



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



THE MAGIC OF CHILDHOOD YMCA Preschool STEELE CREEK YMCA

2023-2024
Family Handbook

ymcacharlotte.org

Welcome to the Steele Creek YMCA Preschool Program! We look forward to working with your child and family during the 2023-2024 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

Director: Jasmine Young, jasmine.young@ymcacharlotte.org, 704-654-1834

Senior Director: Matt Crawforth, matthew.crawforth@ymcacharlotte.org

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.

Modifications and Accommodations

Participation by those with diversabilities is encouraged. Reasonable accommodations will be reviewed in partnership with the individual/family and implemented on a case-by-case basis for a safe and enriching experience.

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 will schedule a meeting to discuss your child's needs and work with you to create a plan to help your child have the best experience possible.

Calendar & Hours

The preschool program will operate from September 5, 2023 through May 24, 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:

September 25

November 10, 22-24

December 20-29

January 1-2, 16, 25

February 19

March 29

April 1-5

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, 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 like Spanish and drama. We utilize a creative arts curriculum. Most activities will be connected to books, artists, and authors.

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. To the extent possible, please pack items that your child will be able to open on their own.

Nut-Free Facility

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 to school will remain in its original packaging and be returned home.

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.

Preschool Staff

The Y hires a diverse team who are excited to help young people reach their potential. After a screening process which includes background checks and drug testing, teachers receive 20 hours of training, including curriculum, child development and emergency preparedness. All YMCA staff are also certified in CPR and First Aid.

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.

ClassDojo app- Each class will use the ClassDojo 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.

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 director if you would like to request a conference at any time during the school year.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Parents may send cupcakes, drinks, or anything else for their classmates, but all items must be store bought. Teachers will send pictures and videos directly to the parents.

Arrival (8:50-9:00)

Park and walk your child to the front door and ring the doorbell. We will bring them inside. Parents are not allowed inside after the first day or unless you have a meeting.

Departure (12:30-1:00)

Park and walk to the front door and ring the doorbell. Have your ID available.

Late Pick Up

You will be charged \$1 for every minute you are late. The late fee will automatically be drafted from your credit card on file. If your child is not picked up after 10 minutes, we will call someone on your emergency list. After 30 mins, with no communication, we will inform the police.

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 or call the director and include the person's name as it appears on their photo ID. You can also inform the director via ClassDojo or at arrival.

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 MANDATORY in addition to all parents/guardians for each child. Emergency contacts will automatically be considered as authorized to pick-up unless indicated otherwise.

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 and the ClassDojo app.

Health and Wellness Policy

For the safety and well-being of all children and staff, the following health and wellness guidelines will be strictly enforced in all youth programs. Please be considerate and do not send your child to programs when they are sick. If a child develops symptoms of illness while in our care, a family member/guardian 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 without the use of medication or unless a written note from the child's physician is provided, stating that their symptoms are not contagious and that the child can attend childcare:

- Fever (temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Contagious diseases or symptoms
- Continuous and/or colored nasal drainage (can provide a physician's note if caused by an allergy)
- Persistent Cough

Staff will notify the family or guardian to pick up children when any of the following conditions exist:

1. The child displays any of the symptoms above.
2. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
3. The illness results in a greater need than the YMCA staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in the program.

If an illness such as Head Lice, Fifth Disease or Chicken Pox has been reported to us, we will send written notices home with fellow participants so that parents/guardians can be alert for symptoms.

Medications

Please administer all medications at home whenever possible. If medications are required during preschool hours, a "Medication Authorization Form" must be filled out. Prescription medications must be in the original bottle with prescription label, and over the counter medication will be accepted only with an accompanying physician's note.

Child Guidance

The YMCA believes the foundation of our work in youth development is safety and character development. We believe in meeting each child's unique needs and recognize that behavior is a form of communication. The YMCA understands that not all children will come in with the same skills, and we understand that part of our role is helping teach children how to regulate their emotions. The following steps may be taken to address inappropriate behaviors:

- Redirect— child will be redirected to a more suitable choice or activity
- Warning— staff will provide a verbal warning and remind child that continuing the behavior will result in a consequence
- Logical consequence— child will be given a logical consequence for the behavior such as being moved to a different seat or not being able to play with a certain toy
- Conference— a meeting with the family and teachers will be held to discuss what has occurred and create a plan to help the child be successful

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).

Enrollment

Enrollment begins in February and is on a first-come, first serve basis. Children who currently attend preschool (and siblings) will be allowed to register prior to registration opening to the general public. The preschool director will send information to families about registration in January.

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 8/15/2023-4/15/2024. 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 preschool program.

My Y Pricing Scholarship is the YMCA's rate structure designed to help us fulfill our mission to serve all by being affordable for our members. Upon receiving an income adjusted membership rate and having dependents (children) on your membership, you will receive a program scholarship rate. Please visit our Sales and Service Center for more information. 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.

Cancellation Policy

All cancellations require a 15 days written notice. Please email your notice to steelecreekprograms@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.

*Please note that we do not prorate tuition rates for days missed due to individual illness, vacations, inclement weather, suspensions, or scheduled closings.