



YMCA OF MEMPHIS & THE MID-SOUTH

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER



EARLY LEARNING FAMILY HANDBOOK



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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WELCOME

Dear YMCA Child Care Family,

Welcome to Early Learning at the YMCA! We are pleased that you have chosen the YMCA to care for your children. We offer a wide variety of exciting and enriching programs for you and your family. YMCA Child Care programs are tons of fun but also instructive for life. Our staff provides activities that have a positive, life-long impact on your child through:

- Developing self-confidence and independence
- Communicating core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility
- Encouraging learning and exploration in a supportive environment
- Infusing fun and good health into activities each day

Positive relationships among kids, staff and parents are critical for each child's healthy development and social growth. A small ratio of children to staff enables Y teachers to engage in activities and conversations with each child every day. In our quality programs, staff is upbeat and interacts with children using warmth, patience, understanding and equality. In addition they:

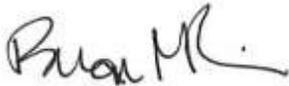
- Are responsive to kid's feelings, needs, cultures, abilities and languages
- Encourage leadership skills by letting them offer ideas to expand or enrich an activity and suggest and initiate activities
- Allow children, as a key part of learning, to make and learn from their own mistakes

We also make sure that there are positive relationships among staff. We know the children look to Y staff as role models, watching and learning as they cooperate, communicate and solve problems with each other.

This handbook is provided to help answer any questions regarding policies and procedures for the operation of our childcare centers. Your child's safety and well-being is our primary concern. If you should need further explanation or have any questions or concerns, our office and childcare staff will be happy to assist you.

We look forward to having you as part of our Y family!

Sincerely,



Brian McLaughlin
Vice President of Operations
YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South



Pam Hupp
Executive Director
Childcare Services



Leslie Gatlin
Childcare Center Director
Child Development Center

PARTNERING WITH YOU

A great program requires a partnership between staff and parents. As a partner in your child's success in our program, you have free access at all times, to all areas of the classroom used by your child. We invite you to become familiar with the staff and encourage you to visit and to participate in the program as often as possible.

Parent/Staff Communication

At the Y, we strive to provide you with timely and relevant information on our program that helps engage you as a partner in your child's success from bi-annual satisfaction surveys and parent teacher conferences to monthly newsletters and from daily informal communication to program learning objectives. Please feel free to provide suggestions for improvement of these communication tools to best support you and your family at the Y.

YMCA CORE VALUES

The YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South is committed to a value-based character development curriculum. The following core values are incorporated into all youth activities:

Honesty: Fairness of conduct and adherence to facts. Other virtues that relate to this concept include sincerity, truthfulness, honor, tact, forgiveness, moderation, orderliness.

Respect: Special regard for others, including assertiveness, consideration, courtesy, gentleness, unity, tolerance, humility.

Responsibility: Moral, legal and mental accountability, including courage, determination, helpfulness, justice, reliability, loyalty, self-discipline, obedience, cleanliness.

Caring: Interest and concern, including compassion, friendliness, generosity, kindness, love, mercy

High Five & Character Counts Communication Tools

We will use High Five Reports to communicate with you when your child has exemplified Y Values or as a way to reinforce positive behavior and choices. When children demonstrate behavior that is incongruent to our Y Values, we will use a Character Counts Form to communicate with guardian. These behaviors may include being disrespectful to other children or staff, dishonesty, destruction of property or failing to carry out responsibilities. Families will receive written Character Counts Reports for behaviors recorded by staff in conversation with your child. The Character Counts are sent home and a copy is placed in the child's records. If a child receives one to three (dependent upon the offense) Character Counts Reports, the Center Director, child and parents will have a formal conference to determine a plan of action.

Through our values based programs, we expect all our participants to uphold the YMCA values of respect, responsibility, caring, and honesty. We are aware that children sometimes copy the behaviors of other children. Therefore, in order for a child to understand the seriousness of their actions, any child engaging in behavior that is inappropriate at the YMCA, will receive disciplinary action. This No Tolerance Policy along with the Character Counts Reports will provide more effective communication regarding a child's behavior.

Any problems your child may be having at home may affect his/her behavior in the Y program. Please keep the Center Director informed so that we can be sensitive to your child's needs. Any information of a confidential nature will be shared only with those who need to know.

PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

OUR CAUSE . . . YMCA OF MEMPHIS & THE MID-SOUTH

To strengthen the foundations of Community. We are for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

YMCA OF MEMPHIS & THE MID-SOUTH MISSION STATEMENT

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

YMCA Child Care programs will stimulate a child's physical, social, intellectual and emotional development. We use small group experiences that are developmentally appropriate.

In YMCA Child Care programs, your child will:

- Develop physically, emotionally and socially through a variety of safe, developmentally appropriate and challenging experiences.
- Support learning objectives: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language and Cognitive Development.
- Expand awareness and appreciation for the natural world.
- Learn and display the four core values of the YMCA: Honesty, Respect, Responsibility and Caring.
- Increase appreciation for their own family, friends and surrounding community.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

All people are welcome at the YMCA regardless of race, sex, age, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology or abilities. Children and parents who have limited English language ability will be assisted with the translation of written information or with an interpreter. Contact the Childcare Director to make necessary arrangements.

In our efforts to promote an awareness and understanding of the world around us, lessons about customs and celebrations of other cultures are a part of our curriculum. YMCA Child Care will reflect and respect the diversity in our community. Religious education is not part of our program.

The YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South is committed to providing developmentally and culturally appropriate programming that respects, reflects, and supports children and families, cultivates an understanding among children and staff, and incorporates an anti-bias approach to curriculum. We are committed to a gender-balanced, non-stereotypical curriculum where all children are allowed and encouraged to participate in all activities, free from conflict and that are consistent with the YMCA values. The YMCA staff respect all cultures and belief systems and encourages children to talk about their thoughts in an open and honest way that promotes interactions. Our program encourages families, extended families and the community to share interests, hobbies, cultural information and activities. The YMCA is committed to inclusion of all people in our community.

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

The YMCA has an open enrollment policy on a first come first served basis during the initial enrollment period with priority to current participants, facility members and siblings to children currently enrolled. Inquiries and referrals are accepted over the phone and an appointment can be scheduled for a family to visit the center.

Registration forms include:

- Youth Program Registration Packet
 - Emergency Pick Up Information
 - Health History
- Childcare Registration form
- Certificate of Immunization
- Payment Authorization Form
- Illness Policy Acknowledgement
- Sign In/Out Policy Acknowledgement
- Parent Questionnaire
- Statement of Understanding Policies & Procedures
- *Protect Your Child From Abuse When You Child Is Not With You* booklet – available at ymcamemphis.org

No child will be admitted to the YMCA Early Learning Programs without these forms on file. Immunizations need to be current and recorded on the appropriate form prior to enrollment. The Parent Questionnaire is an optional form that will help us to include some of children's experiences and culture into our program. New registration forms must be completed by parents each year prior to the beginning of each school year (August), and updated if necessary.

WAITING LIST

The Childcare Director will place families on the waiting list for enrollment in the program as requests are received. When a space becomes available, a family is offered an opportunity to enroll based on the date on which their child was placed on the waiting list. An available space can be held no longer than 7 days after notification of the opening. A parent wishing to guarantee enrollment is required to pay the registration and activity fees to hold the child's space within 7 days of the space becoming available. The payment to secure the spot is non-refundable.

PAYMENTS, CREDITS AND REFUND POLICY

For Tuition Rates, please see the Childcare Director.

If a **fee increase** occurs, it will typically occur annually in August. This moderate fee increase accommodates annual staff salary adjustments based on merit as well as any additional operating costs anticipated for the upcoming year (rent, licensing fees, etc.). Tuition for our childcare program pays for all of the direct operating costs. Staff, food, supplies and transportation must be available for your child whether or not he/she attends. Therefore, days missed cannot be deducted from your fee. Full-time tuition includes one week of vacation programmed into the year after your child has been enrolled for at least 6 months.

Weekly tuition is due on the Friday before each week of care, through bank draft or recurring credit card. At the time of registration, you will be required to fill out a payment authorization form. A late payment fee of \$20 is assessed on past due accounts. The YMCA reserves the right to terminate childcare due to of lack of payment.

The YMCA offers several options for payments:

- Weekly Payments
- Bi-weekly Payment
- Monthly Payments
- Child and Adult Care Food Program Enrollment Form
- All payments are done recurring through Credit Card, Debt card, or Checking or Savings Account Transfer (EFTs)

Insufficient Funds: Checks, credit cards or bank drafts returned for insufficient funds or account closure will be assessed a \$30.00 processing fee. It is further understood that if payment is not honored by the bank (or credit institution), then the YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South, at its discretion, may resubmit the amount due for payment on a future date.

Cancellations and Transfers

For cancellations or transfers, we require written notice 14 days prior to the next scheduled draft. This can be done by submitting the form online. Tuition will be adjusted if necessary through program refund or credit memo. Failure to do so will make the subsequent draft non-refundable. Deposits, registration, and activity fees are non-refundable.

Balances will be due at the time of cancellation. Parents are liable for any fees the YMCA may incur in its effort to collect any remaining balance due.

Exceptions to this policy will only be made by the Childcare Director in extreme emergencies, and documentation **must** be provided to support the request.

Separated/ Divorced Parents

The parent/guardian who registers the child for childcare at a YMCA Early Learning programs will be designated the business contact responsible for payment. The YMCA may accept enrollment of a child from any parent/guardian or other adult who will make payment for care.

The YMCA will hold the parent/guardian with the business relationship responsible for full payment for care services. Separate bills apportioning payment between separated/divorced parents is not provided.

The YMCA will provide financial information only to the parent who has the business relationship. This information may include scholarship awards, payment records and attendance records. If the YMCA is presented with a valid subpoena or

other court order, we will comply with the subpoena or court order and provide the information requested. There may be a fee to cover the costs of providing the requested information.

Subsidized Care

We accept children whose care is subsidized by DHS. If your child receives subsidized care, a copy of your award letter must be available for the YMCA prior to your child beginning care. We are unable to accept children for care without authorization from DHS. Please contact your caseworker to arrange childcare in sufficient time prior to your child starting at the YMCA. **If you have a childcare subsidy and fail to pay your co-pay, it is reportable DHS. Failure to pay could have an impact on your childcare subsidy and could put you at risk of having your subsidy terminated.**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to subsidized assistance above, limited financial assistance and flexible payment plans are available through the YMCA for every program we offer. These funds are made possible through our Annual Campaign and the United Way.

PART -TIME CARE

The YMCA does not sell part time care on a regular basis. On a limited basis, exception may be reviewed and approved by the Center Director. Typically, any part-time care request would need to be offset by a parent requesting care for the alternate days or times. This service is available as space and staffing permits.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

We realize that custody decisions and parenting plans are very important to both parents. **However, we are not a party to any custody orders and not in a position to enforce parenting plans.** If both parents are listed on the Youth Program Registration form, both parents may pick up regardless of the custody agreement. Any disagreements must be addressed by the parents away from the center. Please make sure you have established clear expectations between the parties. We do honor restraining orders, anti-harassment orders, or other court orders created for the protection of the child. Please provide a copy to the Childcare Director.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The YMCA considers personal information confidential and has policies and procedures in place to protect it against unlawful use and disclosure. By "personal information," we mean information that relates to your child and family. Personal information does not include publicly available information or information that is available or reported in a summarized or aggregate fashion but does not identify you.

All children and family personal information remains confidential and the YMCA does not share any information without parent/guardian permission unless required by law.

HOURS OF OPERATION

YMCA Early Learning programs are a year round program. The center is open Monday-Friday from 6:30 am – 6:30 pm, and it is not open on weekends or the **holidays** listed below.

We expect that children are in care for **no more than 10 hours per day**. This is a Tennessee State law requirement. If you have questions concerning this policy, please contact the Childcare Director.

YMCA Early Learning programs will be closed on the following days:

- Annual Facility Improvement/Cleaning (length of time varies, typically 1-2 days)
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day (Staff Training Day)
- Thanksgiving Day
- The day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day*
- New Year's Day*
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day (Staff Training Day)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day*

*If the holiday falls on a Saturday, there will be no care on the preceding Friday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, there will be no care the following Monday. Signs and communication will remind families in advance of holiday closures.

Our tuition is based on annual average days attending. Therefore, we do not prorate for vacations, holidays, or in-service days.

DAILY SIGN-IN/OUT PROCEDURES

- A sign in/out area will be available when you arrive at the site.
- You must sign your full name on the roster/iPad when dropping off and picking up your child.
- Your child will only be released to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult listed on the Youth Program Registration Form.
- Identification will be checked daily.
- For the safety of your child, we will not release your child to anyone who appears under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, but will assist in making other arrangements for transportation home.
- Pick up your child on time each day. If an emergency arises and you are unable to reach the site before closing, call the staff to inform them of your progress.

DAILY ATTENDANCE

We encourage all parents to strive to have their child arrive by **9:30 am** daily in order to maximize their development opportunities while in our YMCA care. Important focused small group and structured activities take place between 9:00 – 11:00 am, which are key to the development of each child. If you know your child will not arrive by that time for a schedule conflict, please let us know in advance.

For programming purposes, it is important to call the center if your child will be absent on a regularly scheduled day so we have an adequate count of children for meals and to determine staffing needs for the day. Refunds will not be made for absences, holidays or weather related/emergency closing of the site.

A **doctor's note is required** for a child to return following a communicable disease. Please see the Illness Policy.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Children must be picked up by 6:30pm, the time the site closes.

If an emergency arises and you are unable to reach the site by close, please let us know when we can expect your child(ren) to be picked up. We will notify the Department of Children's Services or the police when children are left in a program without notification from families and when no contacts can be reached to pick up the child.

Each center follows these guidelines in response to a late pick-up:

1. If family is late for pick up, immediately after 6:30 pm staff will try to call the family to ensure that someone is on the way to pick up the child. If the family is not reachable, staff will notify emergency contacts and ask for pick up.
2. If the family and emergency contacts cannot be reached within 30 minutes, staff notifies the DCS and police.
3. A late fee is charged. This fee is \$1 for every minute the parent is late with a \$10 minimum that will be billed to your account and will be withdrawn in addition to your weekly fee.
4. If your child is picked up late on three occasions, your child's participation in the program may be suspended or terminated.

We will follow these steps:

a. **1st time late:**

- The Program Supervisor reinforces the closing time, and documents in the child's file the late pick up. Staff reinforces late pick up policy, and gives the family a copy of Late Policy.

b. **2nd time late:**

- Staff will provide written notification about being late, listing the 1st and 2nd time being late on the notification form. The Program Supervisor will notify the Childcare Director.

The Childcare Director will contact the family either by phone or in person to problem solve how to ensure that it does not happen again. A new program that will better suit family needs may be suggested.

c. **3rd time late:**

- The Childcare Director will work on progressive discipline (may include suspension or termination of care).

Late pick up policy is strictly followed and enforced.

TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

6:30 - 8:30	Arrival, Child-Initiated Activities (dramatic play, blocks, puzzles, table toys)
8:30- 9:00	Breakfast Snack
9:00 - 11:00	Structured Time / Circle Time, Concepts, Music, Interest Centers
11:00 - 12:30	Gross Motor/Outdoor Play
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 3:00	Naptime/ Rest Time
1:45 - 3:00	Quiet Activity Time for Non-sleepers
2:30 - 3:00	Afternoon Snack
3:00 - 5:15	Structure Time—music, stories, interest centers, large motor activities
5:15 - 5:30	Late Snack
5:30 - 6:30	Child initiated activities/Combining into one classroom for the end of the day.

Schedules vary depending on the site and needs of the children. Please have your child at the site by 9:30 am so your child can participate in structured developmentally appropriate learning activities.

The program is designed with care to develop each child's individual skills and personality while encouraging sharing and cooperation. Your child will experience a wide range of ideas and activities to stimulate his/her creativity, self-esteem and independence. The curriculum is also designed to spark your child's imagination and encourage lifelong, positive values. With this foundation, learning becomes a more natural process.

MEALS AND SNACKS SERVED

Mealtime is a very important part of the daily routine in YMCA Early Learning programs. Mealtimes are educational opportunities and social occasions. Children in every classroom eat family-style meals. All children in full-day care are offered a healthy and nutritious morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack daily for children in care more than 9 hours. Each snack served at our center includes two of the following components: dairy product (milk, butter, yogurt); protein (cheese, meat, beans); bread product (bagel, crackers); fruit, vegetable or juice. All snacks are pre-washed, pre-cut and pre-prepared.

MEALTIME SCHEDULE

Meals meet Child and Adult Care Food Program standards, and the YMCA is part of this program. The YMCA makes a conscious effort to provide low-sugar, colorful, appealing, diverse and nutritious food. Meals and snack times vary by classroom, but follow a similar schedule to the one below:

Breakfast Snack	8:30 – 9:00
Lunch	11:30 – 12:30
Afternoon Snack	2:30 – 3:00

MEAL PATTERNS

<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Morning /Afternoon Snack</u>	<u>Lunch</u>
Milk	Two selections from:	Milk
Grain/bread	Fruit/vegetable	Meat/meat alternate
Fruit, vegetable, or	Meat/meat alternate	Fruit/vegetable (2)
Meat/meat alternate	Grain/bread	Grain/bread

Weekly menus are prepared at least one month in advance and posted for your review on the Parent Information Board. A written list of foods that your child cannot consume is provided by parents on the registration form; dietary restrictions and nutritional requirements for particular children are posted for the staff. It is not possible for us to provide nutrient concentrates or supplements except with written permission from your child's health care provider. If you would like to bring in a special treat for your child's classroom, please check in advance with the teacher. Our policy is that shared treats for the classroom need to be "store bought" for food safety reasons. Please feel free to discuss any food issues with the Childcare Director.

PEANUT AND NUT ALLERGIES

To help the YMCA create a safe environment for children with life-threatening nut allergies, our sites are **nut-free**. Food containing nuts or traces of nuts of any kind are not permitted on the premises. If you have any questions, please speak with the Childcare Director.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a special time for children and we are happy to help you celebrate their special day! You are welcome to send a treat (store –bought ONLY) on your child's birthday. Due to health and allergy requirements, no homemade food will be served to other children. Please check with your child's teacher to make arrangements and learn about any food allergies. We ask that birthday party invitations not to be handed out directly to children to avoid any hurt feelings unless all children are invited.

THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM

When your child participates in our YMCA Early Learning program, your child benefits from a comprehensive, carefully designed and research-based curriculum model provided by *The Creative Curriculum*®. The YMCA's mission, philosophy, program objectives and initiatives are integrated into *The Creative Curriculum*® to create an approach that is unique to the Y. An overview of *The Creative Curriculum*® is available online at www.creativecurriculum.com.

The curriculum is based on:

- Specific needs and interests of the children.
- Talents and abilities of the staff.
- Unique needs of a particular YMCA community.
- Resources within a YMCA and its surrounding community.
- The latest research on how children learn best.

The eight core content areas include:

- **Literacy:** includes increased vocabulary and language; phonological awareness; knowledge of print, letters and words; comprehension; understanding of books and other texts; and literacy creating a sense of enjoyment.
- **Mathematics:** includes numbers concepts; patterns and relationships; geometry and spatial sense; measurement; and data collection, organization and representation.
- **Science:** encompassing physical science (physical properties of materials and objects, such as weights, shapes, size, color and temperatures); life science (learning about living things such as plants and animals); and the earth and environment (the natural world - land, sky and weather).
- **Social Studies:** includes the study of people and how they relate to spaces and geography; how they live; the environment around them and past events.
- **Arts:** includes dance, music, theater or performing arts and the visual arts.
- **Technology:** includes the study of tools, machines, materials, techniques and the source of power that makes work easier and solves problems.
- **Healthy Habits:** includes healthy nutritional choices, physical activity and personal safety.
- **Social and Moral Development**

The program is carefully designed to develop each child's individual skills and personality while encouraging sharing and cooperation. Your child will experience a wide range of ideas and activities that will stimulate his/her creativity, self-esteem, and independence. The curriculum is also designed to spark your child's imagination and to encourage lifelong, positive values. With this foundation, learning becomes a more natural process.

CLASSROOM TRANSITION PLAN

- **Infant (6 weeks—12 months):**
Program runs August—August
Children move up to Toddler room on or after their 1st birthday, as space permits
- **Toddler 1 (12 months – 30 months):**
Program runs August—August
Children move up to the Preschool room on or after the turn 30 months, as space permits
- **Pre-K:**
Program runs August – June
Parents have the option to attend one of our Summer Camp Programs when the children is entering Kindergarten

Parent Communication:

- Parents will receive a "Classroom Transition Letter" at least one month prior to transition date.
- Parents will have the opportunity to discuss the need for transition with their classroom teacher.
- Parents will have the opportunity to meet with new classroom teacher.
- Parents will be informed of any changes in fees.

PARENT/STAFF COMMUNICATION

We know that through effective communication, and a mutual trust and respect, we can build stronger bonds between our staff and the families we serve. We believe that a high quality program focusing on the best interest of the child requires open and ongoing communication between parents/guardians and staff. We encourage you to become involved in your child's development and our enrichment programs. A schedule of activities and a newsletter is provided to you to keep you informed of program plans, special events and updates.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice per year, usually in fall and spring. More parent-teacher conferences may be scheduled when needed/requested by the teacher or parents/guardians.

Communication Log Is provided in each classroom near the sign-in/out register where the parent/guardian may leave notes for their child's teachers.

Posted Information Each classroom teacher will provide lesson plans. A Parent Information Board located near the sign-in/out register or each classroom will also have policies posted for your review, as well as other information.

Daily Report about child's day is provided.

Parent satisfaction survey is provided online for parent/guardian feedback twice per year in fall and spring. The YMCA respects the confidentiality of all sensitive information shared with us.

Confidential Information shared between children and families may be shared with other YMCA staff in order to provide a safe environment for your child. At no time will any information (names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail address or health/behavior conditions) be shared with non YMCA staff.

Grievances

Any individual grievance that the family may have regarding the care of their child or with the policies or practices of the Y should first be addressed with the child's teacher. If the problem is not satisfactorily resolved, the family may request a meeting with the Childcare Director. If the problem is still not satisfactorily resolved, the family may request a meeting with Y Executive Director of Childcare. If the problem is still not satisfactorily resolved, the family may request a meeting with the Vice President of Operations.

WHAT TO SEND WITH YOUR CHILD

Two changes of clothing (including socks), blanket and crib sheet for the mattress, warm jacket and bathing suit for swimming as needed.

For children who are NOT potty-trained parents will need to supply diapers and wipes for their child. If children require diaper cream, a medication form must be completed and the medication procedures apply.

For children who are not eating solid food, parents will be required to provide the food for the child and the child must have a meal plan for the staff to follow for feeding schedules.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Please do not send gum, candy, toys, electronic games, weapons or other personal belongings with your child. Too often, these items of emotional value are lost or broken and are not easily replaced. The teacher will post sharing day or special projects. The YMCA is not responsible for any lost, stolen or broken items.

Personal toys are to remain at home however, your child may bring a soft doll or stuffed animal only to sleep with during naptime.

LOST AND FOUND

Please label all clothing and items brought to the Y Program with your child's first initial and last name. A lost and found box will be located in the classroom or center. At the end of each month, unclaimed items are donated to Goodwill.

STAFF RATIOS AND TRAINING

Staff to child ratio:

Single-Age Grouping	8	12	14	16	18	20	No Max
Infants: Six (6) wks.– Fifteen (15) mos.	1:4						
Toddlers (Twelve (12) mos.–Thirty (30) mos.)		1:6					
Two (2) years (Twenty-Four (24) mos.– Thirty-Five (35) mos.)			1:7				
Three (3) years					1:9		
Four (4) years						1:13	
Five (5) years						1:16	
School-Age (K and above)							1:20

These ratios are maintained to ensure individual attention and proper supervision. Each center has a Director or Program Supervisor who meets the qualifications and experience working with children as outlined in the state standards. He/she is responsible for the overall site operation including staff supervision and program development.

Most of our staff have previous experience working with children and all attend regularly scheduled training events. The YMCA is committed to providing the initial 30 hours and on-going 10 hours of state mandated STARS trainings to all employees, including two Professional Development Days. All staff members have a current TB test, maintain current certifications in CPR and First Aid and are trained in HIV/Aids/Blood Bourne Pathogens and Child Abuse Prevention. In addition, staff and volunteers are thoroughly screened (including criminal history checks/ Drug Screens) prior to employment. Performance appraisals are conducted on a regular basis to ensure continued high performance.

To protect our staff and volunteers, we request that you **do not** ask a YMCA employee or volunteer to baby sit for your child(ren). Our staff **are not** allowed to attend any functions with your child(ren) outside of YMCA programs, including sleepovers, birthday parties, etc.

BATHROOM POLICY

Some centers have single person bathrooms in the classroom that are monitored by staff. If the bathroom is outside of the classroom, staff will accompany a group of children to the restroom and schedule bathroom breaks when an entire group uses facilities. If a child needs to go at other times, staff will take a small group– as many children as needed so that the other staff is still within ratio. Staff will not go with just one child. Groups of children are not allowed to go unaccompanied by an adult.

Only one child at a time will be allowed to use the restroom UNLESS more than one toilet is available for children's use and staff can orally and visually supervise the interactions of children.

*Restrooms accessible to the public are checked prior to use by children to ensure safety.

PARENT /GUARDIAN ACCESS

As the parent/guardian of a child in our program, you have free access at all times to all areas of the center used by your child. We invite you to become familiar with the staff and encourage you to visit and participate in the program as often as possible. Parents/guardians are encouraged to join their children for an occasional lunch. If during your visit you wish to discuss an individual matter, please schedule a meeting with the classroom teacher at a time when he/she is not involved with children.

Parents/guardians will be given individual and unique codes to access the center. Please do not give this code out to anyone, including other family members. If this code has been compromised, please notify the center staff immediately so that we can issue a new code to you. If you are sending someone else who does not regularly pick up the child, they must ring the doorbell and show a photo ID to enter the center. The YMCA reserves the right to remove compromised codes and reserves the right to refuse entry by code.

Children are not allowed to press the exit button - this is for adults only. Allowing children to push the button, compromises the safety of our children. Please help us teach the children that the exit button is for adults only.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

The YMCA is committed to providing a positive atmosphere that is safe and inclusive to all in our community. The YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South's **Code of Conduct** governs the actions and behavior of all people while in our facilities and while participating in YMCA programs.

Individuals are expected to:

- Uphold the YMCA core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and caring.
- Provide an atmosphere free of derogatory or unwelcome comments, conduct or actions of a sexual nature, or actions based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation or any other legally protected status.
- Be respectful and cooperative with YMCA staff and others.

Other behaviors that are NOT be tolerated in our childcare programs include:

- Improper exposure.
- Abusive, harassing and/or obscene language or gestures.
- Threats of harm, physical aggression, violent acts or bullying.
- Possessing weapons of any kind.
- Damaging or defacing property.
- Offensive conduct.
- Purposely leaving the area of supervision without permission.

The YMCA strives to meet the needs of all children by setting guidelines and boundaries appropriate to each stage of development. If problems arise, we will use the following sequential procedures:

1. The child is encouraged to use his/her words to try to solve the situation peacefully.
2. The child is redirected to a new activity.
3. The child is removed from the situation until he/she is able to rejoin the group.
4. Parents/ guardians are alerted and encouraged to share ideas.
5. Parents/guardians and staff conference will be held with recommendations for an immediate behavior contract or short-term suspension from care.
6. The last resort is complete removal of the child from the program.

As a partner in your child's success, we encourage you to share information with us that may affect your child's behavior. We are committed to working with you in the best interest of your child and the rest of the children in our care.

We understand there is a wide variety of behaviors that children may display, so the YMCA reserves the right to make the decision to suspend or expel a child based on the physical or emotional safety of the child, other children in the program and the staff. In a situation that poses a threat to the child or others, parents may be called to come immediately to pick-up their child, or the child may be separated from the group for the remainder of the day.

Families will receive written **Y High 5's** for positive behaviors and **Character Counts** for behaviors needing attention. The reports are sent home and a copy is put in the child's records. Through our values based programs, we expect all of our participants to uphold the YMCA values of **respect, responsibility, caring and honesty. Please help us in emphasizing the YMCA values and making this a safe environment for all.**

Individuals who experience or observe inappropriate conduct are encouraged to promptly report their concern to YMCA staff. Every effort is made to ensure that reports are investigated and resolved promptly and effectively.

If you have concerns about the behavior of another child in our program, please discuss the matter with the classroom teacher or supervisor. It is inappropriate for a parent to confront a child or their parent or guardian.

We do not use or endorse any form of corporal punishment by anyone in our programs, including parents/guardians, which includes biting, jerking, shaking, spanking, slapping, hitting, kicking, verbal threats or any other means of inflicting physical pain.

In order to best serve the needs of your child, it is necessary that you inform the YMCA of existing health and/or behavioral problems. Confidential information is shared only with those who need to know.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW REQUIREMENTS

The YMCA staff with Tennessee State Law to that mandates immediate reporting to the police and/or the Department of Children's Services, any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or child neglect or exploitation. Notification of parents/ guardians if this occurs is based upon the recommendation of Child Protective Services or the police. Our staff has received training in the recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

STATEMENT FOR PREVENTION OF ABUSE

A principal endeavor of the YMCA is to provide a healthy atmosphere for the growth and development of youth and children. Thus, the mistreatment or neglect of youth or children and the resulting severe effects are of primary concern to the YMCA. Child abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of a child by parents or others resulting in injury or harm. Abuse can lead to severe emotional, physical, and behavioral problems. Because of our concern for the welfare of children and youth, the YMCA has developed policies, standards, guidelines, and training to aid in the detection and prevention of child abuse. In addition, all employees are screened, and background checks are conducted upon hiring or rehiring. Additionally, employees who have contact with children and youth receive training in recognizing, reporting, and preventing child abuse, which includes training in recognizing signs that a child is being groomed for abuse. Some of the guidelines employees are expected to follow are:

- Avoid being alone with a single child where you cannot be observed by other staff or adults
- You may not relate to children who participate in YMCA programs outside of approved YMCA activities. For example, baby-sitting weekend trips, foster care etc. are not permitted. An exception must be approved in advance by the Childcare Director, Childcare Executive Director and VP of Operations.
- Giving personal gifts to program participants or their parents is not allowed
- Program rules and boundaries must be followed, including appropriate touch guidelines
- Children or youth should not be singled out for favored attention
- Dating a program participant under age 18 is not allowed. Some YMCA programs may have additional restrictions
- Children may not be disciplined by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
- Verbally, physically, sexually, or emotionally abusing or punishing children or youth is not allowed.
- Children may be informed in a manner that is age appropriate to the group of their right to set their own "touching" limits for personal safety.
- Children should only be released to authorized persons in programs with controlled pick-up procedures.
- Any information regarding abuse or potential abuse should be documented in writing.
- At the first reasonable cause to believe that *any* child abuse exists, it should be reported to a supervisor so that proper reporting can be initiated.
- At the first reasonable cause to believe that an *employee* or *volunteer* abused a child or youth, even if it was not during working hours, his or her conduct should be reported to the program director and the branch executive or another designated branch representative. Additionally, it is the YMCA's protocol to make a report to the appropriate authorities. Appropriate actions will be taken regarding the employee or volunteer, including suspension or termination from YMCA employment or volunteer status.

Confidentiality of information related to child abuse is crucial and should be limited to the immediate supervisor and designated members of the Association office.

PRACTICES CONCERNING AN ILL CHILD

The YMCA cannot knowingly accept children for care when they are ill. Center staff will observe each child upon arrival and if your child is experiencing any of the following symptoms, we will call and ask that other arrangements be made for his/her care until the illness subsides. Staff caring for children will follow the same guidelines if they are ill. We will separate your child from the other children until you arrive. In the case of a staff member, they will be sent home and a substitute arranged.

Your child needs to stay home 24 hours after the occurrence of any of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 100 F and one of the following: diarrhea, sore throat, earache, rash and signs of irritability or confusion
- Vomiting on 2 or more occasions within the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea - 3 or more watery stools in a 24 hour period unless a doctor's note stating that it is not communicable
- Draining rash
- Eye discharge or pink eye
- Too tired or too sick to participate in daily activities
- Lice or nits*
- Communicable diseases

*If your child had lice or nits, he/she must be completely free of lice and nits to be able to return to the classroom.

A record of illnesses is maintained in a log as required by state licensing and we will report communicable diseases as necessary to the local Health Department. We will also notify other parents/guardians in the center of any illness so that they can take appropriate action to protect their children, but we do not share names or any other personal or confidential information.

In order to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases, the staff will take the following precautions:

1. All blood and bodily fluids are treated as potentially infectious.
2. Staff wash their hands with soap and water before eating, after cleaning up spills of body fluids, after assisting a child in the bathroom, after changing a diaper, after going to the toilet, after providing first aid to anyone, after wiping a nose or mouth and after using disposable gloves.
3. Staff must use disposable gloves when there is a potential of contact with blood or other body fluids.
4. Staff wipe their hands with an antiseptic wipe or cleanser in an emergency where soap and running water are not available, and then hands are washed as soon as possible.
5. Staff cleanse all surfaces with a bleach solution or an EPA registered germicide on a regular basis.
6. Each classroom is equipped with first aid and biohazard kits.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

If it is necessary for your child to take medications while he/she is in our care, please give it directly to a staff member when you sign-in your child, rather than giving it to your child. **Written parental consent is required for us to administer any medication.** Medications are stored in a locked box out of the reach of children and administration records are maintained in a medication log. The classroom lead teacher will be responsible for administering medication as per doctor's or parents instructions.

The medication duration, dosage, amount and frequency must be specified on consent do not exceed label recommendation. Written consent for medications cover only the course of illness or specific episode. Written consent for sunscreen is valid up to 6 months. For life threatening and or chronic illness (i.e. asthma, allergies, diabetes, ADHD) you will be required to fill out a medical plan. This plan will contain information about the signs of an emergency and steps to take if a child needs daily and/or emergency medication. A trained office staff will administer ADHD medications; it is counted and secured safely.

All medication must be in its original container with dosage properly labeled including your child's full name, date the prescription was filled, medication's expiration date, and legible instructions for administration on the prescription label. To give liquid medication, you must also provide a measuring device designed specifically for oral or liquid medications. Any unused medication will be returned to you or properly disposed.

The following non-prescription medications require written parental consent and will be given only at the dosage, duration, and method of administration specified on the manufacturer's label for the age and/or weight of your child:

- Anti-itching ointments or lotions, intended specifically to relieve itching or dry skin
- Sunscreen
- Diaper ointment
- Medicated lip balm
- Mouthwash

A physician's written authorization is required for any non-prescription medication that is:

- Not included in the above list
- Antihistamines
- Non-aspirin fever reducers/pain relievers
- Decongestants or non-narcotic cough suppressant
- To be taken differently than indicated on the manufacturer's label
- Lacks labeled instructions (i.e. "Children under age 6 consult a physician")

We cannot give aspirin except with a written authorization from a physician.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

The registration form completed to enroll your child in our program included a medical release giving us permission to seek medical attention for your child in case of an emergency. **Please update this form at the front office in writing as necessary with any changes in home, work or medical emergency contact information.**

In the case of life threatening emergencies, a member of our staff will immediately call 911, administer the appropriate First Aid and CPR and notify you as quickly as possible. If you cannot be reached, your designated emergency contact will be notified. If transportation to the hospital is needed, a staff member will accompany your child and will stay with him/her until you arrive.

For minor emergencies and injuries, all of our staff are trained in first aid and will administer as needed. A staff member will then contact you to come and care for your child if additional care is needed. For minor injuries that do not require us to notify you immediately, an accident report will be given to you when you pick up your child explaining what happened and how the situation was treated.

Accident reports are completed for our records and recorded in our Injury Log. We are required to notify the Department of Human Services, by phone and in writing, of any serious injuries that require medical treatment, illnesses that require hospitalization, occurrence of food poisoning or communicable disease.

The hospitals used for emergencies are:

St. Francis Bartlett
2986 Kate Bond Road
Memphis, TN 38133
Phone 901-820-7000

Methodist LeBonheur Children's Hospital
848 Adams Ave,
Memphis, TN 38103
Phone 901-287-5437

TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIPS

Our program may use a YMCA mini bus for transportation on field trips away from the building for children preschool age and older. Each preschool age child is required to have a car seat and wear a special seatbelt harness when riding on the mini bus and the capacity of riders never exceeds the number of seat belts available.

Drivers of our vehicles are thoroughly screened and authorized by the YMCA insurance company, based on experience and good driving records, to safely operate our vehicles. Each driver has a current driver's license, current First Aid and CPR certification and participates in an approved YMCA defensive driver's training program. Our vehicles are maintained regularly and inspected daily before being driven.

We will notify you at least one month prior to a field trip. **Parents/guardians will be required to sign a field trip permission form. Approval over the phone is not acceptable.**

INSURANCE

It is the responsibility of every parent or legal guardian, to provide for their own accident and health coverage for their children while participating in all YMCA activities. The YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South does not provide any accident or health coverage for its participants.

CHILD SAFETY

As a partner in your child's success, the YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South is committed to providing a safe environment for all participants and staff. We work hard to create an environment that is both physically and emotionally safe for children. If at any time you are concerned about the physical or emotional health of your child, please do not hesitate to speak to a staff member or call the Childcare Director/Supervisor.

PERSONAL SAFETY TALKS

As part of our program, staff engages in discussions designed to increase children's understanding of touching and personal space limits. YMCA staff will model the use of correct words for body parts and functions, and respond to conversations and questions in age appropriate ways. Staff members assist children with understanding their own limits and how to express themselves if they are uncomfortable or believe something is wrong. If you would like to learn more about Personal Safety Talks, please see the Childcare Director/ Supervisor. The brochure *Protect Your Child From Abuse When Your Child Is Not With You* is available from any YMCA branch or on the ymcamemphis.org website.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN DURING TRANSITIONS

YMCA staff is required to do face and name checks when transitions occur. Examples of transitions are moving from the classroom to the playground and back, changing activities, use of transportation, etc. Staff utilizes many different techniques for supervising children during transitions, including the buddy system, roster checks and additional staff to help with transitions.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

All sites practice monthly fire drills and have a posted evacuation plan. We are also practicing quarterly drills in other emergency situations. The YMCA has written emergency policies for a variety of issues which are posted. A copy may be obtained from the Program Director/ Supervisor.

DISASTER PLAN

A disaster plan has been designed for response to fire, natural disasters and other emergencies. The plan addresses what we will do if there is a disaster, and if parents/guardians are not able to get their children for two or three days.

The children will be evacuated from the building until it is deemed safe to return by officials. There will be one designated check point station that will be immediately identified after a major emergency for the release of children. All classrooms doors will be locked. Any person picking up a child must be listed on the child's registration form and bring their photo ID at time of pick-up.

The Childcare Director is responsible for posting the disaster plan in every classroom and making it accessible to parents/guardians and staff.

Immediately after an emergency incident, classroom teachers will be responsible for assessing their area, accounting for each child by referencing the classroom attendance list/rosters, evacuating the classroom, and providing reassurance to children. Each classroom has rosters, emergency contact information and emergency supplies in a backpack that teachers take in the event they need to leave the classroom. Roll call and head counts are conducted to ensure all children are supervised and safe at all times. Children in the program with special needs will be addressed during and after an emergency by referring to each child's Special Needs Plan.

- We will provide care for children in the program until parents/guardians can pick them up by utilizing the YMCA disaster kits to ensure the children are nourished and cared for.
- We will be in contact with parents/guardians or other authorized persons to arrange for pick up of children via the Site phone or via staff cell phones if necessary.
- If transportation is necessary, we will utilize either the YMCA mini-buses, or other available transportation.
- **It is extremely important that your child's registration form contain current information. To make changes you will need to submit the new information to the Program Director in writing.**

EMERGENCY CLOSURES / INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, we may have to close without prior notice. When possible, YMCA staff will use available means to contact parents regarding weather related closures. We will also maintain and update information on our weather line, to the fullest extent possible.

Early Learning programs are closed when the YMCA or local schools are closed due to inclement weather. If the YMCA or schools are opening two hours late, we will also open two hours late. When conditions allow, staff will try to open the center as close to normal operating times as possible. Please make sure that an authorized staff member is available to supervise the center before leaving your child.

The emergency inclement weather line telephone number is **901-505-0959**. Information will be updated hourly if the situation changes.

PET POLICY

Our classrooms may have a pet. This gives children responsibility for feeding and caring for animals. A designated staff in each classroom will be responsible for the pet's environment and supervision of the learning opportunities.

Reptiles and amphibians will be in a self-contained area except during educational activities. Children five years of age or less will not physically handle reptiles and amphibians.

List of Possible Pets: rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, fish or insects.

Accommodating arrangements can be made if your child has allergies to any of these pets.

PESTICIDE POLICY

You will be notified at least 48 hours in advance of the application of any pesticides, as we receive notification from the city. This notification will include the product name of the pesticide being used, intended date and time of application, pesticide application location, the pest to be controlled, and the name and number of a contact person at the site. Signs and/or markers will be posted following the application of the pesticide. These will state, "This landscape has recently been sprayed or treated with pesticides." They will also state who has treated the landscape and who to call for more information.

CULTURALLY RELEVANT/ANTI-BIAS STATEMENT

The YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South Family and Child Programs are committed to providing developmentally and culturally appropriate services that respect, support and reflect children and families in our programs, cultivate understanding and caring among children, families and staff, and incorporate an anti-bias approach to curriculum. At the YMCA, we recruit diverse staff and are committed to providing career development opportunities that include training on culturally relevant, anti-bias practices and building stronger relationships among children, families and YMCA staff.

We are committed to a gender-balanced, non-stereotypical curriculum where all children will be allowed and encouraged to participate in all activities, free from conflict and consistent with the YMCA values. The YMCA staff respect all cultures and belief systems and encourage children to talk about their thoughts in an open and honest way that promotes positive interactions. Our program encourages families, extended families and the community to share interests, hobbies and cultural information and activities.

ADA COMPLIANCE AND SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

The YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South seeks to serve all people. It is our intention to include people of all abilities in our programs in the most integrated setting and wherever it is reasonably possible to do so. This includes individuals with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, individuals with a record of such impairment or individuals who are regarded as having such impairment. We hope that many of the changes we make to accommodate

disabled individuals also will provide us with facilities and services that will better serve all people, not just those with disabilities.

Despite our best efforts, it may not be possible in certain circumstances for the YMCA to accommodate the disability or special needs of a particular child. This occurs in two circumstances:

- The individual's disability or special needs present a significant risk to the health or safety of others and such risk cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level; and
- The required accommodation would require a fundamental change to the YMCA's youth programs or otherwise would present an undue burden for the YMCA.

For some children, special accommodation needs may appear later, or may change over time. The YMCA will make ongoing assessments of your child's needs, and will require the parent or legal guardian's involvement in this process. Failure to share information about your child that identifies special care, accommodations or supervision needs may jeopardize the placement of or continued participation by your child in the program. All children are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct or stated behavior expectations.

YMCA staff members are encouraging, patient and helpful in paving a pathway for children with mild to moderate disabilities to succeed at YMCA Programs. We are not equipped nor staffed to work with children who need significant assistance with personal care, constant one-on-one support or have great difficulty in managing their behavior in a group setting.

If your child has a significant health issue or a special need, please contact the Program Supervisor to discuss appropriate accommodations.

VOLUNTEERS

At the YMCA, we welcome parents or guardians to help throughout the day in your child's programs. We also offer many other volunteer opportunities such as helping with field trips, administrative work, classroom decorations, youth sports and involvement in our Annual Campaign. Please speak with staff or Childcare Director/ Supervisor for more information.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

Our grievance process is designed to address your concerns, complaints and problems.

Any individual grievance that a family may have regarding the care of their child or with the policies or practices of the YMCA should be addressed with the child's teacher within five calendar days of the incident referred to in the grievance.

If the problem is not satisfactorily resolved, the family may request a meeting with the Childcare Director or Assistant Program Supervisor within 10 days of the original incident.

If the problem is still not satisfactorily resolved, the family may request a meeting with the YMCA Childcare Executive Director within 15 days of the original incident. If no resolution is obtained at this level, the family may submit the grievance in writing within 30 days of the original incident to the Vice President of Operations of the YMCA Memphis & the Mid-South.

Thank you for enrolling your children in our program!

We hope this handbook has answered any questions you may have about our program. If you need further assistance, please call the Childcare Director/ Supervisor and we will be glad to answer any other questions you may have.

We are glad to have you as a part of our Y family!

YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South website: ymcamemphis.org