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Morrison Family YMCA

**2022-2023
Family Handbook**

ymcacharlotte.org



2022-2023 Ballantyne Preschool Academy Family Handbook Morrison Family YMCA

Welcome to the Ballantyne Preschool Academy! We are excited to kick off the 2022-2023 preschool year and look forward to working with each of your children. This handbook contains information and expectations to help you and your child feel prepared.

Our Mission

The YMCA is a Christian-based organization that strives, "To put Christian principals into practice through programs that build *healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.*" Our focus is to provide a loving and nurturing environment that will help children develop and demonstrate the five core values of the YMCA of Greater Charlotte: Caring ♥ Honesty ♥ Respect ♥ Responsibility ♥ Faith

Non-Discrimination Clause

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte recognizes that individuals, families and communities are diverse. The YMCA values and respects this diversity and chooses to be inclusive through its acceptance of all individuals regardless of race, age, gender, religion, ability or cultural identity. The YMCA, while not adhering to any doctrine or dogma, is committed to Christian principles. This includes asserting that all individuals, without exception, are intrinsically valuable.

Individual Needs

The YMCA will make every reasonable accommodation to create an inclusive culture that serves all children as individuals. Please share with us your child's specific needs so we can collaborate to best serve them individually and include them fully.

Our Program Philosophy

At the foundation of the Ballantyne Preschool Academy is the belief that children learn best through hands-on, immersive, and sensory-rich experiences and environments that are specifically designed to integrate literacy, visual and performing arts, outdoor education, foreign language, creative mindfulness and STEAM. We place high importance on movement in education and believe that children thrive when they are physically active throughout the day. We strive 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 staff.

Program Overview

The Ballantyne Preschool Academy 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. We place high importance on movement in education and believe that allowing our children to be physically active throughout the day, even during their academic activities, helps them to better process new concepts and retain information easier. It also helps with behavior management and to instill lifelong health and well-being. Our preschoolers have a unique opportunity to work with early educators, arts professionals and to learn in an environment that focuses on being active as a way of life. Through a curriculum inspired by the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia, our students and our teachers' question, discover, create and move together.

Our program offers developmentally appropriate curriculum that includes the following:

- Monthly Themes
- Literacy and Math Learning Labs
- STEAM
- Creative Movement
- Theatre

- Public Speaking
- Music
- Visual Arts
- Science and Discovery Lessons
- Sensory Exploration
- Outdoor Education
- Circle Time/Social Skills
- Self-Directed Classroom Centers
- Fine and Gross Motor Skill Developments
- Creative Mindfulness

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.

Staff

Our program is staffed with well-qualified, educated and trained professionals 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, social and emotional learning, 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 will work with a team of teachers all dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing and engaging learning environment. These professionals each possess expert field knowledge of their respective concentration (education, visual arts, theatre, dance, movement, and more).

Calendar & Hours

Ballantyne Preschool Academy will be open from September 6th, 2022 through May 26th, 2023. Our daily hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

The program will be CLOSED on the dates listed below:

- Monday, September 26
- Wednesday, October 5
- Monday, October 31
- Tuesday, November 8
- Friday, November 11
- Wednesday, November 23 – Friday, November 25
- Monday, December 19 – Monday, January 2
- Monday, January 16
- Wednesday, January 25
- Monday, February 20
- Monday, March 27
- Friday, April 7 – Friday, April 14

In the event of inclement weather or something else that may require a closing or delay with preschool, we will notify responsible adults as quickly as possible via e-mail and the Class Dojo app. Ballantyne Preschool Academy will follow the direction of Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools with closings and delays.

*Please note: The Ballantyne Preschool Academy does not prorate tuition rates for days missed due to individual illness, vacations, inclement weather, or scheduled closings.

Arrival and Departure

Our program begins at 9:00am and ends at 1:00pm. More information will be sent out closer to the beginning of school with details on our drop-off/pick-up procedures.

NC state child care laws limit the amount of time a child can be in care in an unlicensed preschool to four hours. For this reason, **it is imperative that your child is picked up by 1:00pm**. Please be respectful of this rule and do your best to arrive on time to pick up your child. If you are coming into the carline after 1:00pm, there will be a late fee assessed of \$1 per minute charged to 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: Y Kids, Ballantyne Preschool Academy, Parents' Morning Out, Staff Child Care and Afterschool. This means that you will not be able to utilize Y Kids (at any YMCA in Greater Charlotte) for your child if they have already used the Ballantyne Preschool Academy that day. *However*, you are able to use recreational programming on the same day your child has preschool. For example, if your child attends school on Tue-Fri, you may not bring them to Y Kids on those afternoons, 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.

Early Pick-Up

Please let us know at morning drop-off if your child will be picked up early and when possible, please message your child's teacher on the Class Dojo app or email morrisonpreschool@ymcacharlotte.org with the child's name, date and time to be picked up.

Photo and/or ID Required for Pick-Up

We use a software system to check your child in/out of care. Each person authorized to pick your child up will be listed on that system. Please confirm, via your online account, that your list is accurate and up to date. Changes can be made online or by emailing morrisonpreschool@ymcacharlotte.org.

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

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

Financial Information

Payments may be made via bank draft or credit card draft only. Payments are calculated by taking the daily program rate x number of days of service, and dividing that total into 9 equal payments due on the 15th of each month from 8/15/2022-4/15/2023. 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 within 5 days of the due date will result in the **termination of the child's enrollment** in the Ballantyne Preschool Academy.

Financial assistance is available. Please contact a Sales & Service representative at the Morrison Family YMCA to learn more about the assistance program. Approvals made after the start of the school year will be applied to future payments due.

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 \$125 (\$175 for non-members) is due at time of registration. Supply fees are distributed throughout the program all year long.

All inquiries, questions, or concerns about payment/member account will need to be addressed to morrisonpreschool@ymcacharlotte.org.

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. Please register online for the class you wish to attend. You will be contacted by phone or email any time during the school year once an opening becomes available. You will be given a 48 hour window of time to respond before the next family on the list will be contacted.

Program Cancellations

Year-long enrollment: All cancellations require a **TWO WEEK NOTICE VIA EMAIL**. Please email your notice to morrisonpreschool@ymcacharlotte.org 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. If notice is provided and a draft falls within the two weeks, any monies due will still be drafted. In order to stop a draft, two weeks notice via email is required. Registration and supply fees are non-refundable.

Short Term Change of Pick-Up

To change your child's pick-up person for a specific day or a short term period, please email morrisonpreschool@ymcacharlotte.org at least 2 hours prior to pick-up when possible. If you need to permanently change or add an authorized person to the roster, please make those changes online. Remember to alert any authorized pick-up person to bring their valid photo ID.

Communication

At the Ballantyne Preschool Academy, we want our families to be involved and informed. Communication between responsible adults 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!

BrightWheel Each class will use the BrightWheel app to share important information, pictures, and more! You can message your child's teachers using the app. Please wait until the next scheduled school day for a response.

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.

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

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

Modifications and Accommodations– If your child is in need of an accommodation to be successful in our program, please reach out to us prior to the start of school. We want to work with you to create a plan for your child so that we are prepared to provide the best possible care. We are happy to schedule a meeting to get to know your child's needs and how to help meet them so that he/she will have the best experience possible.

Volunteers – If you are interested in becoming a YMCA volunteer please email morrisonpreschool@ymcacharlotte.org.

Emergencies - Teachers keep their personal cell phones on and with them at all times. In the event of an emergency, they will follow the YMCA's emergency protocols which include notification to other staff members. Be aware that in cases of a true emergency, 911 will be called first.

In the event a responsible adult needs to contact the classroom, please call the main Morrison Main Line at 704-716-4600. The program staff member who answers the phone will then contact your teachers to convey any pertinent message, like an unexpected early pick-up.

Health 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 in our program if there are evident signs of the following symptoms:

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

Children may return to their class once they have been **symptom free for 24 hours without medication**. If your child is at school and is exhibiting any of the above symptoms, you will be called to pick up your child immediately. Parents should exercise every precaution and keep their child home should other unusual symptoms occur.

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

Medication

We will administer medications prescribed by a physician with dosing that cannot be provided before or after school. Medication must be in the original container with the prescription label attached and a current date. In addition, we will need a signed Medication Administration Permission form on file.

Emergencies

All of our staff is certified annually by the American 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. **Conference-** if the above steps have not been successful, a conference with the responsible adult 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. 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:

Biting is a normal stage of development for many children between 18 months and 2 1/2 years old. Because they are not able to verbalize their feelings, many older toddlers resort to biting when they are frustrated, tired, angry or overly excited. Teachers will work with children who are biters to be firm that it is inappropriate, yet give the child new ways to respond in those situations. If a child is biting excessively, a teacher may have to modify their supervision techniques with that child.

Our staff will follow the steps below:

Step 1: If a child bites another child, the teacher will comfort the child who was bitten and remind the biter that biting hurts and we do not bite.

Step 2: Staff will follow first aid instructions and Standard Precautions to handle potential exposure to blood.

Step 3: Let the children back in the same space with increased supervision. Interactions will be structured between children such that the child learns to use more appropriate social skills or language rather than biting (If there is another incident, staff should repeat step one). Staff will encourage the biter to play with children they have not bitten.

Step 4: The adult will shadow the biter to ensure safety of the other children. This can be challenging but imperative for the biter.

Step 5: For all transitions when the biter would be in close contact, the staff will hold the child's hands, keep a close watch, and keep the biter from close proximity with peers.

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. 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 may be provided the opportunity to sing a blessing prior to snack and lunch. They may choose not to participate.

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, we will do our best to offer an alternative item or contact you for help.

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. Responsible adults 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. 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. Birthdays may be observed with a non-edible treat that would be shared with other students. If you would like us to pass out birthday party invitations, we must have one for every student in the class. Otherwise, we can provide you with a class list.

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 ensure 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.

Labeling Personal Items

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!

Caregiver & Guardian Expectations

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

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