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# **BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES**

**Child Care/Preschool Handbook**



**Mercer County Family YMCA  
Children's School**

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# PROGRAM POLICIES

## 1. MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the YMCA Children's School is to provide an atmosphere that encourages social, mental, physical, creative, and spiritual growth and development in the child as a whole. By working in partnership with parents, the YMCA Children's School will strive to help children develop naturally to their highest potential through age appropriate activities, direct contact with play media, and nurturing adults.

## 2. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

The school advertises for children in the public media in order to make openings known to all. Children are admitted regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, or handicapping conditions.

## 3. HISTORY OF THE YMCA CHILDREN'S SCHOOL

In 1994, the Aledo Public Preschool and Mercer County YMCA Play School consolidated efforts to form the YMCA Children's School. By working as one, more services could be offered to the community. Both organizations felt that this consolidation was in the best interest of all parties involved, parents, teachers, administrators and most of all, the children.

In 1997, the YMCA Children's School began the process to expand their current program to offer full day childcare and before and after school care in addition to their preschool classes. The program became licensed in the fall of 1997 for a capacity of 50 children ages 2-12. The Children's School expanded their license to a capacity of 74 children in the fall of 1999 due to the increased interest in enrollment.

In 2003, the YMCA Children's School changed the School Age Program site. Before School Program is still held at the YMCA Children's School and the After School Program is held at Apollo Elementary School. We felt that this was more convenient for the children and a more age appropriate environment.

In 2004, the YMCA Children's School expanded their license to include 15 month old children.

In 2008, the YMCA Children's School began collaboration with the Regional Office of Education with the Preschool for All initiative.

## 4. ADMISSION

Preschool Classes: children who are 3 years old by September 1 may enroll in the 3 year old program. Children who are 4 years old by September 1 may enroll in the 4 year old program. **The preschool classes are designed for children who do not need extended child care hours. Our part time preschool program is incorporated in our full time preschool/child care program. The designated hours are 8:30-11:00 daily. Parents may choose any 3 days per week.**

Child Care Program: Children ages 15 months through 5 may enroll in the Child Care program for half days or 2 to 5 full days. A preschool curriculum will be

Provided for all age groups.

Classes are filled on a first come/first serve basis according to the date of enrollment set by the director. Vacancies that occur during the year will be filled from the waiting list.

A \$25 non-refundable enrollment fee will be due for the first child enrolled and \$10 fee for each additional child enrolled per family.

## 5. CALENDAR YEAR

The YMCA Children's School will be closed on the following holidays:

Thanksgiving	Memorial Day Observed
Christmas Eve (Early Closing)	Labor Day Observed
Christmas Day	July 4 <sup>th</sup>
New Years Eve (Early Closing)	Good Friday (Early Closing)
New Years Eve	

***Full regular tuition will be due each week, even on holiday weeks. Our School depends on regular weekly fees.***

Snow and bad weather days – the school will close when weather conditions make it impossible for staff to arrive safely or we feel the conditions are not safe to have children at the center. In such events, please listen to the local radio stations for an announcement (WRMJ). However, when in doubt, call first! You may call the school (309) 582-2503 or the YMCA (309) 582-5101. There will NOT be credit given for days that the center is closed.

## 6. TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is based on scheduled days. We offer full and part-time care, refer to fee sheet. Our policy on part-time childcare is that you may not trade a day that your child is scheduled to attend with a day they are not scheduled for. For example, if Your child is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday and is ill on Monday, you may not trade Monday for Wednesday and still pay for only two days. You may add a day, which means your child would be able to attend on Wednesday (with prior notice) and you would have to pay for three days that week. We must have 2 weeks notice prior to leaving the program.

**Full regular tuition is due on Monday, each week, even on holiday weeks, or When children are absent for any reason. Late charges may be applied if payment is not received on Monday. Our program depends on regular weekly fees.**

Vacation Rate – If your child will be absent from school for an entire week or your child becomes sick and does not attend Monday-Friday, you will only be charged ½ rate for that week. You must notify the classroom teacher or director 1-week in advance to qualify for the reduced rate.

It is the policy of the YMCA that no one be denied the benefit of membership or program participation due to financial limitations within the available resources of the Association. Low-income families may qualify for either DHS or DCFS and will need to fill out paperwork. If you wish to apply, please see Lisa (the director) or you may call 582-2503. All information is confidential.

## **7. PICK UP AND DELIVERY OF CHILDREN**

Children in the Child Care and School Age program may not arrive prior to 6:15 a.m. Children under the age of 2 may not arrive prior to 7:30 am and must be picked up by 5:00 pm. Children must never be left without direct transfer to a caregiver or parent. Therefore, children must always be brought to and picked up from the classroom. Parents must sign children in and out on the forms provided.

If a child should need to be picked up by someone other than those listed on the Consent form; the teacher will need to be notified by the parents. Either a note delivered by the parent or a phone call is acceptable. Please realize this rule is for the safety of the children.

The center closes at 6:00 p.m. sharp. All children must be picked up prior to 6:00. Late fees will be assessed if children are not picked up by 6:00 p.m.

## **8. ILLNESS**

Upon daily arrival to the program, children are given a brief visual health check. If any indications of illness are noted, the child's temperature will be taken and a decision will be made if the child should go home and not be in attendance in the center.

If a child becomes ill while in the program, we will contact the parent or designated caregiver. Parents are expected to pick their children up immediately after being informed of their illness. Children will be made comfortable until they can be picked up.

Children with any of the following symptoms must stay at home and may not return to the center until the child has been SYMPTOM FREE OR FEVER FREE FOR 24 HOURS or until a doctor diagnoses the child as non-contagious.

***This includes children who are sent home from the center due to the symptoms or if symptoms arise at home.***

- Any indication of childhood illnesses  
(Please refer to Communicable Disease Guidelines)
- Fever of 100 degrees or more
- Vomiting
- Undiagnosed rash
- Diarrhea
- Significant respiratory distress
- Extreme irritability and crying because they do not feel well

We may ask for a statement from your doctor, stating that it is okay for your child

to return to the center after an illness or disease.

It is very important that parents notify the Director if your child has a communicable disease. The parents will be notified at the onset of, or exposure to contagious illness at our center.

When there are symptoms of illness or indications that your child is not well enough for group activities, PLEASE DO NOT SEND THEM TO THE CENTER. These policies and precautions are to help ensure good health for all the children while in our care.

We will use the judgment of classroom teacher and director to determine if a child is too ill to remain in the center. Please understand and accept our health policies.

Full regular payments are due each week regardless of attendance. If a child misses One full week (M-F) of childcare due to illness, ½ rate will be charged if the parent talks with the child's teacher or the director about the circumstances.

## **9. INJURIES**

The Mercer County Family YMCA and Children's School and/or its staff are not responsible for accidents or expenses incurred due to accidents that may occur while children are attending the center or its activities. All injuries that occur at the center will be documented on an accident report and kept on file.

A parent or designated person will be contacted immediately if your child should be injured. If no one can be reached a decision will be made on the care that should be given by the staff of emergency service. Parents will need to sign an emergency authorization form which gives staff the proper authority to act on the behalf of the parents in granting permission for a child to receive emergency treatment.

## **10. MEDICATION**

Staff may administer medication only with completed and signed medication form from a child's parent or guardian. A new medication form must be filled out at the beginning of EACH week. Medication must be clearly labeled (in the original container) with the child's name, name of medication, dosage, and specific time of day to be given.

## **11. ABSENCES**

If your child will be absent, please call the Children's School at 582-2503. Full-time children will be charged regular weekly fee regardless of illness or other reason, unless your child is absent the full week. If you need to add an extra day, you will be charged extra for that day.

## **12. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Student records are open only to the particular child's teacher, the Director, Office Assistant, an authorized employee of the licensing agency, or the child's parent or legal guardian.

## **13. COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS**

Parents will be notified in advance if any pesticides are used at our Child Care Center. If it is necessary to use pesticides it will only be applied when the children are not in attendance.

Parents are informed of the activities of the Child Care and Preschool through periodic newsletters. The Parents Newsletter will include weekly theme topics, class activities, field trips.

A Parent Communication Center will be located in the hallway and at classroom entrances. Children will have individual cubbies to keep their artwork, notes, letters, and calendars. Please check this section EVERY DAY at pickup.

Parents or teachers may request a conference any time there is a special concern. The time will be decided by classroom teachers. Individual assessments and progress reports will be completed for all children in the Preschool Program.

Parents are encouraged to visit the school at any time. We suggest that you allow the teachers and children the opportunity to get to know each other before you visit. We have an "open-door" policy at our center.

If parents would like to attend the center to read a story, provide entertainment, or do an activity with the children please contact the classroom teacher to set up a time.

### **PARENT INVOLVMENT**

- Help create and organize school fundraisers
- Assist the teachers with school plays, graduation and other school activities
- Help in seeking donations to support the school
- Attend meetings throughout the year that offer parent education and support
- Visit your child's classroom
- Attend and participate in family nights held in conjunction

### **14. CHILDREN'S GUIDANCE**

Discipline will be handled by frequently rewarding good behavior and discouraging improper behavior. These are simple classroom rules that all children will be expected to follow. When necessary, the child will be removed from group activities for short periods of time (time out). Should it be necessary, the parent will be contacted.

If problems persist, the parents are asked to meet with the teachers to discuss what may be helpful in motivating their child to behave in an acceptable way.

The center reserves the right to dismiss any child, without two-week notice. We believe that not all situations or environments are ideal for all children. If the director deems it necessary to preserve the health and well being of a child or children in the center, a child can be dismissed immediately.

Class Rules:

- We** use good manners to teachers and friends
- We** are kind and gentle to teachers and friends
- We** use cooperation with teachers and friends

We use indoor voices inside and walking feet while indoors  
We encourage creative play with out violence  
We share classroom materials and toys  
We clean up after ourselves

## 15. DRESS

Please send your child to school in comfortable and washable clothes so that He/she will feel free to participate in all our activities. The children will be Participating in painting, gluing, and other exciting but not so neat activities. Please send a change of clothes, fully labeled with your child's name in a zip Lock bag. This is requested for all children in the Child Care Program ages 2-5 years old.

## 16. DAILY SCHEDULE

School Age Program

6:15-6:45 Arrival - Quiet activities available for School Age Children  
6:45 Depart to School Age room for activities and breakfast  
7:25 Prepare for school bus pick up

Child Care Program

**Toddler's hours open 7:15-5:15 daily only**

6:15-7:15 Arrival-Quiet activities offered such as coloring, library, puzzles etc  
7:15-7:45 Quiet activities in classrooms-some play centers open in classrooms  
7:45-8:30 Breakfast served in this time period in all classrooms  
Preschool Schedule is 8:30-11:00 in Dolphin and Bear Preschool Rooms  
Toddler and 2 Year old developmental activities will begin at 8:30 in the Turtle Classroom.  
11:00 Bathroom break and prepare for lunch  
11:20 Lunch served  
Gross motor time is scheduled between lunch and rest time for all classes.  
12:30-2:30 Rest time  
3:30 Snacks for each classroom  
3:30-6:00 Departure time-Outdoor or gym time schedule for all classes  
Open centers and music opportunity.  
5:00 Combine into one class if numbers allow for departure.

We close at 6:00, please make arrangements so your child will always be picked up before 6:00. Late pick up fees will be charged for any child who is not picked up by 6:00 p.m. *sharp*.

Snacks and juice will be requested for each classroom. We will use these as a midmorning supplement for children. (Please be sure to send 100% juice when sending juice.) Nutritious snacks are encouraged, however we realize birthdays and celebrations deserve a special snack. **All snacks must be store bought, prepackaged only, even for birthdays.** The only exception to this is for events or programs - after school hours. We are able to have homemade treats for special events and programs.

## **17. REST TIME**

All children in the child care programs will rest for a period of time in the afternoon. Children who are not nappers will be offered quiet activities after they have rested for a short period of time. Teachers may ask for any special information about our child's napping habits and needs. Please bring a small pillow and blanket for your child to use at rest time (take home and wash on Fridays please.)

## **18. FIELD TRIPS**

Johannes Bus service is contracted for some field trip during the year. On occasion parent volunteers are requested to drive on field trips. One seat belt per child will be required in each car. Sign up for field trips will be posted in your child's classrooms. Any parent who volunteers to help transport children must provide the center with a copy of their Driver's License and Insurance Card.

## **19. SPECIAL EVENTS**

Many special events will be held each year. Evening parent programs, Family Nights, fundraisers, celebrations and more will be scheduled. We hope parents will be part of these events and help us bond home with school and childcare. Children will gain so many positive feelings when they see families working together.

Fundraisers are necessary to operate our program and maintain a high level of quality care. We encourage all families, who are able, to help with these events during the year. We have several of these throughout the year. Please participate in the ones you would like.

## **20. SUPPLIES**

All children need a book bag. Teachers may send a list of items needed home for parents to donate if they wish. There will also be items posted in the hallway of classroom needs. Parents may choose to donate items if they wish.

## **21. BITING POLICY**

If a child in our center is having a stage where they are biting **frequently** or if they bite severely 3 times in a short period of time, they may need to be taken out of our center for a period of 2-4 weeks. This will be at the discretion of the classroom teachers and director. Research has found that breaking the pattern with new environments is helpful. The child may return after the time period and the behavior will again be monitored.