



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



THE MAGIC OF CHILDHOOD YMCA Preschool

Brace Family YMCA

2024-2025
Parent Handbook

ymcacharlotte.org



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Dear Families,

Welcome to the Brace Family YMCA Preschool Program! We look forward to working with your child and family during the 2024-2025 school year. This handbook contains important information specific to the Brace Family YMCA Preschool and expectations to help prepare for a successful school year.

Please also visit [Preschool Central](http://www.ymcacharlotte.org) at www.ymcacharlotte.org for information and expectations of all of our Charlotte YMCA Preschools. Please review before your child's first day and contact us with any questions you may have.

Thank you for entrusting in us, your most precious child. We are very excited in what the year has in store for us.

Jennifer E. Carlson

Early Childhood Director
JenniferE.Carlson@ymcacharlotte.org
704-716-4323

Our Mission

The YMCA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Our Values

Caring · Honesty · Respect · Responsibility · Faith

Program Philosophy

At the Y, we believe childhood is a magical time and understand the importance of learning that takes place in these early years. Building on the natural curiosity and energy young children bring each day, our preschool programs focus on developing the whole child – physically, emotionally, socially and academically – through developmentally appropriate experiences and environments. Play-based learning is at the heart of our programs, and our early childhood educators use a theme-based curriculum to teach foundational skills in fun and meaningful ways.

Calendar & Hours

The preschool program will operate from September 3, 2024 through May 23, 2025. Program hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

The program will be CLOSED on the dates listed below. We follow the CMS School District calendar for all holidays and teacher workdays:

October 3rd and 4th
November 4th and 5th, 11th
November 27th—29th
December 23– Jan 3

January 20th and 24th
February 17th
March 31st
April 14th-21st

What to Wear

Please dress your child in clothing that is comfortable, appropriate for the weather, and easy for your child to manage. We go outdoors daily, weather permitting, so rubber-soled shoes are a must (no sandals, flip flops, or slick bottom shoes). Many of the activities we do in preschool are messy- painting, outdoor play, eating- so you should expect that their clothes will get dirty.

What to Bring

1. Extra change of clothes- Send an extra change of clothes, in a labeled bag, at the beginning of the school year so we have something to change your child into if their clothing gets soiled. You will need to provide clean clothes whenever they are used and as the outdoor temperature changes.
2. Water bottle- Send a water bottle daily labeled with your child's name.
3. Lunch & snack- It is the family's responsibility to pack a separate nutritious snack and a well-balanced, healthy lunch each day for their child.
4. Backpack- Please send your child with a backpack big enough to hold their folder, lunch box, water bottle and change of clothes.

What Not to Bring

Since toys from home can be lost or cause friction among children, please do not let your child bring them to school. We will notify you in advance if there is a day designated for Show and Tell when your child can share a special toy.

We do not allow any technology (iPads, phones, DS devices, etc.) from home to be brought to school.

Labeling

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of labeling ALL your child's personal belongings. This includes everything they bring to school and everything they wear to school: clothes, shoes, coats/jackets, hats, gloves, umbrellas, lunch boxes, drink cups, food containers, ice packs, etc.

We will make every effort to return lost items while your child is in preschool. If you discover that something is missing, please contact your child's teacher or check the lost and found.

Lunch & Snack

Our daily schedule includes time for a snack and lunch. Teachers will monitor the children during meal times to ensure safety and to assist your child if needed. However, they will NOT be responsible for the order or amount your child chooses to eat. Please note we cannot refrigerate or heat your child's lunch. You are encouraged to use insulated containers to keep your child's lunch appropriately hot or cold. Please do NOT send candy or soft drinks. Please do not send products containing nuts. Pack items that your child will be able to open on their own. As the year progresses, we will work towards your child becoming self sufficient. In our older classes, we strive to have them Kindergarten ready.

Carline

Please refrain from using any type of electronics while in the car line. The car line can be very busy with a lot of moving parts. Teachers are coming in and out along with your precious child. Our top priority is to keep everyone safe and we need your help to do this. Please pull all the way forward to the marked lines during drop off and pick up. This allows for our line to move efficiently.

Arrival (9:00-9:15)

A staff member will greet you at your car and check your child into preschool. Please do not let your child out of the car until a staff member opens the door. The staff member will direct your child to his/her classroom. We ask that CAREGIVERS PLEASE STAY IN THE CAR so that we can keep the carpool line moving.

Departure (1:00-1:15)

You will receive a sign with your child's name to display in your car window during pickup. As you near the Preschool entrance, show your sign and we will bring your child to you. Again, please stay in your car. A staff member will put your child in the car.

Y staff cannot strap your child in the car seat. PLEASE PULL FORWARD TO THE END OF THE DRIVE TO BUCKLE YOUR CHILD. This allows our carpool line to run smoother and faster.

North Carolina law requires a child safety seat or booster seat for children under 8 years old. Staff will not dismiss a child into a car if a proper car seat is not evident.

Drop off / Pick up locations

2 year olds—Top driveway
3 year old 4 day—Top driveway
4 year old 4 day—Top driveway

3 year old 5 day—Lower Driveway
4/5 year olds 5 day—Lower driveway

Late Pick Up

You will be charged a late fee. The late fee will automatically be drafted from your credit card on file. If you arrive after 1:15 PM, you will have to walk into the building to pick up your child. If a child is not picked up after 15 minutes, we will call someone on your emergency list to pick up your child.

Absences

Should your child be out sick, due to illness, vacation or emergency, your child's teacher would like to know in advance. While this of course is not required, our teachers do get concerned when a child is out, especially for an extended amount of time. You can reach them at the office: 704-716-7323 or JenniferE.Carlson@ymcacharlotte.org or message them through the BrightWheel app.

Communication

Open communication between families and teachers is strongly encouraged and happens through a variety of methods. Children's actions can sometimes reflect challenges or changes they are experiencing outside of the program (pet's death, divorce, conflict at school, new siblings, etc.) Please keep us informed of anything happening at home that might affect your child so we are prepared to best support your child and family.

BrightWheel app- Each class will use the BrightWheel app to share important information, pictures, and more! You can message your child's teachers and Director using the app. You will receive an invitation from this app, Please make sure that you allow notifications.

Newsletter- Once a week, you will receive a Brightwheel message from your teaching team about the many on-going activities that have taken place in the classroom, our new monthly theme, and activities to look forward to. You will also receive communication from program leadership as it relates to school wide activities and information.

Social Media – Please follow us on the Brace Family YMCA Facebook page and @BraceFamilyYMCA Instagram page where we post fun pictures either telling our daily story of what goes on or showing preparations for big events, along with branch information.

Feedback

We strongly value feedback and suggestions about how to make our programs better. Please do not hesitate to email, call, or set up a meeting with us to discuss any feedback you'd like to provide. We will also periodically conduct surveys or reach out in other ways to seek your feedback and/or ideas in order to enhance and improve what we're doing.

Progress Updates

Teachers will provide families with an update on how children are progressing with the skills we are teaching during preschool. Conferences will be held in January to discuss your child's progress and ways you can support their learning at home.

Please contact the preschool director if you would like to request a conference at any other time during the school year.

Volunteer Opportunities

We love our parent volunteers. Teachers will have sign up sheets at open house for different opportunities to help with in the classroom.

Birthdays and Celebrations

In an effort to maintain a healthy environment and to be sensitive to the increasing number of food allergies of our participants, birthdays may be observed with **non-edible items** only. Children will be given recognition of their special day (with a crown, stickers and/or a special privilege) in the classroom.

Holiday celebrations will be celebrated with healthy snacks, games and holiday projects. Your teachers will reach out to the class with the plans for all celebrations.

Biting

Biting is a normal and temporary stage of development for young children under the age of 3, particularly for those who do not yet have the verbal skills to express their feelings. If biting occurs during preschool, our staff will teach the child that biting is not safe and give the child new ways to respond in those situations. Families will be notified if their child bites or is bitten, and a plan to prevent future biting will be created with the family if biting is habitual.

Toilet Training

Our teachers working with two-year olds will work with families when potty training. If you are potty training your two year old, please make your child's teachers are aware. Be sure to let them know what techniques you are using at home, so that the teachers can reinforce them at school. Potty training is a HUGE developmental milestone, and we want to help make it as smooth of a process as possible. It is recommended that three year olds be potty trained by the first day of school. We know that accidents can occur occasionally. The teachers will assist your child in changing into clean clothes if there is an accident. Please be sure to send a change of clothes, in case this happens. If you need to discuss accommodations with us related to toilet training, please reach out ahead of time so that we can work with you to create an appropriate plan for your child (wearing a pull up, for instance).

Curriculum

The Brace Family Preschool prides itself on a play based curriculum. Giving children opportunities and intentional guidance provides them with a variety of valuable learning experiences. Play fosters and develops language, problem solving, and motor skills while allowing kids to dive into academic areas in a fun and meaningful way. We provide many age-appropriate resources to enrich their learning through play and exploration. We believe that children learn best through hands on experiences. All activities are child centered. This program encourages self-expression and exploration. Our preschoolers participate in a variety of activities daily, including circle time, learning centers, small group lessons, creative play, music and drama, social and emotional learning, and physical activity. In addition to time in the traditional classroom setting, our preschoolers will also go outside each day weather permitting.

A daily class schedule will be given to you at the beginning of the year by your child's teacher. This schedule will include times of activities (story time, lunch, outside, etc.)

**Please note that schedules are subject to change*

Students:

Children will be assigned to classes based on their age **on or before August 31, 2024.**

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

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.

Classroom Ratios (Teacher: children)

Twos- 2:12

Threes- 2:14

Fours- 2:16

Two's Program

Our two year old program focuses on developing a love for school and helping students with that first time separation anxiety. We provide an inviting atmosphere that encourages a child to explore, have fun and develop self-help skills. Our teachers will concentrate on

- Following a daily schedule

- Beginning to learn to share

- Use our words (communicate wants and needs)

- Encourage participation in Circle Time (songs, weather, story time)

- Painting, coloring, pasting

- Introduce letters, numbers, shapes and colors

- Introduce own name and friends names

- Assist with the mastery of "Potty training"

Three's Program

Our three year old program focuses on continuing the love for school, sharing, and self-help skills. Our teachers will concentrate on:

- Following a daily schedule

- Sharing and playing with others through Centers

- Recognition of letters, numbers, shapes and colors through art

- Recognition of one's first name and friends names

- Self-reliance; Unpacking book bag, lunchtime, Packing up book bag, clothing

- Develop large and small motor skills

Four/Five Year Old Program

Our four year program focuses on continuing the love for school and building the necessary skills for the student to move on to Kindergarten. Our curriculum is based on the Scholastic program; PreK *On My Way*. This amazing program builds a students Language, Literacy and Math Skills through a weekly theme that builds upon its self for 4 weeks. Our teachers will also concentrate on:

School Readiness

Following multi step directions

Enhance social development

Self-reliance (unpacking book bag, lunchtime, clothing, packing book bag at the end of the day)

Recognizing upper and lower case letters, numbers 1-20

Prewriting and spelling skills

Introduction of sight words

Writing one's first and last name

Graphing, measuring, sorting, patterns

Science and the world around them

Tax Time:

YMCA Tax ID: 56-1045299