



LICENSED PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Parent Handbook & Resource Guide

2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

TAMPA METROPOLITAN AREA YMCA



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WELCOME/PURPOSE STATEMENT

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We extend a warm welcome to our families joining the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA Licensed Preschool Program! We are excited to have your child join our vibrant learning community. At the Tampa Y, we are dedicated to providing a top-quality program that is not only safe but also enriching for your child. Our approach emphasizes learning through play, allowing children to explore and learn at their own pace.

Our primary objective is to encourage children to become active, creative thinkers who are willing to explore their ideas and develop critical thinking skills. We aim to equip your child with a solid foundation in academics, character values, and social skills to prepare them for future success.

Our preschool team is committed to building strong partnerships with families and the community to ensure each child's self-reliance. We take pride in our qualified and compassionate staff members who are dedicated to promoting the social, emotional, and physical well-being of every child.

We look forward to partnering with you on this exciting journey of learning.

This is the official Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA Licensed Preschool Program Parent Handbook. This handbook serves as a valuable resource, providing essential information about our curriculum, the academic calendar, payment information, program requirements and much more. We trust that this handbook will be beneficial to you and your family throughout your time in our program.

Thank you for choosing our program, and welcome to the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA Licensed Preschool Program!

Sincerely,

Tampa YMCA Preschool Program Leadership

PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

Licensed Preschool Mission Statement

The Tampa YMCA preschool program is committed to forming partnerships with families and the community to cultivate a strong foundation for self-reliance.

- We provide quality educational opportunities for ALL children and their families in a safe and nurturing environment.
- We employ qualified and caring staff committed to the social, emotional, and physical well-being of all children.
- "Strengthening the community one family at a time."

Purpose Statement

At the Y we value a teaching environment that is diverse, nurturing, comforting and safe.

Vision Statement

Building Families, Building Communities: The Foundation of Success Begins with Our Licensed Preschool Program.

What you can expect from the YMCA

- You and your child will be treated fairly and with respect.
- Our staff are trained to the Florida State Licensing Requirements and Y requirements.
- Our staff members provide quality care and a safe environment.
- You will be informed of behavior concerns and work with you to create a plan to support your child.
- We are fully dedicated to ensuring a safe and joyful experience for you and your family.

What we ask of families

- Follow our core values: honesty, respect, responsibility, caring, and health.
- Commitment to your child's learning experiences at the YMCA.
- Be a champion, along with us, in your child's development.
- Help in developing a consistent plan to work through behavioral concerns.

OUR TRAINING AND CREDENTIALS

Our Quality Staff

Ensuring the quality of our staff is a top priority in our childcare program. We carefully select our staff based on their experience, competence, and education to ensure that we have the most highly qualified individuals to care for your children. We seek staff with childcare education, relevant certifications, ongoing training, and practical experience in working with young children.

Our staff members undergo continuous on-the-job training and gain valuable experience in youth development and family engagement. They participate in annual training courses to stay updated on the best practices in childcare. During our trainings and monthly staff meetings, we focus on important topics such as behavior guidance, child development, and curriculum implementation to provide the best care and learning environment for your children.

Licensing

All of our licensed preschool programs are licensed and certified by the state of Florida. This includes following all state requirements:

- Staff to child ratios
 - » 2 years 1:11
 - » 3 years 1:15
 - » 4 years 1:20
- Completion of 45 DCF Childcare Training Courses
- All staff must have a level II background check and be fingerprinted
- All staff must be certified in CPR and First Aid
- Conduct monthly emergency drills and evacuation plans
- Ongoing annual professional development of staff

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment is open to children from 2 years old to 4 years old. Your child's age will determine your child's classroom and price. Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application, signed fee agreement, registration fee, first two weeks tuition, a copy of your child's current physical and immunization record.

Enrollment Trial Period

During the initial 30 days of your child's enrollment, we consider it a trial period. If we determine that the arrangement is not mutually beneficial, we reserve the right to provide notice for removal from the program. Similarly, parents or guardians retain the right to withdraw during this period. Furthermore, if at any point during or after the probationary period, we identify that we are unable to adequately address the needs of the child, we may issue notice to terminate care for your child.

Academic Calendar 2025–2026

Hours of Operation: 7:00am–6:00pm, Monday–Friday

Our Licensed Preschool Program runs **August 11, 2025 – May 29, 2026** and is closed for the following holidays:

Holiday Closing	
September 1, 2025	Labor Day
November 27, 2025	Thanksgiving Day
November 28, 2025	Day After Thanksgiving
December 24, 2025	Christmas Eve
December 25, 2025	Christmas Day
December 31, 2025	New Year's Eve
January 1, 2026	New Year's Day
May 25, 2026	Memorial Day

Children enrolled in our Licensed Preschool Program are guaranteed a spot in our Summer Preschool Enrichment program. This program will run Monday–Friday throughout the summer. Parents can register their preschooler(s) for specific weeks or the whole summer.

Contact Information

Main Office

Address: 110 East Oak Ave,
Tampa, FL 33602
Phone: (813) 224–9622

Camp Sierra YMCA

Address: 4015 Ragg Rd,
Tampa, FL 33624
Phone: (813) 579–4051

Central City YMCA

Address: 110 E. Palm Ave,
Tampa, FL 33602
Phone: (813) 676–5064



Licensed Preschool Enrollment Process

To streamline the enrollment process, families will receive a comprehensive welcome packet containing site-specific details about our program. This packet includes a family questionnaire designed to gather essential information about your child's interests, your family's learning preferences, developmental needs, and any concerns or goals you have for your child's education. Staff members will then utilize this valuable insight to tailor classroom activities and curriculum, ensuring a wonderful learning experience for your child.

Transitioning to a New Classroom

Transitions to new classrooms is an exciting time. Transitions happen year over year and possibly throughout the year and are based on space, developmental readiness, and age. We recognize that every child is unique, that is why our staff are dedicated to supporting the needs of children and families during this time of change. Transitions are set up to help children succeed, therefore, we give time for children to experience their new room, develop a relationship with their new instructor and acclimate to the new schedule and routines. We will communicate with you on the transition plan for your child. Our goal is to make transitions as smooth as possible for all involved.

Arrival/Drop Off

Upon arrival for the programs, the parent/guardian or authorized person must:

- Accompany the child into the program.
- Ensure a Y staff member is present when you drop the child off
- Sign the child into the Y Licensed preschool program by either using our electronic tablets or paper attendance sheets
- Other individuals that are on your child's authorized pick-up list will need to bring their ID and sign your child in and/or out.

Please do not drop a child off at a program without signing them in yourself. We ask that you walk them in to ensure safety.

Pick-Up

Children may be picked up by authorized persons only (over the age of 18), as stated in the enrollment application. Other arrangements may be made in writing to inform the Y of an additional authorized person.

- Staff members will question those people with whom they are unfamiliar and check authorization a child before releasing.
- Identification will be requested daily. Authorized persons must have a valid driver's license or identification card from the DMV.
- In addition, the Y requires a copy of any legal documentation that restricts another guardian's access to your child. We will restrict access as required by the legal documentation only.
- Authorized persons must sign the child out of the Y Licensed preschool program by either using our electronic tablets or paper attendance sheets.
- We are unable to send children out upon parent requests due to safety and ratio requirements.

If there is a court order prohibiting access to a child, and a parent attempts to enter the Y program or otherwise access the child actively participating in the Y program, without legal documentation, the Y is not authorized to release the child.

If the parent that has restricted access fails to comply with restrictions becomes combative, local law enforcement will be contacted.

Should an authorized person arrive to pick up your child and appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the Y staff members will take necessary measures to ensure the safety of the child, including contacting the police. Please do not put staff in a position where they have to make this judgment call.

Late Pick-Up

If a child is not picked up by the end of their program, a late fee of \$1 per minute, per child, will be drafted at the Y's earliest convenience to your Y account according to the Y facility clock. This fee is used to pay the staff members who remain with your child.

If you know you are going to be late, call us. We do understand that things come up and traffic can be challenging even in the best of times. We tend to worry about your safety just as much as your child does. Please be considerate.

If we have not heard from you by 15 minutes after closing time and we cannot reach you by phone, emergency contacts will be called.

If a child has not been picked up 1 hour after closing, law enforcement will be called.

In the event of extreme inclement weather (not to include normal rainfall or other normal precipitation/weather), natural disaster, or man-made emergency

that causes you to be late for pick-up, the Y will not levy the late fee and will remain with the child until such time you can pick up your child safely. During this time, the Y will continue to try to contact your emergency contacts to pick up your child in your absence.

Emergency Contacts & Authorized Pick-Ups

During enrollment, parents must provide a list of individuals aged 18 or older who may be called upon to pick up their child from the program in the event of an emergency. In these situations, parents will be contacted as the primary point of contact. If they cannot be reached, staff members will proceed to contact the emergency contact person and one additional authorized individual for pick-up.

The Program requires each family to have at least one emergency contact (other than a parent) and one authorized pick-up person.

Should the staff member contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is parent/guardian's responsibility to arrange for the child to be picked up by someone on the list. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements will result in dismissal from the program.

The Y reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the Emergency/Authorized pick-up list for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the Emergency/Authorized pick-up list of the policies/procedures contained herein.

Withdrawal from Program

We require a 2-week written notice to withdraw your children from our programs. Please contact the Program Director or Coordinator to process your withdrawal and ensure proper billing adjustments.

Right to Refuse Admission

The licensed preschool program reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause. Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. Lack of staff members to maintain appropriate staff to child ratios as determined by State Licensing Regulations.
2. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
3. Staff members deem the child too ill to attend.
4. Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff, or other children enrolled at the licensed preschool program if the child were to be present at the center.
5. Parent's failure to maintain accurate, up-to-date records.
6. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.
7. Parents' failure to pay and follow the payment policy as outlined in this handbook.
8. Parents will not be reimbursed program fees for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

Photo/Video Release Authorization

During the registration process you will complete an Enrollment Agreement which will allow you to authorize or not authorize the program to be video and/or take photographs of your child.

Walking Field Trips

Walking field trips are considered an integral part of a child's learning experience. It is required that your child has a signed permission slip to participate in a walking field trip. Children sometimes forget or lose permission slips, which can be disappointing. Therefore, during the registration process the Tampa Y requests a blanket permission slip to allow your child to go with his/her/their class on scheduled field trips i.e. to the outdoor play area, field, etc. You will be notified in advance of scheduled on-site field trips. This is fulfilled by the parent/guardian authorizing on the enrollment agreement for the Tampa Y to take your child on walking field trips that are deemed beneficial for your child's growth and development.

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable and washable play clothes that will allow your child to participate freely in all activities without undue concern for spills, spots, and rips. Please mark all clothing and personal articles permanently with your child's name. Occasionally check the lost and found for misplaced items, we are not responsible for lost or stolen items. Sturdy, well-fitting tennis shoes or non-skid shoes are essential for active play (no crocs). When skirts are worn, we ask that your child wear pants or shorts underneath.

Toys, Blankets, and Rest Time Items

Please leave toys at home unless it is a specific share day. The Y Licensed Preschool Programs do not assume responsibility for personal toys. On share days please

refrain from allowing your child to bring any type of toy weapon, electronic toys of any sort, or action figures to the program.

Parents/Guardians need to provide a sheet and blanket for their child to use during nap time. These items will be sent home at the end of each week to be washed and returned the following week.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES/ INFORMATION

Financial Responsibility and Fees

Our Licensed Preschool school-year program runs from August through May and offers a payment plan through weekly drafts, which are scheduled two weeks in advance of each program week. The total program fees for the 10-month period are divided into 42 weekly payments, allowing for consistent and manageable payments throughout the school year.

Please note that our fees are calculated based on the calendar year and are evenly distributed into weekly payments, regardless of the number of days in the week. We do not offer refunds for scheduled holidays, illness, vacations, pandemics, weather-related closures, or acts of God.

The following school-year holidays will be observed: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Easter, and Memorial Day.

Children enrolled in our school-year Licensed Preschool Program are guaranteed a spot in our Summer Preschool Enrichment Program. The summer program operates Monday through Friday (minus July 4th), and parents can choose to register their child(ren) for select weeks or the entire summer.

Payments are automatically drafted from your credit card or debit card, using the information you provided when registering. Draft time cannot be scheduled but typically occurs at 1am on the day the draft is scheduled. Please ensure you have updated credit card information on file at all times. Automatic payments are required for the entirety of the enrollment period.

We prepare snack, activities and staff for your child each day. Few operation costs are eliminated when a child is absent because we prepare for each child every day. Because of the above-mentioned, we do not refund or pro-rate fees for absences.

If there is a balance of 2 weeks or more, child(ren) will be removed from the program until the balance is paid in full.

Late Payments

If late payments accrue, you may be subject to a \$25 charge that will be placed on your account. The late fee along with your balance due must be paid prior to your child attending. Failure to pay on time, or your child's absence for more than two weeks without payments, will result in your service being discontinued.

To Pay Balance

To access the website, you must be using Google Chrome or Firefox. Below are the steps on how to add and select the billing method for your monthly draft.

1. Click on Member Access and then Sign in
2. On the next screen enter your email address and password. If you don't know your password, click on "Forgot your password" and one will be emailed to you. Check your junk email folder.
3. Once logged in click on My Account
4. On the Account Option screen click on Pay on Account found under Payment Details
5. The next screen will show your Outstanding Balances. With the amount due showing in the box under Payment Amount.
6. Click continue and follow prompts to make your payment.

Student Health Records (Physicals)

The Florida State Licensing requires all children to have an updated physical. Prior to enrollment, the program is responsible for obtaining for each child in care a current, complete and properly executed Student Health Examination form DH 3040 and may be obtained from the local county health department, the parent or legal guardian, or a signed statement by authorized professionals that indicate the results of the components of the Student Health Examination form are included in the health examination.

- The Student Health Examination shall be completed by a person given statutory authority to perform health examinations.
- The Student Health Examination or the signed statement is valid for two years from the date the physical was performed. An up-to-date version must be on file for as long as the child is enrolled at the facility.
- If the custodial parents or legal guardians fail to provide the documentation required above within 30 days of enrollment, the facility shall not allow the child to remain in the program.

- Any child who has or is at an increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and requires additional services, within reason, must have a current Emergency Care Plan, prepared by the parent/guardian or physician, included in the child's file and readily accessible for those caring for the child. Child care personnel caring for a child with an Emergency Care Plan must be trained to recognize and respond appropriately to a medical emergency.

Immunizations

All children in the program are required to be up to date with their immunization and parents/guardians are expected to provide an updated immunization record prior to enrollment and thereafter, upon expiration date on the immunization record.

The program cannot refuse to provide care to unimmunized children who are otherwise eligible if the parents/guardians present either form DH 680 for Medical Exemption or form DH 681 for Religious Exemption. If a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs at the program, it is recommended for unimmunized children to be excluded for the duration of the possible exposure.

In order to remain enrolled in our program your child's health records must be current at all times.

Family Engagement

You made a wise choice to apply for the licensed preschool program and now that your child is enrolled there is a whole new world open to you too! Research suggests that children do better in school when their parents/guardians are involved. Family Engagement is about building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents/guardians and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents/guardians and children.

Parent and family engagement is crucial for young children's learning and development and strong community ties and resources help families raise their children in supportive environments. When families involve their young children in daily learning by talking with them, playing with them, and reading to them from birth, children have:

- Higher literacy skills
- Better peer interactions
- Fewer behavior issues
- Greater motivation and persistence during learning activities.

In other words, children whose families involve them in learning at home are more successful in school! In addition, parents/guardians personally benefit from involvement as well. Parents/guardians are the most important people in a child's life. The program strives to include parents/guardians in components of the program.

Together we can:

- Listen and talk with your child.
- Make reading to your child a priority.
- Make attendance an important choice.
- Stay in close communication about your child's development.

Get Involved by:

- Attending Parent Meetings
- Reading the newsletters/emails and information the program offers
- Talking with the staff member about how you can become involved in your child's learning.
- If you would like to volunteer for special scheduled events, please contact the licensed preschool Director or Coordinator for more information.

Parent/Guardian Conferences

Licensed Preschool Instructor Leads and Assistants will meet individually with families throughout the school year. These informal or formal meetings are held to discuss the strengths of your child and keep you up to date on the many ways your child is growing.

Parent/Guardian Conduct

Please refrain from loud and abusive conduct around staff and children. Parents/guardians engaging in such conduct will be asked to leave the Y facility and are subject to termination of services.

CHILDREN'S SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS! ALL PROGRAMS ARE SMOKE FREE, DRUG FREE, AND WEAPON FREE ENVIRONMENTS!

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Attendance

Success in the program is dependent upon regular attendance. The Primary parent/guardian is expected to call the Program no later than 8:30am to report their child's absence. Absences may be due to:

- Hospitalization due to illness or injury
- Contraction of a communicable disease or other health ailment which temporarily prevents attendance.
- Loss of a family member or other extenuating situation/emergency

Program Hours

Full Day Program Hours are 7:00 am–6:00 pm. Your child must be at the center no later than 8:30 am and picked up by 6:00 pm. You are expected to call the center no later than 8:30am to report your child's absence and indicate when your child is expected to return. Picking up your child late from the center could result in late fee charges.

Primary parent/guardian shall ensure the child is signed in and out daily on the Sign-In/Out Sheet.

These fee based options are not guaranteed, please request online or with staff members on availability.

Holiday Closing

We will offer licensed preschool program weekdays from **August – May**; observing the following: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, and Memorial Day.

*Additional days may be added at the discretion of your Y.

Additionally, preschool registrants are given the option of a guaranteed spot in our Preschool Summer Enrichment Program. During the summer, parents/guardians can select certain weeks, or the whole summer, to ensure our preschoolers are engaged and cared for throughout the year.

Early Childhood Development

The Licensed Preschool Program's education component is designed to provide children with a learning environment and varied experiences which help them develop socially, physically, and emotionally in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development.

In recognition that parents are the primary educators of their children, caregivers work with families to ensure the developmental needs of each child are met.

Parents will receive communication throughout the program year of their child's progress.

In addition, our program requires that an individual child's culture be embraced throughout the program's activities and environments. You will see this valuing of different customs in the materials found in each of our classrooms and in the hiring practices of staff diversity.

Daily Routine

The order of these activities may vary. The daily routine helps your child feel secure and independent. A typical day might consist of:

- **GREETING CHILDREN:** Greetings help staff and parents to formally transfer responsibility for the child and to develop trusting relationships built on meaningful communication and daily interactions.
- **CIRCLE TIME:** It is a special time to share fingerplays, chants and rhymes, songs, play rhythm instruments, read a story, and participate in movement games and relaxation activities. Circle time provides a time for listening, developing attention span, promoting oral communication, and learning new concepts and skills.
- **LEARNING CENTERS:** As children spend much of the day in free choice/centers, they choose from a variety of areas to play individually, or together depending on their interests.
- **OUTDOOR TIME:** Children are provided safe, age-appropriate outdoor experiences that include sensory exploration, gross motor, and fine motor play.
- **LUNCH:** Parents are responsible for providing both breakfast and lunch for their child daily that is nutritious and complies with the USDA nutritional guidelines. (see more information under food policy)
- **NAP/REST TIME:** Children will be allotted roughly 2hrs for nap time. The individual sleep pattern of each child's needs is recognized and supported; this includes quiet activities for those transitioning out of nap time usually around 3 & 4 years old.
- **SNACK:** A PM snack will be provided at the program, please refer to your family center's schedule.
- **TOILETING:** We encourage children to use the toilet by themselves. We require children to be completely potty trained and independent prior to transitioning to a three-year-old room. As a best practice, we do not allow cloth diapers in our programs. Diapers and/or Pull-ups are not allowed outside of the two years old room. Please see toilet training for 2yr olds below.

- **DEPARTURE OF CHILDREN:** Provider and parents can exchange information about the child's day in preparation for a smooth child care to home experience. We hope you take advantage of this opportunity and talk with your child's preschool daily.

Toilet Training Procedures

Please provide Pull-Ups® for your child. When you feel it is time to begin toilet training, please speak with your child's instructor. We will work with you on this important step in your child's development. During toilet training, please be sure to provide several changes of clothing, including training pants, pants, shirts, socks, and an extra pair of shoes as shoes occasionally become wet from potty training accidents. Children should not be punished for accidents occurring during potty training, as they are learning to use the potty. We want to make this an enjoyable, rewarding transition in development and cheer the children on in achieving this developmental milestone.

CURRICULUM AND ACTIVITIES

The Creative Curriculum for Twos incorporates meaningful learning activities into daily routines and provides intentional support for their caregivers. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is a comprehensive curriculum that builds children's confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills through hands-on, project-based investigations.

What Will Your Child Learn?

The curriculum provides age-appropriate, culturally sensitive experiences tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual child and to reflect positive child outcomes. What seems to be "just play," is really the way a child develops their own process of learning.

WHEN CHILDREN DO THIS:	THEY ARE LEARNING TO:
Put blocks in trucks and dump them out	Understand size, weight, and number concepts (Math) (Science)
Operate a computer mouse	Improve their coordination skills (Physical Development)
Put on dress-up clothes	Use their small muscle skills (Self-Help) (Writings)
Talk about changes in plants, people, and things outside as seasons change	Sharpen observation skills (Science)
Finish a puzzle	Complete a task (Study Habits) (Self-Esteem)
Catch and throw balls	Coordinate eye and hand movements (Physical Development)
Turn pages from beginning to end	Read a book from left to right (Reading and Writing Readiness)
Make a salad for the family or bake muffins for breakfast	Take pride in their accomplishments (Self-Esteem)
Create different sounds by putting more (or fewer) beans in cans and shaking them	Explore cause and effect (Science) (Logical Thinking)
Use blocks and wooden animals to create a zoo	Recreate the world around them (Geography) (Social skills)

Learning from Activities

When you visit your child's classroom, you see children playing and interacting. Like most parents/guardians, you probably wonder what your child is learning. To answer your questions, the chart above shows typical things children do when they play in each area of the classroom in the column on the left. The column on the right are the concepts and skills children develop from this play.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

Handwashing and Sanitizing/Disinfecting Procedures

Handwashing:

To help control the spread of germs and disease we follow these standards.

Hands are washed:

- Upon arrival to the classroom
- Before and after all meals
- Dispensing of medication
- Before food preparation i.e. special food activity
- Setting tables
- After Toileting
- After sneezing, coughing, or wiping runny noses
- After diapering
- Coming in from outside or playing in gym
- Before and after using sensory table

Sanitizing/Disinfecting Procedures:

1. All hard surfaces will be wiped down throughout the day, before and after use as well as at the end of each day.
2. All high touch surfaces like doorknobs, light switches, cabinet handles, water faucets, phones, tablets, toilets, cots, countertops, desks, chairs, tables, cubbies, outdoor equipment will be disinfected throughout the day.
3. The program will use appropriate water and bleach solution to sanitize all indoor and outdoor toys.
4. Sanitation of classroom toys and materials will occur daily.
5. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used. Toys that children have placed in their mouths are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions should be set aside in a "Dirty Toy Bin" until they are cleaned by a person wearing gloves.

Food Policy

Parents are responsible for providing both breakfast and lunch for their child daily that is nutritious and complies with the USDA nutritional guidelines.

- Food provided by parents/guardians must be properly stored and handled in a sanitary manner at all times to prevent contamination or spoilage. If food is supposed to be kept cold, the food must include ice packs to keep food cold.

- Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents must not be served to children under 4 years of age, such as, but not limited to, whole/round hot dogs, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, whole grapes, nuts, cheese cubes/sticks and any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe. Food for toddlers must be cut into pieces ½ inch or smaller to prevent choking. This applies to all food, even food provided by parents/guardians.
- The program will provide a nutritious AM and PM snack for your child daily..
- Food experiences are planned to be used as part of the total educational program. When parents and other volunteers eat at the program, they are encouraged to eat the same meals provided for the children.
- We are a Peanut Free program.

Peanut/Nut Free Programs

Due to the extreme nature of some allergic reactions to peanuts/nuts and products containing peanuts and/or nuts in some children, the licensed preschool programs are peanut/nut-free classrooms. The staff members will also notify you of any other allergies in the classroom. Per our Confidentiality Policy, only the allergen will be identified, not the child. When families are bringing food into the program, for special occasions, it is important to remember to read the label of every food item you send. Many foods which we do not think of as containing peanuts or nuts have in fact been made in the same factories as peanut/nut-containing foods and are therefore considered to be contaminated. When reading the label, look at not only the ingredients listed but also for statements such as, "may contain traces of peanuts."

Medication Policy

Whenever possible, coordinate with your child's doctor to schedule medications to be administered before or after Licensed Preschool Program hours. For example, if a medication is to be given twice a day it may be given at home before and after the program. No medications will be administered at the Licensed Preschool Program without proper documentation from the child's pediatrician.

All medications to be given to your child at the Licensed Preschool Program will require:

- A medical care provider's written instruction for the dose and frequency.
- A completed Authorization to Dispense Medication Form. Please read this form carefully and fill it out completely and accurately and as the physician prescribes.

- Prescription medication shall be in the original container, dated and labeled by the pharmacist, with the child's first and last name, name of prescribing medical care provider and the medication's expiration date. Make the pharmacist aware that two labeled containers are required, one for the program and one for the home. (No medication will be given after the expiration date indicated on the container. Medication will be administered exactly as indicated by doctor's order printed on the label for that specific child).
- The first dose of any medication is to be given at home and monitored by the parent/caregiver for 24 hours for adverse reactions.
- When medication dosages or times are changed, both steps shall be followed:
 1. A new authorization form will be filled out.
 2. A new label from the pharmacist or physician order indicating the change.
- Medication will be stored in a locked box at the Licensed Preschool Program at all times.
- Staff members who received Medication Administration Training will administer the medication.
- When medication is discontinued it will be taken home by the parent/guardian.
- All medication will be sent home at the end of the school year.
- New authorization forms will be completed when the child returns for the new school year.
- If medication is given by the parent in the program, the parent shall remain in the center for 15 minutes to observe for any adverse reactions.

A Medication Observation Log will be utilized to document medication dosage, time of administration, and observation of any adverse effects.

Over-the-Counter Skin Products Authorization form, if applicable (sunscreen, diaper rash cream, and/or insect repellent).

If the guardian desires to purchase sunscreen, rash cream and/or insect repellent for their child, the Department of Education requires that the guardian complete an Over-the-Counter Skin Products.

Authorization form with information about the sunscreen, rash cream and/or insect repellent selected by the guardian.

Illness Guidelines

The staff members will make a visual inspection of the child for signs of infection, which could include flushed cheeks, fatigue extreme fussiness, etc.

Exclusion is necessary when:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- The illness results in a higher level of care being needed than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children or the child has any of the following conditions noted under Illness Guidelines.
- Fever of 100 degrees F or higher. Children will be excluded for a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, tympanic (ear) or auxiliary (under the arm pit) accompanied by behavior changes. Two temperature readings fifteen minutes apart are required for recording. The child shall be fever free for 24 hours, not including the day the child is sent home, before returning to the program. **If your child requires medication to maintain a fever free state, the child will not be allowed to attend.**
- Staff members will then have the final decision to admit or not admit the child.
- Cough with yellow-green phlegm; cold symptoms (runny nose, cough, persistent congestion).
- The child will be excluded for a runny nose and/or cough that is not discounted as allergy related and the discharge or phlegm is yellow or green in color and lasts more than 7 days. The child will be excluded until symptom free. In some cases, the child shall have written clearance from their health care provider.
- Rashes on the body – The child will be excluded until a health care provider determines in writing that the symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.
- Diarrhea (watery, foul smelling bowel movements) – Three (3) diarrhea stools in 24 hours. The child will need to be excluded for a minimum of 24 hours, not including the day the child is sent home, and until diarrhea free for 24 hours, or until a health care provider clears in writing the child to return to program.
- Vomiting – When a child experiences one (1) episode; the parent or guardian will be notified. When a child has experienced two or more episodes of vomiting; they will be temporarily excluded. They may return 24 hours after the

vomiting has stopped, excluding the day they were sent home. They can also return when a healthcare provider deems the illness non-communicable, and the child is no longer at risk of dehydration. In the event of an outbreak involving three or more children exhibiting similar signs of a suspected communicable illness, children will be excluded after the first episode of diarrhea or vomiting.

- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)** – The child will be excluded from the center for 24 hours, not including the day the child is sent home, after treatment has started. He/she may return 24 hours after treatment has been initiated, accompanied by doctor's clearance including diagnosis and treatment prescribed.
- **Impetigo** – The child will be excluded from the center for 24 hours, not including the day the child is sent home, after treatment has started. The child may return 24 hours, not including the day the child is sent home, after treatment has been initiated, accompanied by doctor's clearance including diagnosis and treatment prescribed.
- **Lice** – The child will be excluded from the center. The child may return 24 hours, not including the day the child is sent home, after treatment has been initiated and lice free.
- **Ringworm** –
 1. A child excluded for ringworm of the scalp and may return only after being seen by a health care provider with treatment initiated. A doctor's clearance indicating diagnoses and treatment prescribed is required.
 2. Ringworm on the body that will not lead to exclusion: The ringworm remains covered at all times while at the center. An over-the-counter treatment with anti-fungal base has been initiated. If the condition does not improve, you may be required to have the child seen by his/her health care provider, returning with a doctor's clearance.
- **Strep Throat** – The child will be excluded from the center for 48 hours, not including the day the child is sent home, after treatment has started. He/she may return after treatment has been initiated and fever free for 24 hours, not including the day the child is sent home.
- **Mouth sores and drooling** – The child will be excluded until a health care provider determines the condition is not infectious. The child may return with a doctor's clearance.

- **Chicken Pox** – The child will be excluded from the center. He/she may return after sores have dried and crusted over. The child will need a doctor's clearance.
- **Bed Bugs** – The child's clothing and belongings will be examined. If a confirmed bed bug is found, the primary parent/guardian will be contacted.

If a child becomes ill with any of the symptoms described while attending the program, the staff member will notify the child's primary parent/guardian and or authorized emergency contacts/pick-ups.

Primary parents/guardians are expected to pick their child up within one (1) hour of being notified by the program or make arrangements for an alternative person on the authorized pick-up list to pick up the child.

Please let the Program Director or Coordinator know if your child has been exposed to or is diagnosed with chicken pox, rubella (German measles), rosella, lice, or other common childhood illnesses.

In the case of a contagious illness, parents are required to keep the child at home until they can obtain a written statement from the child's doctor that the child is free of the contagious illness and may return to school.

When considered necessary, the Y may require additional medical information, and/or medical examination, and/or medical tests prior to considering the child's continued participation in the program.

Suspected or Confirmed Communicable Disease

We follow CDC, the FL Dept of Health guidelines, and our Exposure plan to ensure the safety of children and their families

Isolation Area

- The Licensed Preschool Program will have an isolation area that can be used to isolate a sick child. Isolated children **MUST** always remain within sight and sound supervision. If a child begins to show symptoms of a communicable disease, they will be isolated from the rest of the children in care and the parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the child within the hour and a "Health Alert Form," will be completed and the child will be allowed to return dependent on evaluation from Health Care Provider.

- Children will be isolated if they exhibit symptoms of a communicable disease during the day, including elevated temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or any other signs of illness such as:
 - » Coughing
 - » Difficulty breathing
 - » Diarrhea, nausea
 - » Vomiting, rashes
 - » Sore throat, sneezing
 - » Watery eyes
 - » Runny nose
 - » Discolored eyes
 - » Chills
 - » Muscle pain/body ache
 - » Headache
 - » Loss of taste or smell
 - » Inability to wake or stay awake, bluish lips or face, and excessive crying or irritability (inability to be consoled or comforted).

First Aid Procedures/Medical Emergencies

All staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR/AED. We will provide basic first aid for your child if it is necessary. We will apply ice, clean the injured area as best as possible and apply a Band-Aid if necessary. We are not able to put any creams, gels, or any type of antibiotic ointments on the injury, due to possible skin allergies and adverse reactions. A form authorizing emergency medical care for your child is signed at the time of enrollment. In case of an emergency, you will be called. If our program staff is not able to reach you, we will attempt to notify the emergency contact(s) indicated on your child's authorized form. If we feel the child needs medical attention and we are unable to reach the family or emergency contacts, we will call EMS to transport them for further medical attention.

Fire/Emergency Drills

The Y Licensed Preschool Program conducts monthly drills. Drills include fire, tornado, emergency/evacuation, or lockdown drills. The most efficient way to assess the effectiveness of drills is to not notify Parents, staff members, and children in advance.

During a drill or real emergency situation, parents cannot sign children in or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child in or out of the program. In a real fire/emergency/lockdown situation, the Director or designated staff member will inform each classroom instructor that the school will be closing. At this time, any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. When parents arrive to pick up their child, we ask that you wait until the director or designated staff has accounted for all staff and children and has given the staff permission to release children. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone/text of the situation. Children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call/text.

Inclement Weather

The Y Licensed Preschool Program may close during hazardous weather conditions. Inclement weather conditions may delay our opening and/or transportation of your children. Please note that our primary mode of communication with you will be via email. Please ensure that you have an accurate email on file. No exceptions for not receiving the information will be made.

The YMCA will make every effort to provide care in the event of inclement weather; however, the safety of the children and staff are our primary responsibility. The YMCA could close and/or adjust the inclement policy due to hazardous weather conditions. We will follow the same procedures to contact you regarding closings and/or adjustments to the policy.

DISCIPLINE PRACTICES & PROCEDURES

The goal of discipline is to help children see the sense in acting a certain way and to learn self-control. This of course, may take some time and practice for the child to master. It is important for staff members and parents to be realistic in the expectation of behavior of each child. The child's developmental age and stage must be taken into consideration.

In the Tampa Y Licensed Preschool Program, we encourage positive behavior in the following ways:

1. Allowing the child choices of activities, equipment, and materials, giving them a feeling of control over their environment so that conflict with others can be minimized.
2. Guidance in developing language skills which will help your child resolve conflicts with words and not with inappropriate behaviors such as biting, hitting, kicking, etc.
3. Accepting the child's feelings and helping the child express themselves in a safe and secure manner.

If a child is experiencing difficulty controlling his/her behavior:

1. They will be redirected to another play area, which may prevent escalation of the problem.
2. If a problem still exists, the staff will assist the child in understanding their feelings and managing the situation appropriately. This may involve moving the child to a supervised area beyond the reach of other children.
3. If continued unacceptable behavior occurs, the parent will be scheduled to discuss a team approach to remedy the problem.

The following practices and behaviors are prohibited by Y staff members, contractor's consultants, volunteers and visitors:

- Spanking, hitting, or any form of corporal/physical punishment.
- The use of isolation as discipline
- Binding, tying to restrict movement, taping a child's mouth.
- Using food as a punishment or reward
- Using toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child.
- Using any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child.

- Physically abusing a child
- Using any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family
- Using physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward

Suspension/Expulsion

We will make reasonable efforts to prevent suspension/expulsion of children in our care. However, the Tampa Y Licensed preschool program reserves the right to cancel enrollment for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of program fees.
- Failure to adhere to policies and procedures.
- The child's needs exceed the capabilities of our center.
- Child's behavior endangers the safety and well-being of other children and/or staff members.
- Parent/Guardian behavior and/or actions threaten other children, parents, or staff members.

Biting Procedures

It is developmentally appropriate for a toddler (16–30 months) to bite because of limited language and social skills. However, it is an inappropriate behavior in Youth Development programs. The YMCA will take the following actions for biting incidents:

If a child bites another child or adult and the skin is not broken:

- The guardian of the biter is to be notified immediately. When the guardian of the bitten child comes to pick up their child, staff will inform them of the incident.
- If the biter bites again during the same day, the guardian is notified, and the child must be picked up within ONE HOUR of notification.
- The biter may return the next day. If the child bites again on the next consecutive visit, even if no skin is broken; the YMCA reserves the right to immediately suspend or terminate the child's participation in the program.

If a child bites another child or adult and the skin is broken:

- Staff will remove the child from the program immediately; notify the guardian that the child **MUST** be picked up within ONE HOUR after notification.
- If the person bitten was a child, that guardian is also notified immediately; YMCA staff will attend to the bite wound following proper First Aid procedures.

- The biter may return the next day. If the child bites again on the next consecutive visit, even if no skin is broken; the YMCA reserves the right to immediately suspend or terminate the child's participation in the program.

If a child bites another child or adult and the skin is broken:

- Staff members will remove the child from the program immediately and notify the guardian that the child **MUST** be picked up within **ONE HOUR** after notification. If the person bitten was a child, that guardian is also notified immediately, and the Y staff will attend to the bite wound following proper First Aid procedures.
- The biter may return the next day, but if on the next consecutive visit the child bites again, even if no skin is broken; the YMCA reserves the right to immediately suspend or terminate the child's participation in the program.

Parents can find solace in understanding that biting is a typical phase in a child's development. Just like other stages, their child will soon move past it. For further insights on handling this, we recommend exploring 'Things to Do with Toddlers and Twos' by Karen Miller.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Reasonable Accommodations

Tampa YMCA youth programs are open to all children, including those with disabilities. We strive to provide services to children with disabilities in the same manner as services are provided for other children of comparable age, within the bounds of what is reasonably possible.

We have an obligation to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all of the children entrusted to our care. It is critical that all pertinent information about the child's needs be available to staff from enrollment and that a continuing bond of trust and mutual partnership exists for the benefit of the child. A parent/guardian is encouraged to share relevant medical, physical or behavioral issues caused by a disability or environmental circumstances at the time of the child's enrollment and on an ongoing basis to the extent that such issues require an accommodation. All information provided will be kept as confidential as reasonably possible and used only to establish what, if any, reasonable accommodation(s) may be provided.

Parent Board/Child Cubbies

In each program and/or classroom a parent board is displayed. Our parent boards are a wealth of information about our programs, safety information, upcoming events, and highlights from your program/

classroom. Each child's cubby/area should be checked regularly for important news and information.

Babysitting and Outside Contact Policy

Staff members are often asked to provide babysitting and other services on their own time to Y members and families. The Tampa Metropolitan Area Y does not permit employees to provide babysitting or other services to families or children they meet in Y programs. In addition, staff members should not provide transportation in a personal vehicle or be in contact with children outside of Y programs. This includes non-program related email, text, phone calls, letters, and contact over the internet. Such policies are designed to protect children and staff members from child abuse and/or false allegations.

Birthdays and Celebrations

We like to make each child feel special on his or her birthday and you are welcome to bring healthy snacks for your child's birthday. Because other children may have allergies, we ask that you do not send food or snacks to the program without coordinating with the Program Director or Lead Instructor in advance. We follow the USA MyPlate guidelines. For health and sanitary reasons, we require that all treats be store-bought. We do not allow Piñatas, balloons or gift/treat bags to be given out at the program. We are a peanut/nut free program

In keeping with our diversity and inclusion, the program honors holiday and tradition in ways that are general, simple, and meaningful to the children while respecting diverse beliefs and practices. Therefore, the program will have general holiday celebrations such as; Fall Festival, Winter Wonderland, Dress as your Favorite Character, etc.

Incident/Accident Report

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be shown to the parent/guardian at pick up for review and to sign and date acknowledging they were aware of the incident/accident. If you wish to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, please reach out to your Program Director or Coordinator regarding an Incident/Accident Report, and schedule a specific time and day to discuss further.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Y staff members receive training on the Prevention and Identification of Child Abuse. It is mandatory for child care providers to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services. All Y staff members are mandated to report any suspected child abuse. For more information see the next page.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

General Statement:

The growth and development of men, women, children and families has been the Y's principal concern for over 150 years. Through programs of health, wellness, aquatics, sports, camping, family programs and childcare, the Y is responding to the needs of children

- Physical punishment
- Yelling
- Striking
- Biting
- Kicking
- Squeezing
- Shaming
- Confining children in small or locked rooms
- Verbal or emotional abuse
- Withholding food or restroom privileges

and families. Many changes have occurred in the lives of children and families today. Some of these changes are positive. However, the alarming increase in child abuse is of particular concern to us. Throughout its history, the Y has been a strong advocate for children's rights. It is appropriate that mistreatment or neglect of children and the resulting severe effects would be of primary concern.

Abuse Prevention Policy:

It is the policy of the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA (Tampa YMCA) that we as an organization maintains zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will not condone the mistreatment or abuse of any youth or vulnerable adult.

Staff and Volunteer Expectations:

The Tampa YMCA advocates for a positive guidance and discipline practice with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, redirection, prevention, and the development of self-discipline. At no time will the following disciplinary techniques be tolerated:

Tampa YMCA staff members and volunteers sign and

date the Tampa Metropolitan YMCA Code of Conduct (or a similar document adapted by the Association) before performing any duties and annually thereafter.

Tampa YMCA staff members and volunteers will be sensitive to each person's need for personal space (i.e., not everyone wants to be hugged). The Tampa YMCA encourages appropriate touch; and prohibits inappropriate touch or other means of sexually exploiting children. Based upon its concern for children, parents, and staff members the standards related to reporting procedures, association standards, code of conduct and resources for parents and children, have been developed.

Procedures for Suspicion of Child Abuse

- At the first report or suspicion of child abuse, the staff member or volunteer to whom it has been reported will immediately inform a supervisor or director.
- In the event that the reported incident or suspicion involves a staff member or volunteer of the Tampa YMCA, the responsible director or designee will suspend the person from all responsibilities until the investigation is complete. Whether the incident or alleged offense takes place on or off YMCA premises, it will be considered job-related (because of the youth-involved nature of the Y).
- If the incident has not been reported, the Tampa YMCA will make a report within 24 hours to the Florida Department of Children and Families for an investigation.
- The accused YMCA staff member /volunteer will not make contact with child(ren) or parents involved in the allegations.
- All staff members, members and volunteers will be instructed to only discuss matters pertaining to the allegations with their supervisors or identified members of leadership because of the need for confidentiality.
- All incidents or alleged offenses will be documented on the day of the occurrence and throughout the investigation.
- If the reported incident or suspicion involves a staff member or volunteer of the Tampa YMCA, the Director of Quality Assurance and Risk Management or designee will report the allegation to YUSA utilizing their reporting tool.

PRESCHOOL SUMMER ENRICHMENT

What you need to know about our Summer Enrichment Program:

Your little ones have a place to go during summer! Thanks to the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA, two to five-year-old children can enjoy the experience at the newly launched YMCA Preschool Summer Enrichment. Running from June to August – the same dates for our older campers, the summer program will be hosted at our Central City Family YMCA in Tampa Heights and Camp Sierra in Carrollwood.

Designed to spark curiosity and foster social, emotional and cognitive growth, our camp provides the perfect blend of fun and educational enrichment to keep our littlest campers active all summer. We are also pleased to offer swimming lessons as an add-on to ensure children learn safety around water. This helps families who cannot enroll their children for swim lessons due to work or other commitments.

- We will offer a Summer Enrichment program for Preschool weekdays from June– August; only closing for the following: Fourth of July.
*Additional days may be added at the discretion of your Y.
- Parents are responsible for providing both breakfast (if arriving between 7–8am) and lunch for their child daily that is nutritious and complies with the USDA nutritional guidelines (please refer to page 13 of the parent handbook for more information on our food policy). Reminder we are a Peanut/Nut Free Program.
- The program will provide an AM and PM snack for your child daily. You may send extra snacks with your child's lunch if you would like.
- We ask parents to bring the following items:
 - » A sheet and blanket for nap time (these will be returned at the end of each week for washing)
 - » An extra pair of clothes
 - » Diapers, pull-ups, and wipes (if applicable for children aged 2)
 - » Water bottle

- We require children to be completely potty trained and independent prior to transitioning to a three-year-old room. Diapers and/or pull-ups are not allowed outside of the two-year-old room. Parents are required to provide diapers/pull-ups and wipes for their child. Please see toilet training for two-year-old in the Parent Handbook.
- Our Enrichment program for Preschool offers a payment plan through weekly drafts, which are scheduled two weeks in advance of each program week. The total program fees for the 10-week period are divided into 10 weekly payments, allowing for consistent and manageable payments throughout the summer.
- The draft will be on Fridays and 10 days prior to the start of the week.
- Cancellation policy will be at least 14 days prior to the child (ren) starting.
- Please note that our fees are calculated based on the calendar year and are evenly distributed into weekly payments, regardless of the number of days in the week. We do not offer refunds for scheduled holidays, illness, vacations, pandemics, weather-related closures, or acts of God.
- There is an annual, non-refundable. Non-transferable registration fee.
- When you register, your child(ren) will be enrolled for the entire summer. However, you can let the program director know which weeks you need, and we will adjust your registration accordingly.

Scan QR Code »
for registration and
more information.



ADDITIONAL PARENT RESOURCES

Distracted Drivers

English



Spanish



Influenza Virus Information

English



Spanish



Know Your Childcare Facility

English



Spanish



Other Resources





TAMPA METROPOLITAN AREA YMCA
110 E. Oak Ave., Tampa, FL 33602
P 813 224 9622 tampaymca.org