



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE PARENT HANDBOOK

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YMCA OF GREATER HOUSTON



[ymcahouston.org](http://ymcahouston.org)

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## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

In YMCA Before and After School care, children participate in a balanced program of open play and structured activities. Every activity is carefully designed to spark your child's imagination and encourage lifelong positive values.

Y staff members ensure children participate in a unique mix of activities that focus on developmental assets, the building blocks that teach children how to make positive decisions. Many YMCA Before and After School programs are located in your child's school cafeteria, gym or classroom; however, some programs are held at your local YMCA.

By focusing on leadership development, service learning, college and career exploration, arts education, global learning, 21st century skills, parent and caregiver engagement, academics, health and wellness and interactive learning centers, Y programs give participants exposure to a breadth of knowledge and skills.

The daily schedule will include thirty minutes for children to participate in a mix of moderate to vigorous physically active sessions. Weather permitting, these activities will take place outdoors. Television and movies will not be utilized and use of any digital device will be limited to homework, academic enrichment or programs that actively engage children in physical activity.

## **HOURS, DAYS AND MONTHS OF OPERATION**

School age programs operate from school dismissal until 6 or 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The program begins in August and ends in May or June. The program will follow the school's calendar and adjust for holidays and early release days based on that calendar.

## **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

Children should proceed directly to the program area following school dismissal and check-in with Y counselors. The Y's responsibility for your child begins when:

- Your child is brought into the YMCA before school program space and checked in by the parent/guardian.
- Your child enters the YMCA after school program space, located in a participating school, and they are checked in by Y staff.
- Your child boards a YMCA vehicle to be transferred to the program site.

## **DEPARTURE AND RELEASE PROCEDURES**

Parents/guardians must enter the building and sign their children in and out of our program. This assures child safety and compliance with state child care licensing.

A photo ID may be required for the release of your child. The child will only be released to his/her parent/guardian and/or those adults whom the parent(s)/guardian specifically designate on the enrollment form. Only those designated on the enrollment form will be allowed to modify your information and all changes must be made with the program director.

If a parent/guardian is not allowed to pick up a child, the YMCA must have a copy of the court order signed by a judge. Without this documentation, we are obligated to release a child to either

parent/guardian, if both are listed on the enrollment paperwork. The Y will only follow what the court order states.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY (ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA)**

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:

- Wear gloves when handling or cleaning body fluids, such as after wiping noses, mouths, or tending sores;
- Specify 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;
- Remove gloves and wash hands immediately after each task to prevent cross-contamination to other children;
- Exclude the employee from direct care when the employee has signs of illness.

In order to protect the health of all children in our care, please keep your child at home if you notice that he/she begins to show signs of an illness or contagious disease or if he/she feels too ill to participate in a group care setting.

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. Weather permitting, children go outside every day. We cannot keep one child inside due to illness.

Children with head lice will not be allowed to attend the after school program. In relation to head lice, the Y will follow the same guidelines as your child's school.

If your child becomes ill during the program, we will contact you to pick him/her up. In case of injury, parents will be notified immediately.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

Regular and ongoing medication will not be administered on-site. Arrangements should be made with the school nurse for the child to receive medicine. For emergency medication, please complete an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form which can be provided by the site staff. This form requires the listing of the specific dosage your child is to be given and it must accompany all medications. Medications must also be in the original container with your child's name and all labels intact. If over-the-counter medication must be administered, it must also be accompanied by signed "Authorization to Administer Medication" form, in its the original container, labeled with your child's name, with all labels intact and have a signed doctor's order outlining when the medication should be administered and in what dosage.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

In the case of a medical emergency, we will call 911 and contact the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). Responding emergency medical personnel will make any determinations as to if the child should be transported to a hospital. We will provide them with the information from your child's records as to your choice of hospital and physician. In the event that this information is not specified, the child will be transported to the nearest available hospital.

In the event of a head injury, parent/guardian will be notified immediately. The student will be monitored for symptoms consistent with a concussion following the injury until parent/guardian arrives.

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS**

Parent/guardian notifications may be made in writing via letters, emails, fliers and/or signage at the parent table at each site. Notifications may also be made by phone calls or directly in person by site staff. Open communication is very important to the success of your child's Y experience. Conferences may be requested at any time. Activity schedules, menus and other pertinent information will be available for you to view at the parent table.

## **DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE PROCEDURES**

Self-management skills and positive social interactions among children and adults are encouraged and maximize everyone's enjoyment of the program. Y programs use positive guidance methods including reminders, distraction, logical consequences and redirection. Self-management skills are taught according to the following guidelines:

- Consistent rules are clearly stated. Children are expected to work and play within known limits.
- Behavior expected of children is age appropriate and based on development level.
- An atmosphere of trust is established in order for children to know that they will not be hurt nor allowed to hurt others.
- Staff members strive to help children become acquainted with themselves and their feelings. This will help them learn to cope with their feelings and control them responsibly.

Child safety is the most important concern of the program; therefore, children whose behavior is dangerous or repeatedly disruptive must be immediately picked up from the program by someone designated through the departure and release procedures. Repeatedly disruptive or dangerous behavior will be discussed with the child's parent/guardian and will result in loss of privileges or activities, suspension or termination from the program.

## **SCHOOL-AGE DISCIPLINARY ACTION PLAN**

All children are entitled to a pleasant and safe environment while participating in this program. The five Y core values of respect, responsibility, honesty, caring and faith will be used in the before and after school program.

We expect children to behave as follows:

- Be responsible for personal belongings
- Participate in all activities

- Possess positive and caring attitudes
- Follow proper safety procedures at all times, including:
  - Never opening outside doors
  - Not fighting or using foul language
  - Not running in school
  - Not playing in the restrooms
  - Not playing on or under the tables
- Respect for fellow students and staff
- Stay with your group and listen to your counselor at all times

The Y cannot serve children who display unacceptable behavior. Children who exhibit any type of behavior which is thought to be unacceptable or unsafe by a counselor and the site lead will be warned to correct their behavior and a telephone call will be made to the child's parent or guardian. There are no refunds for suspension or termination due to unacceptable behavior.

Unacceptable Behavior (includes but is not limited to):

- Using foul language
- Disrespecting another child or counselor
- Fighting
- Refusing to take part in activities
- Ignoring or disobeying rules of safety
- Public or inappropriate displays of affection
- Defacing property or vandalism
- Stealing

### **Disciplinary Procedure**

1st Incident: Parent will be notified verbally and/or in writing.

2nd Incident: Child will receive a written warning and one day suspension.

3rd Incident/Gross Violation: The action taken is at the discretion of the Senior Program Director and Executive Director of Afterschool, after appropriate consultation with the parent. This may result in suspension or termination of care. The YMCA considers behaviors such as hitting staff or other students, damaging school property or supplies and running away from the program to be gross violation.

### **SNACKS (FOOD SERVICE PRACTICES)**

An afternoon snack is provided each day that includes a ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable and whole grains. Water is the primary beverage for our program. When juice is served, it will be 100% fruit juice and will be limited to one 8 oz. serving per day. When milk is served, the milk will be low fat (1%) or nonfat milk. All snacks comply with the USDA program guidelines and are served in a family style environment to enhance self-help skills and social skills. Monthly snack menus are posted on the parent board or at the parent table for review.

If you send an additional snack with your child, please ensure that these foods do not include any form of peanut products, fried foods or foods that are high in sugar and saturated fats (such as chips, cookies, candy, etc.). Please refrain from bringing sugar-sweetened beverages and food from

local restaurants into the program. Please also utilize these guidelines for snacks for parties and events. Ideas for healthy snacks can be provided upon request.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS, TB TESTS, HEARING AND VISION SCREENING**

In order to participate in the program, children are required to have been examined within the past year by a licensed physician. Children must be mentally and emotionally able to participate in the program activities. Immunization records, a TB test, hearing and vision screenings must be current and on file at your child's school.

### **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND NOTIFICATION OF POLICY CHANGES**

All enrollment is done electronically at [ymcahouston.org](http://ymcahouston.org). Registration fees must be paid at the time of enrollment. Online registration must be completed in one sitting and it will time out after 30 minutes. Please allow time to complete your registration in one sitting.

#### **The following items are needed to enroll:**

- Emergency contact information for someone other than yourself (not parent or guardian)
- Student ID number – This number is issued by the school. The number is on your child's report card or it is your child's lunch number. You can obtain it by calling the school.
- Name, address, and phone number
- Contact information for others authorized to pick up your child including Drivers License or Identification number
- Payment information
- Registration fee
- Insurance information
- Doctor and hospital information
- Complete Child Care Licensing FARE form ( Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan) if applicable to the child
- Medication Authorization form (if medication is needed during the time of care)

To help us understand your child's needs or accommodations, a meeting must be conducted prior to the child attending the program. Please contact the Program Director to set up a meeting with you and your child.

#### **To begin the process you must have or create an online account**

- You must be a YMCA program or facility member to register your child for before and after school care. There is no cost to become a program member.
- After you have become a member, we ask that you create an online account so that you can register for after school care.

Please note that it may take up to 24 hours for paperwork to be processed. Paperwork must be processed entirely before your child may begin the program.

Any policy changes will be provided to participant's parent or guardian in writing.

## **TRANSPORTATION (IF APPLICABLE)**

If your child is attending a Y program that requires transportation, we ask that you speak with your child regarding proper safety guidelines. All children must stay seated with their seat belts fastened while the vehicle is moving and until the vehicle is completely parked.

Our primary goal when transporting children is to ensure their safety. The Y reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a student if a child is behaving in a way that is unsafe or inappropriate. If your child misses the bus to their Y program, staff will NOT be able to go back to the school to get your child.

## **BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS**

While children are on a bus, they are under the direct supervision of the driver and must obey the driver at all times. The bus driver has the authority to assign seats to students for safety or disciplinary reasons. Failure to follow the driver's rules will be considered an act of disobedience and will result in disciplinary action.

For the child's own protection, hands, head and arms must be kept inside the bus at all times. Feet and bags must be kept clear of the aisle. Conversations containing offensive language are not allowed and children should avoid any unnecessary, loud or boisterous talking.

Fighting or horse play is not permitted and will not be tolerated. General regulations pertaining to the restrictions on the use of tobacco, knives or other weapons, use of profanity and obscene gestures apply to all children riding the bus.

Children are expected to help keep the bus clean, sanitary and orderly. Paper or other debris should not be left on the floor of the bus or thrown at other students. No materials should ever be thrown out of the bus windows or doors.

Damages to seats or other bus equipment by a child will require compensation from the child's parents or guardians. Restitution or immediate arrangement thereof must be made before the child's bus riding privileges are restored.

Tampering with emergency doors or any other controls on the bus is not allowed. Opening or closing the front door is prohibited by anyone other than the driver. No recorders, radios, mp3 players or other electronic devices are allowed to be brought on the bus. The bus driver has the right and will confiscate these articles if brought onto the bus.

## **WATER ACTIVITIES**

YMCA Before and After School programs do not routinely have water activities as a part of the program.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

YMCA Before and After School programs do not routinely have field trips as a part of the program. Should your child's site have a field trip we will follow field trip procedures as outlined in Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards. You will be notified of the field trip a minimum of 48 hours in advance and you will be asked to sign a permission slip for the trip.



## **ANIMALS**

In the instance where your child may have interaction with small animals (i.e. millipede, caterpillar) as a part of the YMCA Afterschool curriculum, parents will be notified in writing. Students will be required to practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in to contact with an animal and items used by the animal, such as water bowls, food bowls and cages.

## **PROCEDURES FOR PARENT INTERACTION – VISITING, COMMUNICATION**

You may direct suggestions, concerns, compliments and complaints to the immediate caregiver, the Program Director or the Executive Director of Afterschool.

Parents are welcome visitors to our program. Please check daily for posted notices, fliers or other information about program activities. We appreciate input regarding program expectations, suggestions, ideas and comments on ways to improve our service to you and your family.

## **PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate with their children in a variety of activities. Three to four times per year, the YMCA will host activities or events designed for your entire family. These events will include opportunities for you to be physically active and to learn more about healthy food choices and nutrition. Please read our newsletters and watch for tips on helping your family be healthy and active.

In order to volunteer in a Y Before and After School Care Program, volunteers must have a clear criminal background and FBI check. Volunteers will also need to complete a volunteer application and take the Y online child abuse and prevention training course.

## **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 and lock down drills are conducted at sites. In the event of a gas leak, your child will be relocated to a secured off-site location and you will be notified immediately to come pick them up.

If evacuation is necessary, staff members will first move children to a designated safe area or alternate shelter known to all employees, caregivers and volunteers. Evacuation procedures also address the care of children with limited mobility or who otherwise may need assistance in an emergency, such as children who have mental, visual or hearing impairments. Head counts and roll sheets will be utilized to account for children and be conducted by two or more caregivers. At all times, our emphasis will be on keeping children safe.

In cases of inclement weather, the Y program will follow specific school district recommendations. If the school is closed or all after school extracurricular activities are cancelled due to weather, the Y after school program will also be closed. If the weather begins to worsen during the day, we will ask you to pick up your child as soon as possible so our staff members may get home safely.

## **BILLING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The YMCA of Greater Houston has balanced billing with the exception of August, December and June. Monthly fees are based on your individual school district calendar year. All early dismissal days and in-service days are included in the monthly fee. Holiday camps and school holidays may require an additional fee.

Payments are due prior to the first of each month. To ensure a spot and to avoid late fees it is recommended that you schedule payments with an auto-draft. Your payment will be drafted from your account on the 1st of each month. (Check with your YMCA for additional drafting options such as weekly and daily drop in rates). Drafting is available through a credit card or EFT. Payment may also be made in-person at the Y prior to the first of each month. Space is limited so your spot is not guaranteed until your payment is scheduled or paid in full. Cash, check, credit card, money order or cashier's checks are accepted as forms of payment. No payments will be collected at the school site.

In the event of program cancellations due to inclement weather or facility issues that prohibit children from attending school, the YMCA recognizes three days of care as a full week of service. Based on this balance billing, accounts will be credited for a maximum of 3 days in any full week of cancellations.

When withdrawing from the program or putting your draft for the afterschool program on hold, written notice must be turned in to the Y, and must be provided at least two weeks prior to your draft date. No refunds will be issued to anyone withdrawing after the first day of the month. All membership fees are non-refundable.

### **Late Payments**

Payments are considered late after the 3rd of each month and your account will be charged a \$30 late fee. If payment has not been received by the 10th of the month your child will no longer be accepted into the Y program and will be withdrawn from registration.

### **Late Pick-Up**

Please call the after school site lead if an unexpected emergency will cause you to be late picking up your child. There is a \$1 per minute charge for children not picked up by the program's closing time. In the event that a child has not been picked up within one hour of the stated closing time, Y staff members will call Children's Protective Services. In the event that a child is repeatedly left past the closing hour, the Y reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment in the program.

### **Receipt Request**

When making payment, you are able to print copy of receipt through your online account. Please retain all receipts and canceled checks for your records. The Y Tax ID number is 74-1109737.

### **Financial Assistance**

The Y is a community-based organization and believes that its programs and services should be available to everyone regardless of age, background, ability or income. The Y offers financial assistance to participants based on your individual financial situation. Limited financial assistance is available to individuals and families who substantiate a need.

Due to the limited availability of funds for after school, families needing assistance should:

1. Contact Workforce Solutions and complete paperwork to determine if qualified for public assistance.
2. Apply to the YMCA for financial assistance until workforce solutions completes their approval process.
3. Once Workforce Solutions has made a determination about assistance please provide an acceptance or denial letter to the YMCA
  - a. If accepted, the YMCA will adjust your account for NCI payments and parent co-payments
  - b. If denied, the YMCA will reassess the original financial assistance application and increase percentage based on need and current availability of funds.

## **Y STAFF**

The Y believes that staff training is essential to providing quality programs. Y staff members maintain current First Aid and CPR certifications. Each staff member also completes eight hours of pre-service orientation training and an additional 20-30 hours of training per year. All potential employees are required to pass a drug test, criminal background screening and FBI background check which includes fingerprinting.

Y staff members are not permitted to have outside contact with children enrolled in our before and after school care programs. Please do not ask staff to babysit, drop off or pick up your child.

## **STAFF/CHILDREN RATIOS**

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requires a minimum of one staff member per 22 to 26 children. The Y strives for a ratio of one staff member per 15 children. Each Y site will have at least two staff members present at all times.

## **CHILD'S BELONGINGS**

Children should be dressed for active indoor and outdoor play. A change of clothes is recommended. Parents will supply their children with insect repellent and or sunscreen if necessary. YMCA Before and After School program will not purchase, provide, or apply insect repellent and sunscreen on participants. Items brought to the program by your child must be labeled and we expect children to be responsible for their personal belongings. Please leave toys, money, video games and players, iPods or other MP3 players, cell phones and anything not allowed by your child's school district at home. The Y cannot credit or compensate for lost, damaged or stolen items.

## **HOMEWORK**

The YMCA recognizes that academic success is important for children who are enrolled in our after school program. YMCA staff members support the parents of program participants by encouraging students to take responsibility for completing their homework. Our schedule will include thirty minutes of designated homework time. During homework time staff members will monitor and work with the students at request, but will not provide one-on-one tutoring. Daily program schedules do not provide for additional homework time beyond the daily scheduled thirty minutes.

Homework guidance from the Y staff will include:

- An explanation of the directions
- Reading instructions and giving examples (this does not include grading or corrections to work as to defer to the school's teaching methods)

Please note that Y staff are not responsible for checking the children's belongings for homework or assignments.

We also encourage students and parents to review and complete homework together.

## **TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES CHILD CARE LICENSING**

By choosing licensed child care, you and your family join your child in new experiences and relationships. You, the Program director and the site 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 minimum standards required for licensing school age before and after school programs is available for your review at the school site. You may also request a copy of these standards from your local child care office. A list of these offices may be found on the DFPS website: [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us) or by calling the Child Care Information Line at 1-800-862-5252. The operation's most recent licensing inspection report is also available for your review at the school site.

## **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION**

The YMCA of Greater Houston is committed to keeping all children safe and we make every effort to prevent child abuse. The Y recognizes that child abuse exists in a number of forms, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as child neglect. As mandated reporters, It is our responsibility to recognize and report all suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

To help prevent child abuse the YMCA of Greater Houston has implemented the following procedures:

1. For the safety of children entrusted in our care, the YMCA conducts and requires a background check and references for all camp staff, as well as every person employed in or by our centers and programs.
2. Allegations or suspicions of child abuse are taken seriously and are reported to the police and state agencies for investigation.
3. YMCA programs are structured and observed so that staff and volunteers are never the only adult present with children with the possible exception of emergency situations.
4. Evaluations are conducted with parents regarding day to day experiences, encouraging reports of any event out of the ordinary.
5. Staff are required to report all incidents and/or the disclosure of abuse.

A key to keeping children safe is a child's ability to seek help. They need to know that there are adults at the Y, and at home, who will listen and respond in a supportive way. It is important to be aware that child abusers can be parents, caretakers, friends, neighbors, or even other youth.

1. Talk to your child – Share with your child that he or she can say "NO" to an adult friend, family member, or an older child, if they act inappropriately.

2. Be Proactive – Create an environment that encourages children to share their views and concerns. Then really listen to them. Establish safety rule online and offline.

If faced with your child disclosing abuse, or if there is a situation where you suspect abuse, but are not sure or don't have proof, call the child abuse helpline and get support. Trust your gut and your instincts and take action immediately.

If you would like to report a suspicion that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by abuse or neglect, call the **Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400. IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OF HARM, CALL 911 FIRST.** Thank you for helping us keep our children safe.