



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# LEARN GROW THRIVE

## A GUIDE TO CHILD CARE

2023-2024 SY



# WELCOME

Dear Families,

Thank you for enrolling your child at the Y where we believe that each child is a special and unique individual. Our early learning programs focus on holistically fostering the physical, social and emotional development of kids of all ages, from infants to school-age children. Kids will learn more about their world, develop healthy relationships with adults and other kids, build self-reliance, and more – all in a safe, nurturing environment.

Y childcare programs like ours, offer high quality care for up to 40,000 children nationwide allowing families to work knowing that their children are in good hands. I am proud to mention that our Y is recognized by Grow NJ Kids, New Jersey's Quality Rating Improvement System, and has been recognized as an exemplary provider for our emergency child care services provided to first responders during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Our success enables us to provide the safest of care while still empowering children to meet their full potential. You can rest assured knowing that the safety of your child remains our top priority.

Once again, thank you for placing your trust in us. Welcome to the Metro Y family!

Sincerely,



Richard K. Gorab, President & CEO  
Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges

## MISSION STATEMENT

**Strengthen community through Youth Development, Health Living, and Social Responsibility.**

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## WHAT MAKES A HIGH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING CENTER

- Frequent, positive, and warm interactions among teachers and children
- Planned learning activities appropriate to children's age and development
- Specially trained teachers and administrators
- Ongoing professional development
- Adult/child ratios that allow individual attention for children and increased safety
- Varied age-appropriate materials
- Respect for cultural diversity
- A healthy and safe environment for adults and children
- Inclusive environments
- Consistent communication with parents who are welcome visitors at all times
- Effective administration
- Ongoing evaluation

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## HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD GET READY FOR THE FIRST DAY

The first day of school is very exciting. Your center director will inform you of any specific opportunities to foster a smooth transition from home to school. We encourage you to have positive conversations about the beginning of school with your child leading up to your child's first day. Also, as the first day approaches, you will have the opportunity to connect with your child's teacher to discuss the best ways to provide a smooth transition.

## DROP-OFF/ARRIVAL AT THE CENTER

- Please be sure to escort your child to the designated drop off location and do not let your child out of the car unattended.
- Review center specific drop off procedures for your child's location.
- If your child will be absent or will arrive after 9:30am, please notify the center. Please discuss you family's drop off schedule with your child's teacher or center management.
- Vehicle exhaust is hazardous to human health especially children. Per NJ State law, no idling beyond three minutes in unattended vehicles.

## PICK-UP/POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

- Children are never permitted to leave the center with unauthorized persons. Your child will only be released to the persons that you have authorized in InCare, the YMCA's electronic registration form system.
- Persons picking up your child will be asked to present a government issued photo identification (i.e. driver's license, passport).
- Please verify that these individuals will be available to come for your child when you cannot and also remind them to bring a photo I.D. when picking up.
- Be sure to update your authorized list/emergency contacts in the InCare system including names and phone numbers whenever a change occurs. In the event of an emergency or unexpected situation and you need to add someone to your authorized pickup list, please contact your center administrator.
- The parking lot is often crowded. Please take your child by the hand until you reach your car.
- For everyone's safety, loitering outside the center is not permitted at pick-up and drop-off.
- If a parent or authorized person appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired while picking up, we will not release the child.

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## CENTER HOURS

Operating hours may change and vary by location. Operating hours are currently 8:30 am – 5:30 pm. Please check with center management to confirm your center's hours. Please be sure to pick up your child by the scheduled pick up time. Late pick-ups will incur a fee of \$15 for every 15 minutes after closing time. Please be sure to notify the center if you are expecting to be late.

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## CENTER CLOSINGS

Safety of your family and our staff is always our top priority. Your center may close during extreme weather conditions or when mandated by the State or local authorities. In the event of an emergency closing, delayed opening, or early closing, announcements will be made via email, as well as on our website and Facebook page.

Centers will be closed for holidays and teachers training on the following days:

- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (Thursday & Friday)
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve & New Year's Day
- Teacher Training Days including:
  - August 31, 2023 - September 1, 2023
  - November 10, 2023
  - April 12, 2024

Any changes to the above dates will be communicated by your center administrator.

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## OUR PHILOSOPHY & APPROACH TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Our philosophy is based on sound principles of child development. Before a child enrolls, these matters will be fully discussed so you can feel confident that you've made the right choice for your child.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

A consistent daily schedule and routines help children feel comfortable in their environment. Daily schedules will include a variety of age-appropriate hands-on learning activities, free choice, handwashing, meals/snack, outdoor activities, and enrichment. For infants, parents will receive a daily sheet via the Tadpoles app that indicates the activities for the day, as well as changing and feeding times.

## COMMUNICATION

Building and maintaining a strong home-to-school connection and keeping you involved in your child's day-to-day learning experiences is of the utmost priority. Your center may utilize the Tadpoles app, and/or other methods such as daily sheets, emails, phone calls, parent meetings, and parent/teacher conferences, to provide you with daily updates on your child's activities. Please check with your center administrator to see if Tadpoles is available at your center. Click here to learn more: [TADPOLES WELCOME LETTER](#).

## FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS

We want to know about your experience! Please be sure to participate in the satisfaction surveys that are distributed throughout the year. This is our way of gauging your satisfaction and learning ways to improve our programs and services. If you need to issue a concern, complaint, or grievance, please notify your center/program administrator immediately. There are several options for you to let us know about your concerns including in person, by phone, or by email. Confidentiality is critical to help ensure all concerns and complaints are reviewed and (as appropriate) investigated objectively and fairly to everyone involved. Please know that all concerns and complaints are important to us; however, depending on the nature and complexity of the issue, it may take time to evaluate the concern. Participants may also issue feedback, concerns, or complaints by speaking directly with a staff member or administrator.

## **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

We maintain an open door policy. Parents/legal guardians may stop in to visit their child's classroom at any time. We do ask that you provide the center administration with notification prior to arriving at the center, so that we may best accommodate your visit.

## **DIVERSITY**

The Y is made up of people of all ages and from different walks of life working side-by-side to strengthen communities. Together we work to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender identity, ideology, income level, national origin, race or sexual orientation has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Our core values are caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility – they are the foundation of the Y and guide everything we do.

Every early childhood classroom plays an important role in increasing awareness and acceptance of diversity. You will find that our materials and activities reflect a variety of races, religions, cultures, abilities, and genders. We encourage parents/caregivers to share information about their culture, language, and country of origin for all to learn.

## **LITERACY DEVELOPMENT**

Whether it is a caregiver softly singing a lullaby to a sleepy baby, a classroom of toddlers excitedly looking at family photos, or a teacher reading a popular book at story time, language and literacy are interwoven into learning and routine activities at every age.

## **ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS**

A variety of enrichment programs may be available including music and movement, theatrical arts, STEAM, physical education, and swim lessons. Additional fees may apply. Please speak with your center administrator for additional information.

## **SCREEN TIME**

Our programs provide an activity-focused, hands-on early learning environment. We believe children learn best through active participation, hands-on experiences, interactive conversations, and exploration. Our programs follow the recommendations established by the American Academy of Pediatrics including no screen time for children 0 – 18 months and limited to one hour or less per day for older children. Occasionally, children may utilize technology such as computers and iPads to participate in learning activities, or participate virtual field trips.

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION**

The Y is committed to supporting healthy living by adopting a set of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards. Based, in part, on years of research with key partners, the HEPA standards will build a healthier future for our children by creating environments rich in opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity.

Our early childhood programs follow HEPA guidelines that develop healthy habits including:

- Access to healthy beverages
- Eliminating fried foods and providing healthier options for meals and snacks
- Providing information and materials focused on healthy eating and physical activity
- Supporting exclusive breastfeeding
- Staff modeling healthy eating behaviors
- Providing children with opportunities for moderate and vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day for full day programs and 30 minutes for half-day programs
- Providing daily opportunities for infants to explore their indoor and outdoor environments under adult supervision; providing daily tummy time
- Limiting screen time

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Opportunities for children to participate in social responsibility projects will be available throughout the year. Children may participate in a trike-a-thon to raise money for a cause or contribute to a holiday coat and mitten drive, all while learning the importance of helping others.

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## **CURRICULUM**

### **THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM®**

The Creative Curriculum® is a play-based learning curriculum that focuses on interest areas and fosters creativity in both children and teachers. Being creative means thinking of new ideas, obtaining information by asking questions, and learning through trial and error.

Infant and toddler classrooms will follow The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, which emphasizes the importance of the child/caregiver relationship. The Creative Curriculum® emphasizes a classroom environment filled with responsive daily routines and meaningful, individualized experiences that nurture your child's learning and development.

The routines will sound familiar to you: hellos and good-byes, diapering and toileting, eating and mealtimes, sleeping and nap time, and getting dressed. These routines are the foundation of your child's day; they are also the foundation of learning. The consistent and nurturing interactions that children experience during everyday activities build trust and allow them to learn through experiencing the world around them.

In addition to daily routines, The Creative Curriculum® will support your child's teacher every day as they engage your child in meaningful experiences, such as playing with toys, enjoying books and stories, creating art, and going outdoors. In each of these experiences, teachers observe what children do and select materials that match their growing abilities and interests.

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool is based on 38 objectives for development and learning that focus on all the areas that are most important for school success: social-emotional, cognitive, math, literacy, physical, language, social studies, science and technology, and the arts. These objectives are built into every activity that happens in the classroom, which means that all day long, the teacher is helping your child build skills and knowledge in these important areas.

In The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, learning happens through studies. Studies, which span several weeks, are in-depth, project-based investigations of topics that are part of your child's everyday life. They feature topics such as trees, buildings, clothes, and balls. In a study, children raise questions about the topic and find answers by exploring, experimenting, and investigating in a hands-on way—through activities that take place in the classroom and outdoors.

Importantly, teachers will follow the lead of the children and pursue the questions and investigations within each study that are most interesting to the children in their classroom, thus promoting a love of learning. Teachers will also continue to have the freedom to add their own "handprint" when lesson planning, utilizing their personal experience and passions to shape the studies.

### **HARMONY SEL**

Harmony SEL is a social and emotional learning program for Pre-K students that fosters knowledge, skills, and attitudes boys and girls need to develop healthy identities, create meaningful relationships, and engage productively by providing SEL learning resources, tools, and strategies.

Lessons include topics such as diversity and inclusion, empathy and critical thinking, communication, problem solving, and peer relationships. Children work together to set class goals that reflect how they want to interact and be treating by one another.

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## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline at our YMCA is looked at as a learning experience. Children of all ages need to explore and test their curiosities. Exploration is imperative to the learning process and is encouraged within our center in a safe environment under the guidance of our teachers. As a child explores, they experience many trials and errors before a concept is understood or learned. Our discipline policy flows from this understanding. Just as a child is not expected to learn a color the first time it is experienced, they too are not expected to learn appropriate behavior without constant modeling and a lot of positive reinforcement.

The goal of our YMCA staff is to work cooperatively with the children and parents to help children develop self-regulation. We hope to help children become increasingly independent. We want children to feel good about themselves and to learn about their needs, along with those of other people. We want children to learn to self-regulate emotions, to see the possible consequences of their actions and to accept alternate behaviors.

We use a combination of the following steps to ensure positive discipline:

- Make adjustments to the classroom environment to avoid possible problems.
- Redirect the child to another activity providing positive and constructive direction.
- Use “do” statements instead of “don’t” statements.
- Recognize that occasional inappropriate behavior is best ignored.
- Encourage the child to consider alternate solutions and the possible effects of choosing those alternatives.
- Determine why the issue has occurred and what can be done to avoid it next time.
- Use time away from the group to help an individual child calm down. When the child is calm, we will talk about the issue with the child and work toward resolution.
- Recognize and acknowledge positive behavior.
- Involve the child in decision making when possible.
- In a situation where a child may physically harm themselves, another child, or adult, we will use restraint holding the child with sufficient strength to protect the child and others until the situation is under control.
- Communicate with the parent/caregiver about the child’s behavior to gain insight and discuss effective strategies to improve behavior.
- Under no circumstances shall disciplining a child involve hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating, or frightening treatment, unsupervised isolation withholding of emotional responses or stimulation, enforced silence for long periods of time, association of a child’s behavior with rest, toileting or food or any form of child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

If there is an ongoing problem with the child, both teacher and director will meet with the parents/guardians to discuss the problem. Together we will come up with a plan or method of handling the particular situation. We strive to keep an open communication with the parents/guardians concerning all facets of their child’s development.

If a serious situation occurs, the child may be asked to leave the center for the remainder of the day, or depending on the circumstances, the child may be suspended for a specific period of time. If there are repeated serious episodes of inappropriate behavior, the child may be asked to leave the program entirely.

We know that consistency in all areas of a young child’s day is important at home and at school. Parents/guardians are welcome to discuss disciplinary issues with their child’s teacher.

## **GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE**

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult. Methods of positive discipline shall be consistent with the age and developmental needs of the children and lead to the ability to develop and maintain self-control. Please review the [INFORMATION TO PARENTS](#) also accessible in InCare.

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## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Safety is our primary concern. Our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility are part of everything we do. Our policies and procedures include our child abuse prevention policy, staff and volunteer expectations, and responding to allegations of abuse. We place great value on creating the most child safe environment possible. For additional information regarding our child abuse prevention policies, procedures and additional resources, please visit [www.metroymcas.org/main/child-abuse-prevention/](http://www.metroymcas.org/main/child-abuse-prevention/).

## NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER SCREENING

We conduct checks through the National Sex Offender Registry on all adult (18 years and older) members and visitors through a web-based platform that will notify us instantly if a sex offender is attempting to enter the building. Anyone with a sex offender record, including visitors, vendors, contractors, family members/friends, and staff, will not be allowed access to the building and/or children in our care.

## PRAESIDIUM ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Y partners with Praesidium, the nation's leading child protection consulting organization, to ensure our approach to child protection ensures the highest level of protection for your child. Praesidium's assessment is an internal assessment tool that allows us to develop strategies to improve our policies, procedures, and program environment to prevent child sexual abuse. The Metro YMCA Child Protection Team is responsible to conducting the assessment every two years, as well as implementing ongoing action plans. For more information, visit [PRAESIDIUMINC.COM](http://PRAESIDIUMINC.COM).

## STEPS TO PROTECTING CHILDREN

1. Learn the facts of child sexual abuse. Understand the risks. Realities, not trusts, should influence your decisions regarding children.
2. Minimize opportunity. If you eliminate or reduce one-adult/one-child situations, you'll dramatically lower the risk of sexual abuse for children.
3. Talk about it. Children often keep abuse secret, but barriers can be broken down by talking openly about it.
4. Stay alert. Don't expect obvious signs when a child is being sexually abused.
5. Make a plan. Learn where to go, whom to call and how to react.
6. Act on suspicions. The future well-being of a child is at stake.
7. Get involved. Volunteer and financially support organizations that fight the tragedy of child sexual abuse.

Please educate your children about appropriate and inappropriate physical, verbal and emotional contact. Make sure that your child knows that if they experience any inappropriate actions at our Y (or elsewhere), that they should alert you immediately.

If you see warning signs from your child or adult, or you hear about something that sounds like abuse, report it immediately. If your child tells you about sexual abuse or inappropriate behavior, here's how to react. Your response plays a big role in how your child understands abuse and how he/she recovers.

1. Stay calm.
2. Comfort your child.
3. Listen carefully.
4. Ask for examples.
5. Do not threaten or criticize the person your child is accusing.

If what you learn from your child or if what you've observed or overheard at practice sounds like abuse, call the CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE at **877.NJ.Abuse (877.652.2873)** or the police. If what you learn from your child, or if what you've observed or overheard at practice, sounds like a boundary violation, suspicious or inappropriate behavior, or a policy violation in an organization, share your concerns with the individual employee, supervisor, or the person in charge of your organization. Be sure to follow up with both your child and the adult you've talked to.



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## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

As a character development, community building, nonprofit organization, the Y acknowledges and pledges its responsibility to act and operate in a framework of ethical behavior.

## **HATE SPEECH POLICY**

The Metro YMCA of the Oranges denounces the use of words or images to harass individuals or groups based on gender, gender expression, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of identity. Hate speech of this nature is contrary to our mission statement, diversity statement, and core values. Individuals determined to have participated in such harassment, may be subject to consequences including suspension and expulsion.

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## **CHILD AGE GROUPING**

### **INFANTS**

Our nurturing caregivers understand the importance of the first year. Infants are assigned to a primary caregiver to encourage trust and child/adult bonding. Teachers use written communication to ensure that parents have a clear sense of their child's day at our center. A typical day will include activities such as water play, finger plays, songs, and the encouragement of gross motor development.

### **TODDLERS**

The toddler age is a time of independence and emerging self-image. Our caregivers spend time with children working on emotional development, fine and gross motor skills, language acquisitions, and self-help skills such as feeding and dressing themselves. Throughout the year, toilet training is introduced, but never forced. Your child will have many special moments that the teachers will share with you.

### **PRESCHOOL**

Our qualified caregivers guide our preschoolers through a structured program. The preschool classrooms are set up in learning centers that aid in preparations for kindergarten. These centers include a wide variety of experiences and materials including STEAM, literacy, language arts, blocks, water, sand tables, and dramatic play. There is time for children to circulate among the learning centers, as well as time to participate in special small group activities that are planned by the staff.

### **RATIOS**

Our teacher-to-child ratios meet or exceed state mandates in all child age groups, allowing us to provide the best possible supervision and care for each child.

### **TOILET TRAINING**

It is important that staff and parents work together to help the child achieve independent toileting. Toilet training is a process that children will experience in different ways. Staff and parents should adopt a simple and consistent routine with the child. There will be accidents at times, so we recommend sending your child with extra clothes including underwear, socks, and shoes. Please allow time and be patient.

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## **BITING AT THE CHILD CARE CENTER**

### **WHY DOES ONE CHILD BITE WHILE ANOTHER CHILD DOES NOT?**

Biting is a very common behavior among toddlers. There are a number of possible reasons why children under age three bite. Sometimes we think we have a good idea about what is causing the biting, but most of the time it is hard to guess what is going on inside the child's head. Some of the most commonly suggested causes of biting:

- **Teething:** When teeth are coming through, applying pressure to the gums is comforting and infants will use anything available to bite. Obviously, if this is a likely cause, then a teething ring or objects to bite will lessen the infant's need to bite other people.
- **Excitement and over-stimulation:** When some very young children are excited, even happily so, they may behave in an out-of-control fashion.

- Impulsiveness and lack of self-control: Infants sometimes bite simply because there is something there to bite. This biting is not intentional in any way, but just a way of exploring the world.
- Making an impact: Young children like to make things happen, and the reaction when someone is bitten is usually pretty dramatic.
- Frustration: Too many challenges, too many demands, too many wants, too little space, and too many obstacles may lead a child to bite, especially before they have the capability to express frustration through using language.

Teachers in child care are trained to do the following to try to minimize the biting behavior:

- Let the child know in words and manner that biting is unacceptable.
- Remove the biting child from the situation and focus caring attention on the bitten child.
- Examine the context in which the biting occurred and look for patterns. Was it crowded? Too few toys? Too little to do? Too much waiting? Is the biting child getting the attention and care he/she deserves at all times?
- Change the environment, routines, or activities if necessary.
- Work with the biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in a more appropriate manner, including using words if the child is capable.
- Observe a child who is a short-term chronic biter to get an idea about when he or she is likely to bite. Some children, for example, may bite not when they are angry or frustrated, but when they are very excited.
- Identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
- Don't casually attribute willfulness or maliciousness. Infants explore anything that interests them with the mouth, and that includes other bodies.
- If biting continues, continue to observe the group closely. Apply additional resources as necessary to shadow the child.

### **WHAT CAN A PARENT DO IF THEIR CHILD BEGINS TO BITE?**

Possibly removing significant stresses on the child at home, such as a schedule that is too demanding or difficult transitions, will make it easier for a child to handle times of stress that do arise. If the child bites other children in your presence, take the same steps suggested above. Immediately after the biting occurs, look for ways to adapt the environment to prevent biting in the future. If the child is biting at the child care center, there is very little you can do other than keep in close communication with the child's teachers. Fortunately, biting is a stage that passes.

### **WHAT IF YOUR CHILD IS BITTEN?**

Seeing a bite mark on your child is very difficult to handle, and even worse, infant and toddler bites are often on the face. All of our parental primal instincts as our child's protector come into play. It is natural to be upset, but try to keep in mind that it is a consequence of the group situation and not really the fault of the child, the family, or the program. Your child might as easily have been the biter. We will not release the name of the biting child for this reason.

### **WE ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING THE PROGRAM WORK FOR EVERY CHILD.**

Every biting situation is different and poses unique challenges. We will take extraordinary measures to help a child overcome the "biting habit". There is no clear line to indicate when program adaptations have failed, the program will never meet the child's needs, and the family needs to find another child care arrangement. The good news is that all biting children grow out of it, most often in their twos. This happens to the great relief of all: the biting child, the other children and their parents, the staff, and most of all, the biting child's family.

Need more information on what to do if your child bites? Visit [WWW.ZEROTOTHREE.ORG](http://WWW.ZEROTOTHREE.ORG) for suggestions and additional resources.

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## FAILURE TO PICK UP POLICY

If the parent or person authorized by the parents fails to pick up a child by the time of the center's closing, the following procedures will be followed:

- The child will be supervised at all times.
- Staff members will attempt to contact parents and persons authorized by the parent for pick up and emergency contacts.
- If staff is unable to arrange for the release of the child within one hour past the center's closing time, the staff member will call the Division of Child Protection & Permanency 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

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## ENROLLMENT AND PAYMENTS

Your child's enrollment will be confirmed by the center administrator. You will be assigned a unique link to register online and submit your registration fee. Once you receive the link, click "forgot your password" and follow the prompts to create a new password. Your login will be the email address you provided during the enrollment process.

**Enrollment and tuition is annual.** Your annual tuition will be charged in weekly installments that will begin the Sunday prior to your child's confirmed start date. Payments will be automatically charged every Sunday to the authorized credit/debit card or checking account you provided during registration. Changes to your child's schedule must be requested in writing two weeks in advance. Any change is subject to the approval of the center administrator. Partial week schedules are fixed. Switching of days due to illness or closures is not permitted. We are not able to make up days due to absence or vacation. Cancellations may be requested with 30 day written notice. Tuition will not be prorated for any reason.

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## LEAVE OF ABSENCE & VACATION POLICY

Enrollment is ongoing. Any leave of absence is subject to termination of enrollment. If you plan to return, you will be required to reregister and pay the registration fee. This includes a leave of absence for any reason including vacation and summer breaks. Your child will be placed on a wait list if enrollment is full to capacity. We will not hold slots during the summer months.

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## CHILD HEALTH & WELLBEING

The following guidelines are required by the NJ Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing:

A physical examination must be completed before a child is allowed to participate in our program. We must have an up-to-date immunization record on file for your child. Any additional immunizations must be added to your child's file. Each child must have a health examination by a licensed physician within:

- **six months prior to admission for children up to 2 ½ years or**
- **one year prior to admission for children over 2 ½ years**

## ILLNESS

The Metro Y is committed to ensuring the safety and health of your child, as well as our employees.

In the event that your child is ill and will be absent, please notify the center as soon as possible. If your child develops symptoms while at the center, we will contact you to request that you pick up your child immediately, and follow the guidelines related to your child's condition.

Your child may return once they have been symptom free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication, or with a doctor's note stating the child is well enough to participate in activities and does not pose a health risk to others:

- Fever of 100° F or higher
- Two occurrences of diarrhea
- Occurrences of vomiting
- Red/inflamed eyes with discharge

- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Undiagnosed skin rashes with fever, behavior change, or increasing tenderness or open blisters
- Difficult and/or rapid breathing or severe coughing
- Severe pain or discomfort, and/or too ill to participate in activities

If your child is suspected to have lice, we will ask that you pick your child up immediately and have him/her treated. Your child may return when free of lice and live nits.

### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

Medication will be administered to your child only under the following circumstances:

- The physician prescribed dosage schedule does not allow the parent to administer the medication to the child before or after child care.
- Medication is in its original container.
- The parent has provided written permission to administer medication.

One staff person will administer the medication while another observes. Both staff persons will sign the Medication Log.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Per NJ executive order, please notify the center immediately if your child contracts a communicable disease, so we can take the necessary steps and inform the Health Department if necessary. Health notices will be communicated to families when we have been notified that a child in that classroom has a suspected or diagnosed communicable disease. Notifications may be provided to the classroom or entire center depending on the case and guidance provided by the Health Department. Please follow the guidelines related to the specific illness as stated on the health notice. The identity of children with an illness or communicable disease will not be provided for privacy reasons.

### **INJURIES**

If a minor injury occurs during the day, an Ouch Report or the State of NJ Incident Report will be filled out and given to the parent. If a more serious injury occurs, then the parent will be notified by telephone. If the injury requires medical attention, then the parent will be asked to come to the center immediately to pick up the child. Staff members cannot take a child to the hospital or doctor in their own vehicles.

In a medical emergency, the proper authorities will be called to transfer the child to the local hospital. The parents will be called immediately. If the staff is unable to reach a parent, the next person on the family's emergency contact list will be called. A staff person will accompany emergency personnel and will stay with the child until a parent or an authorized emergency contact arrives. The permission-to-treat form that is completed during registration will be brought to the hospital by the staff person.

### **HOME LANGUAGE POLICY**

We make every effort to communicate with children and families whose primary language is not English. Parents are asked to share words in their home language with their child's teacher to help make their child feel more comfortable in the classroom. Teachers will attempt to label some of the classroom materials in the home language of the students. Parents are also encouraged to share books or other materials in their home language with the class.

### **NUT SAFE POLICY**

To promote a safe environment for all students, the YMCA Child Care Centers implemented a "Nut Safe" policy because so many children have life threatening allergies. This is a strategy to educate parents and staff about reducing the risk of exposure to life threatening foods. It is important to note that the safety of children with severe reactions requires the cooperation of the entire community. Please read carefully so that you fully understand the guidelines that will be in place.

1. All snacks provided by the YMCA will be free of peanuts/nuts.
2. Children must refrain from bringing in to school ANY products that contain peanuts/nuts. This includes all snacks as well as lunch items.
3. If a lunchbox is found to have peanut or nut products, those items will be removed and an alternative nut-free item provided.
4. We do not allow food sharing at school unless it is a special occasion (holiday parties, fruit and veggie sharing days, and other special events). We do check ingredient lists during these events to eliminate any possible reactions.
5. Any baked items brought in for celebrations should be nut-free, or should be store bought with the ingredient label intact.

Please read ingredient labels of all snacks, including those on this list, to ensure that it does not contain any nuts at all or any of the following: peanuts/nuts, peanut/nut butter, peanut oil, peanut/nut flour, peanut/nut meal, or any variety of the statements, "contains peanuts" and "may contain traces of peanuts/nuts".

#### **HELPFUL PEANUT ALLERGY INFO:**

(<http://www.foodallergy.org/page/peanut-allergy>)

Some Unexpected Sources of Peanut:

- Sauces such as pesto (pine nuts), salad dressing, gravy and salad dressing
- Some vegetarian food products, especially those advertised as meat substitutes
- Potato pancakes
- Glazes and marinades

**Your support and understanding of this policy is greatly appreciated!**

#### **EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**

The mental, emotional, social, and developmental health of your children is just as important to us as their physical health. We strongly encourage parents and guardians to share mental/emotional/developmental needs and/or existing management plans with the Center Director so that we can partner with you to provide the best care possible for your child(ren).

To support mental, emotional, and social development, we utilize the [HARMONY SEL](#) curriculum. Harmony SEL is a social emotional learning curriculum for pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade intended to foster knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to develop healthy identities, create meaningful relationships, and engage productively with others. Lessons include topics such as diversity and inclusion, empathy and critical thinking, communication, problem solving, and peer relationships.

To support the mental and emotional health of your children, select staff are trained and certified by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing in [YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID](#). This training equips staff to recognize when youth and adolescents aged 12 – 18 may be struggling with a mental or emotional challenge, relate to that challenge, and offer support and referral to services if needed/desired.

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#### **STAFF/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

The Y encourages a positive and cooperative relationship between families and staff. This relationship is always professional, and must not extend beyond the classroom or the center. As per our Child Protection Policy, staff members are prohibited from babysitting any child that actively attends or participates in a Metro YMCA program including child care, or is an active member of the Metro YMCA of the Oranges. Please speak with your center administrator if you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy.

#### **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Our programs are strengthened by active family involvement. The Y maintains an open door policy, meaning that any parent or guardian can visit the center and their child's class at any time. In addition to visiting the center,

there are a number of ways that parents can become involved such as volunteering for special events and participating in your center's family association. Please speak with your center administrator for additional information.

### **FAMILY EVENTS**

Events may be offered throughout the year so that parents, children, and staff can gather socially. These may include international events, carnivals, picnics, and family nights. All caregivers are encouraged to participate in family activities and events. Events will be communicated through email and social media.

### **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Families will have the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher to discuss and review their child's progress throughout the year. An assessment of your child's progress will be reviewed and you will have the opportunity to engage and ask questions about your child's development. While parent teacher conferences are more formal opportunities to discuss your child's experiences, parents are welcome to ask for a conference at any time.

### **Y FOR ALL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Y is a leading 501c3 nonprofit organization for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Through funds raised from the Annual Campaign and special events, we are able to provide financial assistance to qualifying individuals and families so that everyone has a chance to learn, grow and thrive at the Y. If you or your family would like more information about financial assistance or to make a donation, please contact your center administrator.

Our policy does not allow us to accept donations in the form of used toys, books, furniture, and/or equipment. Please visit [FAMILYHOOD CENTRAL](#) for information on other organizations that may accept these types of donations.