



## PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

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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,

Jamie Stump  
Childcare Director  
Franklin County YMCA  
540-489-9622 (YMCA)  
jstump@franklincountyyymca.org



## **LAND OF WONDER PRESCHOOL**

**295 Technology Drive, Rocky Mount, VA 24151 Phone: (540) 489-9622  
Hours of operation: 7:00 am – 5:30 pm**

**Serving children ages 3 – Pre-K**

### **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**

Our licensed “VA Quality” 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 Y is dedicated to providing your child with a meaningful preschool experience. All staff work within the mission of the YMCA to build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all and exemplify the Y Character Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. Quality trained staff, certified in CPR, First Aid and MAT are on site for the safety of your children. Teachers maintain at least 18 hours of continued child development education per year and lead teachers are on a degree track. Our star rated childcare center is a participant in the Virginia Star Quality Initiative. We're committed to raising the quality of care for young 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 Childcare 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, gymnasium, outdoor playground, and nature trail
- Creative Curriculum (used in all classrooms)
- Sing, Spell, Read, and Write curriculum (used in 4-5 year-old class)
- Children learn through hands-on art, play, and choice learning centers
- Quality well-trained and certified staff
- Licensed by Virginia Department of Social Services
- Free SWIMMING Instruction for 3 - 5 year olds (5 day enrollments)
- Open all year long!

## **Required Documentation for Preschool Enrollment**

Before your child can attend **Land of Wonder Preschool**, please deliver the following to Jamie Stump in the main Y:

1. **State Birth Certificate or Hospital Proof of Birth**
2. **Copy of Child's Physical Examination and Immunization** certification form dated within the last 12 months and signed by a physician.
3. **Preschool Registration Packet**
4. **Child Developmental Profile**
5. **Auto-Draft Form** with payment for the first week of care, including registration fee.

## Drop-Off/Pick-Up Procedures

Teachers begin their core curriculum (circle time, art, & academics) at 9:00 A.M. Our policy is that all children be here by 9:00 A.M., and no later than 10:00 A.M. (unless extenuating circumstance has been relayed to staff) so that interruptions are kept to a minimum, and so children will get the most out of our program. This also helps children be active in the morning so that they're able to rest without interruption during nap time.

### PLEASE HELP KEEP NAP TIME FREE FROM DISRUPTION

Dropping off or picking up during nap time (between 12:30 – 2:30) causes disruption for the children and teachers. We ask that you refrain from dropping off or picking up your child during nap time unless there is an extenuating circumstance. If there is an extenuating circumstance, please call ahead of time to let the staff know. If you must drop off after our scheduled lunch time (11:15 – 12:00) please make sure your child has already been fed prior to being dropped off (to prevent further disruption).

**Drop-Off:** Children may be dropped off at YMCA Land of Wonder Preschool as early as 7:00 a.m. Please escort your child to the door next to the playground. You will ring the doorbell he/she will be received by a teacher and “sign in” on the attendance roster. If your child’s name does not appear on the roster, please write in your child’s name and sign your name. Please check your child’s cubby to make sure he/she has a change of clothes for the day.

**Pick-Up:** Children must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. by authorized adults. The person picking up will ring the doorbell and tell staff who they are picking up once they answer. Only persons who have been previously authorized by the parent will be allowed to pick up a child. Please be prepared to show a photo I.D. to the teacher. If a parent needs to add someone to the pickup list please call and let their teacher know. 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 5:30 p.m. If you pick up your child after the 5:30 p.m. deadline you will be required to pay a late fee.

**The late fee charged is \$1.00 for every minute after 5:30 p.m. In order to be fair and consistent, this policy will be strictly enforced for ALL late pick-ups.**

- If a child has not been picked up by 5:30 pm, 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, Franklin County Police will be called.

## Supplies

- A packed lunch DAILY is required. \*Refrigeration and heating elements are not available. Two healthy USDA approved 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 to prevent injury. 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. One soft sleeping friend for naptime (one that does not make noise) and a **small** travel pillow are both optional. Mini pillows only please. There is not enough space for standard size pillows. Pillows must have a pillow case.
- Two boxes of Kleenex per child. Teachers may ask for more as needed.
- Your teacher will send home a separate short supply list during your child's first week.

## Snack/Meal

- Menus will be posted weekly for parental notification.
- Morning and afternoon snacks will meet the nutritional needs of children as established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Food portions are appropriate for the age of the child and additional servings are permitted.
- 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 (no soda) for celebrations and/or birthday parties.
- Please do not allow your child to bring candy, gum, soda, or other "junk food." We encourage healthy lunches. A child's dessert will be offered after he/she has eaten an appropriate amount of lunch.
- Children will be encouraged, but not forced to eat their lunch/snack and to try new foods.
- No child will be denied food at a meal time for disciplinary reasons.
- A packed lunch DAILY is required. \*Refrigeration and heating elements are not available. Two healthy USDA approved 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.

## **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. We follow a point system that will be given to you during orientation. 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 suspended or expelled for behavior problems. If a child needs to be picked up due to uncooperative behavior, immediate arrangements must be made.

If you have a concern about another child, please see a teacher or the director. 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 (doctor's note must be provided) or special circumstances arise. Such requests should be discussed with the childcare director who will determine whether a credit will be issued. Please inform YMCA staff in the morning if your child will not be in attendance. Families are granted one "Free" week per school year, not to exceed one per classroom. A free week can be applied toward a week your child attends, or can be applied to a sick or vacation week. Please note: A free week can be taken only after the child has been enrolled for at least 60 days and can't be taken after the required two week notice of withdraw is given. Account must be up-to-date and in good standing in order to use a free week. "Free" week will not be granted for summer only enrollments. Free weeks are non-transferrable and do not roll-over, if un-used.

## **Sick Children**

YMCA childcare programs are not designed for sick children. If your child has a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher **(remember to add one degree if taking the temperature under the arm)** has had diarrhea (twice in one day), has vomited (twice in one day) 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 100.4 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 (no longer than one hour). 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, including use of fever reducer.

## **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 and returned to a MAT certified teacher. 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 specific needs will be reviewed and a determination made as to whether we are able to provide care for the child.

## **Child Abuse Policy**

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



## YMCA Safety Plan

### **PREVENTION FOR SUDDEN DEATH SYNDROME/ SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES 8VAC20-780-240. C.8**

#### **Secure Ways to Protect Your Baby from SIDS**

- Stay Up-to-Date on Vaccinations
- Don't Use Crib Bumpers
- No Tummy Sleeping
- Butt Out Around Baby
- No Stuffed Animals
- Don't Sleep with Baby
- . Put Baby to Bed with a Pacifier
- . Keep Baby Cool
- . Remove Pillows
- . Choose a Firm Mattress
- . Use a Sleep Monitor
- . Don't Ignore Respiratory Issues
- . Keep the Crib Empty
- . Swaddle your Child

#### **Safe Sleep Practices**

- **Alone**- Babies should always be on their own sleep surface. Bed sharing is a risk factor for SIDS and other sleep related deaths.
- **Back** - Babies should be on their back for every sleep.
- **Crib** - The crib should be empty. This means no bumper pads, pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, toys or supplies, like diapers and diaper wipes

#### **How to Deal with a Crying Baby**

- First, make sure your baby doesn't have a [fever](#). In a baby, a fever is a [temperature](#) of 100.4°F (38°C). Call the doctor right away if your baby does have a fever.
- Make sure your baby isn't hungry and has a clean diaper. Rock or walk with the baby.
- Sing or talk to your baby.
- Offer the baby a pacifier.
- Take the baby for a ride in a stroller.
- Hold your baby close against your body and take calm, slow breaths.
- Give the baby a warm bath.
- Pat or rub the baby's back.
- Place your baby across your lap on his or her belly and rub your baby's back.
- Put your baby in a swing or vibrating seat. The motion may be soothing.
- Put your baby in an infant car seat in the back of the car and go for a ride. Often, the vibration and movement of the car are calming.
- Play music — some babies respond to sound as well as movement.
- **Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma 8VAC 20-780-240. C.9**

Belief Statement We, MHC YMCA believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families.

Continued

Background SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death<sup>1</sup>

### **Procedure/Practice**

#### **Recognizing:**

- Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

#### **Responding to:**

If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will:<sup>3</sup>

- o Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.
- o Call the parents/guardians.
- o If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Reporting:**

- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported
- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in the home are reported to the Martinsville-Henry County Virginia Department of Social Services.:

#### **Prevention strategies to assist staff\* in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child**

Staff first determine if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies<sup>5</sup>:

- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child.

- Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy.
- Take the child for a ride in a stroller.
- Turn on music or white noise.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### **In addition, the facility:**

- Allows for staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children
- Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed.
- Other \_

#### **Prohibited behaviors**

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

- shaking or jerking a child
- tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat
- pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture

## **EMERGENCIES**

**In the event of an emergency situation the YMCA Childcare Staff will declare an emergency and put into place the appropriate action plans. Monthly fire drills will be conducted, as well as two Shelter-in-Place and Lock-Down drills, per year.**

### **Emergency Evacuation**

**Land of Wonder Preschool will 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 Childcare Director, or Lead Teacher 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. Once at final destination, our reunification plan will be to notify parents of our reunification site, via email, phone or text message.

### **Shelter-in-Place Evacuation**

In the event that we are unable to leave the Essig Center building 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 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. Our reunification plan will be to notify parents of our reunification site, via email, phone or text message.

### **Lock Down Procedure**

In the event that we have a potential bomb threat or active shooter in the building staff will lead children to designated safe place (specific to each childcare location.) Emergency contacts, children's information, first aid supplies, etc. will be taken with staff. We will remain at this location until it is safe to return. If unable to return and this is not a drill staff will call 911 immediately and then call Hope Vaccaro, Childcare Director. Parents will then be called so we can set up a reunification.

**Procedure for Continuity in an Emergency: In the event of an emergency, staff will be assigned specific rolls so that continuity and safety are maintained. The lead staff person will be in charge of alerting the authorities while the assistant staff will handle the management and care of the group of children. Consistent Care: Consistent staff will be assigned to designated classrooms and groups of children. Ratio standards will be met and teachers will stay with their children through the duration of the program. This will ensure that essential functions are met.**

### Holidays & Inclement Weather

No childcare is provided on: New Year's Eve open 7:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. Every effort will be made to provide care during inclement weather. Due to extremely hazardous conditions, the YMCA may delay opening, close early, or remain closed all day. Parents should look at the YMCA Facebook page and B99.9 radio station for status.

### Scholarship 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 the following: 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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. We also welcome parents who are interested in volunteering to meet with Childcare Director to see how they can assist us.

**Parent Teacher conferences** will be scheduled in the spring and fall, and "as needed" in between. This gives both parents and teachers an opportunity to discuss the child's growth, development, milestones, etc., as well as upcoming transitions to the next class.

## **Weekly Payment Requirements**

Payments are auto-drafted off of a credit/debit card or a checking account no later than the week prior to care. There will be a \$20 fee applied to the account for insufficient funds (NSF). 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 5 day/week care. 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. **Children must be fully potty- trained and three-years-old to enroll in the preschool.**

## **Preschool Contract Termination**

A **TWO WEEK WRITTEN NOTICE** is required if a decision is made 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 two weeks prior to the session being canceled. Parents are responsible for all weekly fees & late fees incurred during or prior to the two-week date of notice.



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

Childcare Director – Jamie Stump [jstump@franklincountyyymca.org](mailto:jstump@franklincountyyymca.org)

Lead Preschool Teachers- Tabitha Richards [trichards@franklincountyyymca.org](mailto:trichards@franklincountyyymca.org)

&

Mickey Crist [mcrist@franklincountyyymca.org](mailto:mcrist@franklincountyyymca.org)

CEO – Kevin McAlexander

