



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# BUILDING STRONG, BRIGHT FUTURES

## YMCA Children's Academy

PARENT HANDBOOK



YMCA Mission: To put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.  
Everyone is welcome.

# WELCOME!

At the YMCA, healthy child development starts early. That's why we offer early care and learning programs that help children learn the essential skills they will need to be ready for school. Our trained, supportive staff works to help children receive the best possible start to their education.

## PHILOSOPHY

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

School Readiness for all children is a core component of YMCA early care and learning. The YMCA of Greater Houston has chosen the Creative Curriculum to ensure that our children are prepared for school. Creative Curriculum provides an innovative and effective curriculum, assessment, professional development, and family connection resources to programs serving children from birth through kindergarten.

The YMCA of Greater will also work with all children to make sure that they are physically active and healthy. The daily schedule will include 60 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 educational activities.

## HOURS, DAYS AND MONTHS OF OPERATION

This year-round program runs Monday-Friday. Typical hours are 6:30 am to 6:30 pm. The program will follow the local school district or college campus calendar in the case of inclement weather. Contact your local YMCA for exact hours of operation and any days that the program may be closed for staff training.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Photo ID may be required for the release of your child. Your child will only be released to the parent and/or those adults that the parent specifically designates on the enrollment form. Amendments to the release section of the enrollment form can be made online by logging into your child's account or information may be submitted in writing to the program director with the signature of the parent or guardian who enrolled the child. Any court documentation restricting release or contact must be signed by a judge and provided for the child's file. Without this documentation we are obligated to release a child to either parent.

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

## 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:

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

In an effort to maintain a healthy environment, the following guidelines must be followed very strictly. Staff perform daily health checks to ensure children are healthy and to note any illness or injury. Children who become ill may not remain at the program, nor will an ill child be admitted. If a child becomes ill during the day, a parent will be notified to pick up the child immediately. If we are unable to reach the parents, we will then begin calling the persons listed on your enrollment form.

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

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

Children must be free of all above symptoms and show no signs of illness when returning to the program.

Please notify us if your child will be absent from the program.

Children with allergies are required to provide a physician's letter noting the allergy, causes, severity, and treatment.

All children must be able to participate in their normal daily schedule (outdoor play included). Weather permitting, children will go outside every day. We cannot keep one child inside due to illness.

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

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

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

If your child needs medication while at the program, you must complete an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form. The medication must be given to YMCA staff, and:

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

Over the counter medication will also require an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form and signed doctor's order outlining when the medication should be administered and in what dosage.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

Should your child require immediate medical attention, we will call 911, provide first aid and/or CPR, and then contact parents or guardians. Responding emergency medical personnel will make determinations as to

whether the child should be transported to a hospital. We will provide them with your choice of hospital and physician as indicated in your child's record. In the event that this information is not specified, the child will be transported to the nearest hospital.

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS**

Parent notifications may be made in writing via letters, emails, fliers and/ or signage at the classroom door or reception desk. Notifications may also be made by phone calls or in person by site staff. Open communication is very important to the success of your child's Y experience. Activity schedules, menus and other pertinent information will be available for your review. Please check daily for new information. Any policy changes will be provided to the parent or guardian in writing.

Occasionally children will be absent due to illness or family vacations please let the director of the program know when your child will not be present. You may contact the director by phone or email.

## **CONDUCT AND GUIDANCE**

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 developmental 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.

Children grow and develop as individuals during the early years. Challenging behaviors are a part of growing and learning. Our goal as we work through these periods of time will be for directors and teachers to have regular, ongoing conversations to express concerns and to discuss strategies for challenging behaviors with you to ensure that we are working together as partners to help your child. Parents will be kept informed of their child's progress.

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 and will result in loss of privileges or activities, suspension or termination from the program.

## **MEALS AND SNACKS**

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

Busy kids need a healthy lunch to boost their energy. If your child's facility requires that you pack a lunch for your child please keep in mind the following:

- Always include fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Offer a variety of whole grain breads, rolls, pita bread and flat breads.
- Use reduced fat dairy foods. Cheese and yogurt are ideal.
- Serve a protein at lunchtime such as lean meat, egg, peanut butter, chickpeas or tuna.
- Add a chilled bottle of water. Limit juice.

It is important to keep food in the lunch box cold to inhibit the growth of harmful bacteria. Pack your child's

lunch in an insulated lunch box and include a small freezer brick or freeze a bottle of water and pop it into the lunchbox to keep food cool. Many of our facilities are not equipped with refrigeration so lunches need to be safe at room temperature. When providing your child's lunch or snack we ask that you refrain from packing fried foods and foods high in sugar and saturated fats, such as chips, cookies, gummies, fried chicken nuggets, etc. Ideas for healthy lunches and snacks can be provided upon request.

A monthly menu will be posted for YMCA provided meals and snacks. Fruits and vegetables are available to children at snack time.

For programs where the YMCA provides meals and snacks food must be prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health department officials or the food product must be commercially prepared. All foods will meet USDA guidelines and are served family style to help enhance the social skills of your child. Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach of children. Meals will include milk, fresh fruits and vegetables.

Water is always available throughout the day and served as the primary drink at every meal. When juice is served, it will be 100% fruit juice and the serving size will be 4-6 oz. When milk is served the milk will be unflavored. Children under 2 years of age will receive whole milk and children over 2 years of age will receive low fat (1%) or nonfat milk.

Staff are educated and take proper precautions regarding any allergies that a child in their classroom may have as long as it is noted on the child's enrollment form. Staff are trained regarding common food allergies and common symptoms of food allergies.

Staff will not use food to reward children. Rewards will not be given to children for cleaning their plate at meal time.

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

Children are required to have been examined within the past year by a licensed physician and have a yearly health statement on file. Children must be mentally and emotionally able to participate in the program activities. Current and up to date immunization records and a TB test are required at the time of enrollment.

### **VISION AND HEARING SCREENING REQUIREMENTS**

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

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

## **RATIOS**

Ratios for early care and learning are established to ensure the safety of our children and our staff.

Age of Children                      staff:child ratio

- 0-12 months                      1:4
- 13-17 months                    1:5
- 18-23 months                    1:8

- 2 year olds 1:10
- 3 year olds 1:14
- 4 year olds 1:16
- 5 year olds 1:16

## **INFANT AND TODDLER ITEMS**

Parents are responsible for diapers, wipes, any diapering supplies and baby food. Parents are also responsible for any lotions or creams that your child may need.

The YMCA will provide an area for nursing mothers and we are able to store frozen breast milk a week's supply at a time. All milk bottles, pacifiers, lunches and drinks must be labeled with the child's full name.

Keeping children safe and comfortable is a priority of YMCA programs. Infants will not be left to sleep in car seats, bouncers, or swings. Children will be placed in designated areas when resting.

YMCA staff work with each infant at his/her level of development and individual schedule. The different activities that staff do with your child help develop hand-eye coordination, promote language development, motor development and sensory development.

## **A TYPICAL DAY IN OUR INFANT PROGRAM**

Infants and toddlers need a schedule that is regular enough to be predictable but flexible enough to meet the needs of each child. Learning opportunities will emerge every day for each child.

- Arrival
- Tummy time
- Enjoying stories and books
- Snack time
- Nap time
- Lunch
- Outdoor time
- Nap time
- Snack time
- Play time – music and movement on the floor
- Departure

## **A TYPICAL DAY IN OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

A typical day will provide a balance between child-directed and teacher-directed activities. Core content curriculum areas include literacy, math, science, social studies, art, character development and healthy eating and physical activity.

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



- Snack
- Outdoor Time
- Centers & Small Group Time
- Departure

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

All enrollment may be completed online at [ymcahouston.org](http://ymcahouston.org). A non-refundable registration fee must be paid at the time of enrollment and at the beginning of each school year, September 1. Online registration must be completed in one sitting, as the system will time out after 30 minutes. Please allow appropriate time to complete your online registration.

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

- Emergency contact information for someone other than yourself (not parent or guardian)
- Name, address, and phone number
- Contact information for others authorized to pick up your child
- Payment information
- Registration fee
- Insurance information
- Doctor and hospital information, including address and phone number

### **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 child 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 child 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.

## **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

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

## **HOLIDAYS**

Our program will be closed on the following holidays:

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • New Year's Eve             | • Labor Day                 |
| • New Year's Day             | • Thanksgiving Day          |
| • Martin Luther King Jr. Day | • Friday after Thanksgiving |
| • Good Friday                | • Christmas Eve             |
| • Memorial Day               | • Christmas Day             |
| • Fourth of July             |                             |

## **In-service Days**

Our program will be closed on the following inservice days:

May 25 and 26  
August 31 and September 1

## **ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The YMCA of Greater Houston has balanced billing. Monthly fees are determined by the local YMCA.

Payments are due prior to the first of each month. To ensure a spot and to avoid late fees it is preferred 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. Drafting is available through a credit card or EFT. If payment is not scheduled to draft the participant must pay at the time of registration. Your scheduled payments 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 at your local YMCA.

In the event of program cancellations due to inclement weather or facility issues that prohibit children from attending the program, the YMCA recognizes three days of care as a full week of service. Based on this balanced billing, accounts will be credited for a maximum of 3 days in any full week of cancellations. Monthly fees are based on children receiving care three or more days each week. In the event of a one day unexpected closure, adjustments will not be made to accounts.

When withdrawing from the program, written notice must be turned in to the director, 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 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.

### **NSF Fees**

Accounts will be charged a \$30 fee for insufficient funds.

### **Late Pick-Up**

Please call the child care center 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 have been instructed to call Children's Protective Services and local police. 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.

### **Program Closures**

#### **Inclement Weather**

In the event of bad weather or a national or community emergency, please tune in to local radio and television for closure information. If the school district or college campus in your child's service area closes because of weather conditions, the child care center will be closed.

### **Facility Emergencies**

Should your child's center experience a facility emergency after the program opens, the center will be required to close. Examples of a facility emergency are gas leak, power outage, or no water.

### **Receipt Request**

You are able to request a receipt when making payments. 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 its participants which is designed to fit your individual financial situation. Limited financial assistance is available to individuals and families who substantiate a need.

### **Due to the limited availability of funds, families needing assistance should:**

1. Contact Workforce Solutions and complete paperwork to determine if qualified for public assistance.
2. Apply to the YMCA (As Workforce Solutions processes the request, you may qualify for minimal assistance through the Y)
3. Once Workforce Solutions has made a determination about assistance they will notify you and the YMCA.
  - a. If accepted, the YMCA will adjust the account for NCI payments and parent co-payments.
  - b. If denied, the YMCA will reassess the original application and increase percentage based on need and current availability of funds.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

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.

## **WATER ACTIVITIES**

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

## **FIELD TRIPS/SPECIAL EVENTS**

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

## **ANIMALS**

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

## **PARENT ENGAGEMENT/VOLUNTEERS/CONFERENCES**

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

As your child learns and grows with us we hope that you will choose to participate in parent engagement activities three-four times a year. We will plan activities to help our families be physically active, have healthy eating/nutrition habits and enjoy quality time together. Please read our newsletters and watch for

tips for helping your family be healthy and active.

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

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

By choosing licensed child care, you and your child will have new experiences and relationships. You, the program director and the center staff have a responsibility to protect the health, safety and well-being of your child. The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Licensing Division is also a part of this partnership.

A copy of the current Minimum Standard Rules for Licensing and an Inspection report will be maintained at the reception desk. You may also request a copy of these standards from your local child care licensing office. Parents may contact the local child care licensing office by calling 713-940-3009 or visiting [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

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



## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Staff members are trained in basic emergency procedures. Necessary responses to issues regarding natural disasters (floods, tornados, hurricanes, etc.), lockdown procedures for hostile situations and fire escape routes are addressed in staff training. Monthly fire drills, periodic severe weather drills and lockdown drills are conducted at centers. A detailed plan is available at each center for your review.

If evacuation is necessary, staff members will first move children to a designated safe area or alternate shelter known to all employees 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 staff. At all times, our emphasis will be on keeping children safe.

In cases of inclement weather, the Y program will follow local school district or college campus recommendations. If the local school or college is closed due to weather, the Y 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 your family and our staff members may get home safely.

## **GANG FREE ZONE**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty. A complete informational handout on this code is available at the Welcome desk for your review.

## **DAILY ATTIRE & EXTRA ITEMS FROM HOME**

Children should be dressed for active play. Since all children will be going outside twice per day, weather permitting, please ensure that they have weather-appropriate attire and sunscreen if needed. No open-

toed shoes permitted. Each child needs a change of clothes for emergencies. This should include: pants/ shorts, shirt and underwear. Children being potty trained may require more than one change of clothing.

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

## **LOST AND FOUND**

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

## **BABYSITTING**

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

## **YMCA of Greater Houston Early Care Locations**

The YMCA of Greater Houston is proud to serve our community by offering quality care for our children. We hope that our program meets the needs of your family and that your children will learn, grow and thrive.

THE YMCA Children's Academy locations are:

The Woodlands Family YMCA @ Shadowbend  
6145 Shadowbend Place  
The Woodlands, TX 77381  
281-367-3622

Texas Medical Center YMCA  
5614 H. Mark Crosswell, Jr.  
Houston, TX 77021  
713-747-2173

Harriet and Joe Foster Family YMCA  
1234 W. 34<sup>th</sup> St.  
Houston, TX 77018  
713-869-3378

Wendel D. Ley Family YMCA  
15055 Wallisville Rd.  
Houston, TX 77049  
281-458-7777

Huntsville Family YMCA  
2906 Old Houston Road  
Huntsville, TX 77340  
936-295-8009

D. Bradley McWilliams YMCA @ University Park  
11144 Compaq Center W. Dr.  
Houston, TX 77070  
281-257-6600

M.D. Anderson Family YMCA  
705 Cavalcade  
Houston, TX 77009  
713-697-0648