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**MORRISON FAMILY
YMCA**

PARENT GUIDE

2020-2021

Parent Handbook

morrisonchildrensacademy@ymcacharlotte.org

Children's Academy Office 704.716.4608
Morrison Family YMCA Front Desk 704.716.4650
Children's Academy Hours of Operation
Monday-Friday 9:00am-1:00pm

MORRISON FAMILY YMCA at Ballantyne
9405 Bryant Farms Rd, Charlotte NC 28277
www.ymcacharlotte.org

Marie Duty, Program Director
704.716.4608; Email: marie.duty@ymcacharlotte.org

YMCA Mission:

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

YMCA Vision:

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte will connect and engage people to enhance lives and build community.

Program Philosophy:

At the foundation of the YMCA Children's Academy is the belief that children learn best through play. Our program integrates purposeful and intentionally planned activities that are designed to be fun while teaching children valuable skills. Small group work ensures that teachers can meet each child at their own developmental level and help guide them toward success. Our goal is to create an environment that will help our children learn the requisite skills while at the same time fostering a lifelong love of learning that will guide them through their later school experiences.

Children's Academy Staff:

Teachers- Our program is staffed with well qualified, educated, trained teachers eager to work with your child. After a thorough interview process, chosen teachers must complete a minimum of 20 hours of training throughout the year in areas such as inclusion, developmentally appropriate lesson planning, dealing with discipline, positive reinforcement, play based learning, safety and emergency procedures, infant/child first aid and CPR, and YMCA child protection practices. We look for leaders who exemplify outstanding character, compassion, and love of children. We take pride in the high expectations & qualifications we set for our teachers. Your child's classroom will include a team of teachers all dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing and fun learning environment. We will hold conferences for Adventurers, Trailblazers, and TK families in January, but if you would even like to arrange a meeting with your child's teachers or program leadership, please just let us know.

Children's Academy Director- Marie Duty, our program Director, is responsible for the oversight of the Children's Academy as well as the training and supervision of all team members. Marie holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration and has almost 20 years of experience working with the early childhood population, including many years working in the classroom as a preschool teacher. She started as a teacher at the Children's Academy in 2005 and then served as the Assistant Director before assuming the Director role in early 2012.

Children's Academy Curriculum Coordinator – Kylie Good is responsible for creating focus learning activities that guide us toward each age group's developmental milestones. Kylie holds a degree in Special Education and Early Childhood Education. Before moving to Charlotte, she taught both preschool and kindergarten. In addition, she has held child care positions here at the YMCA, including teaching three year olds in one of our Morrison YMCA preschool programs.

Program Classes:

Children will be assigned to classes based on their age **on or before August 31, 2020.**

Children will not be "aged up" into a different classroom. They MUST meet the specified birthdate criteria for the class.

Please note that children do not change classes after they have a birthday. We recognize that classes will have a range of birthdays represented (just as children will have throughout their school career) and design our curriculum accordingly. The activities are done in a small group setting, so we can meet each child's developmental needs, and the curriculum is designed so that the activities grow with them as they develop over the course of the year.

Children's Academy Specials and Enrichment Opportunities

Specialty Classes

Included in our curriculum for all of our age groups is a weekly Physical Education and a Music & Movement class. Our specialty classes are taught by YMCA specialty teachers from our own team. Physical Education allows children the opportunity to participate in theme related games and fitness activities that promote active play and development of gross motor skills. Music class introduces the children to basic musical concepts and allows for creative expression through sound and movement. The use of instruments, puppets, songs and a diverse selection of music allows the children to have fun while engaging in an active and sensory rich experience.

A Science special will be held every other week for our Adventurers, Trailblazers and TK, and monthly for our Explorers and Navigators. Through hands on experiments and investigations children will have a unique opportunity to discover and interact. All five senses will be engaged as children learn about a wide variety of topics including space, weather, and animals.

In keeping with our commitment to the Christian principles, Character Education class will be offered on a bi-weekly basis to all classes. Through the use of stories, real life examples, and special activities, our teachers will help our little ones understand and apply our five character traits of caring, respect, responsibility, honesty, and faith.

Additional Enrichment

In addition, the YMCA does offer specialty programming during the early afternoon hours after the preschool day ends. These programs are for children ages 3-5 and are offered in 10 week sessions for an additional cost. If your child is enrolled in one of these classes, staff will transition them to their afternoon class.

YMCA Quality Standards place limits on the amount of screen time (TV, computers, etc.) for preschoolers in our care to less than 30 minutes per day. Please note, the Children's Academy does NOT regularly employ the use of television, movies, or computers as our days are filled with active learning! However, on rare occasion a short piece of educational video may be used to supplement a lesson (i.e., an example of music or animals) or as part of a special class party (i.e., on a pajama party day a class may watch a holiday program while drinking hot cocoa).

Program Guidelines:

Operating Hours: The Morrison Family YMCA at Ballantyne's Children's Academy will operate September 9, 2020- May 28, 2020 on Monday-Friday from 9:00am-1:00pm. Please see and SAVE the yearly calendar for dates the Children's Academy will be closed.

Staggered Entry for Explorers: Students enrolled in the Explorers class (18-24mos) will use an alphabetical staggered entry system for the first week of school. Our staggered entry allows for your little one to adjust & explore their new classroom environment in a smaller setting. It helps for each of our staff to spend some time getting to know you and your child as we know this is a brand new experience for you both.

Arrival and Departure:

Drop off and pick up: Our program begins at 9:00am and ends at 1:00pm.

Drop off/Carline will begin promptly at 8:55 am. Our learning activities begin as soon as the children walk through the door – please do your best to get them to school on time so that they do not miss any valuable teaching time! Please note that if you arrive after 9:10am, you will need to park and bring your child in through the Program Access Center entrance as the car-line will be closed so that all of our teachers can be in the classrooms to begin their day.

Pick up/Carline will begin at 12:45pm. Please call the YMCA front desk at 704-716-4650 if you are running late due to uncontrollable circumstances. Please DO NOT call the preschool office to let us know you are going to be late as we are away from the desk running carline and will not be able to take your call. The Sales and Service staff will get word to us in the event that you contact them.

NC state child care laws limit the amount of time a child can be in care in an unlicensed preschool to four hours. For this reason, **it is imperative that your child is picked up by 1:00pm.** Please be respectful of this rule and do your best to arrive on time to pick up your child. If you are coming into the carline after 1pm, there will be a late fee assessed of \$1 per minute. You will get a verbal warning the first time you are late, but if it occurs more than once, we have no choice but to issue fines and will charge your YMCA account automatically.

Early pick up: Please let the program director or your child's teacher know at morning drop off if your child will be picked up early. Teachers will take note and have your child ready to be picked up at the appropriate time.

Photo and/or ID Required for pick-up:

On your application you listed the individuals who are authorized to pick up your child. We use a software system to check your child in/out of care. Each person authorized to pick your child up will be listed on that system. Please confirm, via your online account, that your list is accurate and up to date. Changes can be made online or at the Sales and Service desk.

We will check your child out using photos stored in the software system, however, in the event that you do not have a photo saved, we will ask for a picture ID until we add one. In addition, we ask that you ALWAYS have your ID with you in the event that our system is down and we need to use another method to check out your child.

If your child is being picked up by another individual, that individual **MUST** have an appropriate child safety seat. By law, we are not able to release a child to a vehicle that does not have an appropriate car seat.

Cell phone use

Using a cell phone while in the carline puts all of our children at risk. Distracted drivers in a small area where staff and children are walking back and forth is simply not acceptable. We will strictly enforce this policy! If you are on your phone in the carline may lose your carline privileges for a period of time.

Carline is a time for you to communicate with your child's teacher. The time allotted for this is very brief and they may have important (or just plain fun) information to share with you. Please be respectful and give them your full attention during these times Thank you in advance for your cooperation and understanding.

Inclement Weather and Carline:

Unfortunately there will be days when car line is not available due to poor weather conditions. We will do our best to continue drop off process in a light drizzle, but anything more significant will require you to walk in to the facility.

Drop-off – Please walk your child directly to class.

Pick-up – When it is raining, or the ground is excessively wet, we do not have a place to safely line up the children who are in our care each day and ask that you come in to pick-up. To prevent hallway crowding on days when afternoon car line is not available, some of our classes will gather in the Teen Center. Staff will assist you in finding your group.

IF THERE IS NO CAR LINE YOU MUST PARK IN A DESIGNATED SPACE – DO NOT PARK IN THE CARLINE LANES, FIRE LANES, or HANDICAPPED SPACES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Please note that for safety reasons; the side door will remain closed and locked at all times. You will be required to enter through the Program Access Center (closest to the pool and dance studios) and scan your membership card or sign in. The side door is NOT a normal parent/member entrance and will remain locked. Please do not attempt to knock on the door to gain admittance through the side or ask a YMCA staff member to let you in – you will be asked to walk around to the Program Access Center.

CARLINE PROCEDURES WILL NOT BEGIN UNTIL THE 2nd WEEK OF SCHOOL – MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14th 2020 for the Navigators, Adventurers, Trailblazers, and TK classes.

CARLINE PROCEDURES for the Explorers class WILL NOT BEGIN UNTIL THE 3rd WEEK OF SCHOOL – MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st 2020

Communication/Involvement:

At the Children's Academy we want our parents to be involved and informed. Communication between parents and teachers is strongly encouraged and happens through a variety of methods:

- **Daily folders-** each day your child will take home a folder. This folder will be used to transport information about upcoming events, monthly calendars, crafts, classroom

materials, and other reminders from the classroom. **Please check and empty your child's folder after school each day to ensure that you don't miss any important news.**

- **Daily sheets for Explorers and Navigators** - at the end of each day your child's folder will include an informational sheet discussing some of the activities that took place throughout the day. These sheets will include an indication of your child's overall mood, how they ate, potty information, and a personal note about your child and some of the activities that they found to be particularly fun during their time with us.
- **Email** - you will receive regular email updates from your child's teachers to keep you up to date on the learning activities taking place in the classroom. You will also receive communication from program leadership as it relates to school wide activities and information. Please note, teachers may not check email daily depending on when they are working. If something requires immediate attention, please email the program director directly or morrisonchildrensacademy@ymcacharlotte.org
- **Text Alert** - We will share information that is time sensitive using our Remind.com text alert system. **You must sign up to receive updates.** Information texted may include time sensitive reminders, inclement weather updates or emergency information. This is a reminder system ONLY for Children's Academy participants and you will not receive other texts from the YMCA by participating. For the 2020-2021 year, please text _____* to **81010.** (*to be updated in August 2020)
- **Before School Meetings for Special Needs Students** - If your child has any special need (physical or developmental) please let us know prior to the start of school. We want to be ready and prepared to provide the best care possible for your child, and that means being informed. We are happy to sit down as a team of teachers and administrators to get to know your child's needs and how to help meet them so that he/she will have the best experience possible.
- **Parent Volunteers** - there are so many ways to be involved in the Children's Academy. If you have time to share and would like to serve as a helper in the classrooms (as a party volunteer, class parent, etc.) we will need you to complete the YMCA Volunteer Training process. This helps ensure the safety of all of our children. Please go to ymcacharlotte.org and click on "volunteers" to begin the process. You can still help if your time is limited - we always have a need to send home materials to prep for our classrooms and curriculum activities. Be on the look-out for sign up sheets at orientation and on Meet the Teacher Days.

Policies:

Sick Policy: For the safety and well-being of all of the children we care for, the following health and wellness policy will be strictly enforced. To protect your child and to help contain illness, we will not accept children at our Children's Academy if there are evident signs of the following symptoms:

Fever (100 degrees or higher)	Pink, gooey, or matted eyes
Continuous and/or colored nasal drainage	Continuous/persistent coughing
Sore throat	Discharge from eyes or ears
Open sores	Vomiting
Skin rash	Diarrhea

Children may return to their class once they have been **symptom free for 24 hours**. If your child is at school and is exhibiting any of the above symptoms, you will be called to pick up your child immediately. Parents should exercise every precaution and keep their child home should other unusual symptoms occur.

We do our best to keep our facility clean and prevent the spread of germs. Toys and surfaces are cleaned with all the appropriate cleaning solutions throughout and at the end of each school day. Our classroom floors are sanitized and vacuumed each day as well as professionally cleaned on a regular basis. Please notify us if your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness or condition (lice, strep, hand-foot-mouth disease, etc.) so that we may take extra precautions in our cleaning.

Medications: With the exception of medication for severe allergic reactions or potentially life threatening conditions, the Morrison YMCA expects that all medications be administered at home before coming to school. However, if medication is required for allergies, please give the ORIGINAL PRESCRIPTION CONTAINER THAT IDENTIFIES THE PRESCRIBING PHYSICIAN, THE NAME OF THE MEDICATION, THE DOSAGE, AND THE FREQUENCY OF ADMINISTRATION to the program director or teacher who will make sure that the medication is stored appropriately. A signed medication consent form is required to be able to administer any medicine including epi-pens and will be kept in the classroom with your child.

Emergencies: All of our staff are certified annually in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid. We are well equipped to handle and treat routine cuts, scrapes, and bumps. In the case of serious illness or an accident involving your child we will provide appropriate care and contact you immediately. Be aware that in cases of a true emergency, 911 will be called first.

Discipline Policy: The philosophy of our program is based on the character development principles of Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Honesty and Faith. It is with respect that each teacher will handle every disciplinary situation. Our main objective is to provide positive reinforcement, consistent praise and encouragement. When a discipline situation arises the following steps will be taken:

1. **Redirect-** the child will be redirected from the inappropriate behavior to a more suitable choice or activity.
2. **Warning-** the child will be given a verbal warning and reminded that continuing the inappropriate behavior will result in a consequence.
3. **Logical Consequence-** the child will be given a logical consequence for their behavior such as being separated from the group for a short time or not being able to play with a certain toy, etc.
4. **Parent Conference-** if the above steps have not been successful, a conference with the parent and teachers will be held to discuss positive methods.

Biting Policy:

STEPS TAKEN DURING BITING OCCURANCES

The Morrison Family YMCA Childcare staff will take the following steps if a biting situation occurs:

- The biting will be interrupted (if possible) with a firm, "NO. We don't bite people."
- Staff will remain calm and not overreact.

- The bitten child will be comforted and have the bitten spot cleaned and cooled with an ice pack.
- Staff will remove the biting child from the situation. The child will then be isolated from the group for time out (either in a regular chair or high chair based on their age).
- Both parents will be notified of the biting incident and appropriate documentation will be filled out.
- Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.

CONSEQUENCES — 35 months and under

Children ages 35 months and younger will be isolated from the group if they bite. All biting incidents will be documented regardless of the severity. After three biting occurrences in a 30 day period, the child will be suspended for 1 day (24 hours). Immediately following the last incident, the child's parents will be called to pick up the child immediately from the program. Documentation of the behavior will be signed by both staff and parent during pick-up and the suspension will be communicated. Upon returning to the Y, if another biting occurs within one week, the parent will need to pick up the child immediately and the child will be suspended for another 1 day (24 hours). Upon return, if additional biting occurrences happen, the child will be removed from the childcare program for a period of time based on the Directors discretion.

CONSEQUENCES — 36 months and over

Children ages 36 months and older will be:

- Isolated from the group if they bite
- Be required to leave the YMCA immediately and will not be able to return the following day (24 hours)
- Suspended for 1 day on the first day\instance of biting. After the second bite occurs, the child will be suspended 2 days.
- After the third bite occurs, the child will be removed from the childcare program for a period of time based on the Sr. Director's discretion. *

Food at the Children's Academy:

Lunch: It is the parent's responsibility to pack a nutritious, well-balanced healthy lunch each day for their child. Teachers will monitor the children during lunch each day to insure safety and assist with any help the child may need. However, they will NOT be responsible for the order or amount your child chooses to eat of his or her lunch items nor will lunches be heated. You are encouraged to use insulated containers to keep your child's lunch appropriately hot or cold. **Please remember that there can be NO PEANUT PRODUCTS/NUTS or TREE NUTS of any kind sent in your child's lunch.**

Snack: It is up to each classroom to assign snack for the parents. Please be on the look-out for a reminder flyer in your child's folder. This will be sent home the last day of class before it is your turn (i.e., on Thursday of one week to let you know that you have snack the following Tuesday and Thursday). Snack assignments are also listed on your class calendar, which comes home at the start of each month.

We will be using a list of approved snack choices to help ensure that we are providing consistently healthy snacks. Please see the snack information sheet in your parent packet for more information. Please do not send in snack foods that are not on this list.

While the YMCA of Greater Charlotte is committed to a peanut allergy friendly facility, we cannot guarantee that peanuts will not find their way into our facility. We ask that you continue to take every precaution to protect yourself and your children from unwanted exposure to peanut allergens.

Birthdays:

In effort to maintain a healthy environment and to be sensitive to the increasing number of food allergies of our participants, birthdays may be observed only with a non-edible item. Children will be celebrated and given recognition for their special day (with crowns, stickers and/or special privileges) in the classroom. If you want to mark the occasion in the room with your child, you are welcome to do so by reading a favorite story or bringing in a non food treat for the class such as stickers, tattoos, pencils, bubbles, etc.

Children's Academy Calendar:

The Morrison Family YMCA will follow the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school calendar. **PLEASE SEE AND SAVE THE ATTACHED CHILDREN'S ACADEMY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION.**

In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the Charlotte-Mecklenburg closing guidelines. You may call our inclement weather hotline at 704-716-4637 for updates on openings and delays of the Morrison YMCA. In the event of a delayed opening the Children's Academy will follow the below procedures:

- If CMS is on a 1 hour delay we will open at 10:00am.
- If CMS is on a 2 hour delay the Children's Academy open at 11:00am.

For CMS Early Release dates the Children's Academy will operate on a normal schedule.

***Please note:** The Children's Academy does not prorate tuition rates for days missed due to individual illness, vacations, inclement weather or scheduled closings. **We do not follow the CMS make-up day schedule.**

Program Enrollment/Payments:

- Payments are automatically charged or drafted on the 15th of each month to the account you listed on your application. If you need to update your billing method, please visit the sales and services desk.
- Payments are charged the 15th of the month prior to the month it is paying for (Example: September tuition is due on or before August 15th). If payment is not received by the 15th it will result in a **late payment fee of \$25. This fee is assessed automatically by our business office.** Failure to pay tuition by the 1st of the month in which it is paying for will result in the **termination of the child's enrollment** in the Children's Academy.
- Financial assistance is available. Please see a Sales & Service representative to learn more or to see if you qualify.
- A **non-refundable** registration fee of \$75/child is due at time of registration.
- A **non-refundable** supply fee of \$75 (\$95 for TK) is due at time of registration. Supply fees are distributed throughout the program over the course of the year. We utilize these funds in areas of

special events, holiday gifts, unique science and arts projects, homemade crafts and treats, yearbooks, graduation supplies and the end of the year extravaganza.

Program Cancellations:

Year-long enrollment: All cancellations require a **TWO WEEK WRITTEN NOTICE** prior to the payment date (listed on payment schedule in parent packet). Cancellations after this time will result in a prorated charge for the session regardless of whether the child attended. Registration and supply fees are non-refundable.

Parent Expectations:

Our hope is that the Children's Academy is a wonderful experience for both you and your child. Over the course of the year, we hope that you feel welcomed and valued by our staff. We feel blessed to have your trust in the care and development of your child. Please feel free to share your questions, comments, or concerns with the program Director or your child's teachers. To help us meet your child's needs, we ask the following:

- Follow policies and procedures outlined in this handbook
- Maintain open communication with teachers and Academy staff. For instance, children's actions often reflect situations that are experienced at home (i.e. death of a pet, family changes, moving, etc.) If any such experiences occur, please inform the directors or teachers so that we will better meet the needs of your child.

YMCA of Greater Charlotte Child Care Guidelines:

YMCA Preschools are not licensed and regulated by the State Department of Child Development. YMCA of Greater Charlotte preschools adhere to YMCA Quality Standards and our guidelines meet or exceed state requirements. These standards are available at your request.

Children may NOT participate in the following programs or a combination of the following programs for more than FOUR HOURS in a calendar day in any YMCA of Greater Charlotte or combination of YMCAs in Greater Charlotte: Children's Enrichment & Program Center, Children's Academy, Afterschool and/or YKids. This means that you will not be able to utilize drop in child care (at any YMCA in Greater Charlotte) for your child if they have already used the Children's Academy that day. *However*, you are able to use recreational programming on the same day your child has preschool. For example, if your child attends school on M/W/F, you may not bring them to Ykids in the evening on those days, but you can bring them to a soccer clinic, gymnastics or dance class.

Please let us know what questions you have. We are always happy to help and look forward to a great year of learning and growing together!