



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



EXPERIENCE THE
MAGIC OF CHILDHOOD

YMCA Preschool

Brace Family YMCA

2022-2023

Family Handbook



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT[®]
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Brace Family YMCA Preschool!

We are so excited to be a part of your child's preschool journey. It is our joy and a true blessing to partner with our families. Our goal is to provide a safe, wholesome, quality environment where your child will grow in spirit, mind and body.

The following information is meant to serve as a reference guide to the Brace Family YMCA Preschool. In the following pages, you will find our mission and vision in which we strive to live each day. We have also outlined our policies for you, to help you understand and support our program. Please use this as your first recourse for questions. However, if you find that you still have additional questions, please reach out to me.

Again, thank you for entrusting in us, your most precious child. We are very excited in what the year has in store for us!

Jennifer E. Carlson
Early Childhood Director

JenniferE.Carlson@ymcacharlotte.org
704-716-4323

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." Our mission defines us. We know that building stronger and healthier kids, adults and families comes about when we all work together. That's why at the Y, strengthening community is our cause. Every day, we work side-by-side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

The YMCA Vision: "To be a catalyst to transform lives and communities." Our strength is in community. The YMCA of Greater Charlotte is a nonprofit like no other. Deeply rooted in the community since 1874, we have the long-standing relationships and physical presence in 19 locations and two resident camps. The YMCA vision is not just to promise, but to deliver lasting personal and social change.

Our Philosophy/Goal

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.

About Our Program

The BRACE FAMILY YMCA offers a preschool program designed to meet your child's educational needs with a variety of activities that include Character Education, center time, creative play, music, and physical fitness, while also incorporating fine and gross motor development. All of our classes are planned to develop each child's self-esteem and 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 and nurturing setting. Copies of your child's daily schedule will be given out at Meet the Teacher; additional copies are available upon request from your child's lead teacher.

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.

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte adheres to YMCA Quality Standards which are set by NC State guidelines. Please be advised, the Brace Family YMCA Preschool is not licensed and regulated by the State Department of Child Development due to being a half-day program, however, they do follow a licensed, published curriculum and National YMCA Quality Standards (audits take place bi-annually). Half-day preschools are not required to be fully licensed and regulated by the State Department of Child Development. Preschools are not drop-in care programs. 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: unlicensed preschool, Y Kids (drop-in care) and unlicensed afterschool. **This means that you will not be able to utilize the drop-in care (at any YMCA in Greater Charlotte) for your child if they have already used the Children's Preschool that day.** This is a NC State guideline. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Preschool Director.

Community Outreach

Did you know the YMCA of Greater Charlotte is part of the network of YMCAs around the country that collectively represents the largest charitable community organization in the United States? Volunteer founded and still volunteer led, the YMCA of Greater Charlotte supports numerous programs that enhance lives and strengthen community health. We are able to do so through the generosity of individuals and corporations who believe in the YMCA's ability to have an impact in our community through these programs.

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte exists in our community as a community partner and provider, seeking to "Put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all." It is the emphasis on "for all" that leads our Association to ask you to partner with us, our 19 branches, and our two resident camps to create a stronger community.

Each year the BRACE FAMILY YMCA Preschool participates in activities to benefit the annual community outreach campaign. This campaign is vital in continuing the YMCA of Greater Charlotte's commitment to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities for the years to come.

Curriculum

The Brace Family Preschool 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.

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.)

Two's Program

Our two year old program focuses on developing a love for school and helping students with that first time separation anxiety. We provide an inviting atmosphere that encourages a child to explore, have fun and develop self-help skills. Our teachers will concentrate on

- Following a daily schedule
- Beginning to learn to share
- Use our words (communicate wants and needs)
- Encourage participation in Circle Time (songs, weather, story time)
- Painting, coloring, pasting
- Introduce letters, numbers, shapes and colors
- Introduce own name and friends names
- Assist with the mastery of "Potty training"

Three's Program

Our three year old program focuses on continuing the love for school, sharing, and self-help skills. Our teachers will concentrate on:

- Following a daily schedule
- Sharing and playing with others through Centers
- Recognition of letters, numbers, shapes and colors through art
- Recognition of one's first name and friends names
- Self-reliance; Unpacking book bag, lunchtime, Packing up book bag, clothing
- Develop large and small motor skills

Four Year Old Program

Our four year program focuses on continuing the love for school and building the necessary skills for the student to move on to Kindergarten. Our curriculum is based on the Scholastic program; PreK *On My Way*. This amazing program builds a students Language, Literacy and

Math Skills through a weekly theme that builds upon its self for 4 weeks. Our teachers will also concentrate on:

- Following a daily schedule
- Following multi step directions
- Sharing and playing with others in group centers
- Self-reliance (unpacking book bag, lunchtime, clothing, packing book bag at the end of the day)
- Recognizing upper and lower case letters, numbers 1-20
- Introduction of sight words
- Writing one's first and last name

Transitional Kindergarten Program

Our TK program focuses on building the necessary skills for the student to move on to Kindergarten. Our curriculum is based on the Scholastic program; PreK *On My Way*. This amazing program builds a student's Language, Literacy and Math Skills through a weekly theme that builds upon its self for 4 weeks. Our teachers will also concentrate on:

- School readiness
- Building the bridge to meet the needs of the 5 year old in areas of social, physical, and academics
- Developmental skills and self-esteem are enhanced
- Enhance social development
- Prewriting and spelling skills
- Graphing, measuring, sorting, patterns
- Science and the world around them
- Art and music development

Students:

Children will be assigned to classes based on their age **on or before August 31, 2022.**

Children will not be "aged up" into a different classroom. They MUST meet the specified birthdate criteria for the class.

Children do not change classes after they have a birthday. We recognize that classes will have a range of birthdays represented (just as children will have throughout their school career) and design our curriculum accordingly. The activities are done in a small group setting, so we can meet each child's developmental needs, and the curriculum is designed so that the activities grow with them as they develop over the course of the year.

While the BRACE FAMILY YMCA Preschool will make every attempt to provide reasonable accommodations for children who have developmental delays. The Preschool 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. A family member/guardian is encouraged to discuss with the Preschool 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.

If your child has any food allergies or restrictions these must be relayed to your teacher at the beginning of the year.

Classroom Ratios (Teacher: children)

Twos- 2:12

Threes- 2:14

Fours- 2:16

Transitional Kindergarten- 2:16

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. All YMCA staff are required to complete Child Abuse Prevention training and CPR training on a yearly basis.

Should you have any specific questions about your child's participation or behavior, you may schedule a virtual/in person 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) 716-4323 or JenniferE.Carlson@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. Individual progress reports will be sent home in the Fall and Spring. Students will be fully evaluated twice during the school year, and we discuss these evaluations with you at our January family conferences. 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.

Administrative Topics

Enrollment

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

Registration/Fees

Registration can be completed at the Sales & Service Desk at the Brace Family YMCA (only) or online. A non-refundable/ nontransferable registration fee of \$75 (Members) or \$100 (Program Participants) as well as our one time supply fee of \$90 per child (pro-rated Jan-May \$45). The first month's tuition for Members and Program Participants is drafted the 15th of each month, starting with August 15th – April 15th into equal 9 payments. Registration will need to be completed online at www.ymcacharlotte.org. 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. These fees are non-refundable. Please note, special events such as field trips, scheduled during 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-served 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 our system 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-served basis. Additional space may become available in additional classes, as the school year progresses if individual participants leave the program.

The BRACE FAMILY 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 and fees are not paid at registration.
- The child is not participating in 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 behavior of the child.

Tuition

Full tuition is drafted by the 15th of each month, from August 15th – April 15th. Refunds are not given for days missed due to illness, snow days, Act of God or Nature 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 Jennifer E. Carlson at: JenniferE.Carlson@ymcacharlotte.org or 704 716 4323.**

Monthly Rates	Members	Program Members
2 Year Old Class – Tues. & Thurs. 9:00 – 1:00	\$235.00	\$315.00
3 Year Old Classes: 3 days – Mon/Wed/Fri 9:00 - 1:00	\$308.00	\$391.00
3 Year Old Classes: Monday - Thursday 9:00—1:00	\$325.00	\$406.00
4 Year Old Class – Monday – Thursday 9:00 – 1:00	\$325.00	\$406.00
4 Year Old Class – Monday – Friday 9:00 – 1:00	\$374.00	\$457.00
Transitional Kindergarten – Monday - Friday 9:00 – 1:00	\$436.00	\$560.00

A \$25.00 late fee will be charged if tuition is paid after the 15th of each month.

Families are given a one week grace period to pay late (fee included), however, should they not pay within that week, their child/ren will not be allowed to return to school until their account is up to date. Should they wish to withdraw their child, our withdrawal procedure still applies.

Withdrawal / Cancellation

If you plan to withdraw your child from the program before the end of the school year, you are required to give a written notice to the Director, fifteen (15) days in advance. You will be responsible for those final 30 days. Should you not make us aware of your child's withdrawal from the program, you will continue to be charged on schedule. All withdrawals for the year must be turned in before April 15th 2022.

Tax Time

For those of you who write off your child's tuition on your taxes, you can use the following YMCA Tax ID Number:

56-1045299

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 pickups. 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 family member's employment or any other pertinent information such as change in insurance, doctor, or allergies

Operating Procedures

School Hours: 9:00 – 1:00

Pick-Up/Drop-Off

All children will participate in carpool. Families are not permitted to enter the building to walk their child to class. Carpool runs from 9:00 - 9:10 AM and 1:00 -1:15PM.

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 up your child 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 bracefamilypreschool@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 a photo is added. In

addition, we ask that you ALWAYS have your ID with you in the event that our system goes down and we need to use another method to check your child out.

If your child is being picked up by another individual, that individual MUST have an appropriate car seat, be on your child's pick up list and have a picture ID.

Early pick-up

Please let us know at morning drop off if your child will be picked up early and when possible please email Bracefamilypreschool@ymcacharlotte.org

Late Drop Off/Pick Up

If you wish to pick up or drop off your child prior to regular time (due to a doctor's appointment, for example), please inform your child's teacher in advance. Please park and ring the doorbell at the TOP door of the preschool building.

Arrival 9:00—9:10AM:

Our car line begins at 9:00am. A staff member will greet you at 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 **FAMILIES PLEASE STAY IN THE CAR FOR EVERYONES SAFETY.** We also need to keep the car line moving.

Children will not be permitted into the school until the doors open for arrival. The teacher's use this time before school starts to prepare for your child's day.

We ask that children arrive no later than 10 minutes after class time starts. When your child arrives late, they may miss the morning activity, but it also disrupts the class and may make them feel uneasy walking in last. If you are later than 10 minutes, please park in the parking lot and walk your child to the TOP front door of the preschool building. There, the Director will walk them to class. The teachers lock all entrance doors after 10 minutes of drop off time for the safety of the school.

Dismissal (1:00-1:15 PM):

You will receive two signs 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 car seat. **PLEASE PULL** forward to the parking space at the bottom of the preschool driveway to buckle your child. This helps

our car 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.**

ALL children must be picked up by 1:15PM. **The families of children picked up after 1:15PM 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 family member. Late pickup also affects the preschool staff. Our staff members have responsibilities outside of the Y which they must attend to after 1:15 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 family member 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.

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 or have the picture on file at pick up. In the event that a child will be picked up by someone NOT on the approved list, a family member must send a note including the person's name picking up (as seen on the photo ID). To help speed up our car line process, please have your ID ready as you arrive in the car 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 Director at (704) 716-4323 immediately to change your approved list and to turn in copies of official court documents (required by the YMCA).

Please note: As per our strictly enforced safety protocol our staff cannot transport students in their own vehicle. Also, staff may not babysit, drive or ride in cars with members or invite children to their home.

Cell Phone Use

Using a cell phone while in car line puts all of our children at risk. Distracted drivers in a small area where staff and children are walking back and forth is simply not acceptable. We will **strictly enforce** the following policy:

If you are on your phone in the car line (this includes talking, texting, playing games, etc.) you will be given **one warning and one warning only**. If you are found to be on your phone again during car line, you will lose your car line privilege for the remainder of that

week and all of the following week. We regret having to resort to such measures but the safety of the children and our staff is our **number one priority**. Please communicate this important information to anyone who may be picking up your child.

Also, remember that car line is a time for you to briefly communicate with your child's teacher. The time allotted for this is for quick updates/feedback on the day or information they need to share with you. Please be respectful and give them your full attention during this time. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Things to Bring to School Each Day

Your child does not need to bring much to school each day. All that is really required is that they show up promptly with their preschool backpacks (with an extra set of clothes and their daily communication folder inside), their snack/lunch, and water bottle for the day.

Family members of 2-year-olds: on the first day, please send in 10 diapers and a set of wipes in a labeled plastic bag. These items will be kept for your child in the classroom throughout the year. When your child's items run low, we will send home a note as a reminder to send more in. This way you will not need to pack them daily for your child.

- **A lunch box labeled with your child's name.**

Lunch – Families send lunch daily. The Brace Family YMCA Preschool does not provide lunch. We ask preschoolers to eat their "healthy food" before eating a "treat" that may be in their lunch. 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. 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 Twos, please cut grapes, carrots or any food that may be 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 not a licensed preschool facility. We can therefore not reheat food or keep food in a refrigerator. 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 learn to independently open his/her own lunch and does not rely on the teacher to open several bags, containers etc.
- The Brace Family Preschool 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. 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. **Please consult ingredients when preparing your child's snack. Preschool aged children do not often know if they have an allergy to such products and if they do, they do not often remember to be careful of what foods they eat. The YMCA of Greater Charlotte's policy is put into place for the safety of all the children. Due to YMCA Guidelines, staff members reserve the right to remove any nut products from your child's snack/lunch due to the health issues of many children with allergies. Crackers will be given as a supplement.**
- **Labeled water bottle.** Water fountains are not available for use.
- **Backpack.** Please send your child with a backpack big enough to hold their folder, lunch box and water bottle.
- 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.

Daily Apparel

Clothing for your preschooler should be simple, comfortable, washable, and easy for your child to play in. **Rubber soled shoes are a must (no sandals please)**, especially for **daily** outdoor activities. Please send appropriate outerwear for the morning's weather conditions. During the winter time, please make sure your child is wearing **layers** as they will spend time outside. (Unless it is absolutely too cold). As with the warmer weather; please note that we cannot apply sunscreen to students. It must be applied before they arrive at school.

Please be mindful that while at school we play and discover many new things. Our staff takes great care in preventing paint spills, messes, etc., but we ask that you **do not dress your child in their best new clothes** and expect them to remain spotless. If an accident

occurs, your child will be dressed in the extra set of clothes you are to leave in their backpack (starting on the first day of school); 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.**

Labeling

We cannot 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. **Here's a list of items to label: shoes, socks, clothes, coats, hats, gloves, backpacks, lunch boxes, drink cups, etc.**

Potty Expectations

We ask that all children three years old and older are potty trained by the first day of school. If you need to discuss accommodations with us, please reach out ahead of time so that we can work with you to create an appropriate plan for your child. We know that some children take to training easier than others and that accidents can occur occasionally, even for those that have a good grasp on it. 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 child come to school wearing a pull up until accidents occur with less frequency.

Our two-year old teachers will work with the families when potty training. If you are potty training your two year old, please make sure 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. We want to help make it as smooth of a process as possible.

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.

Newsletters and Messages from School

Your child's backpack will be used to transport papers, newsletters, messages, crafts, lunch boxes and clothes. Please check your child's backpack 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 bag (or PIN to the outside) OR you can email us at BraceFamilyPreschool@ymcacharlotte.org.

A newsletter will be emailed bi-weekly week from the preschool director. This will include information about upcoming events and fun happenings at the preschool. This newsletter will keep families abreast of all the wonderful happenings at our preschool. All teachers will also send home a bi-weekly newsletter to share information and a peek ahead of things to come. The newsletters also offers a snapshot of the exciting activities the children participated in. A monthly calendar with scheduled activities and themes for each week of that month will also be sent home at the start of each month.

Facebook

Please like the Brace Family YMCA Facebook page where we post fun pictures either telling our daily story of what goes on or showing preparations for big events, along with interesting articles and quotes.

Emergencies

All of our staff are 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, families 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 family member 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 hands 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 families can be alert for symptoms.

Medicines

With the exception of medication for severe allergic reactions, the Brace Family YMCA expects that all medications be administered at home before coming to school. However, if medication (prescribed or over the counter) is absolutely required, 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. Family members/caregivers must sign an Authorization to Administer Medication form for Epi-Pens and any medication. 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) 716-4323 or JenniferE.Carlson@ymcacharlotte.org.

Inclement Weather

The Brace Family YMCA Preschool will not offer make up days or refunds due to missed days due to inclement weather, Act of God, or Power outages.

In the event of inclement weather or other event that requires closing or delaying preschool, we will notify families as quickly as possible. Our school calendar does follow the

CMS calendar but in the event of inclement weather the Brace Family YMCA Preschool may decide to be in class when the CMS school district has chosen to close or delay. Please be on the lookout for an email with our decision.

Please note: The Brace Family Preschool **will not** make up school days missed due to inclement weather even if CMS has scheduled a make-up day.

Volunteer Opportunities – *Suspended until further notice*

Child Guidance Policy

The philosophy of our program is based on the "Golden Rule" with respect being shown to all. The staff will make every effort to relate to children on an individual basis as well as implement appropriate behavior management techniques in order for all children to be successful. 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 effort and made to feel important and successful. Negative behavior will be interrupted and redirected toward positive behavior. Please encourage your child to follow the instructions of the teachers.

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.

We believe in encouraging self-regulation. The teachers model positive interactions and appropriate communication in guiding a child through this process.

Staff will make **reasonable and appropriate** attempts to modify activities, rewards, system/procedures:

- Staff will not damage the participant's self-image or embarrass the child.
- Staff will help participants learn self – control, choose alternatives, identify feelings and develop understanding and respect for the feelings of others.
- Every effort will be made by staff to enlist cooperation of the child and family members to solve problems.

Discipline problems that persist or are disruptive to the class will be shared with the director.

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 family 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 families are unable or unwilling to work with the school or a child whose behavior is dangerous to him/her and/or others.

Examples of Inappropriate Behavior:

- Fighting with another student (pushing, yelling, etc)
- Hitting another child/teacher (with closed fist...example: punch)
- Hitting another child/teacher (with open hand...example: slap)
- Throwing objects at another child/teacher

Other: Leaving the group, spitting, inappropriate language, etc.

When a situation arises the following steps will be taken:

Redirect – the child will be redirected from the inappropriate behavior to a more suitable choice or activity.

Warning – the child will be given a verbal warning and reminded that continuing the inappropriate behavior will result in a consequence.

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 for a toy to be removed.

Family Conference – if the above steps have not been successful, a conference with the family and teachers will be held to discuss and create a plan for the specific circumstance.

Biting Policy

With young children (under the age of 3), biting is a normal and temporary developmental phase, particularly for those who do not yet have the verbal skills to express their feelings and thoughts. However, we recognize that this behavior is not only disruptive to the class, but also unsafe. Teachers will do their best to prevent biting, but in the event that a child is bitten the following safety measures will be taken.

- The biting will be interrupted (if possible) with a firm, "NO...we don't bite people."
- The staff will remain calm and not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted and the injury will be cleaned and cooled with ice.

- Staff will remove the biting child from the situation. The child will then be isolated from the group.
 - Families of both children will be notified of the biting incident and appropriate forms/ documentation will be filled out. A phone call will be made if skin has been broken.
 - If a child bites, regardless of whether skin is broken, three times in one month, they will need to be picked up from the Preschool and will not be able to return the following school day.
 - If a child is biting habitually, we will work with the family to create an appropriate action plan for prevention; such as providing a more appropriate object for biting (i.e. a Teething necklace)
 - If an older child (over 3) bites and breaks the skin, they will be sent home immediately
- Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.

*Please note: As a staff team, we are dedicated to helping your child use his/her increasing vocabulary to work through this phase. Thank you for your understanding.

Field Trips *suspended until further notice*

Throughout the school year the preschool will go on field trips. Notices regarding these trips will be sent home in advance. *Due to YMCA 0-5 Year Old Guidelines, you will be responsible for your child's transportation to and from these field trips.* Please keep in mind that a small, additional fee may be charged to personally participate in the field trip.

Birthday Celebrations

In an effort to maintain a healthy environment and to be sensitive to the increasing number of food allergies of our participants, birthdays may be observed with **non-edible items** only. Children will be given recognition for their special day (with a crown, stickers and/or a special privilege) in the classroom.

You may celebrate your child's birthday by sending in a non-food treat for the class such as stickers, bubbles, etc.

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 the children's folders. 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 volunteer will contact families 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 Volunteer

Room volunteers are an invaluable part of the class and preschool. Room volunteers are responsible for 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.

Additional Brace Family Programs

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte and the Brace Family YMCA offer much more beyond Preschool. For more information on the below programs, please visit our website at www.ymcaofgreatercharlotte.org.

- Sports
- Afterschool
- Aquatics
- Homeschool Programs and Homeschool P.E.
- Rentals/Team Building at the Hemby Program Center
- Volunteering
- Active Older Adult Programs

Contacts/Directory

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

Preschool Information, Absences, Policies, Student/Family Needs

704-716-4323

BraceFamilyPreschool@ymcacharlotte.org

Preschool Director: Jennifer E. Carlson

704-716-4323

JenniferE.Carlson@ymcacharlotte.org

Financial Information:

704-716-4233

BraceFamilyPreschool@ymcacharlotte.org

Brace Family YMCA Front Desk

704-716-4200

Brace Family YMCA Fax

704-716-4201

Mailing Address

BRACE FAMILY YMCA

3127 Weddington Road

Matthews, NC 28105.

Preschool Address - Hemby Program Center

9760 Happy Valley Dr.

Charlotte, NC 28270