the opportunity to visit the classrooms, meet the staff and try a sampling of our daily activities.

Families signing up after the open house may discuss the program with the Center Director and, if time allows, a staff member from the program will call the student's family prior to their start date. The staff will introduce themselves, welcome them to the YMCA and answer any questions they have about the program. The staff will start to get to know the children, by asking the parents to tell them about their child's likes, interests or concerns.

Throughout the year, children in all of our programs will go through transitions in their care. We strive to make these transitions as smooth as possible by planning them ahead of time, working with parents and preparing children for the changes. Common transitions are listed below.

### Adjusting to Child Care

Starting at a new center can be a stressful experience for both parents and children even as a child grows older. New faces, routines, expectations, activities, and foods are just a few adjustments that present themselves. We want to work closely with each family to make the transition to the center a smooth, happy one. Whenever possible, we ask each family to participate in a transitional period, which is helpful in adjusting to the new center. A week to two weeks before your child's start date we ask that you schedule a visit to your child's classroom or group with your child. This brief visit allows your child to explore the classroom or area and to get a sense of the daily routine. It also allows you to start to get to know the teachers by asking them questions about the classroom and giving them important information about your child. Furthermore, we ask you to complete the registration packet in full as it contains information which will help our staff learn about your child and their development prior to their arrival.

You can help your child become familiar with the center by talking with him/her about the teachers and activities in a positive way. If he/she senses that you have confidence in the staff it will help him/her feel more comfortable with this new situation. Sometimes, even when the best preparations have been made, young children will cry when they experience a separation from their parents. Our staff always comforts a child until they are ready to join in. Remember you are welcome to call the teachers any time during the school day to check on your child.

### Placements into Older Classes in Our Child Development Programs

Children are assessed for class placement into the older classes by chronological ages and in terms of their total development – social, physical and emotional. Interest level in the activities typical of each group is also taken into consideration, as is the actual availability of an open place at a particular time that matches the enrollment days of the child being moved. The classroom teacher is also consulted as to the readiness of the child. Parents will be notified and encouraged to set up a transitional conference with the new teacher. When the transition is scheduled, the child will participate in a transition period which includes a written plan for times when they will visit the new classroom accompanied by one of the current classroom staff members for gradually increasing intervals over the course of a week. Children who struggle with the change will be allowed additional transition time and a new plan will be created. Children in transition (moving from one classroom to another) will pay the tuition fees of the classroom they were in on the first of the month. Children must be potty trained before transitioning to the Little Rascals, Little Professors, Giraffes, or Lions Classroom and for all School Age Child Care programs.

**Transitioning to Kindergarten**

We work with families to prepare each child for a successful transition to Kindergarten. Parents are encouraged to schedule an exit meeting with their child’s teacher to review their development prior to the start of Kindergarten. We work to provide parents with information on Kindergarten enrollment and readiness. Site visits can be arranged for children entering Kindergarten who will transition to the Walnut Street YMCA School Age Child Care Program.

**Transitioning Between Summer Camp and School Age Child Care (and vice versa)**

School Age Children may participate in the School Age Child Care Program during the school year and in the Summer Day Camp Program during the summer months. We provide registration information to currently enrolled families ahead of these transitions. While these are two distinct programs, we strive to maintain daily routines and staffing patterns to minimize the transition between both programs. Many of our school year staff work with the children throughout the summer and provide consistency for children struggling with the transition.

**Transitioning Out of Our Program for Care Elsewhere**

We encourage families to give advance notice before removing their child from any of our programs. This provides the staff and children with opportunities to say goodbye to teacher and friends and to talk about the upcoming change. Whether the change is due to a move, work schedule change or other convenience, it is important to explain the change for your child and to allow time for goodbyes. Parents are encouraged to schedule an exit meeting with their child’s teacher to review their development before their departure.

**Transitioning Out of Our Programs for Self-Care (age 13 or older)**

We encourage families to give advance notice before this big transition to allow time for several discussions with the child about staying safe on their own. Parents are the best judge of when their child is ready for this transition. Since our school age programs serve youth beyond age 13, parents are encouraged to consider their child’s ability to handle this transition well ahead of the change. These older children will be given information about our older youth programs and tips for kids staying safe at home. If the family is interested, we will introduce the families to the staff people who run specific programs that might interest them.

**Payment Procedures**

**Registration Fee**

Each program requires a registration fee for participation in the program. These fees are waived for children who utilize Purchase of Care. The registration fees for each program are as follows:

Central YMCA Child Development Center	\$35 per child
Walnut Street YMCA Child Development Center	\$35 per child
Walnut Street YMCA Before & After School Program	\$25 per child (each fall)
Walnut Street YMCA Summer Day Camp	None

**Payment Dates**

Payments are due on the dates established for each program. Routinely late payments will not be tolerated and will result in late fees and/or dismissal from care. We do not adjust payment due dates.

Payments for the Central & Walnut Street Child Development Programs are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month for that month’s care. Special arrangements can be made to split your balance between the 1<sup>st</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> of the month by using the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) option.

Payments for the Walnut Street YMCA Before & After School Program & Summer Day Camp are due by the Monday BEFORE the week of care. Children with balances due for After School Care on Monday afternoon will receive one warning. After that warning, children will not be picked up from school until the balance is paid. In our Summer Day Camp, if the entire weekly fee is not paid by the due date, your child’s camp registration will be cancelled and the next person on the waitlist will be added. If there is no waitlist and you wish to pay late, a \$25 late fee per child will be assessed to re-register your child.

## Financial Assistance (Open Doors)

Our membership and programs are designed to be readily available to the public. Fees are set at the level that makes them affordable to as many people as possible. Our financial assistance policy enables us to assist individuals who want to participate but cannot afford the entire fee. Stop in, call or visit the YMCA on the web at [www.ymcade.org](http://www.ymcade.org) for more info.

## Purchase of Care

Our centers participate in the State of Delaware Purchase of Care childcare fee subsidy program. State of Delaware Social Services offices will finalize your eligibility of subsidy. Proof of a current Purchase of Care Authorization is required prior to enrollment and before the start of each month.

## Absences

We do not reduce tuition for vacations, school holidays, sick days or snow days. We ask that you notify your child's teacher of planned absences and vacations and ensure that payments are made as scheduled during the absence. If your child is ill, please call and inform the center. It is important for us to know your child's symptoms as we monitor illnesses throughout the center. In addition, unreported absences longer than 5 consecutive days are considered voluntary terminations of enrollment. Children who do not return from vacation or an illness as scheduled must call the center to report the change.

## Billing Options

We strive to offer billing options to help parents meet their financial obligations. All billing statements are mailed (unless enrolled in an EFT plan) at the end of each month. However, failure to receive such a statement does not relieve a parent from paying the balance due for child care. Parents can choose from two options for their child care billing.

### EFT Easy Payment Plan

EFT (Electronic Fund Transfer) Payments will be automatically deducted on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month OR the 1<sup>st</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> of the month from your Checking, Savings or Credit Card account. Parents wishing to pay on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> of the month must enroll in this payment option.

### Statement Billing

We will mail you a paper statement two weeks prior to the due date. You return the payment stub to us with the payment.

## Payment Methods

The Downtown YMCA accepts MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover, cash, checks and money orders. You can make a payment as follows:

- At the front desk of the Central YMCA & Walnut Street YMCA
- Mail your payment (be sure to allow plenty of time for it to reach us on time!) to:

Central YMCA	Walnut Street YMCA
Attn: Child Care	Attn: Child Care
501 W. 11 <sup>th</sup> Street	1000 North Walnut Street
Wilmington, DE 19801	Wilmington, DE 19801

- Call to make a payment over the phone by calling the Child Care Secretary  
Central YMCA: 302-254-9622 ext. 172  
Walnut Street YMCA: 302-472-9622 ext. 219
- Sign up for to have the funds automatically withdrawn from the checking, savings or credit card account of your choice.

## Late Payments

Payments that are not received at that time will result in a \$30 late payment fee regardless of payment arrangements and may result in immediate termination of child care services. Our centers operate at or near capacity. Payments that are late may result in dismissing the child from the program. In the event that your child's care is terminated for non-payment, your child's

space in the program will not be reserved. As soon as a vacancy becomes available, even due to non-payment, we begin working to fill it. If your situation requires you to have on-going care, please be sure your payment arrives on time.

We do not offer payment agreements for past due balances. Please plan your financial obligations accordingly.

## Parent Involvement

### Family Participation

We build positive relationships with our families by being familiar with their unique characteristics, strengths and issues important to each of them. To develop partnerships with the families we create a welcoming environment and opportunities for involvement. We welcome and encourage your participation in our program. Your presence and assistance in the classroom is welcomed at any time. Parents are encouraged to volunteer for field trips and to come into the classroom to share a special interest with the class (i.e., playing the guitar, cooking, a foreign language, etc.) We do require parents who volunteer in our programs to complete a background screening and to sign the YMCA's Code of Conduct. Parents who wish to volunteer for more than 4 days per calendar year will also need to complete a fingerprint check with the state police.

We also have an open door policy for parents. You may come in and visit the center anytime you wish.

Ways for families to be involved include:

- Attend Family Nights and special events
- Make things for the program
- Share your culture, talent or job
- Participate in class activities
- Contribute to the curriculum
- Complete program surveys
- Offer feedback
- Serve on Parent Committees
- Chaperone a field trip (see details on field trips under special events)

### Parent/Staff Conferences

We strongly believe that we are partners in your child's early development. Twice a year, our staff set up a time to meet with you concerning your child's development. A developmental assessment is completed and shared with you as well as specific goals and objectives for the next six months for your child.

### Parent Communication

Each classroom/group has a parent communication notebook. Please use this notebook if you would like to communicate information to your child's teacher/group leader and they have not yet reported to work. The communication notebook eliminates the "middle" person (staff that have reported to work that you may give information to that do not work in your child's classroom) and relays information that the staff may need concerning you or your child. In addition, center wide communication will be distributed in memo or newsletter form to the parents/guardians and can be found in the child's cubbie or at the sign out table. Our staff members are very open and responsive to any questions, comments or concerns you may have. Please do not hesitate to consult them as they will you. We will ensure that regular communication concerning your child's well-being and developmental progress is a priority to the parents/guardians.

### Parents Right to Know Notice

Under the Delaware Code you are entitled to inspect, at any time, the active record and complaint files of any licensed child care facility. To review a child care facility record contact:

Office of Child Care Licensing  
3411 Silverside Road  
Wilmington, DE 19810  
(302) 892-5800

**OR**

Office of Child Care Licensing  
821 Silver Lake Boulevard, Suite 102  
Dover, DE 19904  
(302) 739-5487



## Evaluation of Program

Parents are encouraged to share their evaluation of the program with the Program Director at any time. It is our goal to provide outstanding programs and your input during the school year is invited. There will be a written Child Care satisfaction survey sent to each family each year via email. Parents interested in completing this survey should ensure that we have their active email address on file. You are encouraged to discuss the program with your child, and complete the survey to assist us in bettering our programs. We are able to compare our program to other YMCA child care programs across the country and strive to be the best. Your input is welcome and encouraged.

## Sharing of Concerns

In a partnership with parents, the YMCA is committed to the well-being of each and every child in our care. Our policies and procedures reflect that commitment. We welcome any questions, concerns and comments. If there is any situation that seems outside our policies or that you feel is inappropriate or uncomfortable, please see the Center Director immediately. In the absence of the Center Director, contact the Branch Associate Director or Executive Director.

The vitality of the YMCA of Delaware results from the efforts and dedication of the policy volunteers and staff who are part of the Association. The efficient and productive operation of the YMCA is aided by the policies and procedures which clarify the ethical obligations and responsibilities of those participants – particularly those of the staff. YMCA leaders have inherited an organizational culture of high ethical standards. Voluntary adherence to the following statements will guide the Association in its efforts to better serve the community.

YMCA of Delaware has selected EthicsPoint to provide you with simple, risk-free ways to anonymously and confidentially report activities that may involve criminal conduct or violations of the YMCA of Delaware Code of Conduct. All reports submitted through EthicsPoint will be handled promptly and discreetly with the objective of correcting the situation being reported. A link to the EthicsPoint reporting site can be found on the YMCA of Delaware's website.

YMCA of Delaware guarantees that reporters are completely anonymous and reports submitted via EthicsPoint are confidential. No retaliatory action will be taken against anyone for reporting or inquiring in good faith about potential breaches of the YMCA of Delaware policies or for seeking guidance on how to handle suspected breaches.

# Center Closures & Delays

## Hazardous Weather Conditions

In the event that the YMCA or YMCA child care programs will have an altered schedule due to snow or other inclement weather, the following methods are used to communicate with members.

- Updates posted on the YMCA of Delaware's website, [www.ymcade.org](http://www.ymcade.org). (This is the best option and the FIRST place we update.)
- Closing or delay information updated on main YMCA voicemail. Individual extensions are NOT updated. To reach this information, please call 254-YMCA for Central or 472-YMCA for Walnut Street.
- Closing or delay information is also reported to WDEL (1150 AM). Please note, there may be a delay in our reporting this info and the time it becomes public.

Please note, on bad weather days, if you check the above information and it makes no mention of a closing or delay, the YMCA and YMCA child care is open. We do not broadcast openings...only closings and delays. We do, however, strongly recommend that you check for delays right before you leave because some weather conditions require us to make a decision very close to an actual opening or closing time.

In addition, our Before School Child Care Program does not run when your child's school delays the start of school or cancels school for the day. Our After School Child Care Program does not run when your child's school cancels school for the day or dismisses early due to weather. If an emergency or inclement weather requires the YMCA to close ahead of schedule, YMCA staff will contact each family or emergency contact.



## Holidays & Closings

A list of scheduled holiday and closings can be obtained from the Center Director and is posted on site. These closings are scheduled well in advance to help parents plan for alternative care when the center is closed. We reserve the right to close the program due to unexpected emergencies or other issues.

# Safety Practices

## Accidents and Injuries

We monitor our program offerings and facilities to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for all of our participants. However, at times, accidents happen. In the case of minor injury, staff certified in first aid procedures will administer first aid. The staff person supervising your child at the time of the accident will fill out an accident report.

In the event of an emergency, staff trained in first aid and CPR will care for your child as needed while 911 and you are called. In case you and/or your emergency contact person(s) cannot be reached, a child care staff member will accompany your child to the hospital and stay until you arrive. The YMCA does not provide health insurance. Please keep your child's insurance information up to date in our files in case of an emergency.

## YMCA Child Safe Policy

Parents place their trust in the Y to help their children thrive. Our core values—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility—are part of everything we do. Because of this, we place great value on creating the most child-safe environment possible. We believe when parents are well informed about safety protocols, it greatly assists our constant vigilance of all who have potential access to children. The following should be established zero-tolerance YMCA policies that are regularly communicated with parents. Parents should be regularly encouraged to report any deviation from these policies immediately.

- A child should never be alone with a staff member (but may be separate, if in full view of others).
- Children should not be contacted by YMCA staff except for issues relating directly to currently active YMCA activities (i.e., no letters, email, telephone calls, texts, facebook, visits, non-YMCA excursions, etc.).
- Children should never receive gifts of any kind from individual Y staff members.
- Children should always be transported in YMCA-identified vehicles (or appropriately identified vendor-operated vehicles), never in a staff member's personal vehicle, and never alone.
- Y staff members should not baby-sit Y members or program participants. If the babysitting relationship pre-existed the Y relationship, the President of the YMCA of Delaware could make an exception, but a specific acknowledgement should be signed by the parents and the babysitting staff member and retained by the Y.
- Parents who become aware of hazing, bullying, or similar behavior should report the incident to the Y. Such behavior is often the precursor of peer-to-peer abuse and must be addressed.
- Children should be encouraged to discuss their experiences with their parents and identify any behavior or activity that made them uncomfortable. Parents need to be aware that programs like gymnastics and aquatics require some physical contact between adult and child to provide the necessary instruction, coaching, and spotting. A single touch in a normally inappropriate place may not be an inappropriate touch if it occurred while trying to prevent an injury, etc.
- Children in child care must sign in and out of programs each day and will only be released to preauthorized individuals.
- Parents should be provided with the names of at least two separate Y individuals whom they may contact if they believe there is an issue of any kind that needs to be addressed.
- Delaware law requires ALL ADULTS to report cases of suspected abuse to the authorities.

The Y of Delaware has more than 4,000 staff members and volunteers working with youth in the many programs we offer. To keep children in our programs safe we take the following steps in our intensive screening of employees and volunteers:

- Detailed application forms
- Comprehensive interview process

- Reference checks
- Criminal background record

Our employees complete an extensive child abuse prevention training program. Supervisors and managers complete additional training to further promote a child-safe environment. All staff members are mandated to report any suspected child abuse. If you have any questions or concerns regarding a YMCA staff person or program, please inform the program director, associate executive director or executive director at your location. You can make a confidential report to Ethics Point on our website.

Parents are encouraged help prevent child abuse. Here are some suggestions:

- Talk to your child about his or her experiences in Y programs, school, sports, and other activities.
- Drop in on your child's programs.
- Trust your instincts. Don't wait to tell us if something seems "strange." Speak up!
- Watch for warning signs of abuse:
  - Unexplainable bruising or other physical markings
  - Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns
  - Abrupt changes in behavior—anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal, depression
  - Fear of a certain person or place
  - Discomfort with physical contact
  - A child who abuses other children
- Listen and watch for signs of your child receiving special attention that other children or teens are not receiving, including favors, treats, gifts, rides, increasing affection or time alone, particularly outside the activities of school, child care, or other activities.
  - Every once in a while, ask your child these questions:
  - Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
  - Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
  - Has anyone said anything to you that made you feel bad?
  - Is anyone touching you in a way that you don't like?
- Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if anything happens to him or her.

### **Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma)**

Shaken Baby Syndrome (also known as abusive head trauma) can be caused by direct blows to the head, dropping or throwing a child, or shaking a child. This syndrome is 100% preventable. Since a key aspect of prevention is increasing awareness of the potential dangers of shaking our staff members are taught about the syndrome and review our child abuse prevention procedures annually. We encourage our staff members to use the "five S's" approach to calm a crying infant. This includes:

- Shushing (by using "white noise" or rhythmic sounds that mimic the constant whirl of noise in the womb. Vacuum cleaners, hair dryers, clothes dryers, a running tub, or a white noise machine can all create this effect.)
- Side/stomach positioning (placing the baby on the left side — to help with digestion — or on the belly while holding him or her. Babies are placed on their backs to sleep.)
- Sucking (letting the baby breastfeed or bottle-feed, or giving the baby a pacifier or finger to suck on).
- Swaddling (wrapping the baby in a blanket like a "burrito" to help him or her feel more secure. Hips and knees should be slightly bent and turned out). (Refer to our safe sleep procedures for info on our use of swaddling in the center.)
- Swinging gently (rocking in a chair to help duplicate the constant motion the baby felt in the womb).

When a baby in our care won't stop crying, you also try the following:

- Double check the child's daily sheet to ensure the baby's basic needs are met (for example, he or she isn't hungry and doesn't need to be changed).
- Check for signs of illness, like fever or swollen gums.
- Rock or walk with the baby.
- Sing or talk to the baby.
- Offer the baby a pacifier or a noisy toy.

- Hold the baby close and breathe calmly and slowly.
- Pat or rub the baby's back.

Our staff members are also trained to contact a supervisor or other staff member for support if they are unable to calm a crying baby. Parents will be notified and asked to contact their doctor if nothing seems to be helping the infant, in case there is a medical reason for the fussiness.

### Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

As a licensed child care provider, the YMCA of Delaware reports all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the State of Delaware Division of Child Protective Services. In addition, our staff has been trained in Child Abuse and Neglect Recognition and Prevention before the start of employment. We do not in any way discourage, inhibit, penalize or otherwise impede any staff member from reporting any suspected or alleged incident of child abuse or neglect.

### Center Security

All YMCA facilities have security systems as required by the individual needs of the building. There shall be a minimum of two staff readily available at the facility at all times while children are in care.

### Safety Training & Drills

Our centers conduct safety drills to ensure our staff are prepared for emergencies that may occur. These drills include fire drills, missing child scenarios, vigilance awareness testing in our pools and other safety drills. Should you arrive to drop off or pick up your child during one of these drills, we ask that you wait to do so until the drill is complete. In the event of an emergency, YMCA staff will contact you at the numbers on file to let you know the status of the program.

### Drop Off Procedures

Specific drop off procedures vary by program and location. Please refer to the section of this handbook dedicated to your child's program for details on drop off times and sign in procedure for their program. **You must accompany your child into our center and place the child under direct supervision of YMCA staff by *signing your child in* at the beginning of the day on the class sign in sheet.** This is a mandatory procedure and an important safety precaution that ensures each teacher knows which children are in attendance.

### Pick Up Procedures

Specific pick up procedures vary by program and location. Please refer to the section of this handbook dedicated to your child's program for details on pick up times and sign out procedure for their program. You must *sign your child out* each day. During registration, you must designate a list of persons authorized to pick up your child. **These "authorized pick-ups" must be at least 18 years of age and may not be listed in any "Megan's Law" or sex offender databases and cannot be otherwise denied access to a YMCA of Delaware branch.** Your child may be picked up by the adults listed on the application who meet these requirements. All other persons must have written consent from you in advance. Identification will be requested of all unfamiliar people picking up your child. In an emergency, verbal consent along with a faxed copy of written consent will be accepted only when the Center Director can reach you at a phone number previously provided on the registration form. This call back system ensures that you are actually the person giving permission for the change. Please ensure that we have your current phone numbers and updated emergency contact information on file at all times.

If someone is listed in your child's file as "Unauthorized to Pick-Up" and attempts to do so, staff members will use the following guidelines (not necessarily in this order):

- Ask person to speak with administrator on duty.
- Call parent(s).
- Call 911.
- Take child as far away from person attempting to pick up as possible.

If a person threatens our center staff or other children, we are required to release the child and call 911. ***If the person attempting pick-up is a legal parent or guardian, we are required to release the child unless we have a copy of a court order stating otherwise.***

The safety of your child is our highest priority. We respect the rights of parents to access their own child. However, if our staff feel a parent or designated pick up person is in an unsafe condition to drive or otherwise leave with their child (such as under the influence of drugs or alcohol), the staff may suggest that the parent or the staff call another person on the approved list, a friend or relative, or a cab. The staff may also call 911 for assistance and to report the incident.

Please arrive early enough to pick up your child and exit the center by closing time. If it is unavoidable to be late, please call the center to let us know when to expect you. If a child is not picked up by closing time, we will attempt to reach you and/or other emergency persons listed on your child's registration form. If we have not been able to reach anyone after one hour, the Center Director will call the police and/or child protective services so that the child can be placed in their care. If you arrive after closing time, a late pick up fee of \$15 will be charged for each child picked up after the program closes. An additional \$15 fee is charged for each 15 minute interval, or part thereof, as we do not prorate this fee per minute. Parents or guardians who arrive late will be asked to sign a late pick up form and it is the responsibility of the parent to submit the late pick up fee to the YMCA within 3 business days of the incident.

### **Safe Sleep Practices for Infants**

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) is the leading cause of death for infants between 1 month and 12 months of age. SIDS occurs quickly during sleep without warning and with no signs of suffering. The safest and number one way to reduce the risk of SIDS is to place an infant on its back to sleep for every nap and sleep time. Placing an infant on its stomach increases the risk of aspiration, making it more likely for the infant to choke on vomit. We follow these recommendations and place all infants on their backs to sleep.

Positioning devices may not be used unless the infant's health care provider provides written documentation that the infant's physical or medical condition requires an alternative sleeping position or use of a sleep-positioning device. The health care provider must stipulate the specific sleeping position in which that infant must be placed or stipulate the sleep-positioning device and how to use it.

Infants may only sleep only in safety-approved cribs or pack-and-plays. Our crib mattresses are firm and tight fitting and covered by a tight-fitting sheet. Infants may not nap or sleep in any furniture/equipment other than their assigned crib. Soft surfaces, such as soft mattresses, pillows, sofas, and waterbeds, are prohibited as infant sleeping surfaces. If an infant falls asleep in any place that is not a safe sleep environment, our staff will immediately move the infant to their assigned crib. The infant will be placed on its back in its crib.

The following additional safety practices are used to ensure safe sleep practices for infants.

- We avoid letting infants get too hot by dressing them lightly for sleep. Our room temperatures are set in a range that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. One-piece sleepers may be used if warmth is needed.
- Before placing an infant in its crib, we remove bibs, necklaces, and garments with ties or hoods.
- Infants do not share cribs and are not allowed to share a crib.
- Soft or loose bedding is kept away from sleeping infants and out of their safe sleep environment. Items including, but not limited to the following, are not placed in the crib or pack-and-play with an infant: toys, blankets, comforters, pillows, stuffed animals, bumper pads, sheepskins, flat sheets, cloth diapers other than those worn by an infant, etc. (These items can impair the infant's ability to breathe if they are close to its face.)
- Toys or objects, such as mobiles or busy boxes, may not be attached to sleeping or rest equipment
- Parents wishing for their infant to be swaddled during nap time must provide written parent permission and provide a swaddle-blanket sleeper for use during nap time.
- We encourage the use of pacifiers to reduce the risk of SIDS, but we do not force infants to take a pacifier if they refuse it. If a pacifier falls out of a sleeping infant's mouth, we remove it from the crib.

- Sleeping infants are directly observed by sight and sound at all times, including when they are going to sleep, are sleeping, or are in the process of waking up. The lighting in the room allows us to see each infant's face, to view the color of the infant's skin, and to check on the infant's breathing and placement of the pacifier, if used.
- Our staff are present in each room and remain alert and actively supervise sleeping infants. We perform sleep-observation checks every 30 minutes while an infant is napping or sleeping to make sure the infant is breathing normally and there are no signs of distress. These sleep checks are documented on your child's daily sheet.
- We offer infants opportunities to be held upright and to participate in supervised "tummy time" when they are awake. Tummy time strengthens neck, arm, and shoulder muscles and promotes healthy physical and brain development.

### Photographs, Videotapes and/or Voice Recordings

As part of their participation in program activities your child may be photographed, videotaped and/or voice recorded. Such items may be used to post in the classroom, for recording developmental milestones as part of our assessment process and for other program related activities. YMCA staff members may not take photographs, videotapes or voice recordings for personal use and may not share any of these items except as necessary for work related reasons. Additionally, children may be photographed, videotaped and/or voice recorded for promotional purposes. We ask for parental permission on the child's enrollment form to use photographs, videotapes and/or voice recordings for this purpose.

## Health & Sanitation Practices

### Hand Washing

We are committed to helping children, volunteers, and staff members reduce illness in our programs. As part of that commitment, all staff volunteers and children wash their hands frequently throughout the day. Certain daily transitions require that staff, volunteers and children wash their hands. These include:

- Upon arrival for the day and when moving from one child care group to another
- Before and After:
  - Eating, handling food, or feeding a child (including bottles);
  - Giving medication and/or applying sunscreen
  - Playing in water that is used by more than one person.
- After:
  - Diapering;
  - Removing gloves;
  - Using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet;
  - Handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood, vomit) from sneezing, wiping and blowing noses, from mouths, or from sores; handling soiled clothes
  - Handling uncooked food;
  - Handling pets, cages and other animals;
  - Playing in sand;
  - Cleaning or handling the garbage, touching trash cans or lids;
  - Outside or messy play.

You can help at home, by encouraging your child to wash their hands using the same methods used in our programs. While in our programs, children, staff and volunteers wash their hands using the following method:

- Turn on warm water
- Wet hands (water activates soap)
- Apply liquid soap
- Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears
- Rub between fingers, fronts and backs of hands, for at least 10 seconds **out of the water**
- Rinse hands under running water until they are free of dirt and soap
- Dry hands with air dryer, a clean disposable paper towel or single use cloth
- Turn off water **with paper towel**
- Throw paper towel away into a lined trash container

- (Note: Using gloves, wipes, or hand sanitizer are **NOT** acceptable substitutes for hand washing)

## Sanitation Practices

We are committed to maintaining safe and clean facilities. We clean and sanitize equipment items and surfaces according to the requirements set by the State of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing and the Delaware Stars Program.

## Drug, Alcohol & Tobacco Free

Our programs occur in a drug, alcohol and tobacco free environment. Any child who brings drugs, alcohol or tobacco to a YMCA program or on YMCA property may be expelled from the program. No refunds or credits will be issued for a violation of this code.

## Illness & Attendance

As a partner in the care of your child, we ask that you observe your child for the signs of illness listed below and keep them home when they are ill *or not feeling well*. This helps minimize the spread of disease and ensures that your child receives the one-on-one care they need when they are not feeling well. If your child wakes up with a fever, please do not give Tylenol or other fever reducers to try and get the child through the day. This frequently results in your child becoming more ill as they are trying to keep up with other children while not feeling well.

If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be notified to come and pick up the child immediately (within a half hour after contact has been made). While waiting, your child will be supervised in an area away from other children and kept comfortable until you arrive. If we cannot reach you, the emergency contact person(s) listed on the registration form will be called and will be expected to pick up the child.

If your child exhibits symptoms of illness specified below he/she cannot remain at the center. ***If your child is sent home, he/she must stay home for one full day of care (not counting the day they are sent home) or until written documentation from a doctor or doctor's office stating the child has been diagnosed and poses no serious health risk to the other children.***

School Age Children who are sent home from school must follow the same restrictions. The symptoms for exclusion include, but are not limited to the following:

- Temperature equivalent to 101 degrees or greater
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs)
- Uncontrolled diarrhea (one diarrhea accident in potty trained children or one episode of diarrhea leaking from a diaper)
- Blood in stools
- Vomiting or excessive amounts of spit up(one occurrence)
- Persistent abdominal pain or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Any unidentified rash (if your child suffers from a chronic condition, please be certain to have a doctor's note placed in the file)
- Eye drainage with redness or discomfort
- Any unspecified illness if it limits the child's comfortable participation in activities or if it results in a need for greater care than can be provided without compromising the health and safety to the child or other children.

Certain illnesses have specific exclusion requirements. If your child is diagnosed with one of these illnesses, please contact the center immediately and do not bring your child back until the exclusion period has passed. These illnesses and exclusion periods are:

- Pink eye until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Scabies until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Head lice until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and until a health care provider confirms the administration of the treatment.
- Evidence of bed bugs on child and/or belongings until 24 hours after last sighting of bed bug(s) on child and/or

belongings.

- Tuberculosis until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend care.
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever.
- Chicken Pox until all sores have dried and crusted.
- Shingles if sores cannot be covered by clothing or dressing until the sores have crusted & are dry.
- Pertussis until 5 days after antibiotic treatment.
- Mumps until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Hepatitis A virus until 1 week after onset of illness, jaundice or as directed by the health department when passive immunoprophylaxis has been administered to appropriate children & staff.
- Measles until 5 days after the onset of rash.
- Rubella until 6 days after the onset of rash.

### **Notification of Possible Communicable Illness**

If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness, please inform the Director, immediately. Information on the symptoms and treatment of the illness will then be distributed to parents throughout the center. Specific information about your child is never shared with other parents.

### **Health Care Consultation**

The YMCA has made specific arrangements with a health care provider who has agreed to provide us with consultation for both routine and emergency health care for children. If we are unable to reach you or your child's physician, we may contact this provider for medical advice regarding your child's specific needs.

### **Dispensing Medication**

In order for our staff to administer medication, a parent permission form must be filled out indicating the name of the child, date of birth, allergies, doctors' name and phone number, pharmacy phone number, name of medication, time when given, route of administering, expiration date, start date, end date and reason for medication. For maintenance medications, such as inhalers or diaper creams, this form must be completed each month. This form and all medication must be given to your child's teacher for safe keeping. All medications are dispensed by certified staff and recorded on the medication form.

For the safety of all children, please do not leave any medication in the children's bags or cubbies. Topical creams and sunscreen are considered medication and cannot be applied by a child or left in their cubby. Never send in bottles or food with medication in it.

All prescription medicines must be in your child's name with a current prescription label stating the dosage, times, and type of medication. Certain non-prescription medication (Tylenol, Triaminic, etc.) will be given when they are provided by you in their original container and are unexpired. These products must also be accompanied by a physician's note listing days, times, and amounts of dosage.

In order to maintain smooth operation of our programs, medications are given at specific times throughout the day. We ask that you adjust the medication schedule at home to ensure that the timing of doses matches the center schedule. Medication times in our centers are as follows:

- For medications given every 4 hours or 4 times daily: 11:00 am & 3:00 pm
- For medications given three times daily: 11:00 am
- For medications given "at lunch": 11:00 am (or when the class eats if it must be taken with food)
- For medications after school: upon arrival to the After School Program

If your child requires medication with breakfast or a morning dose, we ask that you administer this at home to ensure that the busy start of the day does not interfere with their medication schedule.



## Food Allergies

We ask parents to provide a complete medical history, including any food allergies or intolerances, at the time of enrollment. Each staff person working with a child with known food allergies or intolerances is given a copy of the information shared by the parent. Additionally, if a child's doctor has created a food allergy action plan, the parent should provide a copy to the center. We ask parents to provide a complete medical history, including any food allergies or intolerances, at the time of enrollment. Each staff person working with a child with known food allergies or intolerances is given a copy of the information shared by the parent. Additionally, if a child's doctor has created a food allergy action plan, the parent should provide a copy to the center. Children with food allergies or intolerances may need food substitutions. If this applies, the food substitution form should be completed by the parent and child's medical provider.

## Meals at the Y

### Food Program Participation & Meal Times

Our centers participate in Federal food programs (Child & Adult Care Feeding Program, Summer Food Service Program and/or At-Risk Feeding Program) which offer opportunities for children in our programs to receive nutritious meals throughout their time with us. The meals will always include the recommended daily allowance for children for each meal/snack served. All foods served will meet or exceed USDA recommended guidelines. Our programs are committed to being pork and peanut free and do not serve products which contain these items.

- Children enrolled in the Central YMCA or Walnut Street YMCA Child Development Centers receive breakfast, lunch and snack each day if they are in care at the time of the meal. Each family must complete a food eligibility enrollment form.
- Children enrolled in the Walnut Street YMCA Before & After School Program receive a supper if they are in care at the time of the meal. Each family must complete a food eligibility enrollment form.
- Children enrolled in the Walnut Street YMCA Summer Day Camp Program receive breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack each day if they are in care at the time of the meal. Food eligibility forms are not required for the summer program.

### Breakfast (Child Development & Summer Day Camp Programs)

Breakfast is served from 8:00 am – 8:40 pm. Your child must be in their class or group by 8:40 in order to be served breakfast. Each breakfast includes a serving of fruit, grain and milk. Children who arrive after 8:40 am will need to have eaten breakfast prior to their arrival.

### Lunch (Child Development & Summer Day Camp Programs)

Children arriving after their class or group lunch time will need to eat lunch before arrival. Please refer to your child's daily class or group schedule for their lunch time. Each lunch includes a serving of meat, grain, milk, and two fruits/vegetables. School Age Children attending for a full day Kids Club program must bring in their own lunch. Such lunches must contain full servings of dairy, meat/protein, grain- and 2 servings of fruit and/ vegetable.

### Afternoon Snack (Child Development & Summer Day Camp Programs)

Afternoon snack is served each day after 3:00 pm. Each snack includes water and healthy food choices from at least two food groups.

### Supper (After School Care Program)

Supper is served at between 4:15 and 5:15 pm. Each supper includes a serving of meat, grain, milk and two fruits/vegetables. On days when children are off school and attend all day, children must bring a packed lunch.

## Menus

Monthly menus are posted on each class bulletin board for children ages 1 & older. Children under age 1 follow an individual menu which can be reviewed by contacting your child's teacher. We only serve foods to children under age 1 after they have been introduced to the child at home.



## **Food Substitutions**

As required by our participation in these programs, outside food is not permitted unless it is a substitute for a required food component due to a documented food allergy or religious reasons. Any request for substituting food must be done so in writing through the office and may require a doctor's note. Food substitutions are to be stored in the food cabinets in the classrooms. Any food or food item left in a child's cubby will be discarded. Our centers are not permitted to heat food. As such, all food substitutions must be able to be eaten without heating.

## **Food from Home**

Food from home is not permitted unless it is for a scheduled class event and includes enough food for each child in the class or group to participate. We welcome birthday celebrations and occasionally offer class parties. These celebrations can only be scheduled during snack time and must be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher as they usually take longer than our normal snack times. We recognize that celebrations are fun times, but ask that parents observe the practice of "everything in moderation" for these events. Nutritious snacks or small servings of sugary snacks are permitted during these events. Soda is not permitted at any time. Our centers are nut and pork free centers. The food served by the center, as well as snacks provided by parents, may not contain pork or nuts.

Please refrain allowing your child to enter the center while eating food as it upsets other children to see kids eating something they cannot have. Additionally, please do not leave food or treats for your child in their cubby or book bag. It makes children very upset to be told that they cannot have these during the day. Any food or food item left in a child's cubby will be discarded.

## **Non-Discrimination in Food Service**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue,  
SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

# Behavior Procedures

## Behavior Expectations

All parents must sign that they have read and understand the behavior expectations and discipline consequences of the YMCA. These codes are in place to guarantee the safety, well-being and happiness of all children in this program. We work to build the character values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility in every child. It is important that you discuss these codes with your child before he/she attends.

Thank you in advance for working with us to ensure that your child's before and/or after school experience is an enjoyable one. Please contact us if you have any concerns regarding your child's behavior or the manner in which they are being treated by other children.

## Behavior Code of Conduct

Disrespect or disobedience to any supervising adult is not tolerated. The first time results in a verbal warning, the second time is a written warning, and the third time will result in the child losing the privilege to participate in the next activity, field trip or special event. If this behavior becomes a repeated problem, the Center Director will discuss a behavior action plan with the parent or guardian.

Ridicule, bullying or general disrespect toward another child, whether the student is present or absent is not tolerated. The first time is a verbal warning, the second time is a written warning, and the third time will result in the child losing the privilege to participate in the next activity, field trip or special event. If this behavior becomes a repeated problem, the Center Director will discuss a behavior action plan with the parent or guardian.

Conduct which is disruptive to others (children, staff, members, the public) is not tolerated. The first time is a verbal warning, the second time is a written warning, and the third time will result in the child losing the privilege to participate in the next activity, field trip or special event. If this behavior becomes a repeated problem, the Center Director will discuss a behavior action plan with the parent or guardian.

Fighting, hitting or biting of any kind is absolutely not permitted at the YMCA. When such an incident occurs, the YMCA staff will consider the child's developmental level, prior behavior and any causes of the violence. Children who are caught fighting, hitting or biting, may be sent home immediately for the rest of the day. Generally speaking, children under age 3 may receive additional warnings while children over 3 usually are developmentally mature enough to behave without intentional violence. In our Before & After School or Summer Day Camp Programs, if fighting, hitting or biting occurs a second time, the child will be dismissed from the program and unable to attend either program for the remainder of the school year. If fighting, hitting or biting occurs a second time in our Child Development Programs, the Center Director will discuss a behavior action plan with the parent or guardian which takes into account the developmental level of the child.

These steps are not absolute. If children have repeated behavior issues of any kind, the decision regarding what action will be taken (verbal warning, written warning, loss of privilege, suspension or expulsion) rests solely with the Y and is made on a case-by-case basis depending on the child's previous conduct. Children with extreme behavior issues including running away from the program, possessing a weapon, causing injury to another child or adult, or sexual misconduct may result in immediate suspension or termination.

Parents will be notified if a child needs immediate pick up. An authorized pick up person must pick the child up within one hour or the child will be dismissed from the program.

## Behavior Management Procedures

We focus on the prevention of behavior problems by using strategies that include structured, age appropriate activities, educationally valuable materials, a stimulating environment and realistic expectations. We focus on praising and encouraging children for positive behavior and redirect or guide inappropriate behavior into more positive actions, rather than relying on punishment.

At times, YMCA staff may need to supplement developmentally appropriate, positive methods of behavior management with a “time out”. Time outs shall be limited to brief periods – no more than one minute for each year of a child’s age. Before using a time-out, the staff member will discuss the reason for the time out in language appropriate to the child’s level of development and understanding. Time-outs provide children with the opportunity to regroup and focus on appropriate behavior. Before returning to the group, staff shall talk to the child about alternatives to the inappropriate behavior in a way that shows faith in the child’s ability to make more positive decisions in the future.

When a problem arises which threatens the safety or health of a child, other children or staff, the staff will take immediate action to stop the behavior and inform the child of the disciplinary action that will be taken. Depending upon the severity of the inappropriate behavior or if the child cannot be managed in the area, it may be necessary to temporarily remove the child from the situation. The Parent/Guardian will be notified and together we will work with the child to correct the behavior. A conference between the Director and the Parent/Guardian may be scheduled at this time. Please see the Behavior Code of Conduct for details.

### **Prohibited Punishments**

Corporal punishment inflicted in any way on a child’s body is prohibited in Y programs. In addition, children are not yelled at, humiliated, frightened or abused in any way by staff. Additionally, disparaging comments about the child’s appearance, ability, ethnicity, family or other personal characteristics is prohibited. Children are not deprived of food or toilet use and are not tied, taped, chained, caged or placed in mechanical restraints as a consequence of inappropriate behavior. Children will not be punished for not going to sleep, toileting accidents, failure to eat all or part of their food or for failure to complete a prescribed activity.

## **Special Events**

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special time for children. They enjoy sharing a treat from home with their friends at school. Birthday celebrations are held during afternoon snack time. Please refer to our food from home policy before planning your child’s birthday celebration. We strongly suggest that you check with the classroom or group teacher regarding any food allergies as we encourage families to find food options that allow all children to participate in the parties. Balloons, candy, and soda cannot be given. Costumed characters are not permitted as some children can become very frightened. Individual party bags can be given to take home (if there is one for everyone in the class/group), but are not expected.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are planned as an enhancement to the children’s curriculum. They are fun and exciting for the children as well as the staff. We encourage parents to volunteer as chaperones when available. However, all field trip chaperones must have a YMCA background check completed before participation and chaperones are never permitted to supervise a group of children without a staff member present.

Safety is always a major concern when planning trips for the children. If the required adult/child ratios are not met, the trip will be cancelled. Some children’s behaviors may indicate that, for safety reasons a child may need a parent to chaperone. If you are required to accompany your child for this reason, and cannot, you will need to make other child care arrangements for the duration of the field trip.

In our Child Development program, Field trip permission slips for each trip must also be completed and returned by the due date. Children who have not paid for the trip or do not have a signed permission form on file will need to make other child care arrangements for the duration of the field trip. In our School Age Child Care and Camp Programs, permission to participate in field trip programs is given on the original registration form. In our Child Development and School Age Child Care Programs, field trip fees are not included and must be paid by the registration date for the trip.

In our Summer Day Camp Program, field trip fees are included and parents sign permission for all trips at the time of registration.

## **Family Events**

Several times throughout the year, we offer family nights and other events designed to give you and your family an opportunity to socialize with other families and to learn more about what your child does each day. Families are encouraged to participate in these events and to help plan them. We welcome your ideas for our next Family Event and hope you will join us. While most of our family events occur in the evening, a few special events may occur during the working day. When this happens, we attempt to give parents as much notice as possible.

## **Swimming & Swim Lessons**

We are proud of our ability and commitment to provide children with opportunities to play and learn in our swimming pools. While swimming in our pools, all children in our programs are supervised by their classroom or group staff as well as by certified lifeguards. We ensure children are safe by following all YMCA of Delaware aquatics procedures. Children participating in swim lessons or open swim need to bring a swim suit and towel with them each time.

In our Child Development Programs, children ages 3 and older may participate in free swim lessons two times each week. These lessons are age-appropriate and taught by YMCA swim lesson instructors. Please check your child's class schedule for specific days and times.

In our After School Program, children may participate in swim time at least once per week. During this time, children must abide by YMCA of Delaware aquatics procedures and wear swimming wristbands as assigned.

In our Summer Day Camp Program, children may participate in open swim activities most days. During this time, children must abide by YMCA of Delaware aquatics procedures and wear swimming wristbands as assigned.

# **Community Partnerships**

At the Y, we strive to provide the highest quality care for your child. As part of this commitment, we work with other community agencies to supplement or enhance our programs. We maintain active partnerships as described here.

## **Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)**

CATCH is a health program designed to help children and their families adopt healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. As part of our school age curriculum, CATCH is run several times per week in our School Age Child Care and Summer Day Camp Programs. The students engage in a number of stimulating and non-competitive games and exercises that are developmentally appropriate and FUN as well as learn healthy eating habits and behaviors.

## **PNC Grant – Financial Literacy**

The PNC Grow Up Great financial education initiative leverages the experience of PNC and Sesame Workshop, its partner in early childhood education, along with funding provided by the PNC Foundation. The \$12 million initiative will serve children, their parents, caregivers and teachers to enhance financial education for families in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

## **Delaware Stars for Early Success**

Delaware Stars for Early Success is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which is a method used to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education and school-age settings. It establishes quality standards for programs and provides technical assistance and limited financial support to programs involved in Stars as they engage in quality improvement efforts. Delaware Stars is designed as a voluntary system that expects programs to work on improving quality by moving up the Star Levels.

## **Foster Grandparent Program**

The Foster Grandparent Program strives to provide opportunities for older adults to connect with the youth in their community, providing individualized and supportive service, helping the children grow physically, emotionally, socially, and mentally. This program recruits, trains, and involves, low-income persons, aged 55 and over, in giving supportive one-on-one attention to youth. Foster Grandparents work with children, and their families, who could benefit from their experience. They are guided by an individualized plan directed to meet the specific needs of the child and/or their family.

## **Read Aloud Delaware**

Read Aloud Delaware is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to the promotion of reading in Delaware. It is the only statewide organization focusing attention on the critical early years of child development. Read Aloud Delaware promotes reading aloud to children in order to encourage a love of books and a desire to become a reader. We also help parents prepare their children to learn once they enter school. Volunteers of all ages read one on one to children in child care centers, clinics and shelters serving low income families. In the past year, 855 volunteers read almost 53,000 times to over 6,474 individual children.

## **Christina School District Child Find**

Child Find is a federally funded program in the State of Delaware which locates, identifies and provides educational services to eligible persons from three years of age through the age of twenty-one. Child Find screeners conduct a rapid assessment of preschool children from the age of three to six years. In the spring, the Child Find screeners administer screening to all children whose ages are appropriate for admission to kindergarten in the new school year. These screenings will help identify children who may have delays in the areas of motor, concepts and/or communication development as well as those who may have behavioral problems. Following the screening, a recommendation may be made to the Child Find Office of Special Services requesting that further testing be done. Child Find evaluation services include assessments of learning strengths and needs.

## **School District Partnerships**

We coordinate our Before & After School Program with local schools to ensure that children in our care arrive safely to our buses in the school pick-up lines and, when possible, maintain communication with the school regarding changes in a child's schedule. A current list of schools that we serve is in the section of this handbook dedicated to the Before & After School Program.

## **State of Delaware – Division of Child Mental Health Services**

The State of Delaware's Division of Social Services, DCMHS provides Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services at no cost to Delaware early childhood education programs across the state. Contracted, licensed mental health professionals with experience in working in pre-school settings and with training in evidence-based mental health practices (pictured right) are now partnering with early child care provider staff, providing child-specific mental health consultations at the request of the programs and working together to decrease problem behaviors while increasing positive, prosocial behaviors to promote the child's social and emotional wellbeing. Research shows that social-emotional wellbeing is most important when predicting success as children move from preschool settings to enter first grade.

## **Summer Learning Collaborative**

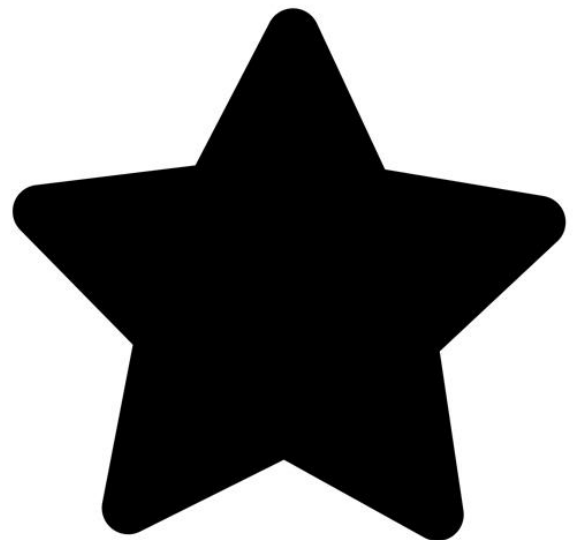
Through a unique approach to problem solving and partnership, Wilmington's community centers have partnered together with the Summer Learning Collaborative. The partnership with Summer Learning Collaborative brings together five community based organizations offering summer programming to low income youth from Wilmington's urban neighborhoods. Partnering agencies include Latin American Community Center, West End Neighborhood House, Boys and Girls Club (Eastside Charter School site), YMCA (Walnut Street), and Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center. Research shows more than half of the achievement gap between low and high income youth is attributable to access to summer learning opportunities. At the same time, summer programs serving Wilmington's low income youth face challenges around planning, staffing, training, curriculum development, data collection, and evaluation. The outcome is an estimated three months of learning loss per student per year in Delaware for our lowest income students, many of whom are multiple years behind grade level. Together, we solve core capacity issues that transform summer learning opportunities available to low income youth. In doing so, we fight summer learning loss and promote student achievement.



# Central YMCA

## Child Development Program

The information in this section of the Parent Handbook contains information specific to the Central YMCA's Child Development Program. This program serves children from 6 weeks old until the start of Kindergarten. Our program is licensed by the State of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing and is located at 501 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.



# General Information

## Philosophy

Youth development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility are the key components that we develop and foster in every aspect of your child's day.

We provide daily activities that encourage physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development. These activities are designed to reflect the children's cultures and communities and to help your child develop at his or her own pace. Activities include familiar and new materials, pictures and experiences. Weekly activity plans are prepared in accordance with these goals. In an effort to provide a comprehensive early childhood experience, your child will experience:

- Multiple daily opportunities for active physical play such as active games, sports, dancing, running, jumping, climbing or exploring the environment. When possible, these activities to take place outdoors.
- Daily opportunities for socialization, conversation, relaxation, and quiet activities such as board or card games, reading or studying.
- Weekly opportunities to participate in projects that require an extended time period to complete in such topics as science, math, social studies, language arts, cooking, drama, creative arts or music.
- Opportunities to take responsibility consistent with their ages for choosing, planning, carrying out and evaluating their own activities. Such activities will include scheduled activity blocks, free choice activities and self-interest time.
- Diverse activities that reflect the various communities, languages and cultures of the children in attendance.

## The Role of Play

Play is an activity-oriented medium. We know that children learn best through activity and we plan activities that build on what children already know. During play, children need adults to help them verbalize their experiences, to find ways to express their ideas and feelings, and to support and encourage them while they face new challenges.

Children in our program are encouraged to participate in all activities. Some activities get messy or require physical activity. Parents are encouraged to dress their children in comfortable, play clothing that helps encourage their participation.

## Hours of Operation

We are open Monday through Friday, 6:45 AM -6:00 PM except for scheduled holidays. Center teachers arrive before 6:45 AM to prepare the center and remain after 6:00 PM to clean up after a busy day. We kindly ask that parents respect the center hours and allow our staff to complete their daily tasks.

## Child to Staff Ratios

Our center meets or exceeds all child to staff ratios set forth by the State of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing. The specific ratios and maximum group sizes for each room are as follows:

Classroom	Staff to Child Ratio	Maximum Staff to Child Size
Bunnies & Ducklings	1:4	2:8
Lambs & Bears	1:6	2:11 (Lambs); 2:12 (Bears)
Kangaroos & Elephants	1:8	2:16
Giraffes & Lions	1:10	2:20

## Parking

We have several street parking spots designated for child care drop off and pick up along the Washington Street side of the building. To park in these spots, you must display the orange, YMCA child care hang tag. Because this is street parking, the spaces are monitored by the City of Wilmington Parking Authority and parents without the hang tag will be ticketed. Also, if you plan on being in the center for more than 15 minutes, we recommend that you use the YMCA lot. This is both a courtesy to other parents as well as a precaution against getting a ticket for being in the spot too long.



Parents may also use their YMCA membership card to access the gated lot at the back of the YMCA building. The entrance for this lot is off of Washington Street just before 12<sup>th</sup> Street. After 5:00 pm, a second lot is available for parking. The entrance to the secondary lot is located on Jefferson Street. It is a left hand turn just before the Delaware Avenue/11<sup>th</sup> Street intersection.

Parents are cautioned against parking in no parking zones, blocking driveways or in bus zones. The City of Wilmington Parking Authority is vigilant in monitoring these areas and the ticket usually come with higher fines than other parking tickets.

### **Center Security**

Our center is a secure center which requires a specific YMCA membership card to gain access. Parents are required to stop by the YMCA front desk to get their picture taken for these cards. Once you have a membership card, it will provide access to the center access doors during all hours of center operation. If you do not have a membership card or another person is dropping off or picking up your child, they will need to use the Washington Street entrance. There is a doorbell at that entrance. If your membership card is not working properly, please see the Center Director for assistance.

Our center is equipped with security cameras in the hallways and classrooms. We can review the footage on these cameras in the event that you have a concern about the care your child is receiving. We also randomly review footage to monitor our staff and the activities the children are participating in. Due to the privacy of each child in the center, we do not allow parents to watch the video recordings. We will, however, release copies of the videos with a court order. Please understand that the system is set to record over previous footage. We strongly recommend bringing any concerns to our attention as soon as possible to prevent footage from being lost.

## **Educational Programs**

### **The Creative Curriculum**

Our center uses the Creative Curriculum for learning and development. This curriculum is aligned with the Teaching Strategies Gold assessment tool. The Creative Curriculum uses exploration and discovery as a way of learning. It enables children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. The curriculum is based on 38 objectives for development and learning. These objectives are aligned with Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, as well as early learning standards for every state. The curriculum offers daily opportunities to individualize instruction, allowing teachers meet the needs of every type of learner; addresses all the important areas of learning, from social emotional and math to technology and the arts, and incorporates them throughout every part of the day; offers daily, built-in opportunities for observation, helping teachers and director clearly see the strong relationship between curriculum and assessment; contains guidance for working with all learners, including advanced learners and children with disabilities.

### **Infants**

Our infant program serves children from the age of six weeks until the age of 12 months. This includes the Bunnies, & Lambs Classrooms. The program is designed to promote feelings of belonging and the loving care which help infants to grow and develop to their full potential. Children eat, sleep, and play according to his/her own schedule until their first birthday. After their first birthday, children are gradually introduced to the center schedule.

Every infant is an individual with unique abilities, desires and emotions. Our program is designed to meet the individual needs of each child and to provide them with educational experiences. In our infant classrooms, we provide a creative and stimulating program which encourages visual, language, gross motor and small motor experiences to enhance learning through their own natural curiosity.

Our highly qualified and professional teachers will guide and encourage your child in every stage of his or her development. We firmly believe in the need for open and thorough communication between teachers and each family to provide loving care for each child and confidence for each parent.

During their time in our program, infants will receive many different opportunities to learn and grow. Our teachers provide opportunities for infants to have frequent face to face interaction with infants when they are awake and allow time to hold and carry each child. Infants spend most of their awake time outside of confining equipment such as a crib, infant seat, swing, high chair or play pen. During the day, our teachers talk with them during play, feeding and routine care and respond to their actions, sounds and beginning language. Our teachers spend time reading books to and looking at books with children in their care and give names to object and experiences in the infants' environment. Infants are encouraged to use their senses to explore varied materials, sights, sounds and other experiences. We provide space and equipment to support infants' developing physical skills such as rolling over, sitting, scooting, crawling and standing and providing materials and encouragement for infants' beginning to pretend play alone, with other children and with staff.

## **Toddlers**

Our toddler program serves children from 12 months to 36 months. This program includes the Lambs, Bears, Kangaroos & Elephants classrooms. The toddler classrooms are designed to provide stimulating experiences for the children where they can learn through their own inquisitiveness. The emphasis during the toddler years is on building self-confidence and fostering the natural curiosity that toddlers possess.

Throughout the day toddlers enjoy the large variety of play materials that are readily made available to them, as well as creative centers where children can dress-up, build with blocks, and experiment in the sensory table. Art, music, language and science activities geared to little hands are also introduced.

Our teachers offer the tenderness, warmth, and patience so essential to this young age. Children feel comfortable in our toddler class settings when their parents leave. Deep respect for each child ensures that your toddler will truly love his or her school environment and, from that, develop a long lasting love for learning.

Our teachers interact with toddlers at their eye level, and whenever appropriate, sitting on the floor with the toddlers. We offer frequent face to face interactions with the toddlers and have conversations with them during play, feeding, and routine care. Toddlers are encouraged to play with one another with adult help and to explore varied materials, sights, sounds and other experiences by using their senses. We provide many opportunities for children to walk, run, climb, stack, balance, scribble, draw, and develop fine and large motor skills and encourage toddlers to pretend play alone and with other children and adults. Our teachers respond to toddlers' words and actions with interest and encouragement and give names to objects and experiences in the toddlers' environment. Our teachers spend time reading books to and looking at books with children in their care

We provide just the right amount of support as toddlers develop independence and mastery of feeding, dressing, and other skills.

## **Preschoolers & Pre-Kindergarteners**

Our preschool program serves children ages three through four years. This program includes the Elephants & Giraffes classrooms. Our Pre-K program serves children ages four through five (roughly one entire school year before Kindergarten) in our Lions classroom.

These programs prepare children socially and academically, as well as, support and encourage the development of independence, responsibility, and confidence, all of which are essential for the child's ongoing success in kindergarten.

Our educational program focuses on each child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development by offering concrete, hands-on activities for the child to explore. The preschool curriculum is designed to actively engage each child in developmentally age appropriate activities exploring the content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and technology. Our skilled teachers prepare curriculum that is exciting and challenging, as well as supportive of each child's own learning style.

Our preschool room arrangement creates the optimum learning environment. It allows children easy access to educational toys, materials and books, enabling them to initiate and expand their activities. Each classroom is organized with areas for block play, manipulative toys, art creativity, dramatic play, and reading in addition to larger spaces for group activities. To enhance learning experiences in our preschool we offer class trips to theatre, farm and children's museums.

Our teachers interact with children at their eye level, and whenever appropriate, sitting on the floor with them. We offer frequent face to face interactions with the children and have conversations with them during play, feeding, and routine care. We support the development of social competence through play and cooperative work with other children. Children are taught rhymes, songs and other ways to help connect sounds and letters and develop literacy skills. Our teachers read to and look at books with children, both individually and in groups. Mathematical and scientific concepts are developed and encouraged through play, projects and investigations of the Center's environment. Children are encouraged to use varied materials as they develop more extended and complex pretend play alone and with other children and staff. We provide varied materials, sights, sounds and other experiences for children to investigate and talk about. Children have daily opportunities to walk, run, climb, stack, balance, scribble, draw, write, and refine fine and large motor skills. Our teachers respond children's words and actions with interest and encouragement and give names to objects and experiences in their environment. We provide just the right amount of support as children continue to develop independence and mastery of a variety of skills.

### **Centers within the Classrooms**

Our classroom activity areas are divided into centers to help guide the activities and learning opportunities each child experiences. Each day, children have opportunities to self-select centers to play and learn in. Our centers include:

#### **Housekeeping and Dramatic Play**

In this center, children are encouraged to role play. The environment and materials change with the theme; it might be an animal hospital or a vegetable market. Children are encouraged to use props and materials creatively. Language, pre-reading and pre-writing skills are used in the center, along with social skills.

#### **Manipulative Area**

Math manipulative are available to provide practice in sequencing, comparing, measuring and introducing number concepts. The concrete materials help the children develop abstract ideas while arranging things they can see and touch. The materials change with the theme to prevent boredom. The children are given the opportunity to put objects in order of size and color and to classify objects according to specific characteristics. Puzzles and other small manipulative toys are available in this area.

#### **Block Center**

Spatial relationships, balance and social skills develop in the block area. Children differentiate between sizes and shapes of blocks to design and build stable arrangements. Social and math skills develop in this area.

#### **Art Area**

Creative projects requiring individual analysis and problem solving are available in the art center. A variety of art media provide exposure to many varied artistic experiences. Fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination are enhanced at this center along with the enhancement of creativity.

#### **Writing Center**

Writing, drawing and stamping instruments are found at this center. While engaged in drawing, the teachers encourage the children to dictate stories about their pictures. As children develop their skills, more pre-writing and early literacy skills are introduced.

#### **Library/Book Center**

Literature relating to the theme is available in each classroom to encourage an early appreciation of understanding story elements and characteristics.

## **Computers**

Computers are part of the activities in the Elephant, Giraffe and Lion classrooms. Age-appropriate programs are educational in nature and enable the children to use the computer independently.

## **Music**

Music is an integral part of each classroom. Records, tapes, musical videos, a variety of musical instruments and singing are used to enhance the daily schedule. We strive to offer music and movement activities from many cultures.

## **Outdoor Play**

We have an outdoor, fenced playground on the corner of Jefferson and 11<sup>th</sup> streets. A variety of equipment is available for children ages two and older as well as an open area for running and games.

We follow Nemours Health Prevention Services best practice recommendations for weather conditions and temperatures for outdoor time. All infants & children will go outside daily unless there is active precipitation or a posted weather advisory stating children of their age should remain indoors. Please make sure your child has proper clothing for the forecasted weather conditions and safe shoes for climbing and running.

## **Physical Activity**

We are committed to our children's health. We recognize the importance of staff as positive role models for children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore, we will:

- Role-model positive behaviors by being physically active with the children, both indoors and outdoors.
- Encourage all children to try new physical activities and respond positively when they do.
- Share our own positive experiences with physical activity and facilitate conversations with the children about their experiences.
- Provide fun, engaging physical activity daily in our lesson plans.
- Make safe equipment accessible in the classroom at all times (e.g. soft balls, push-pull toys, low carpeted blocks to climb on, etc.).
- Not use physical activity as punishment.
- Re-direct children to safe physical activities and/or involve them in discussions about what to do when safety issues or other concerns (e.g. mud, arguments over play equipment, etc.) arise.
- Screen time (except for educational computer use, physical activity and occasional special events) is not permitted in this program.

## **Developmental Screenings & Assessments**

We utilize 3 different tools for developmental screenings and assessments at our centers: Ages & Stages Developmental Screening, Teaching Strategies Gold Assessments, and Child Find (ages 3-5).

The Ages & Stages Developmental Screenings consist of 2 parts, cognitive and social emotional. These are screenings that are to be filled out BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN. These screenings will be sent home for you to complete several times per year. The screenings are scored by our trained staff and if there are any areas of concern, the YMCA will notify you immediately. These screenings are interactive and allow you the opportunity to assess your own child! Participation is required.

Teaching Strategies Gold is our formative assessment tool that classroom staff uses to complete observations, assessments, and conduct parent conferences. Children will be assessed 3 times per year and hold parent teacher conferences 2 times per year. The assessments consist of 38 objectives and dimensions in the following categories: social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science & technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition.

Child Find is a collaboration with the Christina School District. With parent permission, trained staff will come in to assess

children ages 3–5 years old for kindergarten readiness. A form will be sent home prior to the scheduled date for parent permission. THIS FORM MUST BE SIGNED IN ORDER FOR YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE. Parents will receive a copy of the assessment results both sent to their home and from the center.

## Your Child's Day

### What to Bring

For infants:

- Diapers & Wipes (we recommend at least 30...enough for a week's worth of changes or more)
- At least TWO complete changes of seasonally appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, socks)
- If applicable, breast milk, formula or any other special dietary needs (doctor's note may be required)
- Enough bottles for at least 5 feedings (one bottle per feeding). If providing breast milk or formula from home, please bring these already prepared to serve.
- Pacifier

For Toddlers who are not potty trained:

- Diapers & Wipes (we recommend at least 30...enough for a week's worth of changes or more)
- Crib Sheet (to cover a cot)\*
- Blanket (large enough to comfortably cover child)\*
- At least TWO complete changes of seasonally appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, socks)
- If applicable, any other special dietary needs (doctor's note may be required)

For potty training toddlers:

- Crib Sheet (to cover a cot)\*
- Blanket (large enough to comfortably cover child)\*
- At least THREE complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, socks, underwear). We cannot wash clothes in the center and do not have extras on hand. Children who run out of clothes will need to be picked up.
- Pull ups/diapers for naptime for early potty trainers
- If applicable, any other special dietary needs (doctor's note may be required)

For older children:

- Crib Sheet (to cover a cot)\*
- Blanket (large enough to comfortably cover child)\*
- At least one complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, socks, underwear)
- If applicable, other special dietary needs (doctor's note may be required)
- Swimsuit & towel for swimming days

\*All crib sheets and blankets must be taken home on Fridays and laundered.

### What to Wear

All children should be dressed in casual, comfortable and safe clothing. As your child masters new skills, they are grasping, climbing, pulling, pushing, jumping and trying new things. One of the ways we can help them stay safe through their explorations, is to make sure that they are dressed and ready for their daily adventures. Please do not send your child in flip flops or other shoes that could easily slip off while running or climbing. We also ask that children come dressed in play clothing that can get dirty. Some of our developmentally appropriate activities can be messy.

### What to Leave at Home

We ask parents to support our learning environment by helping to ensure each child is ready for a busy day in the center. As such, we ask that all personal toys, games, food and other items be left in the car or at home, so as not to be lost, broken or envied by others. This eliminates distractions during the day and helps to ensure your child and others are not disappointed.

On certain days, teachers may schedule "Show & Share" times for their class. On these days, it is appropriate for children to

bring a special toy or book to share with their friends. Part of the “Show & Share” activity involves passing the toy or book around the group. Please keep this in mind when helping your child select an item. Items that are fragile or especially loved are not recommended for this activity. We ask that you speak with your child before arrival to explain that the toy has to remain in the child’s cubby until the teacher tells them to get it.

**Potty Training**

We ask that you advise us when you are ready to begin toilet learning with your child. It is best if we can duplicate the routines and methods that you are using in order to have consistency for the child.

**Drop Off Times**

Please remember to accompany your child into our center and sign them into the classroom. Depending upon your arrival time, your child may spend some time in the Lions classroom with other children until their teacher arrives to move them to their home room.

You are encouraged to drop your child off between 6:45 am and 9:00 am. Regular, timely attendance is beneficial to children’s learning. Our teachers have a busy day planned for your child and your prompt arrival helps to ensure that all of the children benefit all that we offer. We understand that circumstances may occasionally require a later drop off time. However, children must arrive at the center by 10:00 a.m. Children arriving after this time will not be admitted for the day. Exceptions will be made for doctor’s appointments accompanied by a doctor’s note.

Late arriving children often cause disruptions after their parents leave. You can help minimize these disruptions by ensuring that your child wakes at the same time as usual on days when you will arrive late. We find that many children dropped off late have started their day much later than their friends and find nap time to be especially difficult. Should late drop offs cause continued disruptions, your child may be dismissed from care.

**Continuity of Care**

Children that enter our program are enrolled into a specific classroom with assigned teachers. Children will remain in this classroom for a minimum of 6 months; the only exceptions are the 1 & 2 year olds whom move classroom based on birthdate. Each full time staff member (teacher & teacher assistant) is assigned a particular classroom upon hiring. These are the primary caregivers in the each classroom and children will remain with these teachers for most of the day. We have early drop off procedures where classrooms are combined for a short period of time. Please see schedule below for drop off procedures:

6:45-7:00 a.m.	All children are to be dropped off in the Lions Classroom
7:00-7:30 a.m.	Bunnies & Ducklings dropped off in the Ducklings Classroom
	Lambs & Bears dropped off in the Bears Classroom
	Kangaroos, Elephants, Giraffes & Lions dropped off in Lions Classroom
7:30-8:00 a.m.	Lambs dropped off in Lambs classroom
	Bears dropped off in Bears classroom
	Kangaroos & Elephants dropped off in Kangaroos classroom
	Giraffes & Lions dropped off in Lions classroom
8:00 a.m.	All children dropped off in their own classrooms

In the absence of the lead teacher of the classroom, a qualified part-time staff member will be a substitute for that day. If a lead teacher is out for an extended period of time, a qualified staff member will be assigned to that particular room for the duration of the absence.

Each classroom has an attendance sheet & sign in/sign out clipboard that remain with the staff at all times. This ensures that all children are accounted for throughout the entire day.

**Pick Up Times**

Our scheduled pick up time is 4:00 – 6:00 PM, but children may be picked up at any time during the day. You must *sign your child out* each day. Please understand that many of the children are looking forward to seeing their parents and may become

upset if you remain in the room for too long at pick up. In addition, depending upon your pick up time, the children may be playing in the gym, on the playground or in another classroom. A sign should be posted to help you locate your child. Please be sure to review the day's activities on the classroom information board or on your child's daily slip.

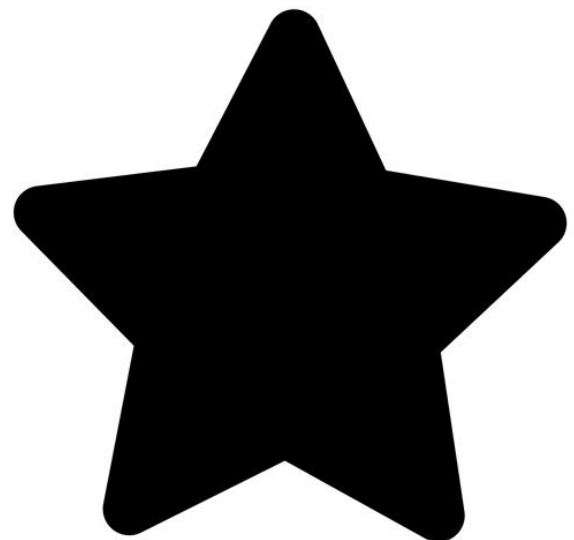




# **Walnut Street YMCA**

## **Child Development Program**

The information in this section of the Parent Handbook contains information specific to the Walnut Street YMCA's Child Development Program. This program serves children from 3 years old until the start of Kindergarten. Our program is licensed by the State of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing and is located at 1000 North Walnut Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.



# General Information

## Philosophy

Youth development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility are the key components that we develop and foster in every aspect of your child's day.

We provide daily activities that encourage physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development. These activities are designed to reflect the children's cultures and communities and to help your child develop at his or her own pace. Activities include familiar and new materials, pictures and experiences. Weekly activity plans are prepared in accordance with these goals. In an effort to provide a comprehensive early childhood experience, your child will experience:

- Multiple daily opportunities for active physical play such as active games, sports, dancing, running, jumping, climbing or exploring the environment. When possible, these activities to take place outdoors.
- Daily opportunities for socialization, conversation, relaxation, and quiet activities such as board or card games, reading or studying.
- Weekly opportunities to participate in projects that require an extended time period to complete in such topics as science, math, social studies, language arts, cooking, drama, creative arts or music.
- Opportunities to take responsibility consistent with their ages for choosing, planning, carrying out and evaluating their own activities. Such activities will include scheduled activity blocks, free choice activities and self-interest time.
- Diverse activities that reflect the various communities, languages and cultures of the children in attendance.

## The Role of Play

Play is an activity-oriented medium. We know that children learn best through activity and we plan activities that build on what children already know. During play, children need adults to help them verbalize their experiences, to find ways to express their ideas and feelings, and to support and encourage them while they face new challenges.

Children in our program are encouraged to participate in all activities. Some activities get messy or require physical activity. Parents are encouraged to dress their children in comfortable, play clothing that helps encourage their participation.

## Hours of Operation

We are open Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM -6:00 PM except for scheduled holidays. Center teachers arrive before 7:00 AM to prepare the center and remain after 6:00 PM to clean up after a busy day. We kindly ask that parents respect the center hours and allow our staff to complete their daily tasks.

## Child to Staff Ratios

Our center meets or exceeds all child to staff ratios set forth by the State of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing. The specific ratios and maximum group sizes for each room are as follows:

Classroom	Staff to Child Ratio	Maximum Staff to Child Size
Little Rascals	1:8	2:16
Little Professors	1:10	2:20

## Parking

Un-metered street parking is available on the streets around the Walnut Street YMCA. Parents are cautioned against parking in no parking zones, blocking driveways or in bus zones. The City of Wilmington Parking Authority is vigilant in monitoring these areas and the ticket usually come with higher fines than other parking tickets. In addition, street cleaning occurs on Mondays and additional parking restrictions are in place between 10:00 AM & 12:00 PM. After 5:00 pm, parking is available in the Colonial Parking Lot across from the YMCA.

## Center Security

Our center is a secure center which requires a specific pin code to gain access. Parents who do not know this code are required to stop by the YMCA front desk gain access to the center.

Our center is equipped with security cameras in the hallways and classrooms. We can review the footage on these cameras in the event that you have a concern about the care your child is receiving. We also randomly review footage to monitor our staff and the activities the children are participating in. Due to the privacy of each child in the center, we do not allow parents to watch the video recordings. We will, however, release copies of the videos with a court order. Please understand that the system is set to record over previous footage. We strongly recommend bringing any concerns to our attention as soon as possible to prevent footage from being lost.

# Educational Programs

## The Creative Curriculum

Our center uses the Creative Curriculum for learning and development. This curriculum is aligned with the Teaching Strategies Gold assessment tool. The Creative Curriculum uses exploration and discovery as a way of learning. It enables children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. The curriculum is based on 38 objectives for development and learning. These objectives are aligned with Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, as well as early learning standards for every state. The curriculum offers daily opportunities to individualize instruction, allowing teachers meet the needs of every type of learner; addresses all the important areas of learning, from social emotional and math to technology and the arts, and incorporates them throughout every part of the day; offers daily, built-in opportunities for observation, helping teachers and director clearly see the strong relationship between curriculum and assessment; contains guidance for working with all learners, including advanced learners and children with disabilities.

## Preschoolers & Pre-Kindergarteners

Our preschool program serves three & four year olds in our Little Rascals classrooms. Our Pre-K program serves four and five year olds in our Little Professors Classroom.

These programs prepare children socially and academically, as well as, support and encourage the development of independence, responsibility, and confidence, all of which are essential for the child's ongoing success in kindergarten.

Our educational program focuses on each child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development by offering concrete, hands-on activities for the child to explore. The preschool curriculum is designed to actively engage each child in developmentally age appropriate activities exploring the content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and technology. Our skilled teachers prepare curriculum that is exciting and challenging, as well as supportive of each child's own learning style.

Our preschool room arrangement creates the optimum learning environment. It allows children easy access to educational toys, materials and books, enabling them to initiate and expand their activities. Each classroom is organized with areas for block play, manipulative toys, art creativity, dramatic play, and reading in addition to larger spaces for group activities. To enhance learning experiences in our preschool we offer class trips to theatre, farm and children's museums.

Our teachers interact with children at their eye level, and whenever appropriate, sitting on the floor with them. We offer frequent face to face interactions with the children and have conversations with them during play, feeding, and routine care. We support the development of social competence through play and cooperative work with other children. Children are taught rhymes, songs and other ways to help connect sounds and letters and develop literacy skills. Our teachers read to and look at books with children, both individually and in groups. Mathematical and scientific concepts are developed and encouraged through play, projects and investigations of the Center's environment. Children are encouraged to use varied materials as they develop more extended and complex pretend play alone and with other children and staff. We provide varied materials, sights, sounds and other experiences for children to investigate and talk about. Children have daily opportunities to walk, run, climb, stack, balance, scribble, draw, write, and refine fine and large motor skills. Our

teachers respond children's words and actions with interest and encouragement and give names to objects and experiences in their environment. We provide just the right amount of support as children continue to develop independence and mastery of a variety of skills.

### **Centers within the Classrooms**

Our classroom activity areas are divided into centers to help guide the activities and learning opportunities each child experiences. Each day, children have opportunities to self-select centers to play and learn in. Our centers include:

#### **Housekeeping and Dramatic Play**

In this center, children are encouraged to role play. The environment and materials change with the theme; it might be an animal hospital or a vegetable market. Children are encouraged to use props and materials creatively. Language, pre-reading and pre-writing skills are used in the center, along with social skills.

#### **Manipulative Area**

Math manipulative are available to provide practice in sequencing, comparing, measuring and introducing number concepts. The concrete materials help the children develop abstract ideas while arranging things they can see and touch. The materials change with the theme to prevent boredom. The children are given the opportunity to put objects in order of size and color and to classify objects according to specific characteristics. Puzzles and other small manipulative toys are available in this area.

#### **Block Center**

Spatial relationships, balance and social skills develop in the block area. Children differentiate between sizes and shapes of blocks to design and build stable arrangements. Social and math skills develop in this area.

#### **Art Area**

Creative projects requiring individual analysis and problem solving are available in the art center. A variety of art media provide exposure to many varied artistic experiences. Fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination are enhanced at this center along with the enhancement of creativity.

#### **Writing Center**

Writing, drawing and stamping instruments are found at this center. While engaged in drawing, the teachers encourage the children to dictate stories about their pictures. As children develop their skills, more pre-writing and early literacy skills are introduced.

#### **Library/Book Center**

Literature relating to the theme is available in each classroom to encourage an early appreciation of understanding story elements and characteristics.

#### **Computers**

Computers are part of the activities in the Elephant, Giraffe and Lion classrooms. Age-appropriate programs are educational in nature and enable the children to use the computer independently.

#### **Music**

Music is an integral part of each classroom. Records, tapes, musical videos, a variety of musical instruments and singing are used to enhance the daily schedule. We strive to offer music and movement activities from many cultures.

### **Outdoor Play**

We have an outdoor, fenced playground just outside of the Child Development Center. A variety of equipment is available for children ages two and older.

We follow Nemours Health Prevention Services best practice recommendations for weather conditions and temperatures for

outdoor time. All children will go outside daily unless there is active precipitation or a posted weather advisory stating children of their age should remain indoors. Please make sure your child has proper clothing for the forecasted weather conditions and safe shoes for climbing and running.

### **Physical Activity**

We are committed to our children's health. We recognize the importance of staff as positive role models for children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore, we will:

- Role-model positive behaviors by being physically active with the children, both indoors and outdoors.
- Encourage all children to try new physical activities and respond positively when they do.
- Share our own positive experiences with physical activity and facilitate conversations with the children about their experiences.
- Provide fun, engaging physical activity daily in our lesson plans.
- Make safe equipment accessible in the classroom at all times (e.g. soft balls, push-pull toys, low carpeted blocks to climb on, etc.).
- Not use physical activity as punishment.
- Re-direct children to safe physical activities and/or involve them in discussions about what to do when safety issues or other concerns (e.g. mud, arguments over play equipment, etc.) arise.
- Screen time (except for educational computer use, physical activity and occasional special events) is not permitted in this program.

### **Developmental Screenings & Assessments**

We utilize 3 different tools for developmental screenings and assessments at our centers: Ages & Stages Developmental Screening, Teaching Strategies Gold Assessments, and Child Find (ages 3-5).

The Ages & Stages Developmental Screenings consist of 2 parts, cognitive and social emotional. These are screenings that are to be filled out BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN. These screenings will be sent home for you to complete several times per year. The screenings are scored by our trained staff and if there are any areas of concern, the YMCA will notify you immediately. These screenings are interactive and allow you the opportunity to assess your own child! Participation is required.

Teaching Strategies Gold is our formative assessment tool that classroom staff uses to complete observations, assessments, and conduct parent conferences. Children will be assessed 3 times per year and hold parent teacher conferences 2 times per year. The assessments consist of 38 objectives and dimensions in the following categories: social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science & technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition.

Child Find is a collaboration with the Christina School District. With parent permission, trained staff will come in to assess children ages 3-5 years old for kindergarten readiness. A form will be sent home prior to the scheduled date for parent permission. THIS FORM MUST BE SIGNED IN ORDER FOR YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE. Parents will receive a copy of the assessment results both sent to their home and from the center.

## **Your Child's Day**

### **What to Bring**

- Crib Sheet (to cover a cot)\*
- Blanket (large enough to comfortably cover child)\*
- At least one complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, socks, underwear)
- If applicable, other special dietary needs (doctor's note may be required)
- Swimsuit & towel for swimming days

\*All crib sheets and blankets must be taken home on Fridays and laundered.

## **What to Wear**

All children should be dressed in casual, comfortable and safe clothing. As your child masters new skills, they are grasping, climbing, pulling, pushing, jumping and trying new things. One of the ways we can help them stay safe through their explorations, is to make sure that they are dressed and ready for their daily adventures. Please do not send your child in flip flops or other shoes that could easily slip off while running or climbing. We also ask that children come dressed in play clothing that can get dirty. Some of our developmentally appropriate activities can be messy.

## **What to Leave at Home**

We ask parents to support our learning environment by helping to ensure each child is ready for a busy day in the center. As such, we ask that all personal toys, games, food and other items be left in the car or at home, so as not to be lost, broken or envied by others. This eliminates distractions during the day and helps to ensure your child and others are not disappointed.

On certain days, teachers may schedule "Show & Share" times for their class. On these days, it is appropriate for children to bring a special toy or book to share with their friends. Part of the "Show & Share" activity involves passing the toy or book around the group. Please keep this in mind when helping your child select an item. Items that are fragile or especially loved are not recommended for this activity. We ask that you speak with your child before arrival to explain that the toy has to remain in the child's cubby until the teacher tells them to get it.

## **Drop Off Times**

Please remember to accompany your child into our center and sign them into the classroom. Depending upon your arrival time, your child may spend some time in the Lions classroom with other children until their teacher arrives to move them to their home room.

You are encouraged to drop your child off between 6:45 am and 9:00 am. Regular, timely attendance is beneficial to children's learning. Our teachers have a busy day planned for your child and your prompt arrival helps to ensure that all of the children benefit all that we offer. We understand that circumstances may occasionally require a later drop off time. However, children must arrive at the center by 10:00 a.m. Children arriving after this time will not be admitted for the day. Exceptions will be made for doctor's appointments accompanied by a doctor's note.

Late arriving children often cause disruptions after their parents leave. You can help minimize these disruptions by ensuring that your child wakes at the same time as usual on days when you will arrive late. We find that many children dropped off late have started their day much later than their friends and find nap time to be especially difficult. Should late drop offs cause continued disruptions, your child may be dismissed from care.

## **Continuity of Care**

Children that enter our program are enrolled into a specific classroom with assigned teachers. Children will remain in this classroom for a minimum of 6 months. Each full time staff member (teacher & teacher assistant) is assigned a particular classroom upon hiring. These are the primary caregivers in the each classroom and children will remain with these teachers for most of the day. We have early drop off procedures where classrooms are combined for a short period of time. Please see schedule below for drop off procedures:

7:00-8:00 a.m.	All children are dropped off in the Little Professors Classroom
8:00 am	All children dropped off in their own classrooms

In the absence of the lead teacher of the classroom, a qualified part-time staff member will be a substitute for that day. If a lead teacher is out for an extended period of time, a qualified staff member will be assigned to that particular room for the duration of the absence.

Each classroom has an attendance sheet & sign in/sign out clipboard that remain with the staff at all times. This ensures that all children are accounted for throughout the entire day.

### Pick Up Times

Our scheduled pick up time is 4:00 – 6:00 PM, but children may be picked up at any time during the day. You must *sign your child out* each day. Please understand that many of the children are looking forward to seeing their parents and may become upset if you remain in the room for too long at pick up. In addition, depending upon your pick up time, the children may be playing in the gym, on the playground or in another classroom. A sign should be posted to help you locate your child. Please be sure to review the day's activities on the classroom information board or on your child's daily slip.

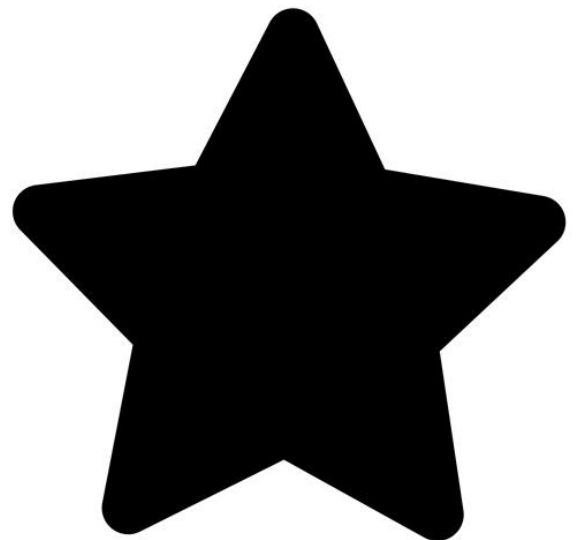




# **Walnut Street YMCA**

## **School Age Child Care**

The information in this section of the Parent Handbook contains information specific to the Walnut Street YMCA's School Age Child Care Program. This program serves children from Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Our program is licensed by the State of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing and is located at 1000 North Walnut Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.



# General Information

## Philosophy

We help participants grow spiritually, mentally and physically using a natural setting to provide challenging activities in both small and large group settings. Our program stands for these things:

- A high quality program that meets the operation standards of the association and the YMCA of the USA.
- Children are recognized as individuals, each unique, each of value, each developing at their own rate. Each child's development is maximized in a caring, nurturing environment, where children and the significant adults in their lives are able to explore their world.
- The School Age Child Care program is designed to develop the social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills of each child through programs, which are structured, yet flexible, providing a balance of active/quiet and individual/group activities.
- Quality staff is hired that represent our values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
- Good principles of YMCA management, including pricing, fiscal success, human resources and financial development that are essential to the delivery of quality services are incorporated into all aspects of the program.

## Program Objectives & Goals

The School Age Child Care experience is grounded in a set of seven objectives that characterize all YMCA programs. Our program strives to provide activities that encourage children to:

- Grow personally
- Learn values
- Improve personal and family relationships
- Appreciate diversity
- Become better leaders and supporters
- Develop specific skills
- Have fun

To meet the objectives above, we provide daily activities that include the following developmental areas: physical, social, emotional, language/literacy, and cognitive development. Such activities are developmentally appropriate for each group and will be designed to reflect the children's cultures and communities. Activities include familiar and new materials, pictures and experiences. Weekly activity plans will be prepared in accordance with the goals listed below. Parents may view these plans in the Activity Plan binder at the sign-in and out area. The overall program goals for School Age Child Care include:

- To Support and strengthen the family unit
- To help children develop to their fullest potential
- To develop and strengthen the character values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility
- To improve interpersonal relationships: Learn to care about, communicate with and cooperate with family, friends and significant adults in their life
- To help children lead healthy lives: Learn ways to be active and to make healthy food choices.

## Hours of Operation

We are open Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM until the start of school and from the end of school until 7:00 PM except for scheduled holidays. Center staff members arrive before 7:00 AM to prepare the center and remain after 7:00 PM to clean up after a busy day. We kindly ask that parents respect the center hours and allow our staff to complete their daily tasks.

## **Child to Staff Ratios**

Our center meets or exceeds all child to staff ratios set forth by the State of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing. We strive adhere to a staff to child ratio of 1:10 and a maximum group size of 2:20

To ensure that these ratios are met, the YMCA assigns staff to a group of children. Only staff that is qualified, physically present, and working with children are counted for the purposes of staff/child ratios. Staff members are responsible for providing supervision at all times and for implementing the curriculum goals and daily activities for the group of children in their care.

When seven or more children are present in the center, the YMCA ensures that at least two staff members are present. The YMCA ensures that there is an organized approach to the supervision of and accountability for children during times when children are normally arriving at the beginning of the day and leaving at the end of the day. In addition, staff/child ratios are maintained during such times.

## **Parking**

Un-metered street parking is available on the streets around the Walnut Street YMCA. Parents are cautioned against parking in no parking zones, blocking driveways or in bus zones. The City of Wilmington Parking Authority is vigilant in monitoring these areas and the ticket usually come with higher fines than other parking tickets. In addition, street cleaning occurs on Mondays and additional parking restrictions are in place between 10:00 AM & 12:00 PM. After 5:00 pm, parking is available in the Colonial Parking Lot across from the YMCA.

## **Center Security**

Parents are required to stop by the YMCA front desk gain access to the center. As a matter of safety, we must have a record of who is in the building at all times.

Our center is equipped with security cameras in the hallways and classrooms. We can review the footage on these cameras in the event that you have a concern about the care your child is receiving. We also randomly review footage to monitor our staff and the activities the children are participating in. Due to the privacy of each child in the center, we do not allow parents to watch the video recordings. We will, however, release copies of the videos with a court order. Please understand that the system is set to record over previous footage. We strongly recommend bringing any concerns to our attention as soon as possible to prevent footage from being lost.

# **School Age Child Care Programming**

## **YMCA of the USA School Age Curriculum Framework**

Second only to human relationships, a well-planned curriculum will help define a child's experience in a YMCA program. Curriculum affects all aspects of a program: its overall quality, parent perceptions, and the outcomes and benefits of the program on individual children. The YMCA of the USA and Y's across the country are adopting the YMCA School-Age Care Curriculum framework. The framework discusses the developmental stages of children and youth, describes YMCA beliefs and other frames of reference used in selecting and developing activities, connects the curriculum to the YMCA mission and goals, suggests core content areas, lists sample activities, details additional sources of activities for school-age children and youth, discusses how to use the framework, and suggests how to develop, set up, introduce and evaluate activities. The eight YMCA core content areas are: arts and humanities, character development, health and fitness, homework support, literacy, science and technology, service learning, and social skills and conflict resolution.

## **Age Groupings**

To ensure the greatest development and enjoyment for your child while they are with us, the children are placed into age groups so all activities may be age-appropriate during the program hours. All activities in which the child participates are completely supervised and designed to meet the recreational, physical and educational needs of your child. All activities are conducted by trained staff. Please encourage your child to participate in all scheduled activities.

## **Program Activities**

Program activities include homework/quiet time, gym time for group games and free time, arts & crafts, character development activities, weekly swim time with Water Wise Program, free choice, and more. On Fridays, we do not have homework time for the children. We do run our clubs which the children can pick which club they will participate in. These club activities include, but not limited to, science, drama, Zumba, art, writing, fitness, dance, etc.

During Kid's Club, activities may include science, drama, pool time, physical fitness, arts & crafts, outdoor time at the park (weather permitting), and more.

## **Special Events & Themes**

Specialty scheduled activities and events will be announced prior to the event. Costumes, music, stuffed animals, show and tell items have been part of past events. Your involvement, encouraging your child to prepare for these events, is important to the success of these days. Please see the monthly newsletter or information board for details.

## **Special Activities**

The children have the opportunity to participate in special activities while they are in our care. Past activities have included Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Drill Team, Youth Sports, etc. Additional registrations may be required for these activities. All of these activities are supervised and run by YMCA staff. If your child is participating in a special activity, please give a note to the school age child care staff. Your child will be signed out by the staff using the note as permission for the child to move onto the special activity. Your child's homework may not be completed depending on the time of the special activity. The program cannot be responsible for their homework not being completed.

## **Extending the Y Experience**

There are a number of ways to extend the Y experience for your child. During the school year, your child will experience a sampling of YMCA programs that might peak his/her interest. These programs may include swimming, sports, karate, dance, art and other special interest activities. For children who enjoy a particular activity, parents can enroll them a full session of programs at the Y. In addition, the YMCA runs a summer day camp program. Many of the staff members your child will spend time with also work for this program.

## **Outdoor Play**

Children in our school age program will, at times, participate in outdoor activities at local parks and playgrounds and the Sherman Street Garden. Outdoor time is scheduled as often as the program schedule allows. When outdoor play is not possible, children receive time to be physically active in the gymnasium.

We follow Nemours Health Prevention Services best practice recommendations for weather conditions and temperatures for outdoor time. All children will go outside daily unless there is active precipitation or a posted weather advisory stating children of their age should remain indoors. Please make sure your child has proper clothing for the forecasted weather conditions and safe shoes for climbing and running.

## **Physical Activity**

We are committed to our children's health. We recognize the importance of staff as positive role models for children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore, we will:

- Role-model positive behaviors by being physically active with the children, both indoors and outdoors.
- Encourage all children to try new physical activities and respond positively when they do.
- Share our own positive experiences with physical activity and facilitate conversations with the children about their experiences.
- Provide fun, engaging physical activity daily in our lesson plans.
- Make safe equipment accessible in the classroom at all times (e.g. soft balls, push-pull toys, low carpeted blocks to

climb on, etc.).

- Not use physical activity as punishment.
- Re-direct children to safe physical activities and/or involve them in discussions about what to do when safety issues or other concerns (e.g. mud, arguments over play equipment, etc.) arise.
- Screen time (except for educational computer use, physical activity and occasional special events) is not permitted in this program.

### Developmental Screening & Assessment

We utilize developmental screenings and assessments in the school age program to understand each child's developmental strengths, individual interests and need for continued growth and support. These tools provide us with information for selecting and providing curriculum activities. These assessments are conducted at least annually and consist of three components:

Program Staff Observation which documents the child's:

- Social/emotional and character development which addresses issues like the child's ability to engage with other children, empathize with others, manage conflict, communicate
- Approach to learning which addresses skills like the child's ability to manage and complete tasks, interest in learning new things, independence in learning, problem solving,
- Personal health and wellness which addresses factors such as the child's understanding of choices and habits that contribute to health and wellness
- Child's support system which addresses what is observable about the child's access to people, systems and materials that support his/her wellbeing and learning

All About Me Form (Child Questionnaire) which is completed by the child alone or with assistance from the program staff and/or parent and a child interview conducted by staff to document the child's:

- Curriculum interests including an inventory of child's interest in each content area identified by the curriculum framework including opportunities for ranking favorite interest areas
- Social/emotional development including the child's perspective on his/her comfort level with peers, interaction with adults, values of caring and responsibility, and self-esteem
- Approaches to learning including the child's perspective on his/her interest in learning and ability to be effective and successful as a learner
- Personal Health and Wellness including the child's perspective and knowledge about healthy choices and understanding of what contributes to wellness

All About My Child Form (Family/Parent Questionnaire) gives families an opportunity to be engaged in the process and offer the program information about the child from the perspective of family members who are most familiar with the child. Families have an opportunity to share their observations and concerns on the following:

- Child's social/emotional development including the family's concerns about social or emotional development
- Child's interest in learning including the family's concerns about any areas of learning, and family's knowledge of special areas of interest/aptitude the child may have.
- Child's health and wellness including the family's commitment to supporting child in healthy choices
- Child's support system including family's knowledge of resources outside of the immediate family that child might access such as teachers, coaches etc.

## Your Child's Day

### What to Bring

Children will need to wear clothing and footwear and socks suitable for sports, being active, doing crafts, etc. Children will need to bring a bathing suit and towel for weekly swim program. All items that a child brings to the program must be labeled with his/her name. Children may bring a change of clothes for after school, if desired.

## What to Leave at Home

Children are not to bring dolls or toys (unless requested for a specific program); pets; game boys or electronic games; ipods/mp3 players,(children may bring music for specific programs); sports equipment; expensive equipment or jewelry; cell phones/beepers; skateboards, roller blades and scooters; and money (except on trip days.) Toy guns, knives, swords and other toys that promote aggressive behavior do not promote the type of learning and cooperative play according to the principles of our program, please leave these at home.

## Drop Off Times

Please remember to accompany your child into our center and sign them into the program. ***Parents are requested to call the YMCA by 7:30 am whenever a child will not be attending on a scheduled day. Parents may leave a voicemail message on the YMCA School Age Child Care Phone – 302-472-9622 extension 17. We appreciate your assistance with this as this ensures a smooth afternoon pick up at the schools if we know in advance that your child is not a school, or had an early dismissal.***

## Continuity of Care

Children that enter our program are enrolled into a specific classroom with assigned teachers. Children will remain in this classroom for a minimum of 6 months. Each staff member is assigned a particular classroom upon hiring. These are the primary caregivers in the each classroom and children will remain with these teachers for most of the day. We have early drop off procedures where classrooms are combined for a short period of time. Please see schedule below for drop off procedures:

7:00-9:00 a.m.	All classrooms are combined during morning care with the consistent staff scheduled daily.
12:00 – 4:00 p.m.	All classrooms are combined with consistent staff
4:00 – 6:30 p.m.	Children are dropped of in their own classrooms
After 6:30 p.m.	All classrooms are combined with consistent staff

In the absence of the lead teacher of the classroom, a qualified part-time staff member will be a substitute for that day. If a lead teacher is out for an extended period of time, a qualified staff member will be assigned to that particular room for the duration of the absence.

Each classroom has an attendance sheet & sign in/sign out clipboard that remain with the staff at all times. This ensures that all children are accounted for throughout the entire day.

## Pick Up Times

Our scheduled pick up time is 4:00 – 7:00 PM. You must stop at the YMCA front desk and *sign your child out* each day. While children may be picked up as early at 4:00 PM, please consider allowing them to stay later to get the full benefit of this program. Many activities including gym time, snack/supper, swimming and group games begin after 4:00. Children who want to experience all the program has to offer should stay until at least 6:00 PM each night.

## Transportation

Daily transportation for the School Age Child Care Program is provided using YMCA vehicles (including small van and bus) and a chartered bus. Some students are transported to the facility by school district appointed buses. YMCA staff members are not permitted to transport children in their personal vehicles.

Children in Walnut Street YMCA's School Age Child Care Program may be transported to field trips and special events using YMCA buses or a chartered bus service. When children are being transported, the child's safety is of utmost importance. Children will be informed of rules and guidelines to follow. During that time the children are under the supervision of the YMCA staff and the transportation authority. Child to staff ratios are maintained for the duration of the trip. If there is any kind of incident, the parents will be notified immediately. The following guidelines are followed for all YMCA transportation:

- Parents will be advised in writing prior to the trip regarding mode of transportation being used.
- YMCA staff will not allow the number of children and staff transported to exceed the seating capacity of the vehicle.

- Children under the age of 8 and traveling in any vehicle other than a school bus must in in an age, weight and height appropriate, child safety seat.
- No person under the age of 18 may ride in the front seat of a YMCA owned vehicle.
- A minimum of 2 adults (at least 18 years of age) must be on any vehicle transporting children. In addition, an appropriate number of chaperones in accordance with state child care licensing must be on each vehicle at all times.
- The YMCA requires the charter bus company to ensure that the driver of the vehicle be screened for criminal and child abuse history, be at least 21 years of age and hold a valid driver's license and maintain a safe driving record.
- Parents will provide written permission of all transportation and will notify the center of any special need or problem of which the driver should be aware.
- The vehicle and/or driver will be equipped with a cell phone which will remain on for the duration of the trip. The YMCA will have the number to this phone.
- A complete first aid kit and operable dry chemical fire extinguisher (approved by the Underwriter's Laboratory) will be present in the vehicle at all times.
- The driver of the vehicle will complete the daily vehicle inspection report prior to the operation of the vehicle.
- Children are never left unattended in the vehicle.
- All doors shall be locked when the vehicle is in motion.
- Children will be loaded and unloaded at the curbside of the vehicle or in a protected parking are or driveway.
- The van shall be air conditioned when outdoor temperatures exceed 85 degrees and providing fresh air through open windows cannot reduce the temperature.
- The heater shall be used, when necessary, to maintain a temperature of at least 50 degrees inside the vehicle.
- Personal vehicles are never to be used to transport children in YMCA programs.

The driver of the vehicle will not operate the vehicle and will find a suitable replacement for the route whenever conditions exist that would impair his/her ability to operate the vehicle in a safe manner according to all related laws. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- The use of prescription or over-the-counter medication that indicates it may cause drowsiness or should not be used with the operation of machinery
- Intoxication or other impairment
- Lack of sleep or extreme drowsiness

### **Information Board**

The School Age Child Care information board is located in the hallway at the top of the stairs on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the facility. Parents are encouraged to take a look each day for the monthly calendar and newsletter, new programs, photographs, news clippings, timely articles of interest, current licensing rules and trip and special event information.

### **Weekly Update**

Please take a moment at the end of each week to consult with the School Age Child Care staff. This will keep you up to date regarding your child's participation and involvement in the program, learn about upcoming events and plan for the next week. If you have any changes to tell the staff regarding your child's schedule, medicine, please arrange to see the site director and put all information in writing for the child's records.

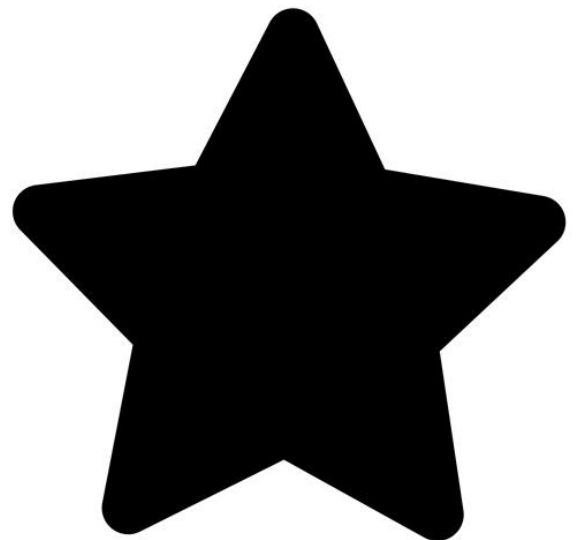




# Walnut Street YMCA

## Summer Day Camp

The information in this section of the Parent Handbook contains information specific to the Walnut Street YMCA's Summer Day Camp Program. This program serves children who have *completed* Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Our program is licensed by the State of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing and is located at 1000 North Walnut Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.



# General Information

## Philosophy

We help campers grow spiritually, mentally and physically using a natural setting to provide challenging activities in both small and large group settings. The Downtown YMCA day camp stands for these things:

- A high quality program that meets the operation standards of the association and the YMCA of the USA.
- Children are recognized as individuals, each unique, each of value, each developing at their own rate. Each child's development is maximized in a caring, nurturing environment, where children and the significant adults in their lives are able to explore their world.
- The day camp program is designed to develop the social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills of each child through programs, which are structured, yet flexible, providing a balance of active/quiet and individual/group activities.
- The natural environment is used to foster knowledge of the natural world whether the camp is located in an outdoor setting or a building based setting. For example, knowledge of the environment, weather, recycling is incorporated into the camp programs.
- Quality staff is hired that represent our values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
- Good principles of YMCA management, including pricing, fiscal success, human resources and financial development that are essential to the delivery of quality services are incorporated into all aspects of the camp.

## Program Objectives & Goals

The day camp experience is grounded in a set of seven objectives that characterize all YMCA programs. The day camp strives to provide programs that encourage campers to:

- Grow personally
- Learn values
- Improve personal and family relationships
- Appreciate diversity
- Become better leaders and supporters
- Develop specific skills
- Have fun

To meet the objectives above, the Downtown YMCA Camp Program will provide daily activities that include the following developmental areas: physical, social, emotional, language/literacy, and cognitive development. Such activities will be developmentally appropriate for each camper group and will be designed to reflect the children's cultures and communities. Activities will include familiar and new materials, pictures and experiences. Weekly activity plans will be prepared in accordance with the goals listed below. Parents may view these plans in the Activity Plan binder at the sign-in and out area. The overall program goals for day camp include:

- Children will be given multiple daily opportunities for active physical play such as active games, sports, dancing, running, jumping, climbing or exploring the environment. When possible, preference is given for these activities to take place outdoors.
- Children shall have daily opportunities for socialization, conversation, relaxation, and quiet activities such as board or card game, reading or studying.
- Children shall have weekly activities to participate in projects that require an extended time period to complete in such topics as science, math, social studies, language arts, cooking, drama, creative arts or music.
- Children shall have the opportunity to take responsibility consistent with their ages for choosing, planning, carrying out and evaluating their own activities. Such activities will include scheduled activity blocks and also free choice activities.
- Children will be given opportunities to experience a diversity of activities that reflect the various communities, languages and cultures of the children in attendance.

## **Hours of Operation**

The typical camp day is 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. All campers enrolled in the program are expected to attend for the entire camp day unless prior arrangements have been made with the camp director. ALL CAMPERS MUST BE DROPPED OFF BY 9:00 AM UNLESS APPROVED BY THE CAMP DIRECTOR. ANY CAMPER ARRIVING AFTER 9 AM WILL BE TURNED AWAY BY THE CAMP STAFF AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND CAMP THAT DAY.

Extended camp hours are available prior to the camp day and after the camp day as ended. Our AM/PM Care is open for campers from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Our extended care is supervised by the camp staff and campers have a choice of centers and other activities to participate in.

## **Child to Staff Ratios**

Our center meets or exceeds all child to staff ratios set forth by the State of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing. We strive adhere to a staff to child ratio of 1:10 and a maximum group size of 2:20

To ensure that these ratios are met, the YMCA assigns staff to a group of children. Only staff that is qualified, physically present, and working with children are counted for the purposes of staff/child ratios. Staff members are responsible for providing supervision at all times and for implementing the curriculum goals and daily activities for the group of children in their care.

When seven or more children are present in the center, the YMCA ensures that at least two staff members are present. The YMCA ensures that there is an organized approach to the supervision of and accountability for children during times when children are normally arriving at the beginning of the day and leaving at the end of the day. In addition, staff/child ratios are maintained during such times.

## **Parking**

Un-metered street parking is available on the streets around the Walnut Street YMCA. Parents are cautioned against parking in no parking zones, blocking driveways or in bus zones. The City of Wilmington Parking Authority is vigilant in monitoring these areas and the ticket usually come with higher fines than other parking tickets. In addition, street cleaning occurs on Mondays and additional parking restrictions are in place between 10:00 AM & 12:00 PM. After 5:00 pm, parking is available in the Colonial Parking Lot across from the YMCA.

## **Center Security**

Parents are required to stop by the YMCA front desk gain access to the center. As a matter of safety, we must have a record of who is in the building at all times.

Our center is equipped with security cameras in the hallways and classrooms. We can review the footage on these cameras in the event that you have a concern about the care your child is receiving. We also randomly review footage to monitor our staff and the activities the children are participating in. Due to the privacy of each child in the center, we do not allow parents to watch the video recordings. We will, however, release copies of the videos with a court order. Please understand that the system is set to record over previous footage. We strongly recommend bringing any concerns to our attention as soon as possible to prevent footage from being lost.

## **Camp Safety**

At YMCA summer camp, our first concern is the safety of your children while they are in our care. We have the following prevention tools to assure our effectiveness:

- Early dismissal – parents or guardians are required to sign out their children from camp and may be asked to present identification. Whenever possible, advance notice is expected. Please be aware, anyone picking up a camper early may have to wait for their child as they may be off-site at that time.
- Late arrivals – Are not permitted without advance notice and approval by Camp Director.
- Sign-out – Parents must sign out their campers before proceeding to the camp areas. All unescorted adults are

not permitted to enter camp areas.

- Every camp has staff trained in CPR, First Aid and emergency procedures.
- All staff have participated in child protection training and must adhere to strict guidelines regarding their interactions with campers.
- Ellis licensed lifeguards are on duty during all free swims. Campers are presented to evaluate their individual swimming ability on the first day of the each session and then given a bracelet identifying their level of swimming ability. During free swims, non-swimmers who cannot recover to a standing position will be required to wear a floatation device provided by the YMCA.

## Camp Programming

### YMCA of the USA School Age Curriculum Framework

Second only to human relationships, a well-planned curriculum will help define a child's experience in a YMCA program. Curriculum affects all aspects of a program: its overall quality, parent perceptions, and the outcomes and benefits of the program on individual children. The YMCA of the USA and Y's across the country are adopting the YMCA School-Age Care Curriculum framework. The framework discusses the developmental stages of children and youth, describes YMCA beliefs and other frames of reference used in selecting and developing activities, connects the curriculum to the YMCA mission and goals, suggests core content areas, lists sample activities, details additional sources of activities for school-age children and youth, discusses how to use the framework, and suggests how to develop, set up, introduce and evaluate activities. The eight YMCA core content areas are: arts and humanities, character development, health and fitness, homework support, literacy, science and technology, service learning, and social skills and conflict resolution.

### Program Activities

Camp is designed for all campers to explore their interests, try new activities, make lasting friendships, and life long memories. This is achieved with the daily schedule for each camp group that is age appropriate. The schedules include a variety of activities including physical activities, arts, science, nature, gardening, character development, literacy, and more to meet the recreational, physical, social, emotional, and educational needs of the campers. Camper will explore the city and surrounding areas either by walking or by using our YMCA bus. Our campers use local parks for outside activities and we will be using local county and state parks for nature exploration and gardening. We encourage all campers to participate in the activities, please encourage your camper to do so as well. Campers will get to participate in weekly special events which may be a field trip or special event at camp. We strive for all our campers to have fun each day they are at camp!

To ensure the greatest development and enjoyment for your child while they are with us, the children are placed into age groups so all activities may be age-appropriate during the program hours. All activities in which the child participates are completely supervised and designed to meet the recreational, physical and educational needs of your child. All activities are conducted by trained staff. Please encourage your child to participate in all scheduled activities.

### Special Events & Themes

Specialty scheduled activities and events will be announced prior to the event. Costumes, music, stuffed animals, show and tell items have been part of past events. Your involvement, encouraging your child to prepare for these events, is important to the success of these days. Please see the newsletter or information board for details.

### Field Trips & Special Activities

Throughout the summer age-appropriate field trips and special events are scheduled. Details about all trips and events will be given out in advance. ALL CAMPERS ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR THE Y CAMP TSHIRT ON TRIP DAYS. All trips are subject to change.

The children have the opportunity to participate in special activities while they are in our care. Past activities have included Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Drill Team, Youth Sports, etc. Additional registrations may be required for these activities. All of these activities are supervised and run by YMCA staff. If your child is participating in a special activity, please give a note to the

school age child care staff. Your child will be signed out by the staff using the note as permission for the child to move onto the special activity.

### **Gardening**

Our campers have the unique opportunity to participate in our gardening program. Campers will work with our staff in one of our gardens and will learn how to maintain and care for the fruits and vegetables we grow. They will also learn how fruits and vegetables grow while digging in the dirt, watering the plants and trying vegetables they've never tasted before.

### **Summer Literary**

Our camp staff believe that learning should end when school does. They work hard to implement our summer literacy program, SLAM- Summer Literacy Adventure Madness. Our goal is to help our campers with their literacy and reading comprehension levels over the summer time as we know studies show children lose 1/3 of their reading comprehension during summer break. All of our campers will participate in a reading assessment when they start camp and then again at the end of camp so we can see if we have reached our goal. Campers will use their literacy skills throughout the summer with a variety of age-appropriate activities. A sample of activities include: our Explorers will enjoy story time, drama activities, library visits, and more. Our Pioneers and Adventurers will put on their acting skills as they act out stories they create around the weekly themes as well as other activities. Our Challengers will explore the city using map skills and reading comprehension.

### **Extending the Summer Camp Experience**

There are a number of ways to extend the summer camp experience for your child. During the course of the summer, your child may experience a sampling of YMCA programs that might peak his/her interest. These programs may include swimming, sports, karate, dance, art and other special interest activities. For children who enjoy a particular activity, parents can enroll them in the activity at the YMCA during the school year. In addition, the YMCA runs a before and after school care program. Many of the staff members your child will spend time with also work for this program. Finally, if none of these options are what you are looking for, the YMCA also offers Kid's Club, a structured, activity-filled day on many scheduled school closing days.

### **Outdoor Play**

Children in our camp program will, at times, participate in outdoor activities at local parks and playgrounds and the Sherman Street Garden. Outdoor time is scheduled as often as the program schedule allows. When outdoor play is not possible, children receive time to be physically active in the gymnasium.

We follow Nemours Health Prevention Services best practice recommendations for weather conditions and temperatures for outdoor time. All children will go outside daily unless there is active precipitation or a posted weather advisory stating children of their age should remain indoors. Please make sure your child has proper clothing for the forecasted weather conditions and safe shoes for climbing and running.

### **Physical Activity**

We are committed to our children's health. We recognize the importance of staff as positive role models for children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore, we will:

- Role-model positive behaviors by being physically active with the children, both indoors and outdoors.
- Encourage all children to try new physical activities and respond positively when they do.
- Share our own positive experiences with physical activity and facilitate conversations with the children about their experiences.
- Provide fun, engaging physical activity daily in our lesson plans.
- Make safe equipment accessible in the classroom at all times (e.g. soft balls, push-pull toys, low carpeted blocks to climb on, etc.).
- Not use physical activity as punishment.
- Re-direct children to safe physical activities and/or involve them in discussions about what to do when safety issues or other concerns (e.g. mud, arguments over play equipment, etc.) arise.

- Screen time (except for educational computer use, physical activity and occasional special events) is not permitted in this program.

## Developmental Screening & Assessment

We utilize developmental screenings and assessments in the school age program to understand each child's developmental strengths, individual interests and need for continued growth and support. These tools provide us with information for selecting and providing curriculum activities. These assessments are conducted at least annually and consist of three components:

Program Staff Observation which documents the child's:

- Social/emotional and character development which addresses issues like the child's ability to engage with other children, empathize with others, manage conflict, communicate
- Approach to learning which addresses skills like the child's ability to manage and complete tasks, interest in learning new things, independence in learning, problem solving,
- Personal health and wellness which addresses factors such as the child's understanding of choices and habits that contribute to health and wellness
- Child's support system which addresses what is observable about the child's access to people, systems and materials that support his/her wellbeing and learning

All About Me Form (Child Questionnaire) which is completed by the child alone or with assistance from the program staff and/or parent and a child interview conducted by staff to document the child's:

- Curriculum interests including an inventory of child's interest in each content area identified by the curriculum framework including opportunities for ranking favorite interest areas
- Social/emotional development including the child's perspective on his/her comfort level with peers, interaction with adults, values of caring and responsibility, and self-esteem
- Approaches to learning including the child's perspective on his/her interest in learning and ability to be effective and successful as a learner
- Personal Health and Wellness including the child's perspective and knowledge about healthy choices and understanding of what contributes to wellness

All About My Child Form (Family/Parent Questionnaire) gives families an opportunity to be engaged in the process and offer the program information about the child from the perspective of family members who are most familiar with the child. Families have an opportunity to share their observations and concerns on the following:

- Child's social/emotional development including the family's concerns about social or emotional development
- Child's interest in learning including the family's concerns about any areas of learning, and family's knowledge of special areas of interest/aptitude the child may have.
- Child's health and wellness including the family's commitment to supporting child in healthy choices
- Child's support system including family's knowledge of resources outside of the immediate family that child might access such as teachers, coaches etc.

## Your Child's Day

### What to Bring

All campers should bring an open mind and be ready to have fun!

- All campers should wear CLOSED toe and heel shoes. We recommend sneakers are the best choice.
- NO flip flops, sport sandals, or any other kind of sandals. This is for the safety of your camper as well as to ensure they will be able to participate in the activities.
- All campers should bring a LABELED bathing suit & towel for swim.
- All campers should bring a LABELED water bottle.
- If a camper is bringing their own lunch, NO peanuts/ peanut butter.

- We recommend campers bring a LABELED bag to keep belongings in.

### **What to Leave at Home**

The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items. As such, we strongly recommend that campers bring only items necessary for the specific camp day or activity. The following items are not permitted at camp at any time.

- Cell phones
- Weapons of any kind
- Personal Property: We cannot be held responsible for the safety of valuable items brought to camp. DO NOT bring gameboys, PSPs, DSs, iPods, MP3 players, electronics of any kind. We are NOT responsible for lost, broke, or stolen items.

### **Drop Off Times**

Our drop off time is 7:00 – 9:00 am. Campers must be escorted into the building and signed in every day. Camp staff will meet you in the lobby and help your child find their group.

### **Continuity of Care**

Children that enter our program are enrolled into a specific groups with assigned camp counselors. Children will remain in this group for the majority of the summer. Each staff member is assigned a particular camp group upon hiring. These are the primary caregivers in the each group and children will remain with these teachers for most of the day. We have early drop off procedures where groups may combined for a short period of time. The staff supervising the campers in the morning are scheduled consistently to provide consistency for the campers.

In the absence of the lead counselor for the group, a qualified staff member will be a substitute for that day. If a lead counselor is out for an extended period of time, a qualified staff member will be assigned to that particular group for the duration of the absence.

Each group has an attendance sheet & sign in/sign out clipboard that remain with the staff at all times. This ensures that all children are accounted for throughout the entire day.

### **Pick Up Times**

Our pick up time is 4:00 – 6:00 PM. You must *sign your child out* each day in the YMCA lobby. Camp staff will help your child gather their belongings and bring them to you. Please bring identification every day when picking up your camper. While our regular pick up staff may know you, emergencies or illness may require other staff (who are not familiar with you) to cover sign out.

### **Transportation**

Transportation for camp trips is provided using YMCA and/or chartered busses. YMCA staff members are not permitted to transport children in their personal vehicles.

When children are being transported, the child's safety is of utmost importance. Children will be informed of rules and guidelines to follow. During that time the children are under the supervision of the YMCA staff and the transportation authority. Child to staff ratios are maintained for the duration of the trip. If there is any kind of incident, the parents will be notified immediately. The following guidelines are followed for all YMCA transportation:

- Parents will be advised in writing prior to the trip regarding mode of transportation being used.
- YMCA staff will not allow the number of children and staff transported to exceed the seating capacity of the vehicle.
- Children under the age of 8 and traveling in any vehicle other than a school bus must in in an age, weight and height appropriate, child safety seat.
- No person under the age of 18 may ride in the front seat of a YMCA owned vehicle.
- A minimum of 2 adults (at least 18 years of age) must be on any vehicle transporting children. In addition, an appropriate number of chaperones in accordance with state child care licensing must be on each vehicle at all times.

- The YMCA requires the charter bus company to ensure that the driver of the vehicle be screened for criminal and child abuse history, be at least 21 years of age and hold a valid driver's license and maintain a safe driving record.
- Parents will provide written permission of all transportation and will notify the center of any special need or problem of which the driver should be aware.
- The vehicle and/or driver will be equipped with a cell phone which will remain on for the duration of the trip. The YMCA will have the number to this phone.
- A complete first aid kit and operable dry chemical fire extinguisher (approved by the Underwriter's Laboratory) will be present in the vehicle at all times.
- Children are never left unattended in the vehicle.
- All doors shall be locked when the vehicle is in motion.
- Children will be loaded and unloaded at the curbside of the vehicle or in a protected parking area or driveway.
- The van shall be air conditioned when outdoor temperatures exceed 85 degrees and providing fresh air through open windows cannot reduce the temperature.
- The heater shall be used, when necessary, to maintain a temperature of at least 50 degrees inside the vehicle.
- Personal vehicles are never to be used to transport children in YMCA programs.

The driver of the vehicle will not operate the vehicle and will find a suitable replacement for the route whenever conditions exist that would impair his/her ability to operate the vehicle in a safe manner according to all related laws. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- The use of prescription or over-the-counter medication that indicates it may cause drowsiness or should not be used with the operation of machinery
- Intoxication or other impairment
- Lack of sleep or extreme drowsiness

### **Information Board**

The Summer Camp information board is located in the YMCA lobby. Parents are encouraged to take a look each day for program updates, new programs, photographs, news clippings, timely articles of interest, current licensing rules and trip and special event information.

### **Weekly Update**

Pick up a weekly newsletter at camp sign in or out. This will include an update for the week and list all special events. Also, you can receive this newsletter via email. Please contact us at [walnutstreetcamp@ymcade.org](mailto:walnutstreetcamp@ymcade.org) to be added to the list. In addition, you can always check our website, [www.ymcade.org](http://www.ymcade.org), for newsletters and updates.