WELCOME!

At the YMCA, healthy child development starts early. That’s why we offer preschool programs that help children learn the essential skills they will need. Our trained, supportive staff works to help children receive the best possible start to their education.

PHILOSOPHY

The YMCA is a community leader in the development of the whole child. Children will learn through discovery and play. Our goal is to encourage a love for lifelong learning in a caring community.

HOURS OF OPERATION

This year-round program runs Monday–Friday. Hours vary by location. Contact your local YMCA for exact hours of operation. A late fee of $1/minute, per child, after the end time of the program will be added to your tuition. Please contact us if you are going to be late. If you are late more than three times, services may be terminated.

MEALS & SNACKS

Vary by location. Please check with your local YMCA for specific details.

A monthly menu will be posted. A private area is provided for nursing mothers. Nursing mothers may provide bottled breast milk for their infants. All lunches, drinks, bottles and pacifiers must be labeled with the child’s full name.

ANIMALS

Classroom “pets” may be included in the learning environment. Please do not bring animals with you to the center.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Staff members are trained in basic emergency procedures. Necessary responses to issues regarding natural disasters (floods, tornados, hurricanes, etc.), hostile situations and fire escape routes are addressed in staff training. Monthly fire drills and periodic severe weather drills are conducted at centers. A detailed plan is posted at each center for your review.
By choosing a licensed day care, you and your child have new experiences and relationships. You, the child care director and the child care staff have a responsibility to protect the health, safety and well-being of your child. The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Licensing Division is also a part of this partnership.

A copy of the current Minimum Standard Rules for Licensing and Inspection report will be maintained at the reception desk. You may also request a copy of these standards from your local day care office. Parents may contact the local child care licensing office by calling 713-940-3009 or visiting www.tdprs.tx.us.

YMCA staff members are trained annually to recognize and report suspected child abuse and neglect and are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. The 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline phone number is 1-800-252-5400 and their website is: www.txabusehotline.org.

**DAILY ATTIRE & EXTRA ITEMS FROM HOME**

Children should be dressed for active play. Since all children will be going outside twice per day, weather permitting, please ensure that they have weather-appropriate attire. No open-toed shoes permitted. Each child needs a change of clothes for emergencies. This should include: pants/shorts, shirt and underwear. Children being potty trained may require more than one change of clothing.

Please bring a nap-mat, blanket and any item that soothes your child during naptime. Ensure that all items are labeled. Please refrain from bringing toys and other items from home. These will only be allowed on designated show-and-tell days. We are not responsible for any lost, stolen or broken belongings.

**LOST & FOUND**

It is important that each item brought from home is labeled with your child’s name to prevent them from being lost. Should an item of your child’s be misplaced, it will be placed in the lost and found. These items will be donated to a local charity if left at the center for more than 30 days.

**BABYSITTING**

We are pleased that you feel comfortable and confident in our employees and that you may want them to babysit or transport children after hours; however, it is against the YMCA’s policy and employees may be terminated.
INFANT & TODDLER ITEMS

Parents are responsible for diapers, wipes, any diapering supplies and baby food.

GANG FREE ZONE

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty. A complete informational handout on this code is available at the Welcome Desk for your review.

CURRICULUM

YMCA preschool programs follow a comprehensive curriculum in all age groups.

Core content areas include:
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Arts
- Technology
- Healthy Eating and Physical Activity
- Character Development

CLASSROOM RATIOS

A minimum of two staff members are assigned per classroom. Teacher-to-Child Ratios:

- 0-11 months 1:4
- 12-17 months 1:5
- 18-23 months 1:8
- 2 year olds 1:10
- 3 year olds 1:14
- 4 year olds 1:16
- 5 year olds 1:16

TUITION POLICY

All tuition is due prior to services rendered. An annual non-refundable registration fee is required. Payments are due by the first day of each month. An initial payment is due at the time of enrollment and is non-refundable. Payments are late after the third day of each month, and your account will be charged a $30 late fee. A late fee of $30 will also be added to your account for all returned payments. If your tuition is not made current by the 10th day of the month, your child care services may be terminated. There are no refunds or credits due to illness or absence.
WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A two-week notice must be submitted to the Director in writing in order for your child/children to be withdrawn from the program. Enrollment is considered continuous until written notice of withdrawal is given.

HOLIDAYS

Our program will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year’s Eve (varies by location)
- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (varies by location)
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve (varies by location)
- Christmas Day

ENROLLMENT

The following are required to enroll your child:

- Completed enrollment form
- Immunization record (including TB test if required)
- Health statement signed by a physician
- If your child is four years of age or older – vision & hearing screening*

Due to state licensing standards, new enrollment forms are required by September 1st of each year. All forms must be completely filled out at the time of enrollment. It is very important that we can always reach you in the event of an emergency. Please remember to update your records should you have any change in your personal information (i.e. address, phone numbers, emergency contacts, immunization, etc.)

* VISION AND HEARING SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

The Special Senses and Communications Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, requires a screening or a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems for the following children who are enrolled in a child care center:

First-time enrollees, who are four years of age or older, and all children enrolled in programs, who are four years of age by September 1st of each year, will need to be screened for possible vision and hearing problems prior to completion of the first semester of enrollment or within 120 calendar days of enrollment, whichever is longest, or present evidence of screening conducted within one year prior to enrollment.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Should your child require immediate medical attention, we will call 911, provide first aid and/or CPR, and then contact parents or guardians. Responding emergency medical personnel will make determinations as to whether the child should be transported to a hospital. We will provide them with your choice of hospital and physician as indicated in your child’s record. In the event that this information is not specified, the child will be transported to the nearest hospital.
A TYPICAL DAY IN OUR PROGRAM

- Arrival
- Centers & Small Group Time
- Group Activities
- Snack Time
- Group Activities
- Outdoor Time
- Lunch
- Rest
- Group Activities
- Snack
- Outdoor Time
- Centers & Small Group Time
- Departure

VOLUNTEERS/PARENT PARTICIPATION/CONFERENCES

We welcome parents as visitors to our program! Open communication is very important to the success of your child’s experience. Parent conferences may be arranged at any time with teachers or the director. We appreciate your input regarding suggestions, ideas and comments on ways to improve our service to you and your family. You may direct suggestions, concerns, compliments or complaints to the immediate caregiver or one of the directors.

Volunteers will need to have clear criminal background and FBI checks, as well as complete our YMCA child abuse prevention training in order to volunteer in the program. Parents and volunteers are never left alone with a group of children and will have a staff member with them at all times.

MEDICATION

If your child needs medication while at school, you must complete a medication form. The medication must be given to YMCA staff, and:

- Be in its original container
- Labeled with the child’s name (we cannot share medications among siblings)
- Labeled with the date that the prescription expires
- Labeled with the dosage and directions on how to administer the medicine
- Include the name of the physician prescribing the medication

Over the counter medication will also require a medication form. This includes sunscreen and other topical medications.
SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

In order for us to provide the best care for each child, it is important that we have as much information as possible on all participants. If your child has any special concerns and needs including: allergies, existing illness, injuries, disabilities, long-term, continuous use medication, any limitations or need for special provisions etc., please speak to the Program Director, and if we can accommodate the special provision, we will be happy to enroll your child.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event the local Independent School District closes due to inclement weather, we will also be closed. If this occurs during operating hours, parents will be notified by phone.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE POLICY

Arrival to and departure from the program must be noted on the appropriate form. Photo ID may be required for the release of your child. The child will only be released to the parent and/or those adults that the parent specifically designates on the enrollment form. Amendments to the release section of the enrollment form must be submitted in writing with the signature of the parent or guardian who enrolled the child. Any court documentation restricting release or contact must be signed by a judge and provided for the child’s file. Without this documentation we are obligated to release a child to either parent.

For security purposes, it is very important that you sign your child in and out every day by putting the time and your initials in the appropriate box. For safety reasons, all children must be signed in and out daily.

OUTSIDE PLAY POLICY

If children are well enough to attend and weather permits, they will participate in outside play. TDPR5 requires that they have scheduled outside play twice daily, weather permitting.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

Parent notifications may be made in writing via letters, emails, fliers and/or signage at the classroom door or reception desk. Notifications may also be made by phone calls or in person by site staff. Please check daily for new information. Any policy changes will be provided to the parent or guardian in writing.

CONDUCT & GUIDANCE

Our program uses positive guidance methods including redirection, distraction, reminders and logical consequences. Self-management skills are taught using consistent rules that are clearly stated so that children are expected to work and play within known limits. Behavior expected of children is age appropriate according to developmental stages. The YMCA reserves the right to restrict children’s activities, have parents pick up immediately, suspend or terminate care when children are displaying behavior that is dangerous to themselves or others, or for repeatedly being disruptive or failing to follow program rules.
TRANSPORTATION

If your child is attending one of our programs that provides transportation, they are under the direct supervision of the driver and bus monitor and must obey our YMCA rules. Staff involved in the transportation of the kids are trained on proper bus procedures and ensure the safety of the children at all times.

FIELD TRIPS/SPECIAL EVENTS

Field trips and special events are fun and exciting learning opportunities that enhance your child’s experience. Varies by location. Check with your local center for specific details.

WATER ACTIVITIES

Activities may include sprinklers, slip & slides, splash pads and instructional swim lessons. Varies by location. Check with your local center for specific details.

ILLNESS & EXCLUSION

The YMCA of Greater Houston does not require child care staff to receive any additional immunizations in order to work with children. In order to ensure the health and safety of all, employees who work directly with children will follow required procedures to prevent the spread of exposure to disease:

- Wearing gloves when handling or cleaning body fluids, such as after wiping noses, mouths, or tending sores;
- Specifying that an employee with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits hand washing, such as casts, bandages, or braces, must not prepare food or have close contact with children in care;
- Removing gloves and washing hands immediately after each task to prevent cross-contamination to other children;
- Excluding the employee from direct care when the employee has signs of illness.

In an effort to maintain a healthy environment, the following guidelines must be followed very strictly.

- Children who become ill may not remain at school, nor will an ill child be admitted.
- If a child becomes ill during the day, a parent will be notified to pick up the child immediately.
- If we are unable to reach the parents, we will then begin calling the persons listed on your enrollment form.

For the safety of your child as well as the other children in his/her class, you may not bring a child to the program for one business day after having any of the following symptoms:

- A fever above 100 degrees
- Intestinal disturbance accompanied by diarrhea or vomiting
- Any undiagnosed rash
- Sore or discharging eyes or ears
- Profuse, colored nasal discharge
- A communicable disease

Children must be free of all above symptoms and show no signs of illness when returning to school. All children must be able to participate in their normal daily schedule (outdoor play included).

Please let us know as soon as possible if your child has a communicable illness or infection. This will allow us to notify the parents of children attending our program. Children with communicable conditions may not return to care without a note from their physician.

For the success of our programs please respect the health of the other children in our care by cooperating with us on these state mandated rules, Article 746.3601, 746.3609, and 746.3611 Texas Minimum Standards of Child Care Centers.