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MAGIC OF CHILDHOOD**

**HARRIS YMCA
PRESCHOOL ACADEMY**

**2021-2022
Parent Handbook**

ymcacharlotte.org

Greetings Parents!

On behalf of the Harris Preschool Academy, we would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to educate your child with our Christian preschool program. We provide this program as a ministry to your family. Our goal is to offer developmentally appropriate early-learning environments, rich in social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth. As parents, you are encouraged to have open communication with us, ask questions and make suggestions. Your child's success depends on close cooperation and understanding between parents and staff.

The Harris Preschool Academy has been designed with the young child in mind. Our goal is to provide a safe, wholesome, Christian environment where children will grow in spirit, mind and body. This handbook has been created as a resource for the parents. It will help you know and understand our policies, as well as, support our program, so that your child will have a successful year at the Harris Preschool Academy.

Again, thank you for allowing us to minister to you and your family! We're glad you're joining us for your child's preschool adventure!

Meaghan Hinckley
Director of Early Childhood Development

Program Information

The YMCA Mission/Vision

The YMCA Mission: "To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all." The YMCA Vision: "To be a catalyst to transform lives and communities."

Our Philosophy/Goal

The goal of YMCA Preschool is to provide a safe, wholesome, Christian environment where children will grow in spirit, mind and body. Teachers focus on teaching your child the YMCA's Five Building Blocks: socialization, fine and gross motor skills, education and healthy choices. YMCA Preschool strives to enhance each child's self esteem, helping reach their God-given potential.

About Our Program

YMCA Preschools provide developmentally appropriate early-learning environments, rich in social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth and learning opportunities. The Harris

Preschool Academy offers a variety of activities that include circle time, learning centers, small group lessons, creative play, music and drama, social and emotional learning, physical fitness, prayer, while also incorporating fine and gross motor development. All of our classes are planned to develop each child's self esteem and a strong image of self-worth through learning and sharing in a fun, structured environment. Children are encouraged to explore, ask questions and solve problems in a warm, Christian setting.

Our program is a combined system of concept explorations, play based learning, and multi-sensory activities. We believe that through play and other process-oriented experiences, children gain confidence in their ability to learn. From circle time to their adventures through the learning centers, from the organized classrooms to the playground, we strive to provide an atmosphere where children can laugh, learn and play; a place where a child can be a child, growing intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually every day.

YMCA Preschools are not licensed and regulated by the State Department of Child Development. The YMCA of Greater Charlotte Preschools adhere to YMCA Quality Standards. Preschools are not drop-in care programs (Drop-In Childcare), recreational programs such as aquatics, sports, dance, gymnastics, etc. or Children's Enrichment Programs such as "Parents' Morning Out". Children may not participate in the following programs or a combination of the following programs for more than four hours in a 24 hour period (calendar day) in a Charlotte YMCA or a combination of Charlotte YMCAs: Children's Enrichment Programs, unlicensed Preschool, Drop-In Childcare (drop-in care) and unlicensed Afterschool (Therefore your child can not attend Drop-In Childcare on the same day that they have attended preschool, as this is a N.C. State guideline; we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you). Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Preschool Director.)

Classroom Ratios (Teacher: children)

Toddlers- 2:10

Twos- 2:12

Transitional Threes- 2:12

Threes- 2:14

Transitional Fours- 2:14

Fours- 2:16

Transitional Kindergarten- 2:16

Curriculum

The Harris Preschool Academy 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. The daily activities will consist of circle time, read aloud stories, free choice centers, art, music and small group work. In addition to spending quality time in the classroom, the students also attend several "special" classes throughout the week. The three and four year old

classes will experience dance, gymnastics, Kid Fit, and swimming with experts from our YMCA community. These are classes that make the Harris Preschool Academy unique.

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.)

Toddler Program

The main focus of our toddler program is help children adjust to a caregiver other than their parents. The children are given lots of love and playtime. They will participate in age appropriate crafts. During nice weather, they spend time on the playground practicing their gross motor skills (i.e., walking, running, climbing). In these classes, too, the children are beginning to learn how to relate to peers and teachers

Two's Program

Our Two Year Old program adapts to the changing skill levels and needs of the class. We provide an inviting atmosphere that encourages fun as well as discovery. Our main goals are social interaction, a positive separation from parents, listening skills and potty training. We will also concentrate on the following:

- Following the daily routine
- Beginning to learn to share
- Participating in "circle" time
- Painting, pasting and coloring
- Beginning to recognize colors and simple shapes
- Following a one-step direction
- Assisting with the mastery of "toilet training"
- Recognizing own name and friends names.

Transitional Three's (T3) Program

This class will have a combination of the two year old and three year old curriculum, but will be heavier in the three's. T3 is a perfect choice for parents who are planning on giving their child an extra year to mature instead of starting kindergarten when he first becomes eligible. This class is also good for those two year olds who are ready for a class with more structure. Children in this class should be potty trained by January 1st.

- Participating in circle time
- Manipulating a paintbrush, cutting with scissors and experimenting with other art mediums
- Beginning to recognize colors and simple shapes
- Following a one-step direction
- Assisting with the mastery of toilet training
- Recognizing own name and friends names.
- Recognizing their first and last name and names of others in their class
- Beginning to recognize some letters of the alphabet
- Recognizing numbers 1-10
- Being self-reliant with their clothing
- Developing large motor skill through games and activities on the playground

Three's Program

Our main goals in the Three's consist of making an easy transition from home to school, developing good listening skills, learning to follow simple directions and beginning to become more self-reliant. This class provided a time for your children to practice new-found independence as well as introducing them to limits and schedules. Gross and fine motor skills, communication, listening and self-help are emphasized and encouraged. We will also concentrate on:

- Following simple instructions
- Sharing and playing with others
- Manipulating a paintbrush, cutting with scissors and experimenting with other art mediums
- Recognizing their first and last name and names of others in their class
- Beginning to recognize some letters of the alphabet
- Recognizing numbers 1-10
- Knowing primary colors and basic shapes
- Being self-reliant with their clothing
- Developing large motor skill through games and activities on the playground

Transitional Four's (T4) Program

The T4 class will offer a combination of the 3 year old and four year old curriculum, but will be heavier in the fours. The teacher will adjust the lessons to the needs of the students. Some of the goals for T4 class are to:

- Further develop fine motor skills
- Recognize primary and secondary colors
- Recognize letters of the alphabet
- Write first name
- Recognize last name
- Participate in the whole language experience (listening to stories, sharing experiences with class, answering questions about stories)
- Master simple math manipulations
- Follow complex instructions and sit and listen
- Recognizing shapes
- Expand attention span
- Recognize rhyming words
- Develop an awareness of the world around them through science
- Develop good health habits and manners

Four's Program

Our goals in the Four's class are to provide a Kindergarten readiness program while encouraging creative free-play. Fours are exposed to the alphabet as well as early math skills. Teachers will stress cooperative play, listening skills, self reliance and self control. We will provide a loving, caring and stimulating environment which will encourage the development of happy, thoughtful, curious, self-confident children ready to enter grade school. We will also concentrate on the following:

- Further development of fine motor skills
- Knowing primary and secondary colors
- Recognize letters and some letter sounds
- Writing first name and recognizing other high frequency words
- Mastering simple math concepts and manipulations

- Writing numbers 1-10
- Participating in the whole language experience
- Following complex instructions and sitting and listening
- Working on their own for a limited time as preparation for school
- Developing an awareness of the world around through science
- Having good health habits and manners

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Program

Our TK program is to prepare children for a successful kindergarten experience by stressing readiness skills in the areas of reading and writing, along with continued practice in important school skills like: listening, following directions, sitting for longer periods of time, etc. We will also concentrate on the following:

- Recognize all letters (capital and lower case) and most letter sounds
- Recognize numbers 1-20
- Write numbers 1-10
- Write first and last name
- Establish Phonemic Awareness, including beginning and ending sounds, counting syllables, letter blends and rhyming
- Recognize and create rhyming words pairs
- Write words using "inventive" spelling
- Know the beginning/middle and end of stories.
- Retell simple stories
- Recognize common sight words
- Complete and create simple patterns
- Sort items by one or more attributes
- Interpret data using graphs
- Count objects using one-to-one correspondence
- Develop a knowledge of the world around them in relation to science

Spanish Immersion

In this program, Preschoolers will be immersed in the Spanish language through games, music, dance, and literacy led by native speakers. This class will allow students to explore through diverse activities in the Spanish language. Instruction will be flexible to include everyone. Students in this program do not need to be fluent in Spanish. This class will concentrate on the same academic and developmental goals of the 2, 3 and 4 years old classes. See above.

Students

While the Harris Preschool Academy will make every attempt to provide reasonable accommodations for mentally and physically handicapped children, the Academy cannot accept children that are (1) of danger to themselves, (2) of danger to others or (3) a disruption to the normal activities making it unreasonably difficult for other children to learn and participate in our programs. Any of the above reasons will be grounds for dismissal from the Harris Preschool Academy. A parent/guardian must discuss with the Director any special conditions or circumstances involving their child. This must be discussed prior to registration, so that we can advise you as to whether or not we can make reasonable accommodations for your child

Teachers

Our preschool is staffed with many certified, as well as, experienced and trained teachers who are eager to work with your child! Our teachers either hold their B.A. in education, with years of preschool/elementary teaching experience, or a degree in a related field and relevant experience, or have a vast amount of preschool teaching experience and have received YMCA preschool certifications. We have searched high and low for leaders who exemplify outstanding character, compassion and love of children. We take pride in the high expectations we set for our preschool staff each year and evaluate them on a bi-annual basis.

Should you have any specific questions about your child's participation or behavior, you may schedule a virtual conference outside of class time. This will ensure that classroom instruction will remain uninterrupted and your concerns will be thoroughly addressed in a one-on-one setting. You can also leave a message for our teachers at: (704) 716-6851 or meaghan.hinckley@ymcacharlotte.org at any time.

Evaluations

The teachers are continually assessing your child on a daily basis. We can learn so much about a child through daily activities. There is no formal assessment for two year olds, but there is a checklist for the threes, T4, fours and TK classes. Conferences can be called at any time of the year by teachers or parents if needed. All families of students in classes 3's and up will have conferences at the end of January or early February to go over your child's progress. At this time, the teacher will be able to make recommendations for the next school year. There will not be school on the day of your conference. We believe that since we are a small and close-knit preschool, that continuous daily communication is essential. Our teachers are dedicated to sharing with you both joys and concerns; if you have any questions or would like advice on how to academically prepare your child more at home, please let your child's teachers know.

In regards to the Academy's progress, we always appreciate your comments, input and ideas on how to make our preschool program better! Should you have any questions throughout the school year and wish to leave a comment you may contact Meaghan Hinckley at: (704) 716-6851 or Meaghan.hinckley@ymcacharlotte.org at any time.

Administrative Topics

Enrollment

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte will not discriminate by race, color, sex, nationality, origin, creed, or special needs.

Registration/Fees

Registration can be completed at the Sales & Service Desk at the Harris YMCA (only) or online. Registration cannot be completed without proper payment.

The Registration Fee covers all necessary registration processes. The Activity Fees are used to help pay for special classroom projects, school festivals and parties, as well as the "special classes" such as swimming, gymnastics, dance, music, etc. Both of these fees are non-refundable. Please note, special events scheduled during in the preschool year may require additional fees to be paid at that time.

If you are interested in enrolling your child for the upcoming school year, registration will begin in February and is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Children who are currently attending (and their siblings) will be allowed to register one week prior to the public.

All participants must be registered in the program prior to the start of the program or may be added throughout the year if space is available. All participants must be entered into Personify prior to the child's first day. This may take up to 3 business days after registration is turned in.

Admission

Children will be enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Additional space may become available in additional classes, as the school year progresses if individual participants leave the program (please ask if you would like your child's sibling or friend to be added to our waiting list).

The Harris YMCA reserves the right to deny preschool admission or continued participation if one or more of the following conditions exist:

- The child's registration form is incomplete.
- Monthly installments not paid on time.
- The child is not participating in or benefiting from the program.
- The staff can not provide adequate or safe care for the child.
- The staff can not provide adequate or safe care for other enrolled children due to the behavior of the child.

Cancellation

If you need to cancel your enrollment in the Preschool Academy, you must notify the preschool director in writing or email. Cancellation at anytime will result in the loss of registration fees and activity fees. Parents will be responsible for paying for all days of service through the end of the 15 days notice period. Prorated tuition will be refunded after the 15 day time period, from the date of notification.

Monthly Payments

Nine equal monthly payments will be automatically drafted from your bank account on the 15th of every month August – April. Refunds are not given for days missed due to illness, snow days or vacation. Your child has an assigned spot in our program (we cannot give your child's spot away to outside children on days your child does not participate). **Should you have questions regarding payments, please contact Emily Keziah at: (704) 716-6813 or emily.keziah@ymcacharlotte.org.** **Payment schedule is attached to the back of this document.**

Should you find that you need financial assistance, please contact our Member Services desk and a Member Specialist will be able to assist you with our My Y Pricing program. There is a cap of 45% on discounts for monthly payments; registration/activity fees are not eligible for discounts.

Up-to-Date Information

Please make sure you update your family's records through your online YMCA account prior to the start of the program. **Information that needs to be reviewed and updated includes contact information, emergency contacts, and authorized pick ups. You will also need to update medical information for your child, including allergies, medications and vaccination dates.** Please notify your child's teacher and the director IMMEDIATELY about any change in the family's address, telephone number, e-mail or cell phone number(s) as well as the place or phone number of parental employment or any other pertinent information such as change in insurance, doctor, or allergies.

Operating Procedures

School Hours:

School hours are 9:15 AM and 1:00 PM. Children may be dropped off between 9:15 AM and 9:30 AM. Children will not be allowed into the classrooms prior to 9:15 AM. The teachers use this time before school starts to prepare for their day.

Preschool pickup is between 12:45 PM and 1:00 PM. ALL children must be picked up by 1:00 PM. **The parents of children picked up after 1:00 PM will be charged \$1 for every minute they are late. The late fee will automatically be drafted from your credit card on file.** Picking up your child **ON TIME** is very important. Your child will worry if they are left waiting for a parent. Late pickup also affects the preschool staff. Our staff members have responsibilities outside of the Y which they must attend to after 1:00 PM. Please make EVERY effort to pick up your child on time. If you think being late will be an issue, please find a "pick up" buddy from your class. This would be a parent who is willing to pick up your child and wait for you until you arrive. Make sure your "pick up buddy" is on your approved list.

Carpool Procedures

All children will participate in carpool. Parents are not permitted to enter the building to walk their child to class. Carpool runs from 9:15 - 9:30 AM and 12:45 -1:00 PM.

- **Arrival (9:15-9:30 AM): Our carpool begins at 9:15am.** A staff member will greet 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 **PARENTS PLEASE STAY IN THE CAR.** We need to keep the carpool line moving.
- **Dismissal (12:45 - 1:00 PM):** 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. Please **stay in your car.** A staff member will put your child in the car. For liability reasons, staff members CANNOT strap your child in the carseat. **PLEASE PULL** forward to a parking space or fire lane to buckle your child. This helps make our carpool line 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.
- **Please refrain from using your cell phone during carpool times.** We have many students and staff members moving around the parking lot and safety is a top priority!

Late Arrival and Pickup

- It is very important that your child arrives to school on time. Many important things happen at the beginning of the day; your child does not want to miss them. If you are late to school (after 9:30 AM), you will need to park and walk your child to the building for the health screening. You may not enter the classrooms from the outside classroom doors. Please bring your child into the main entrance and check your child in with the coordinator or director.
- Preschool pickup is between 12:45 and 1:00. Please make every effort to be on time. **You will be charged \$1 for every minute you are late. The late fee will automatically be drafted from your credit card on file. Chronic late pick-ups will be grounds for dismissal from the program. If you arrive after 1:05 PM, you will have to walk into the building to pick up your child. Please enter through the main doors of the Harris YMCA. If a child is not picked up after 10 minutes, we will call someone on your emergency list.** (This YMCA of Greater Charlotte policy is also followed by camp and after school programs.) Should you have any questions, please contact the director.

Early Sign Out/Late Drop Off

If you wish to pick up or drop off your child prior to regular time (ex - due to a doctor's appointment), please inform your child's teacher in advance. You will have to come to the main entrance of the Cato Education Center to pick up.

Authorized Pick Up

For the safety of your child, participants will only be released to the legal guardian or a person listed on the **approved pick up** form. Every adult MUST present a photo ID at carpool pick up. In the event that a child will be picked up by someone NOT on the approved list, a parent must send a note including the person's name picking up (as seen on the photo ID). To help speed up our carpool process, please have your ID ready as you arrive in the carpool line.

If there is any change in who may pick-up your child, especially if someone who has been regularly signing your child out is no longer allowed custody, please update your online account and contact the Preschool Academy Director at (704) 716-6851 immediately to change your approved list and to turn in copies of official court documents (required by the YMCA).

Daily Apparel

Clothing for your preschooler should be simple, comfortable, washable and easy for your child to manage. **Rubber soled shoes are a must (no sandals, flip flops, or slick bottom shoes please)**, especially for **daily** outdoor activities. Please send appropriate outerwear for the morning's weather conditions. Make sure your child's name is on sweaters, coats, hats, mittens, etc.

Please be mindful that while at school we play and discover many new things and although our staff takes great care in preventing paint spills, messes, etc., we ask that you **not** dress your child in their best clothes for school. If an accident occurs, your child will be dressed in the extra set of clothes you send to school at the beginning of the year (the soiled clothing will be returned home to you on that very day.) **Please don't forget to send an extra set of clothing back if this happens!**

Things to Bring to School Each Day

- **A lunch box labeled with your child's name.** Please send a nutritious lunch that is easy for your child to manage. We strive to teach healthy eating habits and appreciate your help from home. We ask that your child's lunch contains the four basic food groups. Teachers will sit with the children during lunch time in order to provide them a positive role model. You are welcome to join your child during lunch. Please notify your child's teacher of any lunch date. Here are some other lunch reminders:
 - Do not send candy! Chewy and hard candy are choking hazards.
 - Please do not send soda.
 - Students are asked to finish all healthy food before eating any treats.
 - Teachers will send back any uneaten food in the child's lunch bag.
 - If your child is in the Toddler, Twos or T3 program, please cut grapes, carrots or any food that is a potential choking hazard.
 - Please label all reusable food containers and ice packs, so they do not get put in the wrong lunch box.
 - We are a PEANUT/TREE NUT FREE* school. Please do not send any peanut/tree nut products to school.
- **Labeled water bottle.** At this time, we can only use the hands free water bottle filler. Water fountains are not available for use.
- **Red School Bag.** Be sure your child brings his/her Harris Preschool Academy tote bag provided by the preschool when first enrolled into our program. We ask that **ALL** children use this bag. Please do not use a back pack. The totes are easier for teachers and children to access. If your child's bag gets lost or torn, the cost is \$10 for a replacement.

Since toys from home can be lost or cause friction among children, please do not let your child bring them to school. There may be a day set aside for Show and Tell. This is a perfect time for your child to share a special toy. We also ask that children do not wear distracting jewelry.

Meal Times

- The Harris Preschool Academy is a **Peanut/Tree Nut Free*** school. This step was taken in an effort to provide a safe environment for children in our school who have severe nut allergies. Please do not send any peanut products in your child's lunch or snack.
- Teachers do not have access to a microwave. Please do not send any food that needs to be heated. If your child enjoys a hot lunch, there are several styles of insulated containers that will keep food warm.
- Another highly suggested item for lunch is reusable lunch containers. By using these, your child can independently open his/her own lunch and does not rely on the teacher to open several bags, containers etc.
- **Snack. The Toddlers, Twos and T3 classes are the ONLY classes that will have snack.** Please pack a healthy snack for your child. **REMEMBER...we are PEANUT/TREENUT FREE.** Please do not send any peanut products for snack. Please place the snack in a bag separate from his/her lunchbox. This way the teachers can access the snacks in an easier fashion.

- **Lunch** – Parents send lunch daily. The Harris YMCA Preschool does not provide lunch. We ask preschoolers to eat their “growing food” before sweets.

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 means and/or snacks that do not contain nuts. However, we realize that most packaged products are labeled with verbiage that indicated 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.

Screen Time

We believe that screen time should not be a part of the preschool day. Occasionally, our teachers will use technology (iPads or laptops) to show a quick video about a subject being studied. We provide opportunities for light, moderate and vigorous activities throughout the day. We do not allow any technology (iPads, phones, DS devices, etc.) from home to be brought to school.

Labeling

We can not emphasize enough the importance of labeling **all** 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. Again, please remember to label EVERYTHING!

Here’s a list of items to label: shoes, clothes, coats/jackets, hats, gloves, umbrellas, lunch boxes, drink cups, food containers, ice packs, etc.

Potty Training

All three year olds **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.

Children in the Transitional Threes class should be potty trained by January 1.

The two-year old teachers will work with the parents when potty training. If you are potty training your two year old, please make your child’s teachers 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. We want to help make it as smooth of a process as possible.

Volunteer Opportunities – *Suspended until further notice

Parents are always welcome at the Harris Preschool Academy. We encourage you to help or visit your child’s classroom at any time. We do have an open-door policy: however please make sure that your child’s teacher is aware of your intention to help or to visit in order to maximize your involvement with the class. Parents are strongly encouraged to sign up with their child’s teacher so that they can participate in regularly scheduled

volunteer opportunities ("Mystery Reader," crafts, cooking etc). If you would like to become an on-going volunteer, please contact your child's teacher or the coordinator.

The Harris Room Parent Committee is a group of parents that work with the Preschool Director, teachers and other parents to coordinate various volunteer opportunities in and out of the classroom. This committee will work together to plan school wide celebrations, class parties, organize staff appreciation activities, schedule "after hour" preschool functions and communicate with preschool parents when new volunteer opportunities arise.

Newsletters and Messages from School

Your child's red tote bag will be used to transport papers, newsletters, messages, crafts, lunch boxes and clothes. Please check your child's tote bag after school **each day** to insure that you don't miss any important news. If you need to communicate with your child's teacher or the director, please put any notes in your child's red bag (or PIN to the outside) OR you can email us at meaghan.hinckley@ymcacharlotte.org.

A newsletter will be emailed each week from the preschool director. This will include information about exciting upcoming events and fun happenings at the preschool. This newsletter will keep parents abreast of all the wonderful happenings at our preschool. All teachers will also send home a weekly newsletter with class information and a monthly calendar with scheduled activities and themes for each week of that month.

Emergencies

All of our staff is CPR and First Aid certified. Our preschool staff will treat routine cuts, scrapes and bumps. In the case of serious illness or an accident involving your child, we will contact you immediately. In the event that you cannot be reached, your signed authorization waiver (which you completed at registration) allows us to secure prompt treatment. Please be aware that in the case of a life-threatening emergency, 911 will be called **first**.

Wellness Policy

The YMCA recognizes that children might need to be excluded from program participation if they have a short-term illness, injury, or acute illness that could present a significant risk to the health and safety of the child or anyone in contact with the child. Every situation will be evaluated in a case-by-case basis.

Staff will monitor children for signs of illness. If your child develops symptoms of illness during their stay, parents will be notified and will need to pick up their child immediately. **Children who have the following symptoms should remain at home until they are symptom free for 24 hours unless a written note from the child's physician is given, stating that their symptoms are not contagious.**

- A fever 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. A current note from a physician can be provided if drainage is caused by an allergy.
- Diarrhea. Child cannot have more than two loose stools in a 24 hour period.
- Vomiting within a 24 hour period.

- Communicable diseases. Examples include, but are not limited to, pink eye, head lice, skin rash, and strep throat.

If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will call an emergency number listed on the child's health form.

Program participants will wash/sanitize hands upon entering the classroom at the beginning of the day and before eating food. Participants will also wash hand after each visit to the restroom.

Please be considerate of the students and teachers in the classroom and do not send your child to school sick. If an illness such as Head Lice, Fifth Disease, Hand, Foot and Mouth or Chicken Pox has been reported to us, the preschool will send written notices home with fellow students so that parents can be alert for symptoms.

Medicines

We will accept prescription medication in the original bottle with prescription label and current date and over the counter medication only if accompanied by a physician's note. These medications will be kept out of reach of other children. Parents/caregivers must sign an Authorization to Administer Medication form if medicine is needed. With the exception of emergency medication, all medication will be kept out of reach of children in a locked location. Emergency medications will be kept in a safe location in the child's classroom.

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) 716-6851 or Meaghan.hinckley@ymcacharlotte.org.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather or other event that requires closing or delaying preschool, we will notify parents as quickly as possible.

Please note: Due to other programs that must share our space, the Harris Preschool Academy **cannot** make up school days missed due to inclement weather even if CMS has scheduled a make up day.

Discipline

Please encourage your child to follow the instructions of the teachers. The philosophy of our program is based on the "Golden Rule" with respect being shown to all. Good manners and personal empathy are traits we will foster. Encouraging good behavior helps **discourage** unacceptable behavior. Therefore, using the principle of positive reinforcement, each child will be praised for good work and made to feel important and successful. Negative behavior will be confronted and redirected toward positive behavior.

In order to provide the positive kind of discipline desired, we must first begin with the proper student-teacher ratios. The next step is ensuring that our teachers understand

the age group they teach and are well-prepared with a variety of activities. Within each classroom positive rules and guidelines are established. When a child does not follow the rules, he/she will be reminded. If the reminder is ineffective, the child's attention will be redirected or there will be some time allotted out of the activities for a child to think and prepare himself for appropriate behavior. Discipline problems that persist or are disruptive to the class will be shared with the parents so teachers and parents can work together to correct the inappropriate behavior.

Even though we provide low teacher-child ratios, loving care and plenty of age appropriate toys and activities, children will sometimes show aggressive behavior (hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, etc.) toward a classmate. All signs of aggression are unacceptable but are not considered abnormal for young children who are learning to get along in group situations.

Our desire is to work with families through any difficult stage their child may be going through. If a behavioral problem is recurring, the parent may be called in for a conference with the teachers and or/directors. Our goal is always to come up with a plan that can provide the child with consistency at home and at school. We reserve the right to request temporary or permanent withdrawal of a child whose parents are unable or unwilling to work with the school or a child whose behavior is dangerous to him/her and/or others.

*Please note: Children often bite others because they do not have the words to express their emotions. He/she may have been frustrated or wanted attention. As a staff team, we are dedicated to helping your child use his/her increasing vocabulary to work through this phase. However, for the safety of other children your child may be asked to take a day off from the Preschool should the bite break the skin or should biting occur three times in the same month. Thank you for your understanding.

We strive to guide children in becoming happy, responsible and cooperative participants through positive reinforcement and teaching techniques.

Special Class Programs

Based on your child's age, they will periodically participate in an activity outside the regular preschool curriculum. Dates and details will be shared in advance through preschool/class newsletters.

Birthday Celebrations

You may celebrate your child's birthday in class by making **advance** arrangements with your child's teachers. We believe that children deserve to celebrate their birthdays. Teachers will provide options to celebrate your child's special day at school. If you choose to bring a treat, please keep in mind our commitment to healthy habits and children with dietary restrictions or limitations. Mini cupcakes or 2 bite brownies are great options. Other great **healthy** birthday treats are fruit kabobs, banana muffins, fruit salad, yogurt cups/tubes and fruit juice popsicles.

If you are planning an off-site party and would like to invite classmates, please send party invitations for ALL students to the teacher so that they can distribute them into tote bags. Presents are not permitted to be exchanged in the classroom.

Class Parties

The classes will celebrate various holidays and special events throughout the year. The classroom room parent will contact parents when food or supplies are necessary. When purchasing or making party treats, please remember that we are teaching healthy eating habits at preschool. Until further notice, class celebrations will be for students only.

Room Parent

Room parents are invaluable part of the class and preschool. Room parents are responsible building a strong relationship with the classroom teachers and other families in the class. Duties include coordinating class parties in conjunction with the teacher, assisting in planning preschool-wide events, soliciting supplies and volunteers for events, and coordinating celebrations for teacher birthdays, holidays and teacher appreciation events. Room parents will attend Preschool Parent committee meetings to plan and execute events throughout the year.

Contacts Directory

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the Academy or other YMCA programs, you can reach the following staff/departments:

- Teachers (Absences, Policies, Student/Parent Needs, etc): 704 716 6851
- Academy Enrollment, Comments, Questions: Meaghan Hinckley, Director of Early Childhood Development: 704 716 6851
- Preschool e-mail: meaghan.hinckley@ymcacharlotte.org
- Monthly Payments/Tax Information: Emily Keziah | 704 716 6813 | emily.keziah@ymcacharlotte.org
- Harris YMCA Front Desk: 704 716 6800
- Harris YMCA Fax: 704 716 6801
- Mailing Address: Harris YMCA, 5900 Quail Hollow Road, Charlotte, NC 28210
- Website: www.ymcacharlotte.org/harris
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/harrisymca>