



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



**THE
MAGIC OF CHILDHOOD
YMCA Preschool
LOWE'S YMCA**

**2023-2024
Family Handbook**

ymcacharlotte.org

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Welcome to the Lowe's YMCA Preschool! The Lowe's YMCA offers a preschool program with a focus on developing the whole child – physically, emotionally, socially and academically with activities that include group playtime, Bible stories, music and movement, as well as fine and gross motor skill development. All of our classes are planned to develop each child's self-esteem and create a strong image of self-worth through learning and sharing in a fun, structured environment.

Our program is a combined system of thematic learning, and physical activity. We believe that through play and other process-oriented experiences, children gain confidence in their ability to learn. We strive to provide a warm and secure atmosphere where children can laugh, learn and play through different activities. Every day your child will be given the opportunity to grow intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

GOAL OF THE YMCA PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The goal of the YMCA Preschool is to impact early learners in a positive way by developing the whole child by providing environments that support each learner's individual needs and are conducive to learning. Our early childhood educators provide a warm and secure atmosphere with five areas of focus to help kids meet and exceed developmental milestones: learning, life skills, healthy habits, socialization and fine and gross motor skills. The Lowe's YMCA Preschool promotes inclusion, equity and diversity and strives to enhance each child's self-esteem, helping them to reach their God-given potential.

PRESCHOOL STAFF

- **Youth Development Coordinator; Jessica West**
(P) 704-716-4036 (E) Jessica.West@YMCACharlotte.org
- **Youth Development Director; Francine Molina**
(P) 704-716-4043 (E) Francine.Molina@YMCACharlotte.org
- **Senior Youth Development Director; Ryan Swengros**
(P) 704-716-4009 (E) Ryan.Swengros@YMCACharlotte.org

- **Teachers**

Our preschool is staffed with capable, trained teachers, who are eager to work with your child. After a rigorous screening process which includes background checks and drug testing, chosen teachers must complete training in areas including child development, blood borne pathogens, CPR, first aid, dealing with discipline and positive reinforcement, safety and emergency procedures, and YMCA policies. In addition, we require 5 additional hours of training to give them expertise in early child development. We look for leaders who exemplify outstanding character, compassion, and love for children. We take pride in the high expectations we set for our preschool staff each year and evaluate them on a regular basis.

Communication between families and teachers is strongly encouraged. If you have specific questions about your child's behavior or participation, you should schedule a conference outside of class time. This will ensure that classroom instruction will be uninterrupted for all participants and your concerns will be thoroughly addressed in a one-on-one setting.

ADMINISTRATIVE TOPICS

- **Declaration of Inclusive Policy**

All programs of the YMCA of Greater Charlotte are open to everyone within age parameters regardless of race, religion, national origin, or ability to pay.

- **Registration**

Each child must register by completing a registration form and providing a non-refundable registration and supply fees of \$75 for Members or \$100 for Program Participants. This fee is inclusive of supplies and any other event that may include a fee. Once registered, the family must complete an information packet containing:

1. Tuition payment
2. Participant Info
3. Registration Form
4. Emergency Contact and Pick-Up Authorization
5. Signed waiver
6. Handbook acknowledgement form

As needed throughout the preschool year, in your online YMCA account, please regularly update your phone number/email address, your child's health history, allergies, and any changes to emergency/authorized pickups.

- **Admission**

Children will be enrolled into the program based on space available as determined by the registrar. A waiting list will be compiled in the event that additional space may become available as the school year progresses. All admissions are on a first come, first serve basis.

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

- The child's information packet is not returned promptly
- The child is not participating or benefiting from the program
- The staff cannot provide adequate or safe care for the child
- The staff cannot provide adequate or safe care for other enrolled children due to the behaviors of the child
- Non-payment of monthly fee

- **Tuition**

Bank Draft or Debit/Credit Card Draft: Monthly bank drafts will occur on the 15th of the month beginning on August 15 and ending on April 15 for 9 total payments.

- **A \$25.00 bank fee will be charged if a draft or charge is returned for insufficient funds.**
- **A \$25.00 late fee will be charged on payments made after the 15th of each month.**
- **Removal from the program will occur if tuition and late fee payments are not made by the last day of the current month.**

Refunds are not given for days missed due to illness, inclement weather, or vacation.

WITHDRAWAL

If you plan to withdraw your child from the program before the end of the school year, please give written notice to the Sales and Service desk **15 days** in advance. Otherwise, tuition will be charged for the upcoming month. Families will be responsible for paying for all days of service through the end of the 15-day notice period regardless of the child's last day of attendance. An exit interview to discuss your reason for withdrawal may be requested.

SCHOLORSHIP PROGRAM

Our YMCA does provide scholarship opportunities to those members who qualify. We are committed to helping our community and welcome new members into our building. Only members are eligible to receive a scholarship and must provide income verification at the Sales and Service Desk in order to receive a scholarship.

INSURANCE

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte provides liability insurance to all programs. It is the participant's responsibility to provide his or her own accident insurance coverage. Families should include their personal health insurance information on the child's health form. The information will only be used to facilitate medical treatment if required. Families are responsible for prescriptions and charges incurred for outside medical treatment of their child if such series are required while in attendance at the preschool program.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- **What to Wear**

Clothing for your preschooler should be simple, comfortable, washable, and easy for your child to manage. Rubber-soled shoes are essential for running and outdoor play. Please send appropriate outerwear for the morning's weather activities, including close-toed shoes and jackets.

Please be mindful that at school we play and discover new things; as a result, your child's clothing may become soiled. We ask that you do not dress your child in their best clothing expecting them to remain spotless. Please keep an extra set of clothes in your child's backpack. If an accident occurs, your child will be dressed in their extra set of clothes and the soiled clothes returned to you in your child's backpack. Please place another set of clothing in the backpack for the next day if an accident does happen.

- **Items to Bring Every Day**

Your child will need a backpack and a two pocket folder daily. In your child's backpack please bring:

- Preschoolers in the two-year-old classroom need to bring a minimum of three diapers and wipes (if your child is in diapers)
- All preschoolers need to bring a complete change of clothes (including socks and shoes). For our two year olds who are in the new to potty training, we also recommend placing a pair of flip flops as well.
- A nutritious, peanut free and nut free lunch and a drink in a lunch box or bag.

Please monitor these supplies daily and replenish as needed.

Since toys from home can be lost or cause friction among children, please do not let your child bring them to school. A young child may bring something for security, such as a pacifier or blanket. These will be placed in your child's backpack at the first available opportunity.

- **Potty Training**

Our two-year-old teachers will partner with you in your efforts to potty training your child. Please communicate with the teachers when **you** are ready to begin so that they can help with consistency between home and preschool to increase your success and limit the time needed to potty train.

All preschoolers entering our three and four-year-old classrooms are required to be successfully potty trained by August 31. Being potty trained means that your child must be wearing underwear daily to preschool.

- **Supplies for the First Day**

Please send the following items to school as a donation to the program if possible.

- Hand Sanitizer
- Unscented Baby wipes
- Paper towels
- Facial tissues

They will be distributed and used throughout the year wherever they are needed.

- **Labels**

It is very important that all items that belong to your child are labeled. Please write your child's first name and last initial clearly on all items such as coats, umbrellas, backpacks, drink cups, jackets and lunch boxes/bags.

- **Missing Items**

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 immediately. If the item is in the classroom, the teachers will send it home the next school day. The Lowe's YMCA is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged clothing or equipment.

- **Lunch**

All classes have a scheduled lunch time daily. Please send a small nutritious, peanut free and nut-free lunch for your child to enjoy during this time. Water bottles are a great beverage selection for small children. If your child uses a spill-proof cup, please label and supply a beverage in that cup everyday.

COMMUNICATIONS

Calendars will be made available to Families. This item will inform you of activities planned for your child and keep you abreast of topics related to the preschool operations. Calendars will be handed out in the children's folders at the beginning of every month. We will also be using "Class Dojo" as a means for communication. This is an app where you can message the teachers and administrators and they can message you as well. The first day of school your preschooler will bring home a code that has been assigned to them if you did not receive one during Open House.

SOLICITING

Soliciting is prohibited on YMCA premises. No printed material may be distributed without the approval and consent of the marketing department and the Youth Development Director.

DAILY ROUTINES

Classroom specific routines will be given at the scheduled open house. Example activities that the children will participate in are listed below.

- *Morning message* focuses on calendar, weather, and pledge of allegiance.
- *Activity Time* refers to a lesson developed by the teachers encompassing literacy, phonemic awareness and mathematical thinking.
- *Learning centers* provides opportunities for the children to participate in teacher-created productive play areas. Centers are used as a tool to reach developmental milestones
- *Read Aloud* time is devoted to children's literature and story comprehension.
- *Playground* is a time of physical activity, development of social skills and team work. All classrooms are guaranteed 30 minutes of physical activity play time daily. This is typically outside unless inclement weather or heat advisory is a factor.
- Manners, self-help skills, social and emotional learning occur throughout the day.
- We have a balance of whole group, small group and individual learning times.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

- **Illness**

It is our sincere desire to provide quality care for your child while you take advantage of various services at the Lowe's YMCA. It is absolutely imperative that we work together to make this happen. **Please be considerate of all the students and teachers in the classroom and do not send your sick child to school.** Please be advised that staff *will not* exclude your child from care *unless* one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in preschool activities
2. The illness results in a greater care need than the child care staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
3. The child has any of the following conditions:

- a. • 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.
 - b. • Continuous and/or colored nasal drainage. A current note from a physician can be provided if drainage is caused by an allergy.
 - c. • Diarrhea. Child cannot have more than two loose stools in a 24-hour period.
 - d. • Vomiting within a 24-hour period.
 - e. • Communicable diseases. Examples include, but are not limited to, pink eye, head lice, skin rash, and strep throat.
4. Staff will notify Families to pick up the child when any of the following conditions exist:
- The child displays any of the symptoms above.
 - The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities. (This means that the family may be asked to pick up their children even when a fever is not present).
 - The illness results in a greater need than the YMCA staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

If an illness, such as lice, Fifth disease or Chicken Pox has been reported to us, all Families in that class will be notified.

Medication Policy

We will accept prescription medication in the original bottle and over the counter medication only if accompanied by a physician's note. We accommodate administering the medications if the doses cannot be provided at home.

Allergen Statement

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. Families 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.

Emergencies

Our preschool staff will treat minor cuts, scrapes, and bumps. In the case of serious illness or an accident involving your child, the Youth Development Coordinator or Director will contact you. If you cannot be reached, treatment will be prompted as secured by your signature on your child's health form. In order to make sure that a child's safety is taken care of, some medication may need to be administered in case of an emergency due to an allergic reaction. To give the preschool permission to administer emergency medication, please fill out the emergency medication release form, available through your preschool coordinator. We do not administer other medications, including medication for diaper rash.

Inclement Weather

For inclement weather, the Lowe's YMCA Preschool follows the Iredell Statesville School System's (ISS) lead. If ISS schools are delayed for one or two hours, then the preschool will open one hour late and close at regular time. If ISS schools are delayed by three or more hours, then the preschool will be closed. If ISS schools are closed, then the preschool will be closed as well. The Lowe's YMCA Preschool program will offer a limited amount of preschool make-up days that are marked on the preschool calendar, due to the length of our preschool year. There are no refunds for weather cancellations.

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

REDIRECTION

The YMCA believes in a positive approach to behaviors. Staff should use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. It is our intent to provide teaching moments that redirect negative behaviors.

Our teachers are committed to working with Families regarding disciplinary matters; however, should these processes fail and behavioral problems are not corrected, the preschool coordinator reserves the right to dismiss the child from the program.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Preschool begins daily at 9:00 am and ends at 1:00 pm. Our car line is available from 8:55 am–9:10 am. Preschool arrival and dismissal procedures will require time and patience. Please be understanding that during the first few weeks of school everyone is adjusting to a new routine. Specific guidelines for the car line will be available at open house. Please do not talk on your cell phone while in line to pick up your child. This is both a safety issue and a beneficial time to talk about your child's day at school.

- **Photo ID Protection**

Pick up: Please stand on the sidewalk near your car if you are in one of the first four cars in the car line. A preschool staff will come to your car and ask to see your photo ID (which must include your photo and your name) and then have you sign your preschooler out. If an alternate person will be providing transportation for your child, they will be verified on the pickup authorization list and asked for photo identification also.

The preschooler will be escorted by one of the preschool teachers to you so that you can secure your child in their car seat.

- **Car Seats and Your Child's Safety**

Be sure to have the proper car seat in your car for your preschooler(s) being picked up. Child Safety Seats are required by law.

The North Carolina Child Passenger Safety Law States:

A child less than eight years of age and less than 80 pounds in weight shall be properly secured in a weight-appropriate child passenger restraint system. In vehicles equipped with an active passenger-side front air bag, if the vehicle has a rear seat, a child less than five years of age and less than 40 pounds in weight shall be properly secured in a rear seat, unless the child restraint system is designed for use with air bags. If no seating position equipped with a lap and shoulder belt to properly secure the weight-appropriate child passenger restraint system is available, a child less than eight years of age and between 40 and 80 pounds may be restrained by a properly fitted lap belt only."

- **Late Pick Up**

Preschool ends at 1:00 pm. A ten-minute grace period will be granted for late pick-ups. After the grace period is over, a \$1.00 per minute toll will be charged. Payment is expected prior to future attendance. Our car line is available from 12:55pm – 1:05pm. After 1:05pm, families will be required to come to the front door and sign out your child. If you arrive after the staff member has left the outside car line area, **you are late.** Chronic late pick-ups may be grounds for dismissal from preschool. If a child is not picked up after one hour nor a phone call is received, local authorities will be called.

- **Custody Issues**

In cases of separated or divorced families where visitation rights are denied to one family member, we cannot deny releasing the child to such family member unless a court decree or separation document is in our file expressly forbidding such family member from picking up the child from our program, or from picking up at times not allowed by the court decree. The court decree must specify the rights of visitation on the YMCA property during preschool hours and it must specify in writing that visitation is permitted by the non-custodial family member. Otherwise, we will not permit visitation.

- **Birthday Celebrations**

You may celebrate your child's birthday during the classroom's snack time by making advanced arrangements with your child's teacher. Birthday celebrations during preschool hours may include cookies or mini cupcakes. We understand that you may not be able to invite the entire class to your child's birthday party outside of preschool hours. So, to prevent any hurt feelings, we ask that you send any birthday invitations electronically and **NOT** through the teachers. Until further notice, classroom celebrations will be for preschoolers only.

LOGISTICS

- Our YMCA preschool is not licensed, but is regulated by the State Department of Child Development. Our YMCA of Greater Charlotte preschool adheres to YMCA Quality Standards.
- 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 preschools, YKids and unlicensed after school programs.
- All programs of the YMCA of Greater Charlotte are open to everyone within age parameters, regardless of race, religion, national origin or ability to pay.

FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Please sign and return this form at your child's open house.

I have read and I understand the policies and procedures outlined in the Lowe's YMCA preschool booklet.

My child's name is _____

Family Member Signature

Date