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**MORRISON FAMILY YMCA
BALLANTYNE PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS**

**2020-2021
Parent Handbook**
ymcacharlotte.org

Morrison Family YMCA Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2020 – 2021 School Year

Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts

Senior Arts Director

Micah Hein

MorrisonPreschooloftheArts@ymcacharlotte.org

Program Director Office Phone: 704-716-4696

Morrison Family YMCA Front Desk: 704-716-4650

Hours of Operation: 9:00am-1:00pm

In addition to reviewing the parent handbook, we ask that parents also read the “COVID-19 Precautions” information on Preschool Central to learn about the steps we are taking to prioritize the health and safety of our preschoolers and staff.

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

To provide a safe and engaging environment where children are encouraged to develop and balance their academic and creative skills through our unique curriculum and talented team of teachers and teaching artists. We believe that arts education connects and integrates life skills, literacy and learning through creative experiences fit for all learners.

To strive under the mission of the YMCA that each child be given the opportunity to develop character traits: caring, respect, responsibility, honesty, and faith in a nurturing environment.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts is an arts-integrated preschool program that provides a visual, exploratory, engaging environment where your child will learn through visual and performing arts and thematic concepts. Our preschoolers have a unique opportunity to experience dance, drama, and music with field professionals. While they will only work with one teacher throughout the day to minimize exposure during the pandemic, our virtual curriculum will allow your students to experience a variety of arts concentrations taught by a variety of professional teaching artists. Through a curriculum inspired by the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia, our students and their teachers' question, discover and create together.

This year, we are offering a hybrid model for our preschool classes. Students will attend in-person classes two days per week and then receive related virtual curriculum for additional days each week. This curriculum will be pre-recorded content that you can review with your child on your own schedule. We will use Google Classroom as our platform to facilitate this virtual environment. This is a new world for us, but we already have some amazing ideas to keep this content fun, fresh, and engaging for your student.

Our program offers developmentally appropriate curriculum that includes the following:

- Monthly Themes
- Literacy and Math Learning Labs
- Creative Movement
- Drama
- Public Speaking
- Music
- Visual Arts
- Science and Discovery Lessons
- Sensory Exploration
- Circle Time/Social Skills
- Self-Directed Classroom Centers

- Fine and Gross Motor Skill Developments
- Creative Mindfulness and Yoga
- Monthly Character Traits

PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS STAFF

Our program is staffed with well qualified, educated and trained professional teaching artists who are eager to positively influence the life of your child. After a thorough interview process, chosen teachers must complete a minimum of 30 hours of training throughout the year in areas such as child development, re-directive discipline techniques, positive reinforcement, appropriate lesson planning, best practices, safety and emergency procedures, CPR/First Aid, and YMCA child protection procedures. We look for leaders who exemplify outstanding character and compassion. Your child's classroom will include a team of teachers all dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing and engaging learning environment. These teaching artists each possess expert field knowledge of their respective arts concentration (visual arts, theatre arts, dance, yoga/movement, and more). While your student may not work with more than one teaching artist directly during their in-person days to minimize exposure, we will be providing this variety of specialty staff and instruction via our virtual platform.

PROCEDURES

Operating Hours:

The Morrison Family YMCA Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts will operate for the upcoming school year from September 8, 2020 through May 28, 2021. Our daily hours are: Monday-Friday from 9:00am-1:00pm. Our first in-person class for our TK students will be Thursday, September 10, 2020.

Calendar: We'll hold in person classes during the semester on days that we've previously taken off and only be out of school Wed-Fri of Thanksgiving week (11/25-11/27), Winter Break (12/21-1/1) and Spring Break (4/1-4/9).

In the event of inclement weather or other event that requires closing or delaying preschool, we will notify parents as quickly as possible. You may visit www.ymcacharlotte.org/morrison for updates on openings and delays of the Morrison Family YMCA.

*Please note: The Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts does not prorate tuition rates for days missed due to individual illness, vacations, inclement weather, or scheduled closings. Also, if CMS returns to in-person classroom instruction, we will not follow the CMS make-up day schedule.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT/PAYMENTS:

Payments may be made via checking account or bank draft only. Payments are due 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 Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts.

Financial assistance is available. Please see a Sales & Service representative at the Morrison Family YMCA to learn more about the assistance program. Approval must be done prior to the start of program month.

A **non-refundable** registration fee of \$75/child (\$100 for non-members) is due at the time of registration.

A **non-refundable** supply fee of \$165 (\$200 for non-members) is due at time of registration. Supply fees are distributed throughout the program all year long.

No monies are collected at BPA. All inquiries, questions, or concerns about payment/member account will need to be addressed at a Sales & Service Desk at the Morrison Family YMCA (704-716-4600).

Wait-List Option:

If the class you wish to sign up for is at full capacity at the time of registration, we do have a wait-list option for the Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts. Please submit a completed application (minus payment) at the Sales & Service Desk at the Morrison Family YMCA to be placed on the list. You will be immediately contacted by phone or email any time during the school year once an opening becomes available. A 48-hour time frame is given to respond before the next family on the list is contacted.

Program Cancellations:

Year-long enrollment: All cancellations require a **TWO WEEK WRITTEN NOTICE** prior to the payment date (listed on payment schedule in Yearly Calendar). Please email your notice to the Program Director to ensure proper and timely cancellation. Cancellations with less than two weeks notice will result in a prorated charge for the month regardless of whether the child attended. Cancellations made after this time will also result in the draft for the following month's tuition continuing as scheduled, as it takes at least two weeks to stop the draft. Registration and supply fees are non-refundable.

Drop-Off Procedures and Health Screening Information:

Health screenings, including an online health questionnaire and temperature check, will be conducted daily to all staff and participants prior to entering the facility. Staff will take the temperature of children using a temporal thermometer, and children will not be permitted to stay if the temperature is at or above 100.4 degrees. Parents may not leave until their child is cleared to enter.

Drop-off Procedures

1. Please come to the Y and park in a parking spot at the Dee Dee Harris Program Entrance.
2. TEXT 704-428-9027 when you arrive on campus.
3. Remain in your car until we text you to walk up to the PAC entrance.
4. We will complete your child's health screening and get them checked in to the program from there.

5. Parents will need to remain there until the health screening is complete.

Pick-up Procedures

1. Please come to the Y and park in a parking spot at the Dee Dee Harris Program Entrance.
2. TEXT 704-428-9027 when you arrive on campus.
3. Remain in your car until we text you to walk up to the entrance.
4. We will get your child from their group and help them gather their belongings.
5. We will text you when your child is ready to go. Please come to the entrance with your photo ID for check-out.

Our program begins promptly at 9:00am and ends at 1:00pm. You can complete your student's required onsite health screening and check-in as early as 8:45am. **It is important to have your child arrive on time so they do not miss any of the scheduled activities or disrupt the teachers and children who have already begun their day.** Pick up will begin at 12:45pm and promptly ends at 1:00pm.

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 arrive on time to pick-up your child. If you come into the building after 1pm, there will be a late fee assessed of \$1 per minute. You will get a warning the first time you are late, but if it occurs more than once, we have no choice but to issue fines and charge your YMCA account automatically.

Please note that 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, Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts, Child Watch, Afterschool and/or Kid's HQ. This means that you will not be able to utilize the CEPC (at any YMCA in Greater Charlotte) for your child if they have already used the Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts 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/R, you may not bring them to the CEPC in the afternoon on those days, but you can bring them to a soccer clinic, gymnastics class, dance class, preschool club, etc.

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.

Pick-Up Policy:

Staff will check in each child into the program at the start of the day and then check out each child at the end of the preschool day. Anyone picking up a child at the BPA (or from ANY YMCA program) must present a valid photo ID at the time of pick-up, until their photo is uploaded into the program. Please make sure all authorized individuals are aware of this policy. **Once that is in place, no photo ID check is necessary!** The Morrison Family YMCA reserves the right to deny release to any persons who are not on the authorized pick-up roster and/or do not have valid photo identification (except for legal guardians, unless there are legal documents to prohibit the child's release). **PLEASE MAKE SURE ANYONE AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD IS ADDED THROUGH YOUR ONLINE ACCOUNT!*****

***If you are unsure of who you placed on the list or want to change an authorized person applicable to the entire Morrison YMCA, you may check and edit your account conveniently online. You can also update medical information for your child, including contact information, emergency contacts, allergies, medications, and vaccination dates.

Early Pick-Up:

Please let the Program Director or your child's teacher know if your child will be picked up early. Teachers will have your child ready to be picked up at the appropriate time. Upon arrival to the Morrison for pick-up, please text our Morrison program phone (704-428-9027). Wait for a response, and then come up to PAC door to pick up your child outside of our main entrance.

Short Term Change of Pick-Up:

To change your child's pick-up person for one time or a short term, a written note with an authorized signature must be turned in to your child's teacher or to the Program Director. An email to the program director will also be accepted, as well as a verbal request in person to the Program Director. If you need to permanently change or add an authorized person to the roster, please make those changes online AND communicate this information to the Program Director. Remember to alert any authorized pick-up person to bring their valid photo ID.

POLICIES

COVID-19 Precautions

We understand this is one of your biggest concerns for the 2020-2021 school year. Please review the COVID-19 precautions for preschool provided by the Association office on our website ([Preschool Central](#)). If you have specific questions, please feel free to reach out to the Program Director.

Sickness and Wellness 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 the Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts if there are evident signs of the following symptoms:

Children who have the following symptoms should remain at home until they are symptom free for 24 hours (72 hours for fever) without the use of medication or unless a written note from the child's physician is provided, stating that their symptoms are not contagious:

- A fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. Children must be fever-free for at least 72 hours without fever-reducing medication before they can return to programs.
- Continuous and/or colored nasal drainage
- Continuous/persistent coughing
- Discharge from eyes or ears
- Sore throat
- Communicable diseases. Examples include, but are not limited to, pink eye, head lice, skin rash, and strep throat. Skin rash

- Open sores
- Diarrhea. Child cannot have more than two loose stools in a 24 hour period.
- Vomiting
- If your child has a known exposure to or symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, fever) of COVID-19, they will be asked to self-quarantine for 2 weeks before returning to the program. We will credit any tuition monies paid for this time away from BPA for quarantine or illness if the family can provide a doctor's note.

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.

Staff will notify parents to pick up the child when any of the following conditions exist:

1. The child displays any of the symptoms above.
2. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
3. The illness results in a greater need than the YMCA staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

We do our very 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/mopped daily, 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) so that we may take extra precautions in our cleaning.

Medications:

With the exception of medication for severe allergic reactions, the Morrison Family YMCA expects that all medications be administered at home before coming to school. However, if medication (prescribed or OTC) is absolutely required, please give the ORIGINAL PRESCRIPTION CONTAINER THAT IDENTIFIES THE PRESCRIBING PHYSICIAN, THE NAME OF THE MEDICATION, DOSAGE AND THE FREQUENCY OF ADMINISTRATION directly to Morrison Leadership Staff. Our leadership staff are responsible for safely storing the medication in a lockbox in the program office, including EpiPens. No over-the-counter medications, unless accompanied by a doctor's note, will be administered. A signed medication consent form is also required to be able to administer any medicine including Epi-Pens. Medicines, including Epi-Pens, cannot be expired.

Emergencies:

All of our staff is certified annually by the Safety & Health Institute 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 child misbehaves 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.

Please note that in the event that a child demonstrates behavior that puts the safety of others at risk we may choose to send them home for the remainder of the day.

Our first priority is creating a safe and nurturing environment for ALL of our children to learn and grow in. Our school has a unique set-up, both by curriculum and daily transitions. We reserve the right to document behavior and to set up conferences with any family whose child may find this type of preschool setting challenging.

Biting Policy:

With young children, biting is a normal and temporary developmental phase, particularly for those who do not yet have the verbal skills to express their thoughts. However, we recognize that this behavior is not only disruptive to the class, but also unsafe. Teachers will do their best to prevent biting, but in the event that a child is bitten the following safety measures will be taken:

1. The child who was bitten will receive proper care for their injury. If the skin has been broken, parents will be called and given the option of having both the biter and the bitten child tested for communicable diseases by the YMCA. This is done at no cost to the parents and confidentiality of both parties will be strictly maintained.
2. The biter will be firmly reminded that biting is not an acceptable way to treat his/her friends and will receive a consequence of being separated from the group for an age appropriate amount of time (2-3 minutes).
3. Parents of both children will be notified at pick-up (a phone call will be made if the skin is broken) and an incident report will be filed at the YMCA.
4. If the child bites, regardless of whether skin is broken, two times in one week, they will need to be picked up and will not be able to return the following school day (even if days separate their in-person class time).
5. If a child is biting habitually, we will work with the parents to create an appropriate action plan for prevention such as providing a more appropriate object for them to bite (i.e., a teething necklace).

6. If an older child (over 3) bites and breaks the skin, they will be sent home immediately.

Lunch and Snack:

It is the family's responsibility to pack a separate nutritious snack and a well-balanced, healthy lunch each day for their child. Teachers will monitor the children during lunch each day to ensure safety and to assist with any help your child may need. 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. To the extent possible, please pack items that your child will be able to open on their own. Please label your child's lunchbox (and if possible, all other belongings that are sent in with them for the school day – backpack, water bottle, etc).

*Please Note: Children will sing a blessing prior to snack and lunch.

Please remember that there can be NO PEANUT PRODUCTS/NUTS or TREE NUTS of any kind sent in your child's snack or lunch. If you send in an alternative butter, please label the item for your teachers. Any nut item sent into school will remain in its original packaging and be returned home with a peanut free reminder. In that situation, an item from your child's lunch will be offered as snack.

While the YMCA of Greater Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of peanuts and tree nuts, we cannot guarantee that allergens will not find their way into our facility. Parents or guardians should make every effort to provide meals and/or snacks that do not contain nuts. However, we realize that most packaged products are labeled with verbiage that indicates foods may contain traces of nuts or may be made in facilities or on equipment that processes nuts so we do expect that some packaged products in our facility will contain that messaging.

Water Bottle:

Please send a water bottle with your student since we can only use the hands free water fountains at this time. Please label this water bottle with your student's name.

Birthday Celebrations/Party Invitations:

Your child will be celebrated and given recognition for their special day in the classroom, per your teachers' discretion. Due to COVID-19, birthdays may not be observed with an edible or non-edible item that would be shared with other students (balloons, stickers, glow sticks, etc.) For the safety and health of our students, we will not be allowing parent/guardian visitors inside the classroom until further notice.

Room Parents and Parent Volunteers – Due to COVID-19, we are currently not allowing room parents and volunteers to be in the room with our preschoolers as a preliminary caution. We will be in touch if this changes and we are able to rely on some extra sets of hands to help.

Dress Code:

- No flip-flops or shoes that come off of feet easily.
- Comfortable, roomy clothes that can get messy (we do have and use smocks for our youngest students, but there are always opportunities for a spill or an "oops" in an arts preschool!)

- Be aware that all intentions are there to insure hair bands, bows, jewelry or other special items that come to school goes home at the end of the day with their owner. But accidents happen and items can be misplaced or broken.

Potty Expectations:

All three year olds (and older) MUST 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 a three year old continues to have accidents, we may ask that the preschooler stays home until the accidents are under control.

Labeling:

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of labeling **all** of your child's personal belongings. Very often if an item is not labeled, teachers are unable to determine its owner. Therefore, if your child brings it to school, make sure that their name is clearly written on it. Do not hesitate to label EVERYTHING!

COMMUNICATION

At the Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts, we want our families to be involved and informed. Communication between parents and teachers is strongly encouraged and happens through a variety of methods. All of these communication points are intended as a way to open up communication with your child about their day and we encourage that you use the opportunity to build deeper understanding, reinforce learning and create even more enthusiasm for coming to school!

Weekly Lesson Plans – Your class' lesson plans will be uploaded to the Google Classroom the week prior to help you plan your week at school. They also include important reminders about specific upcoming classroom activities, which may need your attention.

Monthly Parent Communication Email for Each Class – Once a month, you will receive an email 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. Parents are welcome to respond or send emails to the teachers at any time, though please note that YMCA emails will be checked once daily.

FaceBook – Please like the Ballantyne Arts Center on FaceBook where we post fun pictures either telling our daily story of what we do here or showing preparations for big events, along with interesting articles and quotes celebrating and supporting education through the arts.

Conferences – Teachers conduct milestone assessments for our students in January in order to have conferences with parents in late January (before February registration cycles at Morrison YMCA, as well as other schools, including CMS, begin). Sign ups will be sent out as assessments start.

Emergencies:

Teachers keep their personal cell phones on and on their person at all times. In the event of an emergency, they will call the main Y facility and the Program Director for assistance. Be aware that in cases of a true emergency, 911 will be called first.

In the event a parent needs to contact the classroom, please call the Program Director at 704-716-4696 or the Morrison Main Building cell phone at 704-428-9027, who will then contact your teachers to convey any pertinent message, like an unexpected early pick-up.