



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



THE MAGIC OF CHILDHOOD YMCA Preschool KEITH FAMILY YMCA

2024-2025
Parent Handbook

ymcacharlotte.org

Welcome to the Keith YMCA Preschool Program! We look forward to working with your child and family during the 2024-2025 school year. This handbook contains important information and expectations to help prepare for a successful school year. Please review before your child's first day and contact us with any questions you may have.

Important Contacts

Cheri' Price - Program Coordinator

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Lance Jackson - Youth Development Director

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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, 2024. Program hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

The program will be CLOSED on the dates listed below for holidays and teacher workdays:

Oct. 3 - 4, 2024

Nov. 4 - 5, 2024

Nov. 11, 2024

Nov. 27 - 29, 2024

Dec. 23, 2024 - Jan. 3, 2025

Jan. 20, 2025

Jan. 24, 2025

Feb. 17, 2025

Mar. 31, 2025

Apr. 14 - 21, 2025

Childcare Usage Guidelines

YMCA preschool programs are not licensed and regulated by the NCDHHS Division of Child Development and Early Education. Based on state guidelines, children are not able to participate in unlicensed childcare programs for more than four hours per day. If your child attends preschool for 4 hours, please note that they will be unable to participate in any other childcare programs that day, including Y-Kids drop-in childcare or Kids' Night Out.

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 at the beginning of the school year so we have something to change into if your child's clothing gets soiled. You will need to provide new 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.

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.

Daily Activities

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 also attend several "special" classes throughout the week. All classes will participate in our KinderMusik curriculum, and ages 3-4 will participate in Sports, Fitness, and Swim classes.

Your child's teacher will provide a daily class schedule at the beginning of the year with activities and times.

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 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. Please do not send products containing nuts. To the extent possible, please pack items that your child will be able to open on their own.

Birthdays and Celebrations

You may celebrate your child's birthday in class by making advance arrangements. Please contact the preschool coordinator so plans can be shared with your child's teachers. We ask that celebrations are kept simple. All food brought to Preschool to share must be store bought in original containers. To prevent hurt feelings we will handout invitations only if all children in your child's class will receive one.

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.

Email - 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. You will also receive communication from program leadership as it relates to school wide activities and 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.

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

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).

Arrival (8:45-9:00)

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 caregivers please stay in the car so that we can keep the carpool line moving.

Departure (12:45-1:00)

Please stay in your car. A staff member will put your child in the car. Please refrain from using your cell phone during carpool times as we have many students and staff members moving around the parking lot and safety is a top priority!

Y staff cannot strap your child in the car seat. 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.

Late Pick Up

You will be charged a fee if picking up late. The late fee will automatically be drafted from your credit card on file. If a child is not picked up after 10 minutes, we will call someone on your emergency list.

Authorized Pick-Ups

For the safety of your child, participants will only be released to a legal guardian or responsible adult listed on the child's account. Every adult must present a government-issued photo ID during pick-up each day unless their photo is captured in our childcare software. In the event that a child will be picked up by an adult not listed on the registration form, please email the director and include the person's name as it appears on their photo ID.

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 director immediately to change your approved list. If there are special circumstances involving custody issues you must provide the Director with legal documentation of these arrangements.

If you need to make changes to your child's authorized pick-up list, please follow these steps:

1. Go to ymcacharlotte.org and sign into your account using the icon in the top right corner.
2. Click "My Account" and go to "Manage My Family" on the left side menu.
3. Select the child you would like to update information for and select "View Emergency Contacts" in the drop-down menu.
4. Now you can add, edit, and/or delete emergency contacts. Be sure that "can pick up" field is marked "yes" if that person is allowed to pick up the child.
5. Click "Save." Please note that you will need to make updates to each child.

Emergency Contacts

Two emergency contacts/authorized to pick-up individuals are requested in addition to all parents/guardians for each child.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather or something else that may require a closing or delay with preschool, we will notify families as quickly as possible via e-mail.

Cancellation Policy

All cancellations require a 15 days written notice.