



PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

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August 6, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On behalf of the preschool staff, I would like to warmly welcome you and your child to YMCA “Land of Wonder” Preschool! Thank you for choosing the YMCA for your child’s early education, and we extend an invitation to each of you to visit the classrooms at any time during the year. With love, patience, and guidance, our goal is to nurture your child’s growth and development during these tender preschool years.

If you should have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don’t hesitate to let me know. My door is always open and I am here to help make your preschool transition a smooth one. All of “Land of Wonder” Preschool teachers and staff are here to work together with you to make these magical preschool years special!

Sincerely,

Hope Vaccaro
Preschool Director

LAND OF WONDER PRESCHOOL LOCATED IN THE ESSIG YOUTH CENTER

295 Technology Drive Rocky Mount, VA 24151 Phone: (540) 489-9622
Hours of operation: 6:30 am – 6:00 pm

Serving families with children ages 2 – 5 years old

YMCA Mission

The mission of the Franklin County Family YMCA is to build strong kids, strong families, and a strong community by offering programs and services that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. At the YMCA we put Christian principles for living and relating into practice, impacting the lives of adults and especially youth and children with positive life experiences, seeking to make them better people.

Our Program Philosophy

The YMCA Land of Wonder Preschool is committed to providing a foundation for growth and development for all children. As in all Y programs, our focus is on the YMCA mission -- to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

As children grow and develop, they will pass through a series of developmental stages. Each child is an individual and will develop and progress through these milestones on their own time, in their own way. We believe all children should be in an environment that is loving, nurturing, and safe. We also believe an environment must be created to enhance creativity and learning through play.

We will offer developmentally appropriate activities to guide children as they grow. Our program will focus on character values including caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility in all that we do. The staff of the Franklin County Family YMCA is committed to ensuring that all of these philosophies and principles are implemented to the fullest extent.

Our Program Goals

- To help build strong children, strong families, and a strong community
- To develop a child's positive self-image
- To develop and enhance a child's emotional, social, physical and cognitive skills
- To prepare each child for school, and to help begin the lifelong learning experience
- To provide information and support to families regarding child development issues
- To serve the needs of the surrounding community

YMCA Staff

The YMCA is dedicated to providing your child with a meaningful YMCA experience. All YMCA staff work within the mission of the YMCA to build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all and exemplify the YMCA Character Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. Quality staff, certified in CPR, First Aid and MAT are on site for the safety of your children.

Please read this handbook in its entirety before your child begins attending our childcare programs. If at any time you have questions or concerns about our policies or programs, please contact the director of your program first. Policies that are specific to your program are listed under the program headers of this handbook. Our Preschool Director oversees preschool operations and would be glad to assist you and can be contacted at 489-9622.

Program Facility & Features

- State-of-the-art classroom, dance studios, gymnasium, and indoor & outdoor playground
- Sing, Spell, Read, and Write curriculum taught in 4-5 year-old class will help prepare rising kindergartners
- Children learn through hands-on art, play, and choice learning centers
- Quality well-trained and certified staff
- Licensed by Virginia Department of Social Services
- NEW in 2009-2010 Free SWIMMING Instruction for 3 - 5 year olds!
- Open all year long!

Required Documentation for Preschool Enrollment

Before your child can attend Land of Wonder Preschool, please deliver the following to the YMCA Essig Youth Center:

1. **State Birth Certificate** (Hospital Proof of Birth must be pre-approved by the Director of the childcare program and will serve only temporarily (for 30 days) until the state birth certificate arrives.)
2. **Copy of Child's Physical Examination and Immunization** certification form dated within the last 12 months and signed by a physician.
3. **Preschool Participation Application/Contract**
4. **Child Developmental Profile**
5. **Weekly Preschool Payment Form** with payment for the first week of care, including registration fee.

Drop-Off/Pick-Up Procedures

Drop-Off: Children may be dropped off at YMCA Land of Wonder Preschool as early as 6:30 a.m. Please escort your child into the preschool and “sign in” on the attendance roster. If your child’s name does not appear on the roster, please see the director. Please check your child’s cubby to make sure he/she has a change of clothes for the day.

Pick-Up: Pick-Up Authorization Cards are given to parents when a child is registered. Children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. When picking up children, parents must present their *Pick-Up Authorization Card* to staff on site and then sign their child out on the attendance roster. Anyone without a *Pick-Up Authorization Card* must present a photo I.D. Only persons who have been previously authorized by the parent will be allowed to pick up a child. Persons authorized to pick up a child must be 18 years or older. If any parent or authorized individual arriving to pick up a child is observed as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the parent or individual’s child will be kept on the YMCA property pending notification of properly authorized personnel. Parents should inform the YMCA as soon as possible if their child will not be in attendance.

Late Pick-Up Fees

YMCA staff is scheduled to be at the program site until 6 p.m. If you pick up your child after the 6 p.m. deadline you will be required to pay a late fee.

- **The late fee charged is \$1.00 for every minute after 6 p.m. This late fee must be paid to staff upon arrival.** In this situation, at 6:01 p.m. the YMCA will start calling legal guardians. If legal guardians cannot be reached, YMCA staff will call the two emergency numbers on file.
- If a child has not been picked up by 45 minutes after closing, Child Protective Services will be called.
- If a child has not been picked up by 1 hr after closing, the authorities will be called.

Supplies

- A packed cold lunch DAILY is required. *Refrigeration is not available. Two healthy snacks will be provided by the YMCA (one morning and one afternoon) but these do not substitute for meals. If your child cannot eat the planned snack due to allergy, please supply an alternative snack from home.
- One or more spare set of clothes is to be kept in the child’s cubby, including underwear and socks. Clothes should be appropriate for active play, including appropriate outerwear for cooler months (outdoor play). No sandals or open-toed shoes should be worn at any time. Clothing & shoes should be appropriate for a variety of activities, including painting. Please label your child’s belongings.
- One standard crib sheet and a blanket are required for nap time. Mats are provided. A soft sleeping friend for naptime and a pillow are both optional.
- Diapers, if applicable and or Velcro closed “Pull-Ups” for children still potty training
- Two boxes of Kleenex per child
- Swim suit & towel for children ages 3 – 5.

Snack/Meal

1. Menus will be posted weekly for parental notification.
2. Morning and afternoon snacks will meet the nutritional needs of children as established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
3. Food portions are appropriate for the age of the child and additional servings are permitted.
4. Parents may provide snack for their children in some cases:
 - A. Since the YMCA does not supply food for special diets, religious, or medical reasons, parents are required to provide such food for their child. Note: A written letter must be completed by the parent identifying the reason for the special diet, and parents are responsible for complying with the USDA nutritional guidelines. Food must be delivered in air-tight containers or the original container. The center will not keep leftovers.
 - B. Parents may bring food/beverages for celebrations and/or birthday parties.
5. Please do not allow your child to bring candy, gum, or other “junk food.”
6. Children will be encouraged, but not forced to eat their lunch/snack and to try new foods.
7. No child will be denied food at a meal time for disciplinary reasons.

Disciplinary and Behavior Management Policy

We certainly want each child to enjoy the activities planned and benefit from their experience with the “Y”. Basic rules of safety and conduct will be enforced. Please help reinforce these practices at home so that your child understands and learns the rules of the classroom. YMCA staff will document and relay any discipline problems with the parent by phone, note, or conference. YMCA staff will be available to discuss any behavioral problems. Parents will be notified of continuing and/or serious behavior problems and whether a conference with teachers and director is necessary.

General discipline techniques involve positive reinforcement for good behavior and careful explanation of behavior that is unacceptable. An activity will be denied for repeated poor behavior, and the child will be directed to an alternative activity. A child who needs a break to think about his/her actions and behavior will have an activity denied & time to consider actions. The break from activity will not exceed the age of the child. Teachers will then discuss the behavior with the child and use positive reinforcement to prevent the same behavior from occurring.

While the above policy is the standard, if at any time the child is uncooperative or displays behavior that is disruptive or detrimental to staff, other children, or themselves, termination from the program may be immediate. No refund is given for a child who is removed for behavior problems.

If you have a concern about another child, please see a teacher or the director, as at no time are parents allowed to discipline children other than their own. Parents, please keep in mind while disciplining your own children that you follow the YMCA discipline policy while on premises.

Absentee Policy

Payment is due on a weekly basis regardless of attendance, unless cases of lengthy illness or special circumstances arise. Such requests should be discussed with the preschool director who will determine whether a credit voucher will be issued. Please inform YMCA staff in the morning if your child will not be in attendance.

Sick Children

YMCA childcare programs are not designed for sick children. If your child has a fever of 101 degrees or higher, has had diarrhea (twice in one day), has vomited, or has a rash, they are considered unwell and are not able to attend our program. Children must remain symptom free for 24 hours prior to returning to the program. If staff determines that a child is sick upon arrival (vomiting, diarrhea, etc. or having an elevated temperature of 101 degrees or above), the parent may not leave the child. If a child becomes sick during the program, the parents will be notified as soon as possible. If parents cannot be reached, the emergency numbers will be called. Immediate arrangements must be made for picking up a sick child. In case of an emergency, a YMCA staff person will notify the child's parents immediately.

Parents are required to notify YMCA Staff if their child or anyone in their household has a communicable disease such as pink eye, bronchitis, etc. so that this information may be posted for other parents' awareness. If your child is sent home with any of the above symptoms or illnesses they are not allowed to return until they have EITHER 1) been to the doctor AND have been diagnosed AND treated for at least 24 hours, AND have a doctor's note, OR 2) been away from the program for 24 hours without symptoms.

Medication

Medication may be administered to participants enrolled in the Land of Wonder Preschool, according to Department of Social Services regulations. If the YMCA is to administer medications, a *Medication Authorization (MAT)* form must be filled out. Contact the program's director or teachers for details and forms.

Special Needs

The YMCA tries to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with special needs. If your child has special needs, please contact the program's director prior to submitting a Participation Application. Your child's needs will be reviewed and a determination made as to whether we are able to provide care for the child.

Child Abuse Policy

YMCA staff is required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect situations to the proper authorities.

Emergency Evacuation

Land of Wonder Preschool would evacuate the building under the following circumstances: 1. An alarm is sounded, 2. Evacuation is recommended by personnel at the school and/or appropriate emergency personnel. These events would be reason for evacuation: fire, bomb threats, power failure, etc.

In the event of an emergency situation, the Senior Child Care Director, or Preschool Director shall declare an emergency and put into place the appropriate action plans.

Lead teachers will assemble all children in their classrooms and count the number of children, verifying this with appropriate paperwork. The teachers will follow the primary evacuation route posted on the wall/door of their current location, moving quickly & quietly. All emergency paperwork, children's information, first aid supplies, etc. will be taken with them. Once at the destination, the preschool faculty will again count the number of children present and verify this with the number counted earlier and with appropriate paperwork.

The decision will be made as to whether the children and faculty are safe at the current site, or if they need to move to another location for safety purposes. Once at the final destination, and if we are notified that we are unable to enter the preschool building, we will notify parents of our location and plans. If and when it has been declared safe to return to the building, teachers will do another head count, then proceed into the building with their class.

Shelter-in-Place Evacuation

In the event that we are unable to leave the YMCA Essig Center in an emergency due to tornado or other threats, the teachers will gather the children at the front of the preschool and lead them to the center of the Essig Center Kitchen, adjacent to the preschool art hall. Emergency paperwork, children's information, first aid supplies, etc. will be taken with the teachers. We will remain at this location until we have been notified that it is safe to return back to the preschool. If unable to return to the preschool, preschool staff will notify parents of our intentions as we reach the final destination.

In event that emergency personnel are needed, please call 911 and then notify the Franklin County Family YMCA at 489-9622.

Holidays & Inclement Weather

No childcare is provided on: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day. Every effort will be made to provide care during inclement weather. On very rare occasions due to extremely hazardous conditions, the YMCA may delay opening, or remain closed all day. Parents should listen to media outlets for status. Please listen/look for: Franklin County YMCA.

Financial Assistance Opportunities

It is the policy of the YMCA to attempt to provide services to anyone who desires to participate and understands the mission of the YMCA, regardless of the ability to pay published fees. Those not able to pay the full fee may be awarded a partial scholarship based on their ability to pay, the Department of Social Services approval process, and the YMCA's ability to fund the subsidy. Applicants must **first** apply for assistance at the Department of Social Services and if a need still exists after DSS approval, submit a YMCA Financial Assistance Application. All applicants will be contacted after application is received for an interview. **This process generally takes a minimum of 3-4 weeks.** Until this process is complete, the full amount will be due if the child is to attend.

Tax Statements

As a courtesy, tax statements will be mailed by January 31st for the previous year. If tax statements are needed at other times, please submit request in writing and allow one week for processing.

Parent Involvement

We believe involving parents in center activities is important for both you and your child. When parents are involved in activities within their center, it strengthens the continuity between a child's experience at home and at preschool. We have an open door policy -- and encourage parents to visit the preschool anytime during the day. We also welcome parents who are interested in volunteering to meet with our Preschool Director to see how they can assist us. Parent conferences will be scheduled annually.

Weekly Payment Requirements

Payments are due by Wednesday one week before care is to be given. The YMCA accepts cash or check. Credit cards may be used at the main building only. Checks only will be accepted in the payment lock box located inside the preschool. If paying with cash, please pay at the front desk after 3:30 or you may pay at the main building at any time. A late payment fee will be charged for all late payments.

Once the *Preschool Participation Contract* and the first *Weekly Quick Payment* form for the first week of care is submitted, a commitment has been made by the parent that their child will be enrolled in the YMCA Preschool. Because space is limited, payment must be made for each week **even if the child will not attend** temporarily, in order to reserve the spot. **A late fee of \$10.00 is charged if payment is received after the Wednesday deadline. Services will be suspended immediately if no payments are made for two weeks.**

Fees

COVERING	FEES AS OF 9/1/09
Registration	\$ 40
3 Day Week, 2s	\$ 75 weekly
3 Day Week, 3s – Kindergarten	\$68 weekly
5 Day Week, 2s	\$116 weekly
5 Day Week, 3s – Kindergarten	\$108 weekly

Preschool Contract Termination

- The YMCA reserves the right to terminate enrollment upon two weeks notice without cause and to terminate childcare immediately for any act, word, or condition of the child or parent causing disruptions, safety, or health concerns for the child, other children, or employees of the YMCA.
- A **TWO WEEK WRITTEN NOTICE** is required if deciding to withdraw from the program. Parents/Guardians are responsible for fees during the notice period. Cancellations must be in writing and submitted to the YMCA by Wednesday, two weeks prior to the session being canceled. Parents are legally liable for all weekly fees & late fees incurred during or prior to the two-week date of notice.

CONTACTS

**For questions regarding Franklin County YMCA Childcare Programs,
Please call 540-489-9622**

Preschool Director – Hope Vaccaro
Land of Wonder Preschool

Sr. Childcare Director – Tina Lawton
Before & After School
Fun Club/Snow Days
Summer Camp

Director of Operations – Mary Mullins

CEO/Executive Director – Dave Lawton