



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



A GUIDE TO CHILD CARE

METROPOLITAN YMCA OF THE ORANGES





WELCOME



At the Y, we believe that each child is a special and unique individual. We base our curriculum on our knowledge of the way in which young children learn best. Our classroom and activities are designed to meet the needs of the whole child. Our hands-on, experience based approach promotes comprehensive child development and also fosters a love of learning.

Dear Families,

Thank you for enrolling your child in our Early Childhood Learning Center. We appreciate the important trust you have placed in us.

Our Early Childhood Learning Center programs are an excellent example of how our Y strengthens the foundation of community through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

When COVID-19 hit, shutting schools and increasing the demand for our frontline workers, Y child care programs like ours responded by offering safe, quality care for up to 40,000 children nationwide, so that parents could still go to work and serve their communities. We've been fortunate to provide Emergency Child Care to more than 80 kids in two of our five child care centers within the Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges.

Our successful experience in providing Emergency Child Care has enabled us to provide a safe and healthy environment under new guidelines, while still empowering children to meet their full potential.

Once again, we welcome you to our growing Y family. We look forward to watching your child grow and thrive at the Y.

Sincerely,

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

The Y: We are for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

MISSION STATEMENT

Strengthen community through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility

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 site directors;
- Ongoing professional development;
- Adult/child ratios that allow individual attention for children;
- 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; and
- Ongoing systematic evaluation.

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

The first day of school is very exciting. Check with your director about center specific opportunities to foster a smooth transition from home to school. We encourage families to have pleasant and positive conversations about the beginning of school with their child.

As the first day of school approaches discuss the best ways to provide a smooth transition from home to school with your child's teacher.

Arrival at the Center

- For safety's sake, do not let your child out of the car unattended.
- Vehicle exhaust is hazardous to human health especially for children. Per NJ State law no idling beyond 3 minutes in unattended vehicles.
- Review center specific drop off procedures for your child's location.
- If your child will be absent, or will arrive after 9am, please notify the teacher. Please discuss your families drop off schedule with your child's teacher.

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 on InCare, the YMCA's electronic data solution.
- We will ask for photo verification of persons picking up your child.
- Please verify that these individuals will be available to come for your child when you cannot.
- In InCare, parents must update telephone numbers, alternate pick up and emergency contact information whenever a change occurs.
- **The parking lot is often quite 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 pickup and drop-off.**

Important Note: If a staff member deems that the parent(s) or authorized person(s) picking up their child appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired, we will not release the child.

CENTER HOURS

The Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges Child Care Centers have slightly different schedules:

East Orange Y:	7am-3pm follows the EO BOE schedule	Wayne Y:	7:30am-6:30pm
Peanut Shell:	7am-6pm	Greater Bergen County Y:	8am-5pm
South Mountain Y:	8:30am-5:30pm		

All late picks will incur a late pick up fee of \$15 for each 15 minute increment. The objective of this rule is not punitive; it is upsetting for children to wait for a late parent and staff also have families who need them. Your cooperation in respecting this rule is greatly appreciated.

CENTER CLOSINGS

Closing Policy

The Y child care centers close only during extreme conditions or when mandated by the State, such as in the case of a state of emergency or pandemic. In the event that the Y must close for an emergency, delayed opening, or close early, an announcement will be made on our website, Facebook page and via email.

Center closings

The Y strives to meet the needs of working parents by limiting the number of closings. Below is a list of our center closings and early closures:

(For Wayne closings please contact the branch at 973-595-0100)

**New Year's Day • Memorial Day • Independence Day • Teacher Training Days • Labor Day • Thanksgiving Day
Friday after Thanksgiving (except Greater Bergen County Y) • Christmas Day**

Early closings - 3pm: Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The YMCA's Early Childhood Learning Center philosophy and curriculum are based on sound principles of child development. Before a child enrolls, these matters will be fully discussed so that the family can make the right choice for the child.

Diversity

The Y is made up of people of all ages and from every walk 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, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race or sexual orientation has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity. Our core values are caring, honesty, respect and responsibility—they guide everything we do.

We encourage parents to share information about their culture, language, and country of origin. 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.

Literacy Development

Whether it is a caregiver softly singing a lullaby to a sleepy baby, a classroom of two-year-olds 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, every day.

Enrichment Programs – Are Currently suspended due to the pandemic. In the future we hope to offer again:

Included in the curriculum at the West Essex & Greater Bergen Y are swim and gym classes. Our Wayne Y program includes swim, gym, music & movement and theatrical arts programming.

At some locations, a variety of enrichment classes are available for an additional fee. For information on our enrichment programs contact your director.

Screen Time

Our YMCA programs provide an activity focused early learning environment. We believe children learn best through active participation, hands-on experiences, interactive conversation and exploration. Our programs follow the recommendations established by the American Academy of Pediatrics. When field trips are not available we offer virtual field trips with parental permission.

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, he/she experiences many trials and errors before a concept is understood or learned. Our center's 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 of all ages 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.

1. We will change the environment eliminating possible problems.
2. We will redirect the child to another activity before the behavior becomes a problem - positive and constructive direction.
3. We will use "do's" instead of "don'ts".
4. We recognize that occasional inappropriate behavior is best ignored.
5. Once a problem has occurred, we will encourage the child to solve of alternate solutions and the possible effects choosing those alternatives.
6. We will try to determine why the problem has occurred and what can be done to avoid it next time.
7. We will use time away from the group to help an individual child calm down. When the child is calm, we will talk about the problem with the child.
8. We will recognize positive behavior.
9. We will involve the child in decision making when possible.
10. If restraint is necessary, we will hold the child with sufficient strength to protect the child and others until a situation is under control.
11. We will contact the parent about the child's behavior to gain insight.
12. Under no circumstances shall discipline of a child at the our YMCA involve hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh /humiliating/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 a child, teacher and/or director will meet with the family 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 family 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 consequences up to and including, in the rarest of circumstances. 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. Families 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 detailed documentation in InCare, the YMCA's electronic document solution.

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Safety is our primary concern. 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.

The safety of the children who use our facility has always been a top priority of our Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges.

Technology has now evolved that provides instant screenings for registered sex offenders in all 50 states. Raptor, a leading web-based platform identifies unwanted visitors instantly by scanning driver's licenses and state-issued ID's and keeps unwanted guests from entering our YMCA. If a potential threat is identified, the Raptor system will send an instant alert to designated management staff. If necessary, law enforcement will be notified.

Steps to Protecting Our Children

- 1. Learn the facts. 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 Suspect Abuse

If you think your child is physically injured, seek out appropriate medical attention.

If you see signs of distress, withdrawal, or acting out, consider counseling for your child.

Talk to your Y executive director for assistance.

Call any of the community resources listed in our "CHILD SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY" brochure or the police to report any abuse.

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 YMCA's Mission Statement, Diversity Statement, and Core Values. Individuals determined to have participated in such harassment, may be subject to consequences including suspension and expulsion.

CHILD AGE GROUPING

Infants

Our nurturing caregivers understand the importance of the first year and our low teacher/child ratio allows us to address the needs of each infant in our care. Infants are assigned to a primary care giver 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 low staff/child ratio enables the teachers to spend time with children working on emotional development, fine and gross motor skills and language acquisition 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/Full Day Kindergarten – at the Wayne Y and Peanut Shell

Our qualified caregivers guide our preschoolers through a structured program. The preschool classrooms are set up in learning centers that aid in preparation for kindergarten. These centers include a wide variety of experiences and materials e.g., 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 observation of each child.

FAILURE TO PICK UP DIVISION OF CHILD PROTECTION & PERMANENCY (DCP&P) POLICY

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

- The child will be supervised at all times.
- Staff members will try to contact parents and persons authorized by parent for pick up and emergency contacts.
- If staff is unable to arrange for the release of the child an hour or more past the center's extended closing time, the staff member will call DCP&P's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline number 877-652-2873 to seek assistance in caring for the child.

ENROLLMENT AND PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Your child care director will set up your account in ActiveNet (our management system) and assign you a link to submit your registration fee to reserve your child's space and register them in the account. During that registration, you will access your account using the link and choose "forget your password" to create your new password. Your login will be the email address you provided during the enrollment process.

Your ECLC annual tuition will be broken down into weekly installments that will begin the Sunday prior to your child's start date and continue through the school year. Remaining payments for your annual tuition will be automatically charged to the credit/debit card or checking account information you provide during registration.

Enrollment and tuition for childcare is annual. Changes to the child's schedule must be requested in writing two weeks in advance. Any change is subject to the approval of the director. Partial week schedules are fixed, no switching of days due to illness or closures can be accommodated. We are not able to make up days due to absence or vacation. Cancellations may be requested with 30 day written notice, but tuition will not be prorated for usage.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Please discuss your family's circumstances with your child care director. Any leave of absence is subject to termination of enrollment. If you plan to return, you must re-register. If we have full enrollment, your child will be placed on the waiting list.

CHILD HEALTH

This important information from the NJ Department of Children & Family Office of Licensing should clarify any questions regarding our illness policy.

A thorough 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 • One year prior to admission for children 2 ½ + years

Please inform the site director of any special considerations or needs in regard to health and/or behavior to ensure that proper arrangements are made for your child.

Illness

Metro YMCAs of the Oranges is committed to ensuring the safety and health of our youth & families and employees in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our policy is intended to help prevent the spread of illness, and to keep all of our children and staff safe. Thank you for your adherence to our policy.

In the event that your child is ill and will be absent, please notify the center. If your child develops symptoms of illness during the school day, we will contact you, request that you pick your child up immediately and follow the guidelines related to your child's condition.

Your child may return after 72 hours symptom free, 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 100.4 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 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. He/she 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 book.

Communicable Diseases

Per NJ Executive Order 149 – Please notify the center if your child contracts a communicable disease so we can inform other parents. Health notices will be communicated when we have been notified that a child in that classroom has a suspected or diagnosed communicable disease. Please follow guidelines related to the specific illness as outlined on the health notice.

Potty Training

- It is important that staff and parents work together to help the child achieve independent toileting.
- Potty training is a process. Children are individuals and will experience this process in many different ways.
- Staff and parents should adopt the same simple consistent routine with the child.
- Bring lots of clothes including underwear, socks & shoes. There will be accidents.
- Allow time and be patient.

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, the parent will be notified by telephone. If the injury requires medical attention, 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 arrives. The permission-to-treat form that all parents complete in InCare 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.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Our programs are greatly strengthened by active family involvement, there are number of ways that parents can become involved, please speak with your center’s director.

STAFF/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The Y encourages a positive, cooperative relationship between families and staff. This relationship is always professional, and must not extend beyond the classroom or the center. There have been numerous instances of conflicts and uncomfortable situations that have resulted from parents asking staff to baby-sit after program hours.

Staff members are prohibited from babysitting all children that attend any Metro YMCA of the Oranges programs.

Classroom Ambassadors

Classroom representatives will serve as committee leaders and parent recruiters in organizing family activities.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Once and up to twice yearly, in the late fall and/or in the spring, families will have the opportunity to meet with their child’s teacher to discuss and review their child’s progress. 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

The Y is a leading 501c(3) 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 your family needs financial assistance for Y programming, please discuss with the site director.

We need your support. Please consider making a donation by visiting metroymcas.org/donate.

Students in our child care program will participate in social responsibility projects throughout the year.



METROPOLITAN YMCA OF THE ORANGES

139 East McClellan Avenue, Livingston, NJ 07039
(P) 973 758 9622 (F) 973 535 1478 MetroYMCA.org

OUR BRANCHES AND CHILD CARE SITES

EAST ORANGE YMCA

100 North Arlington Avenue
East Orange, NJ 07017
(P) 973 673 5588
(F) 973 673 6415
EastOrangeYMCA.org

SOUTH MOUNTAIN YMCA

13 Jefferson Avenue
Maplewood, NJ 07040
(P) 973 762 4145
(F) 973 762 2064
SMountainYMCA.org

WAYNE YMCA

1 Pike Drive
Wayne, NJ 07470
(P) 973 595 0100
(F) 973 595 5234
WayneYMCA.org

FAIRVIEW LAKE YMCA CAMPS

1035 Fairview Lake Road
Newton, NJ 07860
(Toll Free) 800 686 1166
(P) 973 383 9282
(F) 973 383 6386
FairviewLakeYMCA.org

SOUTH MOUNTAIN YMCA Early Childhood Learning Center

10 West Parker Avenue
Maplewood, NJ 07040
(P) 973 762 0860
(F) 973 762 1619

WEST ESSEX YMCA

321 South Livingston Avenue
Livingston, NJ 07039
(P) 973 992 7500
(F) 973 992 7680
WestEssexYMCA.org

GREATER BERGEN COUNTY YMCA

360 Main Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601
(P) 201 487 6600
(F) 201 487 4539
YMCAGbc.org

SUSSEX COUNTY YMCA

15 Wits End Road
Hardyston, NJ 07419
(P) 973 209 9622
(F) 973 209 1483
SussexCountyYMCA.org

WEST ESSEX YMCA

Peanut Shell
Early Childhood Learning Center
7 Regent Street, Suite 706
Livingston, NJ 07039
(P) 973 533 1511
(F) 973 533 0069