



Hamilton Area YMCA Early Childhood Program

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We hope that this Parent Handbook will be helpful to you in understanding our policies and procedures. We ask that you read it carefully and refer to it as needed. Should you have any questions, please call us.

Please sign the **Handbook Acknowledgement Form** and return it to us immediately. In this way we can be sure you have received a copy of the Handbook and understand the Center's policies and procedures.

The Hamilton Area YMCA Early Childhood Program is a state-licensed program. The Program serves children 3 to 5 years old, and provides a warm, nurturing environment in which your child can discover and develop his or her individual potential for physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth.

Program Goals

- To help your child develop a positive self-image.
- To provide an environment that is warm, caring, encouraging, consistent, safe, and full of respect for each individual.
- To provide experiences and activities which will encourage the developmental state of your child physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and creatively.
- To help your child relate comfortably to peers and adults.
- To provide opportunities for development of gross and fine motor skills, using music, art and physical activities.
- To implement a curriculum based on age appropriate activities to develop skills in self-help, language, math readiness, reading readiness, science exploration, dramatic play, creative arts, and social studies.

Mission Statement

The YMCA is a charitable association dedicated to building a healthy spirit mind and body. Part of a world-wide movement, it puts Christian principles into practice through programs that promote good health, strong families, youth leadership, community development, and international understanding. YMCA's are open to men, women and children of all ages, incomes, abilities, races, and religions.

The Hamilton Area YMCA EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

REGISTRATION:

All registration forms must be submitted prior to a child's admission to the programs. Parents are responsible for notifying the office of any changes in information such as new phone numbers or address that occur during the year. A YMCA program youth membership, tour of the facility, classroom visitation and parent interview is required for enrollment.

A non-refundable, non-transferable \$25.00 registration fee, per child, is required at time of registration.

ALL IMMUNIZATION AND PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CHILD'S START DATE.

To enter the 3 year old program in September, the child must be 3 by October 1st of that school year and potty trained.

To enter the 4 year old program in September, the child must be 4 by October 1st of that school year and potty trained.

October 1st is the cut off date implemented by the Hamilton Township School District and will ensure that your child will not be refused admission to kindergarten because of age requirements.

TUITION PAYMENTS:

Person signing enrollment application will be held responsible for tuition payments. Monthly tuition will be due by the 25th day prior to the month of service. All late payments received will incur a \$10 late fee, per child, per program. September's tuition is due by August 25 in order for your child to start on the first day of the program. There is a discount for the second child enrolled in the family. The same monthly tuition rate is charged for each month regardless of holidays, or emergency school closings. There is no credit for days missed due to vacation, illness, suspension or other circumstances.

PAYMENT METHOD:

The Hamilton Area YMCA does not bill for services. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to make sure tuition payments are made on time each month.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

There is financial assistance for all who qualify. Applications are available on our website at www.hamiltonymca.org.

WITHDRAWAL:

A schedule change or withdrawal from the program requires written notice. Please use the Schedule Change/Drop Request Form located under Resources and submit to the Childcare Registrar by the 15th day of the prior month to the withdrawal date.

PROGRAM CHANGES:

The Hamilton Area YMCA reserves the right to increase tuition with thirty days (30) days advance notice and to change the times and sessions of the programs offered.

CHILD CARE TAX CREDIT

Please save your child care receipts for tax information. Our tax ID number is 21-070-2879.

DROP OFF

Your child must be signed in each day by a parent or guardian **18 years of age or older**. Please complete sign in form accurately.

PICK UP

Your child must be signed out each day by a parent or guardian **18 years of age or older**. Please complete sign out form accurately. Never leave the center with your child until you are sure the teacher in charge knows you have taken him/her.

AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE

A child will not be released to any person other than a parent/guardian or those authorized to care for him/her. Notify the Director in writing if a person other than those authorized will be picking up the child. This person will be required to show identification until the staff becomes familiar with him/her. You will want to inform any persons picking up your child that identification will be required.

If there is a court order of legal custody, the site Director must have a copy in order to deny a parent permission to take a child from the Center

LATE PICKUP:

If you are late picking up your child, the following fees will be charged:

- 15 minutes \$10.00
- 16-30 minutes \$20.00
- 31-45 minutes \$30.00
- 45-60 minutes \$40.00

If alternative arrangements are unavailable, we are required to notify the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) if a child is not picked up within one hour of closing.

TOILET TRAINING

Our Early Childhood Program requires that all children are to be toilet trained, including the ability to wipe themselves.

If an accident occurs, the child will be changed and the soiled or wet clothes will be placed in a plastic bag. If the accidents are frequent, we will schedule a conference with the parents. Parents will be called to come to the site if their child has a bowel movement accident that is messy.

CLOTHING

Sneakers are required each day. For your child's safety, boots, sandals, flip flops, crocs or dress shoes are not allowed. Children should wear comfortable play clothes that are child friendly and can get dirty.

SUNSCREEN POLICY

Please put sunscreen on your child, if warranted, before bringing him/her to the site each morning. If you would like your child to put on sunscreen at school, please bring it in with his/her name written on it in permanent marker. Staff can only apply lotion to children's faces. Staff will direct children in applying lotion on themselves.

TOYS

Each site provides a variety of toys for the children. Toys are not to be brought to the site from home unless the teacher schedules a "Show and Tell" day. At NO time are guns, weapons, large toys, or toys with sharp edges allowed.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We welcome parents to visit! Parents of enrolled children may visit the site at any time without having to secure prior approval from the Director or any staff member. Please see your child's teacher for specific guidelines.

If you are interested in volunteering in the classroom, please notify the

teacher. If you have a special skill or talent you would like to share with the children, please let us know.

Please keep us informed of any changes which may have an effect on your child – new baby, moving, divorce, death in the family, etc.

NUTRITION

The Early Childhood Program is a “peanut/tree nut-free” environment. Absolutely no products containing peanuts, peanut butter, or tree nuts of any kind will be allowed. This includes products made in a facility that processes tree nuts/peanuts or **may contain** tree nuts/peanuts. Please read all ingredients carefully! Please inform the Director/Teacher of any food allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have.

Any food considered a potential choking hazard such as carrots, grapes and popcorn may not be brought into the Center. Candy, soda or glass containers are also not permitted in the Center. Please see “Foods from Home” Policy located under Resources.

POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

A. The Center’s policy on the release of children shall include:

1. The provision that each child may be released only to the child’s custodial parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the custodial parent(s) to take the child from the YMCA and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the custodial parent(s) cannot be reached.
2. The provision that if a non-custodial parent has been denied access to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect and maintain a copy on file.

B. Procedures to be followed by staff member(s) if the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), as specified above in A. 1. , fails to pick up a child at the time of the center’s daily closing, shall require that:

1. The child is supervised at all times;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his or her parent(s) or authorized person(s) have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the Division’s 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800/792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child’s parent(s) is able to pick-up the child; and

C. Procedures to be followed by a staff member(s) if the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), as specified above in A. 1., appear to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgement of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk or harm if released to such an individual, shall require that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual.
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. If the Center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the Division's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800/792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

MEDICAL POLICIES

Illness: We are concerned with the health and welfare of each child. In order to prevent illness from being spread to classmates, please observe the following guidelines:

- Children may not attend school with fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. (Allow 24 hours before returning).
- In the event that your child becomes ill at school, a teacher or administrator will contact you. Upon notification, we require that your child be picked up from school within one hour.
- Children sent home from school must be free of symptoms, (i.e., fever, vomiting) for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Please contact the Director of your site if your child will not be attending school. Call by 9:00 A.M. and provide the school with the reason for absence.

Injury: If medical care is necessary, any of the following steps might be taken:

1. Attempt to contact parent or guardian.
2. Attempt to contact person on the emergency form.
3. Take child to hospital if no responsible person can be reached.
4. An ambulance or paramedics may be summoned.

Medication: For specific guidelines and information with regard to medication administration please speak to Early Childhood Director or your child's Teacher.

*Over-the-counter medication must be accompanied by a doctor's note prescribing that medication.

*Cough drops are not permitted.

POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she should not attend school. If such symptoms occur at school, the child will be removed from the classroom and you will be called to take him/her home.

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Sore throat or severe coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes lasting longer than 24 hours
- Swollen joints
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- Stiff neck
- Blood in urine

If a child contracts any of the following diseases, please report it to us immediately.

TABLE OF EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Respiratory Illness

Chicken Pox

German Measles *

Hemophilus Influenzae*

Measles *

Mumps *

Meningococcus *

Strep Throat

Tuberculosis *

Whooping Cough*

Gastro-Intestinal Illness

Campylobacter

Escherichia coli

Giardia Lamblia *

Hepatitis A *

Salmonella *

Shigella *

Contact Illness

Impetigo

Lice

Scabies

Shingles

* Reportable diseases, as specified in N.J.A.C. 10:122-7, 10 (a).

If your child is exposed to any of the above diseases at school, you will be notified in writing.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult.

Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells the child what they should not do; positive discipline tells the child what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

Using positive discipline:

- Re-direct to a new activity to change the focus of a child's behavior.
- Provide individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation.
- Use time-out – by removing a child for a few minutes from the area or activity so that he/she may gain self-control. At this time the child will remain under the supervision of a staff member.
- Provide alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings.
- Point out natural or logical consequences of children's behavior.
- Offer a choice only if there are two acceptable options.
- Criticize the behavior, not the child. Don't say "bad boy" or "bad girl."
- Respond to and reinforce positive behavior; acknowledge or praise to let the child know you approve of what he/she is doing.
- Provide positive reinforcement through rewards for good behavior.
- Use encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism.
- Give caring to every child every day.
- Appreciate the child's point of view.

We appreciate your cooperation and involvement in your child's school experience. It's important that we work as partners to ensure the best possible educational environment for your child.

INFORMATION TO PARENTS STATEMENT

Our Center is required by the State Child Care Licensing law to be licensed by the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services. A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our Center. Look for it when you're in the Center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our Center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may secure a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers, for a nominal fee, by writing to the Bureau of Licensing, Division of Youth and Family Services, CN 717, Trenton, NJ 08625.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of the Center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of requirements. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our Center may be in violation of licensing standards, you are entitled to report us to the Bureau of licensing. Of course, we would appreciate you bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our Center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parent(s) or people authorized by the parent(s) to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the Center.

Our Center must have a policy about dispensing medicine and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Parents are entitled to review the Center's copy of the Bureau of Licensing's Inspection/Violation reports on the Center, which are issued after every State licensing inspection of our Center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the Bureau's Complaint Investigation Summary report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the Center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review.

Our Center must cooperate with all DYFS inspections/investigations. DYFS staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our Center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our Center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Bureau for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the Center's space.

Our Center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to participate in and observe the activities of the Center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the Center should discuss their interest with the Center Director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our Center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the Director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our Center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing or special event away from the Center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by an adult, whether working at the Center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the Division of Youth and Family Services; Office of Child Abuse Control, Toll free at 800/792-8610, or to any District Office. Such reports may be made anonymously.

Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: Community Education Office, Division of Youth and Family Services, CN 717, Trenton, NJ 08625.