

Santa Maria Valley YMCA Young Children's



Preschool



Partial Funding Made Possible by
the William & Lottie Daniel Fund

Santa Maria Valley YMCA

Preschool Parent Handbook

2025-2026 School Year



Dear families,

Welcome to the Santa Maria Valley YMCA Preschool Program, and thank you for choosing us to be part of your child's early learning journey!

Starting preschool is an exciting milestone, and we're honored to support your child as they grow, make new friends, build confidence, and explore through hands-on learning. Our program is rooted in strong relationships, a sense of community, and active family engagement — we truly believe that children thrive when families, educators, and communities work together.

We're also excited to introduce our new curriculum, **Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum**. This research-based, developmentally appropriate program supports the whole child and allows our educators to tailor learning experiences to each child's interests and needs while fostering growth in key areas like social-emotional development, literacy, math, and physical skills.

Please take a moment to review the enclosed materials so you and your child feel prepared for the first day. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to me at (805) 937-8521 or dborjas@smvymca.org.

We're so happy to welcome you into our YMCA family. I look forward to connecting with you and your child in the days ahead!

Warmly,
Diana Borjas
Preschool Director
Santa Maria Valley YMCA

Location and Contact Information

**3400 Skyway Drive
Santa Maria, CA 93455
www.smvymca.org
805.937.8521**

Follow us on:



Instagram- **SMV.YMCA**



Facebook- **Santa Maria Valley YMCA**

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

- \$75 registration fee. This fee is annual and charged every August.
- Full Time, Licensed Preschool with a monthly tuition rate of \$1,170 (Toddler Classroom) \$980 (Butterfly Classroom). Financial Scholarships are available. *Tuition increases will only happen as costs rise such as inflation, minimum wage, retention of quality teachers. *
- Preschool care is for children 2 ½ through 5 years. Child must be **fully potty trained**.
- Prior to your child's first day of attendance, all paperwork must be completed and turned in along with a **copy of immunization records and physician's report**. This new law, effective January 1, 2016 eliminates the personal beliefs exemption from immunizations. All children must be immunized to attend the YMCA Preschool. Records must be updated annually and/or as immunizations are updated.
- We consider it of great importance to provide a safe and threat-free environment. For this reason, the YMCA does not permit smoking and firearms and monitors the sexual offender registry. Persons on the list will not be eligible for membership, program participation, and volunteer or employment opportunities with this Y.

BACKGROUND CHECK

For your preschooler's safety, we ask that ALL parents, guardians and emergency contacts who will be entering the preschool classroom must have their ID ran through our database to ensure our classroom is free from harm. Below is the policy from our membership handbook.

Please follow procedure below:

- 1) Please submit copies or pictures of everyone's ID who are on your child's pick up list prior to start date.

These adults will be ran through a screening process.

- 2) If something comes up on their background that makes them unfit to be around children, they will not be granted permission to pick up your child at our preschool or be allowed on field trips.

CHILD'S PLACEMENT/TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

The first 6 weeks will be a probationary period to evaluate the child's adjustment. If the Center in its sole and unfettered discretion determines that it is unable to meet the needs of the Child, enrollment will be terminated. This agreement may be terminated if the Center in its sole and unfettered discretion determines that it is not the best interest of the Center or other Children enrolled at the Center to have the Child in attendance. This agreement may be terminated if Parents or Guardians fail to honor the obligations listed in this agreement or any rules or regulations stated in the Center Handbook. Failure of the Parents or Guardians to cooperate with the Center is serious enough to warrant termination. In exercising its discretion, the Center may require the Parents or Guardians to attend conference(s) with Center personnel regarding the matters that potentially warrant termination of the agreement. The Center shall have no obligation to grant a request for conference in matters that warrant termination of the agreement. The Center's Director or staff shall have the sole right and responsibility to determine any disputed factual matters regarding termination of this agreement.

YMCA CHILD CARE PROGRAM GOALS

Specific goals include:

- Providing an environment of health, safety, nutritional practices, support and care
- Develop social skills with other children and adults
- Realistic trust in his/her environment is encouraged
- Childcare staff encourage and provide opportunity for quality development at each child's stage of development
- Encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment
- Respect cultural diversity of staff and children
- Prepare children for kindergarten success

YMCA EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT & CURRICULUM

- **We believe** children learn through hands on activities and play
- **We believe** that learning occurs by continually building upon new experiences to further enhance the cognitive, social, emotional, physical, fine and gross motor development of children
- **We believe** that our theme-based curriculum provides a framework, yet demonstrate an approach to draw from many resources to meet children's and family's individual needs
- **We believe** in forming a relationship between children, their families and the teachers
- **We believe** that every child should be given a chance to have quality child care
- **We believe** in incorporating each family and child's culture and home language as much as possible

Our Theme-based Curriculum is an idea or topic that children can explore in many different ways. Teachers demonstrate this approach through a child's culture, environment or shared experiences (ex: Fieldtrips, guest speakers, activities). Teachers **integrate literacy, social studies, science, math, music, art, fitness, nutrition, and dramatic play**. A teacher considers the total need of the child and uses the themes to invite new learning. Teachers meet weekly to discuss assessment results of each group and child to help determine if curriculum needs to be adjusted in order to meet the needs of the children.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide a safe, nurturing and enriching environment for children ages 2.5-5 years. We have a play-based philosophy, therefore, we encourage and offer an exceptional indoor and outdoor learning environment. We focus and guide students into developing their social and emotional development, physical growth, intellectual progress, and the child as a whole. We believe that it takes a village to raise a child and the YMCA provides an overall positive environment for our preschoolers to develop their body, mind and soul.

YMCA PRESCHOOL STAFF

Y Preschool staff truly have a passion for early childhood development. Staff are CPR and First Aid certified are mandated reporters and meet criminal clearance and state health regulations. We take pride in our staff and provide training, which includes emergency procedures, program planning, child abuse awareness, and other areas pertaining to childcare. All preschool staff meet or exceed the minimum state requirements regarding academics and experience working with children.

Child Care Director: Diana Borjas, BA Child Development and 27 units in Early Childhood Studies

Lead Teacher /Preschool Coordinator: Ms. Breanna ... 24 units in Early Childhood Studies

Lead Teacher: Teacher Kayla ... 18 units in Early Childhood Studies // Pursuing degree in Early Childhood Studies

Lead Teacher: Teacher Neidy... AA in Early Childhood Studies and pursuing BA in Child Development

Teacher Aide: Teacher Claudia... AA Early Childhood Studies// BA in Child Development

Teacher Aide: Teacher Kiana... 9 units in Early Childhood Studies

Teacher Aide: Teacher Karen...15 units in Early Childhood Studies

Teacher Aide: Teacher Reena... 6 units in Early Childhood Studies

Teacher Aide: Teacher Monica... 6 units in Early Childhood Studies

Teacher Aide: Teacher Karina... 15 units in Early Childhood Studies

TEACHER TO CHILD RATIOS

The YMCA Preschool follows licensing's 1 teacher to 12 student ratio, but strives for a 1 teacher to 10 student ratio. This rule applies to both indoor and outdoor classrooms. The class splits into two groups for part of their day by age.

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CURRICULUM

At the Santa Maria Valley YMCA Preschool, we use **Teaching Strategies GOLD®** and **The Creative Curriculum®** to guide our classroom planning and support each child's development.

The Creative Curriculum® is a research-based, comprehensive curriculum that supports the development of the whole child—socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. It is designed to be developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive, offering hands-on, play-based learning experiences that are both fun and meaningful. Our teachers plan activities and learning environments based on the interests and needs of the children, encouraging exploration, problem-solving, and creativity.

Teaching Strategies GOLD® is an assessment tool that helps our teachers observe, document, and understand your child's growth across all areas of development. This system allows us to track progress and tailor learning experiences to meet each child's individual goals. We share this information with families through regular conferences and updates, ensuring a strong home-school connection.

Together, these tools help us provide a high-quality early learning experience that prepares your child for success in school and in life.

YMCA Preschool Daily Schedule

7:00-8:00 Arrival. Child Choice Activity
8:00-8:15 Clean-Up. Good Morning song
8:15-8:30 Potty Break. Hand Washing. Transition into Snack
8:30-9:00 Morning Snack and Outdoor Classroom
9:00-9:10 Potty Break/Hand Washing. Group 1 Transitions Inside

Butterfly Group (Older Students) Ms. Neidy. Ms. Claudia

9:15-10:00 Circle Time and Morning Curriculum. Child Choice Activity
10:00-10:15 Clean-Up. Potty Break. Hand Washing. Transition to Outdoor Classroom
10:15-11:15 Outdoor Classroom
11:15-11:25 Clean-Up. Transition to Nap Set-Up

Caterpillar Group (Younger Students) Ms. Kayla Ms. Andrea Ms. Kiana

9:00-9:45 Outdoor Classroom
9:45-10:00 Clean-Up. Potty Break. Hand Washing. Transition to Circle Time
10:00-11:00 Circle time and Morning Curriculum. Child Choice Activity
11:00-11:20 Clean-Up. Transition to Nap Set-Up

11:30-12:00 Lunch
12-12:30 Potty Break. Hand Washing. Transition to Nap
12:30-2:30 Nap
2:30-2:45 Nap Clean-Up. Potty Break. Hand Washing. Transition to Snack
3:00-3:15 Snack
3:15-4:45 Outdoor Classroom
4:45-5:00 Clean-Up Outdoor Classroom. Transition to Circle Time
5:00 Circle Time. Afternoon Curriculum
5:00-6:00 Child Choice activity and departure

This schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the children and/weather

PROGRAM HOURS & DAYS

YMCA Preschool is open Monday through Friday. Our program begins at 7:00 a.m. and continues until 6:00 p.m. (See below days that center will be closed). **Please have your child here no later than 9:00 a.m.** unless arrangements have been made with program director. If a child arrives after 9:00 a.m. and no previous arrangements have been made, **the child will not be allowed to stay.**

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The Child Care Program does not operate on the following days:

New Year's Day	Fourth of July	Friday after Thanksgiving	October 16-17 th PD Days
Martin Luther King Day	Labor Day	Christmas Eve	Juneteenth
Presidents Day	March Teacher In Service Day	Christmas Eve- New Year's Day	Preschool Graduation Day (May 29)
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving	New Year's Eve	January 2nd

We will be closed **4 days** throughout the school year for an in-service cleanup day. Parents will be given a 30 day notice.

EARLY CLOSURES

The program will close at 12:00pm on the following days:

	Preschool Graduation Day Graduating students only in attendance half day to practice.	Day before Christmas eve (December 23 rd)
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Please note: Dates are subject to change. Preschool will notify guardians within 30 days if there is a change in schedule. For a full list of our YCP Calendar (closures and important dates) please refer to the separate page provided on the parent info board and on our website.

SIGN IN AND OUT PROCEDURES

Students must be signed in and out every day at time of arrival and departure by printing name and writing the time of drop off. Please be sure to always have your ID available, as staff can ask for it at any time. For your protection, only persons authorized, in writing, by the parents may pick up your child. ***The staff will question anyone who is unfamiliar to them and ask for identification to check their authorization.*** Should someone out of the norm need to pick up your child, please call program staff to let them know.

Anyone without proper authorization will be stopped from taking a child. Only registering parent/guardian may add or remove persons to the pick-up list. Children should arrive no later than 9 am. **Please note: once a child is signed out for the day, they may not return. (I.e: Signing child out at 11:00 for a doctor's appointment. Child may not return after appointment.) The latest we will accept a child due to a doctor's appointment will be 10:00 am.**

It is important to assist each child with routine and setting boundaries. Routines and consistency provide children with security and a safe environment. We ask that each parent or guardian take time to assist with making their child's day a successful one. We believe that by creating a routine at sign in by washing hands, entering the classroom together and getting settled in at each child's cubby, giving a hug and smile when leaving will help ease each child into their day and set them up for success.

A phone number must be provided for any additional persons listed to pick up the child or any time the parent will be out of the area/out of phone service.

In the event a child needs to be picked up due to sickness or behavior, parent/ guardian must be able to pick up within 30 minutes.

If YMCA staff are unable to reach anyone on the emergency contact list, law enforcement will be contacted after 60 minutes past preschool closure.

MONTHLY TUITION

The Santa Maria Valley YMCA child care department will not send you a monthly invoice. Your child care payment is due on the 1st of each month or the 1st and 15th should you opt for split payments. A late fee of \$30 will be added to your account if it is not paid on time. There are no adjustments in the monthly child care enrollment payment for absence or non-participation. Tuition can be automatically withdrawn from an EFT or credit card that we can keep on file. In the event the funds do not clear the member's account, the childcare enrollment will be suspended until payment is received.

Any change to the EFT system, (i.e. change of bank/credit card account, leaving the program, increasing fees to include an additional child) **must be received in writing by the YMCA 14 days prior to the month in which the change is to be effective.**

There is a \$30 service charge for any payment that does not clear the member's account, for any reason, including change in credit card expiration date. Returned payments may result in suspension or termination of YMCA child care services. Additional late fees may also apply.

****As the enrolling parent, you are responsible for *all fees* related to your child's participation.** This includes families that receive assistance through third party agencies (CHS, ODE, CRR, SBCEO etc.) such as co-pays and family fees.

Full-Time (5 Full Days)

Butterfly Class (Pre-K) \$980.00

Caterpillar Class (Toddler) \$1170.00

Part Time (3 Full Days, MWF)

Butterfly Class (Pre-K) \$735.00

Caterpillar Class (Toddler) \$877.00

Part Time (2 Full Days, T/TH)

Butterfly Class (Pre-K) \$588.00

Caterpillar Class (Toddler) \$702.00

THIRD PARTY AGENCY POLICY

Should your family use any third party agency to assist with paying for childcare, it is the parent's responsibility to properly fill out and sign monthly sign in sheet. Child Care Director will be responsible for mailing in appropriate forms. **Should the monthly sign in sheet not be filled out by the last day of the month, there will be a \$30 service charge and Child Care Director will complete.**

PART TIME OPTIONS / QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Part-Time Enrollment Requirements

Minimum Schedule:

Part-time enrollment requires a **minimum of 2 consistent days per week**. The YMCA may offer set schedule options such as **M/W/F** or **T/Th**, depending on availability. Custom or alternating weekly schedules are **not permitted**.

Consistent Weekly Schedule:

Part-time attendance days must remain **the same each week**.

- Days **cannot fluctuate** or rotate week to week.
- Temporary schedule swaps (e.g., "switch Tuesday for Thursday just this week") are **not allowed**.
- Part-time families may **not attend on non-scheduled days** unless pre-approved and space is available.

No Drop-In Care:

We do not offer drop-in care for children not scheduled to attend. Regular tuition will not be adjusted for missed scheduled days.

Tuition Based on Reserved Space:

Tuition for part-time enrollment is based on the **reserved space**, not daily attendance. Missing days or holidays does **not** result in credits or refunds.

Holidays & Center Closures

Full-time and part-time families follow the **same holiday and closure schedule**.

- If a holiday or closure falls on a child's scheduled day, **no make-up day or credit** is provided.
- Tuition remains the same regardless of closures.

Changes Between Full-Time and Part-Time Enrollment

Changes from part-time to full-time or full-time to part-time require:

- **A minimum of 2 weeks written notice**, and
- Notice must be received **14 days prior to the next billing cycle**.

If notice is received after this deadline, the change will begin the **following month**.

All schedule changes are **subject to space availability** and are **not guaranteed**.

To support stable staffing and classroom planning, families may change program type **no more than once per school year**, except in extenuating circumstances approved by the Preschool Director.

Priority Registration

Full-time students receive **priority registration** for the upcoming school year before part-time students or new families.

Part-Time Attendance on Field Trips

If a field trip is scheduled on a day your child **is not normally enrolled**:

- Your child may attend **only if accompanied by a parent or guardian**.
- The child will **not be counted in staff–child ratios** for that day.
- The parent must remain with the child for the **entire duration** of the trip.

Communication Expectations

Part-time families receive the **same communication** as full-time families.

It is the responsibility of all parents to:

- Check messages, calendars, emails, and posted notices regularly
- Stay informed even on days their child does not attend

This ensures all families remain up-to-date on center events, requirements, and changes.

WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM

Participants leaving the child care program are required to notify the YMCA Preschool Director in writing by sending an email to Diana Borjas at dborjas@smvymca.org. ***This step is required to stop the EFT payment and must be received 14 days prior to the month the child will be leaving the program regardless of the time of year.*** If 14 day written notice is not given there will be no credits or refunds given. After 30 days, unpaid accounts may be submitted to a collection service. Registration fees and increased participation fees will apply to any re-enrollment.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Those families unable to pay the full cost of participation are encouraged to apply for YMCA Scholarships made possible through the William and Lottie Daniel Childcare Scholarship Fund and the Santa Barbara Foundation. Please speak with your Child Care Director for more information on eligibility requirements.

PROGRAM COMMITMENT TO INCLUDE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The YMCA Child Care Program staff strives to respond to the needs of each individual child in a group care setting, 1:12 for preschool age children. The YMCA provides opportunities for involvement in large and small groups with a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. The YMCA childcare program is unable to provide one-to-one care for any child except on an intermittent basis, such as injuries, immediate disciplinary issues, and certain personal care needs customarily provided to other children.

The YMCA Child Care Program welcomes all children. To the extent it is reasonably able to do so, the YMCA program will provide services to children with disabilities or any special needs in the same manner as services provided for other children of comparable age. An individualized emergency care plan will be developed for any known medical or developmental problems or other conditions such as: allergies, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems.

It is essential that all pertinent information about the child's needs be available to staff from the start of enrollment and that a continuing bond of trust and mutual partnership exists for the benefit of the child.

Therefore, a **parent has the obligation to disclose significant medical, physical or behavioral issues at the time of the child's enrollment and on an ongoing basis.**

- If it is unclear whether The YMCA Child Care Program can reasonably accommodate the unique needs of a child, we will arrive at a final decision by reviewing the circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY ON CHILD GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE

Children's Appropriate Conduct

It is our intent that each child enjoys the activities planned by understanding that she/he is responsible for her/his actions. With prior knowledge of our basic rules of safety and good conduct, each child is made aware of how to exercise self-discipline. We are here to assist her/him and to know that we expect her/him to succeed. Character development is an important part of our program. We also use positive reinforcement by consistently acknowledging good behavior. Teachers will always offer students other options and will never take anything away from a child.

The expectations listed below are the general expectations we have for all our program participants:

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Safe

Character Code

Developing and displaying positive character values is very important to the YMCA. *Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility* is a large part of our commitment to offering a safe and exciting experience. It is imperative that our children agree to live by our Character Code while under our supervision.

**We CARE for ourselves and those around
us.
We earn each other's trust through
HONESTY.
We RESPECT each other and the
environment.
We are RESPONSIBLE for our own
choices.**

Process

As mentioned above, when positive behavior is displayed, the consequence is participation and enjoyment of planned activities. In cases of negative or inappropriate behavior, the following process will be employed:

1. **Reasoning and Redirection:** Every effort will be made to help the child understand the inappropriateness of her/his action and agree to an alternate form of behavior. Children may be redirected to alternative activities. When the conflict is child-to-child, every effort will be made to have them reason together face-to-face with staff facilitating.
2. **Removal from Specific Activity:** When reasoning has been pursued and has not changed behavior, removing the child from the activity involved for an appropriate amount of time may become necessary. The denied activity should be related to the misbehavior and the removal should not exceed 10 minutes.
3. **Parent Conference:** If the parent needs to be formally involved in the process, specific changes in behavior will be requested with specific consequences for non-compliance outlined in a personalized behavior contract. Whenever possible, the child is present and participates in these conferences. The goal is to define what changes need to be made to help the child be successful in the program.

Please read these expectations at home with your child:

WHILE AT PRESCHOOL, I WILL:

_____ Show Respect and Kindness to other Children Participants and staff	_____ Show responsibility by being helpful
_____ Be honest with other children participants and staff	_____ Respect the property of the Y and other participants
_____ Respect other people's feelings and differences	_____ Respect others by keeping your hands to yourself
_____ Have fun and it fun for others	_____ Respect others personal space

WHILE AT PRESCHOOL, I WILL NOT:

_____ Fight, "rough house" or behave unsafely	_____ Take things that don't belong to me
_____ Threaten or bully others	_____ Inappropriately touch others
_____ Use inappropriate language	_____ Bring toys or electronics from home

Challenging/Inappropriate Behavior

- 1) Any behavior that interferes with self or other child's learning, development and success at play
- 2) Any behavior that is harmful to the child, other children, or adults puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure.

Examples of challenging behaviors: physical aggression (hitting, biting, spitting, shoving, whacking with toys), relational aggression (verbal bullying, "you can't play with us"), running from classrooms or center, testing limits, refusal to follow directions, classroom rules and/or classroom schedule may lead to removal from the program.

Removal from Program for Inappropriate Behavior

In certain cases, if the child's behavior is continuously disruptive or dangerous the family will be required to remove the child from the program. Please note if a child hits, kicks, punches, or harms a teacher or YMCA staff member, the child will be removed from the program immediately.

Special Situations

In situations that indicate professional help may be necessary, a referral to a professional resource in the community can be made.

Behavior Management

The safety of a child is the highest priority for setting behavior management procedures.

- When a child has a serious discipline problem, (on any ONE occasion), the parent may be called by staff to request that the child be picked up within one half hour of the call. In households with split homes, both parents will be contacted (if both are listed on registration form). Hitting another child, biting, spitting, threatening or intimidating others, injuring another child or staff member or runs from the program center is a serious discipline problem.
- Should it be decided by YMCA staff that a child poses a serious discipline problem, the child may be suspended from the program for a period of 1-5 days, or may be removed from the program entirely

Behavior Contract

YMCA Child Participants have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that is in the best interests of the program, its students and staff.

Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to go over the Child Behavior Contract with their child(s), as we want to make all participants experiences a positive one.

The YMCA staff has a responsibility to support your child in the child care setting, be a role model and to follow all safety protocol, including behavior management. Along with a behavior contract, families may be referred to CALM or Santa Barbara County Ed when necessary.

What will happen when this contract is violated?

If an incident occurs where a child conducts himself/herself in such a manner which jeopardizes their safety, the safety of others, or is not in accordance with the mission of the YMCA, the following steps will be taken.

- 1. First Violation:** A staff member will address and document the issue directly with the child. The child may be removed from an activity for the day, free time, special activity or event, etc. Parents will be contacted during the day or at the end of day depending on the time and severity of the incident. Parents must sign the behavior slip at time of pick-up.
- 2. Second Violation:** A staff member will address and document the issue directly with the child. The parent or guardian will receive a phone call and may be asked to pick up their child within the hour. The child may or may not be allowed to attend YMCA Programing the next day that he/she is registered for. Parents must sign the behavior slip at the time of pick-up.
- 3. Third Violation:** A staff member will address and document the issue directly with the child. Parents may be contacted and asked to pick up their child immediately. The child may be put on a break for the day or week that he/she is registered for depending on the severity of the incident. Parents must sign the behavior slip at the time of pick-up.
- 4. Fourth Violation:** Child will be dismissed from YMCA Programing for the remainder of the program time and may be permanently expelled from YMCA program.

***Please Note:** We reserve the right at any time to dismiss your child from the program immediately if we deem unsafe placement due to environment, physical, emotional, or other harm to themselves, other children, and staff. We will work to determine if the program suits the need of your child and if your child's presence in the program jeopardizes the safety of other children and staff.

Child Abuse Reporting

Section 11166 of the California Penal Code requires any child care custodian, medical practitioner, or employee of a child protective agency who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment who he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse, to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

"Child Care Custodian" includes teachers, licensed day care workers, administrators, or community care facilities licensed to care for children, foster parents, and group home personnel.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATION

To ensure you and your child are getting the most out of your YMCA experience, we keep the lines of communication open through a variety of ways including: monthly newsletters, Parent Advisory Councils, flyers at parent table, parent/teacher conferences, classroom events, surveys, and feedback forms. You will receive

frequent communications from us, both in person and in writing, so you're constantly informed of your children's progress, achievements' and daily activities. The remind app is used daily to communicate with parents.

In order to ensure our staffs time is respected, we ask that communication amongst staff happens during regular programing hours- 7 am-6 pm. This includes the Remind App.

WAYS PARENTS CAN BE INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM

YMCA Annual Campaign

Each year, the YMCA holds its annual support campaign. This is where we create teams to work together to raise money from within the community to go towards our financial aid dollars. The YMCA Preschool has their own campaign team and we encourage families to be involved at whatever level they are comfortable. Whether it's making a personal donation, asking family and friends to donate or joining the campaign team, your involvement means the world to us! Please inquire with preschool coordinator if you are interested.

Classroom Involvement

Throughout the year, the preschool will put on events and holiday gatherings for students and families. We encourage all families to join us on these occasions. Some of them will include: St.Jude's Trike a Thon, Valentine's Day party, St. Patrick's Day Leprechaun hunt and party, Easter Egg Hunt, Graduation, Halloween Trick or Treating and Carnival, Thanksgiving Family Feast, Holiday Book Exchange, and Winter Gala performance. We love to have families participate as much as possible, but especially on these important events. Our preschoolers and staff love to learn about new cultures and family traditions. Parents/Guardians are always welcome to come in and share with the students about your families' culture and traditions.

Open Door Policy

The YMCA Preschool prides itself on having an open door policy, meaning parents are welcome to visit the preschool as often as they would like. Anyone visiting the preschool must be listed on the child's emergency contact form.

Parent Concerns

The YMCA is dedicated to developing and maintaining high levels of member service. We want to hear from you if we have not accomplished this goal. Please don't hesitate to contact Diana, Child Care Director at dborjas@smvymca.org or 805.937.8521. There is also an anonymous parent suggestion box hanging in the preschool hallway where we welcome any suggestions.

Potty Training Policy

Our childcare license covers children ages 2.5 to 5 years old. All children are expected to be fully potty trained as our teachers are not licensed to assist with potty training. By being potty trained, we expect that your child can successfully use the toilet on his or her own. We understand that accidents happen. If an accident does happen, parents will be notified via our remind app or by phone call. A teacher will graciously assist children to get cleaned up and in new clothes. If accidents occur five or more times in one week, that is an indication that there may be regression or something going on. Parents will be communicated each time an accident occurs. If there are five or more accidents in one week, a conversation around the child waiting a bit longer to stay enrolled in the program. Pull ups are not acceptable; underwear is the only option.

We encourage children to wear clothing that allows for easy restroom use. Please refrain from sending your child to school with a belt, one piece outfits, overalls, etc. These styles may make it more difficult for your child to use the restroom when they need to go.

MEDICATION DURING PROGRAM

Any medication which needs to be administered during program hours must:

- Be accompanied by "Permission to Medicate" form (available at the Program Center);
- Be brought directly to Program Coordinator in its **original** container with the child's name, physician's name and drug name clearly labeled on the container; and
- Have specific written instruction for dosage amounts, times, etc.
- Ongoing medication will require a new permission to medicate form each month

YMCA staff members **are not** permitted to administer any over-the-counter medication, such as aspirin, and cough medicine without having written instruction and dosage given by the child's physician.

****We are a NUT FREE classroom due to multiple children in our care having an allergy to nuts.**** Thank you for respecting this and ensuring that your child does not bring any type of nut into the classroom.

SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLENT

Please apply sunscreen to your child in the morning. If you would like sunscreen to be applied to your child in the afternoon, please send your child with a spray bottle of sunscreen SPF 15 or higher for application. Teachers will not apply sunscreen, but can supervise your child spraying themselves. An authorization form will need to be completed for the sunscreen to be applied during school hours. Insect repellent will be allowed to be brought in, only when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellent due to high risk of insect-borne disease. Parents must provide insect repellent containing DEET and fill out an authorization form.

WATER PLAY ACTIVITY

A water sensory table is available in the outdoor classroom for preschoolers to enjoy. Precautions are taken to ensure that water is kept clean and that water play does not spread infectious disease. Staff monitor the water table to ensure no child drinks the water. Children with sores, cuts or band-aids on their hands are not permitted to participate in the sensory table. The water in the sensory table is changed out between each group of children that is using the outdoor classroom. When the sensory table is not in use, the water is drained. During the summer, children will be provided the opportunity to have water play days. On these days, staff set up water activities such as water play tables, sprinklers and water toys. Parents will be asked to bring their child dressed in water play clothes, closed toed water shoes (Crocs work great), sunscreen already applied, a dry towel and a full set of dry clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, socks, dry shoes). If you wish for your child to not engage in water play days or water activities, please let preschool staff know and alternate activities will be arranged for your child.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents are highly encouraged to attend and transport their children to field trips with the preschool class. Permission slips and field trip information will be handed out to parents 30 days prior to the day of the trip. If you do not want your child to participate in the field trip, you will be responsible for making alternate arrangements in advance for that day. On field trip days, parents should ensure their child is at the program at least 45 minutes

prior to the departure time. When transporting your child we will need their car seat and completed permission slips with emergency contacts for the day. The seats in the Y vans are first come first serve, once the van is full, parent will be responsible for transporting child to field trip. Emergency forms, first aid-kits and any medications will all be taken with staff to any field trip. Children use a 'walking rope' when going on field trips. The same staff to child ratio applies during all field trips of 1:12, but will always strive for a 1:10.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

- Ensure the door is closed and secured
- Cell phones can be distracting and limit quality interactions with child and teacher. Please no cell phone use during drop off or pick up
- Ensure your child is signed in/out every day with your full legal signature and the exact time
- Hold your child's hand in the road and parking lot
- Encourage child to follow safety rules
- Report safety and supervision concerns to staff immediately
- Please do not leave any child unattended at any times.

PROPER HANDWASHING

All preschool staff and students follow proper handwashing procedures using soap and water. Staff will work with children to teach them the proper hand washing procedure, which is as follows:

*Wet your **hands** with water, apply soap. Lather your **hands** by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your **hands**, between your fingers, and under your nails. Scrub your **hands** for at least 20 seconds. Dry hands with paper towel, use paper towel to turn off water faucet.*

Hand sanitizer is available in the preschool for use when hand washing is not available.

We thank you for having your child wash their hands with soap and water in the centers restroom before entering the indoor or outdoor classroom.

CHILD ILLNESS

A visual health check is performed by teaching staff upon drop off each day. We make every effort to not spread illnesses. If your child becomes ill while at the program, we will call for them to be picked up immediately. Depending on the severity/contagiousness of the illness, the child may wait in the coordinator's office or a cot may be laid out in the classroom for the child to rest until parent arrives. A child taking antibiotics must be on medication for over 24 hours before allowed to return to the preschool. This health policy pertains to antibiotic drops and ointments as well as antibiotics prescribed for non-contagious illnesses, such as ear infections. Parents must notify the YMCA Child Care Director of the absence AND the nature of the absence on the day of the illness. All families will be made aware immediately if your child has been exposed to any communicable disease by phone call, letter and/or email.

Please keep your child at home if he or she has any of the following symptoms: Sore throat, nausea/vomiting, undiagnosed rash, cough, fever, diarrhea, headache, earache, or if your child is not able to fully participate in all activities. The following table serves as a guideline for excluding children from participation in the YMCA Early Childhood Program due to illness. One or more of these illnesses will determine when a child is excluded and may return to program.

When a child is to be excluded from care	When a child may return to school
Diarrhea	24 hours after diarrhea subsides

Fever	Without fever for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medication.
Vomiting	24 hours after vomiting subsides
Rash	When rash is no longer present or with a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious.
Lice (No Nit Policy)	Should your child be exposed to lice in the classroom, parents will be notified in writing. The center will be properly treated. Our priority is the safety and well-being of all the children in the program. <u>Staff will check upon child's return.</u>
Pink eye	When discharge and redness are no longer present or when treatment has been 48 hours.
Breathing difficulty and/or asthma	When child is able to breathe without difficulty/or nebulizer is provided
Cough	When cough has subsided or with a doctor's note saying cough is not contagious.
Nasal Discharge	When discharge clears or with a doctor's note saying discharge is not contagious.
Earache/Ear infection	At least 24 hours after taking antibiotics and when child is no longer in pain.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Senate Bill (SB) 277 (Pan) SB 277 eliminates the exemption to immunizations for children attending public school and child care based upon personal beliefs, leaving only the medical exemption in place. Your child must be fully immunized to attend the YMCA Preschool.

*A current copy of your child's immunization records and a physician's report completed by doctor is **due at time of enrollment**. Child will not be able to start without these forms. Updated health records will be required annually in July. Only registering parents, preschool staff and regulatory authorities will have access to child's file and health records. Should other agencies, programs or providers request information about the child, YMCA staff must receive written consent from registering parent before sharing information.*

CHRONIC HEALTH ISSUES

The YMCA Child Care Program will administer medications to children who have asthma, or who experience allergic reactions. The YMCA Child Care Program will not administer insulin shots. Any other substitute foods for raising blood sugar, such as honey, or orange juice, or other food substance, will be maintained at the parents' request if we are reasonably able to do so. **Parents must be reachable by the YMCA staff the entire time the child is at The YMCA Child Care Program.**

ILLNESS DURING PROGRAM HOURS

If your child becomes ill, she/he will be isolated from other children and will be made comfortable in a quiet area. We will contact you or your emergency contact (in the event we cannot reach you) to make arrangements for the

child to be picked up from the center **within 45 minutes**. It is required that we are able to contact parent /guardian and or emergency contact and that child is able to be picked up as soon as possible, within 45 minutes from phone call. It is a goal of the YMCA to provide a safe and healthy environment for all the children. The YMCA staff reserve the right to call an ambulance if they feel it is necessary or if a parent cannot have the child picked up in 30 minutes, this is reserved for children with breathing difficulties and high fevers.

INJURIES DURING PROGRAM HOURS

If your child is injured during program hours, the staff member in charge will take whatever steps may be necessary to obtain emergency medical care as warranted. These steps may include but are not limited to:

- Provide immediate first aid;
- Attempt to contact a parent or guardian or others listed on registration form
- In case of serious injury, appropriate emergency medical assistance will be contacted (911 will be called). A YMCA staff member will remain with the child until parents or another authorized adult arrives. YMCA staff may not transport program participants.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire drills are practiced monthly in the preschool. Earthquake and lockdown drills are practiced quarterly. In case of fire, or any other disaster, the children will immediately line up at the door with walking partners, and will be escorted out of the building and across the parking lot a safe distance away. Here the children will sit on the sidewalk with their teachers, roll will be taken and parents will be contacted. Staff have an emergency backpack that is fully stocked with a first aid kit and emergency contact information for each child. Earthquake drills are practiced quarterly in which children get underneath the tables as quickly as possible to protect themselves from an earthquake. We also run a lockdown drill quarterly, known as a starfish drill to the students, which is to prepare from outside invasion.

PRESCHOOL OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Many child care teachers and administrators, as well as parents, are unaware of the degree of positive impact that sophisticated outdoor play activity has on children's development, including their health, self-concept, and future school success. The philosophy of the Outdoor Classroom is that all children need and benefit from more time outdoors. This benefit affects development and learning. It is critical for physical health. Nearly every activity that can be done indoors can be done outdoors. Some activities can only occur outdoors. Other activities occur best outdoors. For children ages 0 to 5, development and learning outdoors is often easier and more beneficial than it is indoors. Full development and integration of outdoor and indoor programs creates the optimal learning and growing environment for young children. Children will get approximately 3 hours of outdoor play per day unless weather conditions and/or air quality pose as a health risk. When weather conditions keep children indoors, alternate physical activities will be planned in the classroom or large activities room at the YMCA.

CLOTHING/DRESS CODE

Please dress your child according to the weather/comfortable "PLAY" clothing. Children will be doing arts and crafts and going outside for activities; clothing may get soiled. Children should not wear clothing that will restrict activities. Closed toes shoes are required, and **NO** open-toe shoes or heels. Staff will send children home for dress code violation.

Every child must have **two complete extra sets of labeled clothing** (tops, bottoms, underwear, socks) on hand at the center and if possible one extra pair of shoes. Remember to change the size and season about late October and

April. If your child needs to be changed and does not have extra clothing/shoes at the center, we will contact you to bring clothing or have the child picked up.

Please label all of your child's clothing, lunch boxes and nap time bedding. Be sure to check your child's "cubby" at the end of each day. The YMCA will not be responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen articles. Please do not send valuables (toys, action figures, video games etc.) to the site with your child.

ABSCENSE/RUNNING LATE: If a child has a planned absence or a plan for a late arrival, we request advance notice through our remind app or email to ensure teacher is aware and can prepare accordingly.

LATE PICK-UP

YMCA licensed child care ends at 6:00 p.m., and our staff are scheduled to leave to tend to their own families and personal commitments. Parents need to ensure that their child is picked up before the end of the program.

Children become very worried when their parents do not arrive on time. Please contact the program center if you anticipate being late; this will ensure the comfort of your child. **You risk losing your child's spot in preschool if you are continuously late.**

Late Fees:

6:00 - 6:10 p.m. \$10.00 per child

6:11 – 6:30 p.m. \$30.00 per child

After 6:30 p.m. \$30.00 plus \$1.00 every minute thereafter

You risk dismissal from the program if:

- You fail to pay the late pick-up fee at the time of pick up.
- You are late in picking up your child(ren) three (3) times.

Parents must keep the YMCA office and Program Center notified of phone number changes for work, home and emergency contacts at all times.

EMERGENCY-CLOSING POLICY

In the event of an emergency closing or evacuation, the YMCA will follow the "Emergency Care and Disaster Plan" posted at the YMCA Program Center. Please see your Program Center Director for details

NAPPING POLICY

Preschoolers have a scheduled nap time daily after lunch from 12:30pm-2:30pm. Preschool provides individual cots which are numbered to ensure each child uses the same cot daily. Children who do not choose to nap may rest and read quietly on their cots, but they must remain on their cots. If child is disruptive during nap time, not offering the other children time to rest and/or getting off of their nap cot, they will be sent home for the day.

A soothing atmosphere is provided, complete with soft music and patting of backs to calm and relax them. In order to help us in providing a peaceful nap time environment, **we ask that children are not picked up during nap time between 12:30-2:30pm.** Families must provide a blanket and crib sheet for your child. Nap belongings must fit in the top of your child's cubby. Please no large pillows or soft animals. Crib sheets and blankets must be **taken home every Friday** to be washed. Preschool staff disinfect nap cots **daily.**

BIRTHDAYS

Students are welcome to celebrate their birthday at preschool. Please let the preschool staff know that you would like to bring in a special treat and we will celebrate after nap time. As we try to encourage healthy living, please refrain from bringing in sweets such as cookies or cupcakes.

Preferred birthday treats:

- Your child's favorite snack
- Fresh fruits/veggies
- 100% juice popsicles
- Yogurt
- Crackers and hummus

SNACKS & LUNCHES

The preschool provides AM & PM snacks, parents must provide a lunch. Their lunch must contain: 1 dairy product, 1 fruit, 1 vegetable, a beverage- water or 100% juice only, main course (i.e. sandwich, pasta, soup, etc.). **Lunches must arrive with child in the morning. No fast food will be allowed.** Uneaten food will be packed back into the lunch box so that you may see how much and what your child has eaten. Staff sit with children at every meal time to assist them as needed and engage in conversation.

Please note: *refrigeration and/or warming up of food cannot be provided so please do not send perishable items or items that need to be cooked or heated up.*

Please inform the YMCA Child Care Director or teacher of any allergies.

Please, no hot dogs, nuts, popcorn, pretzels, spoonful of peanut butter (it will always be spread onto bread or cracker) raw peas, chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

**Staff ensure that all food served at snack time is cut into ½ inch pieces as a choking precaution.*

SCHOOL READINESS

Children will get many opportunities throughout the day to explore through play. Continually observing children in natural settings is the best way to determine a child's abilities and readiness, along with their interests and needs. There will be a portfolio of your child's progress of concept development, numbers, language, writing, reading, social and emotional development, physical development, health and safety. The following factors will contribute to your child's success in school.

- **Physical well-being:** Good health care, proper nutrition and physical activity promote children's development and are fundamental for learning.
- **Emotional well-being:** Children need recognition for their attempts to learn and to explore new situations. Children who receive praise from parents and caregivers develop self-confidence and are more willing to learn new things.
- **Social skills:** Children also need to develop social skills in order to work with others and to talk about new ideas; this interaction can lead to an exchange of ideas and increased understanding.
- **Communication skills:** the ability to understand and to express ideas through language is the cornerstone of learning.
- **General knowledge:** parents and caregivers can help children learn by encouraging their interests and their natural curiosity about the world.

- **Approach to learning:** how children approach learning is important as what they know. Curiosity, persistence, the ability to work independently, and the ability to listen all help children learn.

ASSESSMENTS

ASQ

The YMCA Preschool uses two assessment tools to assess students. One is the ASQ-3 and is designed for children from birth to age 5. We ask families to complete the assessment at home upon enrollment and observe what they see from their child in their own environment. Teachers then assess the child in a school setting and we all meet for a parent teacher conference to discuss results.

ASQ – SE

The ASQ: SE-2 is a social-emotional assessment that evaluates 7 key areas including self-regulation, compliance, communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people. This helps us to determine if there may be social-emotional developmental delays. YMCA Preschool staff may give referrals to parents based upon these results.

Completing the ASQ-3 is mandatory upon enrolling at the YMCA Preschool. **

The Portfolio

Here at the preschool we keep a child portfolio collecting pieces of evidence to document their development. The portfolio includes:

- Photos of the child interacting and playing
- Language samples (dictated stories, records of conversations)
- Anecdotal notes (written notes highlighting typical or significant events)
- Writing and drawing samples

The portfolio will be shared during parent teacher conferences.

Additional Support

When staff feel that there may be a developmental delay, special need or that more support is needed, teachers will schedule meetings with families to discuss the particular concern, or to support the family during a time of need. The Coordinator, as well as the Director, are available when families have concerns or need support. All information will remain confidential and families will receive documentation and assessment results with an explanation of the concern. Referrals for children with special needs are based on the observations of the teachers, the coordinators, and the family, as well as the outcomes of the DRDP. The primary decision will always be made solely by the family, but staff are available to give support and advice as needed. Staff encourage families to advocate for the child and receive whatever services their child may benefit from.

Assessments are designed to support us in focusing on the child. Trusting relationships between families, teachers, children and other program staff will always be the most important tool we have in creating a program that keeps each child's best interest at heart.

Parent Conference:

Parent/teacher conferences are offered twice a year for parents to meet with teachers and discuss their child's DRDP assessment and portfolio. This is an opportunity for teachers and parents/guardians to talk about their child's progress and for teachers to answer any questions/concerns they may have. Families are given a written summary of the DRDP including the goals that were collaboratively written. The Child Developmental Progress form is used as a tool for teachers to share information with families. Families will be given a copy of the summary form. Teachers encourage the parent to share in the goal writing process by ascertaining what their goals are for their child, by better understanding the culture of the family and by asking families to participate in classroom activities.

****Teachers are available to talk with families at arrival and departure times and a policy of open communication between teachers and families is strongly supported.**

Parent handbook, preschool tours and any other communication can be translated upon request.