



The Y in Central Maryland • It's deeper here.®

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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# Preschool Family Handbook

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## Y IN CENTRAL MARYLAND PRESCHOOL LOCATIONS

### **Baltimore City**

#### **Y Preschool at Weinberg**

**410-735-8635**

Monday-Friday 6:30am-6:30pm

- full-day program serving children ages 2-PreK

### **Carroll County**

#### **Y Chipmunks Preschool**

**410-848-2772**

Monday-Friday; hours vary by class

- half-day program serving children ages 2-PreK

### **Harford County**

#### **Y Preschool in Riverside**

**410-679-0708**

Monday-Friday 6:00am-6:30pm

- full-day program serving children ages 6 weeks-PreK
- half-day program serving children 3-5 years old
- before and after school enrichment program serving children in kindergarten through fifth grade that attend Church Creek Elementary

### **Northern Baltimore County**

#### **Y Preschool in Towson**

**410-494-7778**

Monday-Friday 6:30am-6:30pm

- full-day program serving children ages 2-PreK

### **Southern Baltimore County**

#### **Betty Sterner Y Preschool in Catonsville**

**410-747-4951**

Monday-Friday 6:30am-6:30pm

- full-day program serving children ages 2-PreK
- before and after school enrichment program serving children in kindergarten through fifth grade

#### **Y Preschool at UMBC**

**410-455-6830**

Monday-Friday 7:00am-6:30pm

- full-day program serving children ages 2-PreK

## Y IN CENTRAL MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OFFICE

### **Y in Central Maryland Association Office**

**443-322-9622**

This Handbook is reviewed annually by a team of experts in the field of Early Childhood Education, including our Senior Vice President of Early Childhood Development, our Executive Director of Early Childhood Development and Quality, and our experienced team of Preschool Directors and Regional Directors. The Senior Vice President of Youth Development oversees the operations of all early childhood programs at the Y in Central Maryland, including consumer-paid preschool programs and federally-funded Head Start programs. The Executive Director of Early Childhood Development and Quality is responsible for the overall operation of the consumer-paid preschool programs at the Y in Central Maryland, including the fiscal operations of the centers and serving as a resource for center directors and teachers. The Regional Preschool Directors oversee operations of consumer-paid preschool programs in select regions, and the Preschool Directors oversee the operations of specific preschool programs, including supervising teachers, fostering communication with parents/guardians, observing children, ensuring compliance with licensing regulations, maintaining inventories of food, supplies, and equipment, maintaining accurate administrative records, and facilitating positive relationships with local schools and other community partners.

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WELCOME TO THE

# Y Preschool Program



For many of you, this will be your child's first adventure away from home. It may also be your first experience with the Y. To help with this transition, we have designed this Handbook to answer some of your questions and give you a deeper understanding of our Y preschool philosophy and program. Together we can create a rich and rewarding experience for your child and wonderful memories that will last a lifetime.

**The Y Preschool is a trusted program** that has provided educational and developmental support to children and families for over 160 years. Our preschool programs are licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care (OCC) and combine a safe and happy educational environment with a curriculum designed to stimulate intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth. The Y has taken an innovative approach in designing programs that meet the needs of the various communities we serve. We offer full-time infant and toddler care; full-time and part-time preschool programs, and before and after school programs.

**Each day you will be provided with detailed information** to guide you through your child's journey with us. You'll receive daily reports from your child's teacher outlining your child's activities, routines, and care including information on food eaten, length of naps, diaper changes, new skills learned, classroom activities, and special accomplishments.

**Our centers maintain an open door policy** at all times and parents/guardians are encouraged to observe our programs. If you have any questions about our program, we encourage you to talk to your preschool director. Our directors are available to speak with you in person, by phone, or via email.

**Thank you again for joining our Y family.** Together we will partner to provide an environment that is both supportive and enriching to your child's overall development.

Sincerely,

**The Y Preschool Team**



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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## MISSION STATEMENT AND PHILOSOPHY

The Y in Central Maryland is a charitable organization dedicated to developing the full potential of every individual through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

The Y Preschool mission incorporates the Y in Central Maryland's goals of developing the full potential of all people through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

Y Preschool builds on the Y's mission by providing opportunities for children to: learn through play; develop cognitive and physical health; become enthusiastic learners; develop character; and to be independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is our policy to provide an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination of any type, including discrimination based on age, race, color, national and/or ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, military status, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

We act in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable federal, state, or local laws pertaining to the provision of services to children with disabilities. Our goal is to meet the individual needs of the child within the structure of our program and the abilities of our teachers, while maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all the children and teachers. We will make reasonable accommodations to provide children with disabilities full and equal access to our programs and services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs as long as doing so does not place an undue staffing or financial burden on our program, or does not pose a safety risk to the child or others in the center. We will make no assumptions concerning any individual's abilities or disabilities and will make an individual assessment to determine if we can meet each child's needs in our group setting.

At the time of enrollment, the parent/guardian must indicate if any special accommodations are required for their child. If a child has a medical condition, medical paperwork must be completed accordingly. It is imperative that the parent/guardian, director and teacher directly involved with the child, be familiar with the medical needs of the child to best meet his/her

individual needs. Special medical needs include asthma, food or other allergies, ADD or ADHD, physical limitations or any other diagnosed condition.

If a child has an IEP or an IFSP, then we require that parents provide a copy to us upon enrollment so that we can make reasonable accommodations to best meet the needs of the child. Please note that this information will be shared with the Maryland State Department of Education on an as-needed basis, as well as with members on the preschool team, Child Find, Project Act, and Infants and Toddlers to help meet the needs of your child. Our preschools work directly with these agencies to provide a strong foundation for your child.

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Our policy is to maintain confidentiality and respect each family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information. However, when the teacher has reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, we are required to share information with agencies and individuals who may be able to intervene in the child's best interest.

## ENROLLMENT

Prior to enrollment parents/guardians must request a tour of the center. A brief orientation will be provided and questions will be addressed. Enrollment takes place at the center with the director or assistant director. Children may not participate in the program until all necessary paperwork has been completed.

The following information must be completed and submitted to the Director prior to your child's first day:

- Registration Form w/ Registration Fee
- Emergency Card
- Enrollment/Liability Release
- Immunization Record
- Swim Permission Slip (if applicable)
- IEP/IFSP (if applicable)
- Payment for Two Weeks of Care
- Registration Agreement
- Financial Issues Statement
- Allergy Alert w/Medications (if applicable)
- New Health Inventory Form w/Lead Addendum
- Special Medical Plan (if applicable)

We will need a copy of an IEP or IFSP, for those children receiving special services. By providing us with a copy you are enabling us to create a strong foundation for your child. Our schools work directly with local Infants and Toddlers programs, Project Act, and Child Find.

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On your child's first day, please bring the following items labeled with your child's name:

- Quiet time bedding (crib-sized sheet, travel-size pillow, small blanket – stored in a pillow case, drawstring duffel or backpack)
- Diapers and wipes (if child is not yet potty trained)
- Sweater-sized plastic box/lid or Ziploc bag with a complete change of clothing inside
- A nutritious packed lunch (with nothing to heat up please) if applicable
- 3 Family Photos

## Continual Enrollment

Re-registration fees and forms are due annually. Registration packets typically go out each spring. All required documents that are included in the original registration packet will be given to you during the re-registration process. These must be returned to secure your spot. Spaces for the new school are filled on a first come, first serve basis.

## Custody Issues

We assume that both parents have equal rights to pick up, drop off, visit, or request information about their child. If that is not the case, then it is your responsibility to provide court documents to clarify the rights and responsibilities of each parent. It is imperative that official, current court documents be in your child's file if custody or visitation is a concern. Without court orders, we cannot withhold a parent from their child. Based on the information that you share with your director, he/she will tell you if additional documentation is required. In addition, we ask that parents keep the preschool, our teachers, and other children out of any legal or custodial issues. We expect that you communicate effectively with each other in the best interest of your child and that you refrain from placing our teachers in the middle of your situation.

Failure to follow our policies regarding custody issues may result in immediate termination.

The parent(s) who registers the child for enrollment is responsible for child care fees. We cannot sub-divide fees and establish multiple accounts.

## New Student Orientation

New students are provided with special support systems to help them transition into their new classroom environment. We often provide them with a 'buddy' who can help them make their way throughout the classroom. We also provide specific instructions to help them prepare for transition periods throughout the day. Our teachers take special care to ensure that new students feel welcome and are given the attention they need to adjust to their new environment.

On occasion, there are children who simply can't adjust to a classroom environment and who demand more individualized attention than our teachers can provide. Should this be the case, we will do our best to provide additional resources to help you find alternative care.

## TUITION

The Y in Central Maryland is a non-profit organization and all revenue goes directly toward the operation of our programs. While we strive to maintain affordable tuition rates for our families, changes in tuition may occur. Written notice will be given in advance regarding any change.

### Registration Fees

All new applicants and applicants re-enrolling will pay a non-refundable registration fee annually.

### Tuition Discounts

Only those with an active family Y membership are eligible for discounted "member" tuition rates. Membership discounted rates are not applicable for complimentary membership offers. The Y offers a 10 percent sibling discount to families enrolling multiple children from the same family. The full rate must be paid for the child with the highest tuition rate.

### In-house Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance may be available to qualifying families. Verification of income is required and applications are renewed and reviewed on a regular basis. Applications are available from the business office. The information that you provide is confidential and applications are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### Outside Financial Assistance

The Y also accepts Child Care Subsidy vouchers from the state. For additional help with payments, families should contact their local Department of Social Services office.

In addition, some of our locations participate in fee assistance from the following programs:

- Ameri-Corps
- Military Fee Assistance through Child Care Aware of America (where applicable)
- Corporate Partnerships

### Additional Program Fees

Special activities outside of the general curriculum may require additional fees. You will be notified in advance of any fees and their due dates. Please note that we do not accept cash.

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## **Vacation Credits**

A vacation credit of one week per year (September through August) may be used if your child is absent for five consecutive days (Monday–Friday) for a family vacation. This credit only applies to full-time children that have been enrolled in the program full-time for at least 6 months or more. Written notice must be given at least two weeks in advance to use this credit.

This written notice should be given directly to the preschool director for approval and delivery to the billing office. A Vacation Credit Request form can be used to provide notice.

## **Absences & Closings**

Please notify your center director if your child is going to be absent or arriving later than 11 a.m. Also, please notify the center via email, written note, or by phone if your school age child is leaving early from the public school or going home after school with someone else.

There is no reduction in fees for holidays, absences, or if the site is forced to close due to circumstances beyond our control. Please note that parents/guardians are required to pay for days the center is closed and for all absences from the program.

## **Payment Policies**

Payment can be made by check, money order, or credit card. Please put your child's name on the check or money order. Make check or money order payable to the Y in Central Maryland. Mail your payment to the Customer Service Office, or make payment at the membership desk at your local Y Family Center.

Payments will not be accepted at our Y preschool centers. A receipt will be provided only upon request. Automatic weekly billing (formerly EFT) can be set up in your online account at any time via our website at [www.ymaryland.org](http://www.ymaryland.org). Weekly payments (formerly PayPal) via credit card or checking account can be made in your online account at any time via our website at [www.ymaryland.org](http://www.ymaryland.org).

## **Late Payments**

A late charge of \$25 will be applied to any account not paid in full by the due date. If payment is late, then parents will receive either a note or a phone call concerning late payments and a date for termination of services if payment is not received. To avoid disruption of service, payment must be made in full by the final termination date; and you must provide receipt of payment to the center director or opening teacher before your child will be admitted into care. Those accounts with repeated late payments will be held to the conditions of a modified late payment policy.

## **Bad Checks**

Checks that are returned for non-payment will not be re-deposited. An additional charge of \$25.00 will be charged for any returned checks. We will notify you by phone or letter of a Non-Sufficient Funds occurrence. The \$25.00 fee will be added to your next payment. Personal checks will not be accepted on delinquent accounts or if a personal check has been refused for payment (NSF–non sufficient funds) by our financial institution within the last 12 months. Multiple returned checks may result in the Y not being able to accept personal checks for future payments.

## **Late Pick-Up Charge**

Late fees begin at the time that the program ends for the day. They are assessed as follows: \$5.00 for the first five minutes and \$5.00 for each 5-minute period thereafter or fraction thereof. Parents who are late will be presented with a Late Charge Slip, and asked to sign/verify the late balance being assessed. Parents are responsible for paying the accrued late charges by the close of the next business day. (Regulations require that two teachers stay at the center until every child is picked up. Teachers who work overtime are required to be paid time and a half salary.) Please remember that late parents must call the center to inform the teacher of the delay. Ten minutes after the close of business, emergency contacts will be notified to arrange pick-up of the child. If we cannot reach either you or your emergency contacts to pick up your child, then we will contact Child Protective Services. Parents with excessive, unexcused, late pick-ups will be given notice to find alternate care.

## **Withdrawal/Changes in Care**

All changes in scheduled care must be made in writing through the preschool office at least two weeks in advance, including requests for vacation credits. Verbal notifications of changes or withdrawals cannot be accepted. A Change in Care Form must be completed. Please note that a 30-day notice must be given if you plan to withdraw your child from the program.



## EDUCATION AT Y PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

At the Y, you can rest assured that your child is receiving a quality education. Our learn through play curriculum that incorporates character values, cognitive, physical, social, emotional and language experiences lay the foundation for your child's educational future. Our preschools are committed to providing each child with an experience that will last a lifetime.

### Our Curriculum

Our curriculum choices are made using the following best practices: individual needs of students; developmentally appropriate practices; reliable and valid assessments (completed three times a year); teacher's input; developmental age of the students; special needs of students; cultural sensitivity; daily progress reports; social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development domains; and health and safety. The activities we plan, the way we organize the environment, selected toys and materials, daily schedules, and talk with children are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.

With this in mind, the Y in Central Maryland has implemented a Maryland State Department of Education Approved Preschool Curriculum into all of our Y Preschool programs. These resources promote the development of the whole child – socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. Our curriculum is comprised of skills and activities that provide children with solid, coherent foundations for later learning in kindergarten and beyond.

The most important goal of our curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging children to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We're teaching them how to learn, not just in these early years, but all through their lives. We're allowing them to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them. We're instilling good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will benefit them throughout their lives.

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development:

#### Language

To help children gain literacy skills and oral language skills

#### Cognitive

To help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as problem solving, asking questions, and using words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings

#### Emotional

To help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude towards life.

#### Social

To help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are part of the group

#### Physical

To help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about their bodies



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## Learn Through Play

Children learn best when they are having fun and enjoying what they are doing. This fact makes play a very natural avenue to use in teaching young children. Through play, children can “try on” different roles. They can learn cause and effect. They develop confidence while doing things they know they can do. They learn to work as a team and to solve problems by thinking them through. A child’s self-concept is built by being successful in a variety of experiences. Discovery, learning, and play help them do that in terms that they can understand.

## Character Counts

We work to provide the best program possible for your child. At the Y, that means more than just providing activities. We believe character development is an important part of what we do. Y Character Development challenges all of us to demonstrate positive values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility. Character Development is the basis of the social-emotional development element of our curriculum. The individuality of each child is both respected and encouraged. Strengths are recognized and each child is encouraged to move at his or her own pace.

## Cognitive Development

Learning Centers in each classroom are purposefully designed to encourage cognitive development. Areas such as Dramatic Play, Art, Music, Science, Blocks, and Manipulatives provide endless opportunities for your child to grow intellectually. Language and listening skills are developed through group reading, language games, and discussion. Opportunities for literacy and numeric skill development are intentionally woven into daily activities and transition periods.

## Physical Development

Your child’s physical development is as important as any other area of our program. The Y offers: daily opportunities for vigorous play, both indoors and out. Opportunities to develop motor skills with movement education, simple games, and tumbling activities; nutritious and varied snacks; rest periods designed to meet developmental needs; and health and safety education are all infused into our curriculum.

The Y also provides a physical education curriculum called I Am Moving, I Am Learning. This curriculum focuses on nutrition and physical fitness providing age appropriate guidelines to children through songs and simple activities.

## Portfolio Content

We will maintain a portfolio for each child in our program. The portfolio will contain date-stamped work samples from a variety of domains. The work samples will show the child’s progress throughout each school year. Developmental screenings and assessments are also kept in each student’s portfolio.

## Lesson Plans

Teachers in each classroom create weekly lesson plans based on our MSDE approved unit plans. The curriculum and the unit plans are created by Y curriculum specialists and reviewed annually by the teaching teams, giving them an opportunity to provide feedback on an ongoing basis. All of the activities included in the lesson plans are designed to meet age-appropriate goals and objectives. We individualize our lessons to meet the developmental needs of each student to the best of our ability. For a student who is on an IEP or an IFSP, the school will work in partnership with the local school district, Infants and Toddlers, Project Act and/or Child Find to provide the student with services available to him. Reasonable accommodations and modifications will be provided for students needing services.

A curriculum overview is posted on the family communication board in the main lobby.

## Student Observations and Assessments

The Y supports the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Maryland Model for School Readiness and will orient families to their child’s readiness for school. Our teachers observe and assess students on a regular basis in order to adapt their lessons and activities to meet each child’s needs. Our teachers conduct formal assessments three times a year and share results with parents during parent-teacher conferences in the Fall and in the Spring. We utilize the Ounce Scale and the Work Sampling System.

Furthermore, we often utilize the Ages and Stages screening tool. Students can be assessed up to three times a year. Students with significantly lower scores on this assessment will be referred to their pediatrician, Infants and Toddlers program, Project Act or local Child Find for formal testing and screenings.

Our teachers also conduct ongoing observations, including anecdotal notes and the use of developmental checklists.

In addition to in-house assessments, the Y also partners with the local health department to provide speech/language, vision, and hearing testing by health department professionals at our sites.

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## Classroom Environment

Our preschool centers are clean, safe, and designed appropriately to meet the needs of children. The child-sized furniture, equipment, sinks, and toilets will help your child develop the independent skills needed to take care of his own personal needs. Supplies are within reach of the children who are encouraged to explore in the different learning centers throughout the classroom.

Each learning center is equipped with carefully selected educational toys and materials designed to help your child develop motor skills, social skills, and cognitive skills. For example, the two-year-old room contains large trucks, larger paint brushes and crayons, and low shelves labeled and supplied with age-appropriate materials. The three and four year old classrooms have writing materials in a variety of the learning centers, age-appropriate manipulatives that encourage problem-solving, and smaller paint brushes, colored pencils and crayons designed to enhance fine motor skills. We reference the ITERS (Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale) and the ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale) guidelines for help with selection of materials.

Each classroom contains a variety of materials, including puzzles, dolls, and posters that reflect diversity. These items encourage interest in many cultures and abilities. In fact, we encourage parents to talk to our teachers and students about their cultural traditions and to discuss their child's unique abilities with the class. Each center is compliant with ADA guidelines and is designed to allow access to all children, regardless of ability.

Each classroom follows a daily routine, including teacher-directed activities in both small groups and large groups as well as child-selected activities. Teachers are encouraged to participate in joint lesson planning and to evaluate the need for new materials such as prop boxes. Prop boxes allow the teachers to change the classroom environment to reflect the current theme: holidays, occupations, community helpers, etc. Prop boxes and other classroom materials are rotated several times a year to encourage exploration and to meet the developing needs and interests of each student.

## Diversity in our Schools

Children's attitudes toward others develops as they observe and interpret the actions of those around them. While young children may be essentially free of adult prejudices and stereotypes, they are not necessarily insensitive to the subtle attitudes displayed by the adults around them. As such, we recognize the importance of:

- Introducing different cultures through stories, in-house field trips and guests, songs, dance, art and food experiences
- Including a variety of diverse props and learning materials throughout the classroom
- Acknowledging and sharing information about holidays and celebrations from other cultures
- Encouraging families to share their traditions with the children and teachers
- Acceptance of various family structures, abilities and other diversities that are a part of our society

## Classroom Transitions

A positive transition from home to school is important for your child each day. Drop-off should be a positive experience for your child – it should not be rushed and should not leave either you or your child feeling anxious. We encourage you to spend time in your child's classroom and talk to them about their projects on display, their teachers, and their friends. Talking with your child about their day at school will help them feel more secure.

Your child will be assigned a cubby and a mailbox. When you drop off your child, please sign them in, put their belongings in their cubby, and escort them to their classroom. When you pick your child up, please sign them out, collect their items from their cubby, and check their mailbox for information/projects to be sent home.

The center director will contact you when your child is ready to move into a new classroom. The decision to move a child up to a new classroom is based on age, birth date, available classroom space, and assessment results. We make every effort to make this transition a smooth one for your child allowing him/her to spend brief periods of time in the new classroom before making a full transition.

## TEACHERS

The Y understands that leaving your child with an unfamiliar adult can be difficult. To help ease your mind, we have requirements in place for all of our teachers. Some of these requirements go beyond those mandated by the State of Maryland. Enabling teachers and aides to provide comprehensive services for children and families and to assist in the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the program is critical. Because we are strongly committed to providing quality preschool programs, the Y offers teachers the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally through ongoing teacher development and training. Y teachers are encouraged to apply for MSDE credentialing and further their formal education to increase their credential level.

### Qualifications

To the Y in Central Maryland, the protection and safety of children is our first concern. All Y preschool teachers meet the specified requirements by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care.

While these are just the minimum requirements, many of our teachers also have Associate's or Bachelor's degrees in the field of Early Childhood Education.

### Pre-Employment Screenings

Y preschool teachers undergo criminal background checks, reference checks, and medical examinations prior to employment. All teachers must also agree to random drug and alcohol testing. In addition, all teachers are provided with a Teacher Handbook which covers policies and procedures, including specific policies on Child Abuse Prevention.

### Training

Training on the newest information in the field of Early Childhood Education is provided during monthly teacher meetings. In addition, teachers are provided with ongoing feedback during mid-year performance reviews, annual performance reviews, ongoing observations from center directors, and annual individual development plans.

To meet licensing requirements, all teachers must participate in a minimum number of continuing education trainings per year:

- 12 continuing education hours for lead teachers
- 6 continuing education hours for assistant teachers

In addition, any teacher that works at our NECPA accredited preschool locations must meet the following requirements:

- 30 hours of training during their first year of employment
- 24 hours of training during every subsequent year of employment

Assistant Teachers & Substitutes
MSDE Aide Orientation
Lead Teachers
MSDE 45 hour Curriculum Certificate
MSDE 45 hour Preschool Certificate or
MSDE 45 hour Infant/Toddler Certificate or
MSDE 45 hour School Age Certificate
1 year experience in a center

MSDE OCC Trainings	Y Required Trainings
First Aid	Bloodborne Pathogens
CPR (Basic Life Support)	Preschool Orientation
ADA	Child Abuse Prevention
Health & Safety	Diversity & Inclusion
Medication Administration	Curriculum Training
Emergency Preparedness	
Breastfeeding	

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## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Each family member that walks through the front door of our preschool is a part of our Y family. In order for your child to get the most out of his/her preschool experience, it is critical that you play an active role in their education.

### Family Code of Conduct

Maintaining a warm, nurturing environment for children, parents and teachers is a mutual effort. We expect both teachers and parents to keep honest and respectful lines of communication open.

Just as there are expectations concerning appropriate teacher conduct, there are also expectations for appropriate parent conduct:

The following behaviors are not acceptable:

- Cursing or swearing when speaking with teachers, children or other parents.
- Using violence or acting in any way that causes teachers, children or other parents to feel threatened.
- Arguing with parents or teachers.
- Interfering with a teacher's ability to do their job.
- Violating our Confidentiality Policy.
- Physical or verbal punishment of your child(ren) or other children while in the program.

We have the right to exclude any parent(s)/guardian(s) in violation of this policy from participating in the program or entering the program.

Inappropriate behavior or failure to meet expectations as explained herein may result in immediate termination of care and/or expulsion from all Y programs/properties.

### Parent Participation

The Y believes strongly that parent participation is a key ingredient in a quality preschool program. We encourage you to visit our program whenever possible during the year, and to discuss any concerns or ideas with the center director, including situations in the home, scheduled events or happenings in the center. This will give you a chance to see how your child spends his/her time with other children and his/her teacher, and will assist us in more fully meeting the needs of your family.

Parents are encouraged to support the teachers in their efforts to enhance program development and extended family services through fund-raising efforts, social activities, center improvements, etc.

Families are encouraged to participate in our Parent Committee known as FISH (Family Involvement Starts Here). The FISH Group meets to plan upcoming events, and to discuss a variety of projects. Some of the

projects include: family activities, parent workshops and community outreach. Notices of opportunities to participate will be provided.

The Y encourages parents to provide feedback – both formally and informally. On an annual basis, the association distributes evaluation forms to our preschool parents. Feedback is analyzed by each preschool team and by the Y's Association Office.

### Open Door Policy

You are always welcome to stop in, visit your child, and join us for activities. We seek your active involvement in our program to help us make improvements and to help us meet both the needs of your child and the needs of your family.

We do ask that you refrain from using your cell phone when you are in our building and that you remember to wash/sanitize your hands upon entry in to our facilities to help us promote a clean and healthy environment and to assist in reducing the spread of illness.

### Communication

If communication is frequent, together we can provide security and continuity for your child. We will strive to communicate with families on a daily basis to keep you informed about your child's day. Most of our centers will utilize Tadpoles providing you with information on your child's activities throughout the day. In addition, we also communicate quite frequently through email and/or text alerts. Please ensure that your center director has your current email address and that you have signed up for text alerts at the preschool center.

Please feel free to call the preschool office or your child's teacher (at nap time, if possible) if you have any questions or concerns. If a conversation takes the teacher's attention away from the children, we encourage you to schedule a conference. We offer parent-teacher conferences twice a year, in the Fall and in the Spring, but please don't hesitate to let us know if you need to meet more frequently to address any concerns or questions that you may have.

The classroom and lobby bulletin boards are important areas that we use to communicate with you. There you will find things such as menus, lesson plans, monthly newsletters, calendar of events, and messages that are important to you and your child. Please take some time to browse these areas to stay informed.

We also provide information on resources within the local community, including information on the local public schools, the local library, doctor's offices, dentists, and more. See your preschool center director for information on specific resources.

## PROGRAM QUALITY

At the Y, we strive to provide the best curriculum-based quality care for all children. As such, we continuously assess our programs to ensure we're doing so. We assess each program in a variety of ways, including internal quality audits performed every other month by our Executive Director of Early Childhood Development and our VP of Quality and Risk Management; parent surveys distributed three times a year to parents; ongoing classroom observations performed by our preschool directors; voluntary participation in state quality standard initiatives (EXCELS) and both state and nationally recognized accreditation programs (MSDE and NECPA); and consistent adherence to regulations set by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care (OCC).

All of our preschool programs are licensed and regulated by the OCC. As such, we are required to adhere to strict standards and guidelines in regard to our facilities, our teachers, our paperwork, health and safety procedures, our curriculum, and the supervision of children. Periodically, our schools will be inspected by state, county/city health, fire, and licensing officials.

### EXCELS

Maryland EXCELS is a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that awards ratings to family providers, center-based and public school child care programs, and school age before- and after-school programs that meet increasingly higher standards of quality in key areas including licensing, learning environments, teachers and professional development, developmentally appropriate learning and program practices, child assessment, program administration and policies, and accreditation. Each of our preschool programs voluntarily participates in the Maryland EXCELS rating system and some have achieved the highest quality rating level available through EXCELS.



### Accreditation

Maryland State Department of Education (MDSE) Accreditation incorporates program standards, indicators and descriptions of best practices for prekindergarten, kindergarten, center-based childcare and the Head Start Programs. Accreditation focuses on the administration, operation and family/community partnerships of classroom-based programs. By pursuing and successfully completing MSDE Accreditation, programs demonstrate their commitment to improving the performance of its services and to providing the highest quality programs to children. Our Chipmunks Preschool program has achieved and maintained MSDE accreditation for several years now.

Our other preschool programs have achieved or are currently in the process of achieving accreditation from the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA). NECPA is a nationally recognized accreditation program with high standards based on research from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Health and Safety Performance Standards developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Public Health Association (APHA). These standards assess quality in the areas of adult and child interaction, teacher framing, health and safety, physical environment, administration, and parent and community relationships.

Our goal is to achieve and maintain accreditation for all of our centers. This will ensure that our programs meet and maintain the highest standards of excellence.

Furthermore, our preschool leadership team works closely with a wide array of volunteers, including professors, researchers, school officials, and other specialists in the field of education to review program outcomes and discuss the newest trends in educational research.

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## PROGRAM OPERATIONS

### Meals

The Y provides a morning snack and an afternoon snack which consists of either fruits or vegetables at least twice a week. A monthly menu is prepared based on USDA guidelines and is posted for your review. At centers where lunch is not provided, parents provide a “bagged” lunch which should include a balanced meal. We suggest whole grains, fresh fruits or vegetables and food with lower fat, sugar or salt content. Please do not send items that need to be heated. We do not heat any lunch items as we cannot guarantee the temperature of food or move teachers out of the classroom to do so. Teachers are required by the Office of Child Care to review the meals children bring from home to ensure that food is nutritious. We often send home “tips” or ideas for lunch. If a parent does not provide a healthy meal, then we will provide a supplement to the child to meet the basic nutritional needs as outlined and set forth by the OCC.

Meal time is an important part of our day that is never rushed. Whenever possible, we implement Family Style Dining – a method of serving food to the children seated at a table in which the main and side dishes are brought to the table in serving bowls or on platters that are passed between the children, who take what they want and transfer it to their own plates. Y teachers join the children at the lunch table to help facilitate conversation and table manners. Young children are assisted with their lunch and encouraged to eat.

When milk is provided, only 1% milk is served. Water is offered and made readily available throughout the day and at mealtimes. OCC licensing regulations state that we are required to have physician’s documentation for each child who is on a special diet due to medical reasons. The documentation must include food items which are to be excluded from the diet. If children are on special diets due to religious or cultural reasons, a signed note from the parent/guardian is required. The note must outline the foods to be excluded and the reasons for excluding the foods from the child’s diet.

Infants and Toddlers are fed in accordance to their Infant and Toddler Care Plan that is provided by the parent/guardian. Care plans are updated every three months or as needed, by the parent/guardian. During all feedings our teachers promote social development through conversational interactions with the child as they are eating (see the INFANT AND TODDLER CARE Section in this Handbook for more details).

### Special Occasions

According to the Centers for Disease Control, allergies have increased more than 20 percent among American

children since the mid 1990s. Sending a food treat to the classroom to celebrate a birthday or a holiday can exclude those children who have food allergies, diabetes, or other dietary restrictions. Furthermore, in a classroom with twenty children, it’s possible that we could have sugary food several times a month if each parent brings a food item in to celebrate. As such, we do not permit outside food for holiday events and birthday celebrations. We are happy to recognize your child’s birthday and holidays with non-food items. We invite you to bring in stickers, pencils, mini notepads, playdough, and mini Frisbees to celebrate your child’s birthday with his classmates. Please contact your center director to discuss what you’d like to bring in and to ensure that the item is age appropriate.

### CACFP Federal Food Program

In an effort to keep our costs in check, the Y participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). We receive a small reimbursement for meals and milk that is directly applied to the food line on our operating budget. At the beginning of each school year, you may be asked to complete a USDA application. Any preschool that participates in the CACFP Federal Food Program is restricted from accepting any food from home unless accompanied by a physician’s order.

### Rest Time

Rest periods after lunch are designed to meet your child’s developmental needs. The length of rest time is based on recommendations from the Office of Child Care (OCC). Children who do not nap during their rest time will be offered quiet, cot activities. We want your child to be comfortable during rest time. A child-sized cot is provided for each child. A small blanket and crib-sized sheet is required for your child per the OCC. If a crib-sized sheet is not provided by the family, a child may be sent home. Bedding needs to be stored in a closeable bag (i.e., drawstring, duffel, backpack, etc. – please do not send plastic bags). The blanket and sheet will be sent home each weekend for laundering.

### Field Trips and Special Guests

Most Y preschools do not offer off site field trips. Special guests frequently visit and enrich our preschool programs. Guests include storytellers, magicians, puppeteers, musicians, etc. You will be notified of the details for each event in advance. Additional costs may be incurred; however we will strive to keep these to a minimum.

### Items from Home

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, money, books, jewelry, candy, electronics and other items from home to the center. These items can be easily lost or misplaced; and, even more importantly, some can pose a health risk for children (i.e., choking hazard).

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Weekly, the teachers plan curriculum based show-and-share days. You will be notified of these days through our Home Learning Calendar. Only in these instances will a child be permitted to bring in an item from home directly related to the curriculum theme as specified.

The Y in Central Maryland is not responsible for lost, misplaced, or stolen items.

### **Screen Time Policy**

Our preschool programs follow the OCC regulations in regard to technology use in the classroom. We utilize 'interactive technology' which is defined as educational and age-appropriate technology designed to facilitate active and creative use and to encourage social engagement with other children and adults, including programs, applications (apps), noncommercial television programming, videos, streaming media, and e-books. The use of interactive technology is limited to no more than 30 minutes per week for children ages 2 and up. Any children under age two are excluded from the use of technology at our centers.

Children are not permitted to use cell phones or tablets from home at our preschool centers.

### **Outdoor Play**

The Maryland OCC requires that children are offered an opportunity to participate in outdoor activities on a daily basis, weather permitting. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather and active play. Unfortunately, in order to maintain child to teacher ratios, we cannot keep one child inside while the remainder of the children are outside. We are mindful of heat codes and air quality and will adjust our outdoor schedule accordingly as needed.

### **Clothing/Shoes**

For safety reasons, shoes need to be sturdy and cover the entire foot. Flip flops, sandals and clogs are not safe for running, climbing, and biking. We sometimes get very messy in our learning so please don't send your child in their Sunday-best outfit. Water-based paint and markers still leave stains.

Toileting accidents do happen. Please keep a seasonally appropriate change of clothes (including socks, shoes and underwear) in your child's cubby.

Lastly, please label all of your child's clothing and belongings. We have lots of children wearing the same kinds of outfits in the same sizes.

### **Restroom Policy**

Our teachers are not permitted to accompany your child one-on-one in to the restroom. As such, it is important to understand that your child must be able to use the restroom independently, including wiping if they are 'fully

potty-trained'. Students will always be supervised by teachers during bathroom breaks; but never one-on-one. This policy is designed to protect children and teachers from child abuse and/or false allegations.

### **Scheduled and Unscheduled Closings**

At the beginning of each school year, you will receive a calendar of the Y's scheduled closings and inclement weather policy. We recognize the needs of working parents and make every effort to open during inclement weather. Please see your Center specific plan for additional information on policies regarding inclement weather closings and delays. For questions regarding tuition during these instances, please refer to the Tuition section of this Handbook.

## **BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PRACTICES**

For many people, discipline has only negative connotations. Some may regard it as punishment. If we look at the source of the word "discipline," however, we find it has a very positive meaning. To discipline means "to teach." It is a learning experience – something we do with children, not to children. Children have to learn how to take care of themselves and live in a world with other people. Through discipline, we teach self-control and responsibility. Teaching discipline is one of our most important jobs.

Our qualified, trained teachers who are knowledgeable about the traits and needs of preschool children effectively diminish disruptive behaviors by:

- Using redirection
- Implementing preventative management techniques and encouraging self-discipline
- Stressing positive behaviors
- Providing an enriching environment to diminish disruptive behavior
- Offering a selection of interesting activities and giving choices
- Changing environments
- Facilitating the settlement of disputes versus intervening
- Letting children experience the consequences of their actions when appropriate
- Using "calm down spaces" (if necessary) – the child is encouraged to take time away from a group activity for a short time period to regain self-control
- Developing "house rules" with the children
- Establishing mutual respect

We ask parents to let us know if anything exceptional or unusual is happening at home or in other aspects of the child's life. Having this information will help us in working with your child.



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## Steps for Disciplining Children at the Y Preschool Program

### 1. Discussion and Redirection

- We will allow the child the opportunity to calm down and talk about what has happened. We will help the child verbalize feelings of anger, fear, etc.
- Children will, through encouragement and demonstration, be shown how to problem-solve. Teachers will discuss why the behavior is inappropriate and help the child develop different ways to handle their frustration or anger. Positive reinforcement will be given when the appropriate behavior is displayed.
- Children are not forced to apologize or explain their actions. The teacher will help the child understand how their actions or words have made the other child/adult feel. They will also explain the consequences of their actions.
- If a teacher is having difficulty relating to a child or handling a situation, another teacher may be asked to assist.
- Teachers are to redirect the child to another activity. If the child is having trouble choosing, then teachers will offer alternative choices.

### 2. Calm Down Spaces

- Occasionally, it may be necessary to remove a child from an activity or from the group if the behavior is too disruptive or harmful to others. This allows the child to gain his/her composure.
- The child will not be removed for more than one minute for each year of age (i.e. – three minutes for a 3-year old child).
- The child will remain in the classroom and will be within sight and sound of a teacher at all times. A specific place will be designated as the 'calm down space' and used as such.
- After the allotted time and when the child has regained his/her composure, a teacher member will discuss the behavior with the child.
- Physical restraint will only be used in instances when it is necessary to prevent a child from injuring himself or others.



### 3. Separation from the Classroom

- If a child's behavior is uncontrollable or consistently disruptive, the teacher will seek assistance from the assistant director or the director.
- If a child's behavior is too disruptive or poses a safety risk to himself or others and the child cannot be calmed down through discussion, redirection, or separation from the group, the parent/guardian will be called and asked to pick up their child for the day.
- Depending on the severity of the behavior a child may be suspended for a period of up to three days. Severe behavior concerns include:
  - Deliberately destroying Y or personal property (1 day)
  - Running out of the classroom or away from the program site or group (2 days)
  - Consistently aggressive behavior (hitting, biting, kicking, throwing) (3 days)

## Behavior Communication Report

Any child who displays inappropriate behavior at school will receive a Behavior Communication Report. This report will provide families with a description of the incident, classroom intervention strategies, and parent/guardian action steps. The report will be presented to parents/guardians for their review and signature. The purpose of this form is to ensure that you are informed of your child's behavior and that we are working together in helping your child to be successful in our program. Maintaining the reports in the child's file will help teachers to assess whether a pattern of unacceptable behavior is developing. If a pattern of unacceptable behavior is evident, then teachers will request a conference with the center director and the parents/guardians. A lack of parent/guardian participation and cooperation toward a resolution may result in the child's termination from the program.

## Behavior Plan

- If the teacher has continued concerns about a child's behavior in the classroom, the parent/guardian will be notified and a conference will be scheduled to discuss concerns, develop strategies, and create a Behavior Plan. Parents/guardians are expected to work with the teachers and the director in finding effective solutions for the behavior concerns. Appropriate referrals could be made for professional assistance or outside specialists. Parents may be given a deadline for contacting outside agencies for assistance and submitting required paperwork (i.e. – Project Act, Child Find, Infants and Toddlers).
- If the child's behavior does not improve after implementing the strategies as described on the Behavior Plan, or if his/her behavior threatens his/her own safety or the health and safety of others in the center, it may be grounds for termination from the program.

## INFANT AND TODDLER CARE

Some of our preschools provide infant and toddler care. At these centers, you will be required to provide the following items labeled with your child's name:

- Prepared and labeled formula or breast milk (daily) (no glass bottles)
- Jar food and cereal (daily)
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Ointments (as applicable)
- Crib sheets
- Extra sets of clothing

Infants are fed, changed, and placed in a crib to sleep according to their individual schedules and needs. They are held while being bottle fed and are placed in their cribs only to sleep. During their waking hours they are removed from their crib and provided with interaction, nurturing, verbalization, singing, and playtime.

All bottles must be taken home each day to be cleaned and sanitized. Please do not leave any bottles, open food, or formula at the school at the end of the day. All leftover open food items not taken home will be discarded.

For those centers that provide infant care, a designated space is provided for mothers to breast feed. Please contact your director for details.

You will be notified when your child needs diapers and wipes. Please replenish these items immediately as we do not have these items in stock. Hands are washed before and after diapering and gloves are worn as a precaution in helping to reduce the spread of illness. If your child needs ointment, then please alert the director so that you can complete any necessary paperwork.



## HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

### Injury

The Y makes it a priority to implement best practices and procedures to ensure the safety of every student. However, even with the best policies in place, accidents do occur. If your child incurs an injury while in our care, you will receive a Family Communication Form. This form will provide you with details on the injury and a description of the first aid provided. The form should be reviewed and signed by the center director/assistant director and the parent/guardian. If you take your child to a doctor's office or emergency room as a result of an accident/injury that occurred at our center, please inform the preschool director as soon as possible.

Parents/guardians will be notified immediately of any injury to the head, if their child was bitten by another child, or of any injury requiring immediate medical attention. As such, parents/guardians need to be available by phone (it is important that contact information on the emergency card be kept up to date). Doctors and hospitals will not treat a child (except in life threatening cases) without the parent's presence or permission.

In case of an injury requiring emergency medical attention, teachers are required to:

- Administer First Aid
- Call for an ambulance
- Make the child comfortable
- Notify the parent
- Notify the Regional Office of Child Care (OCC)
- Accompany the child to the hospital
- Inform parent/guardian that they need to meet the child at the hospital

In case of injury not requiring emergency care, the teacher will:

- Administer appropriate first aid
- Notify parent
- Observe and monitor the child's activity

When treatment is questionable, parents must assume responsibility for picking up their child and determining whether further medical attention is necessary. Parents should ensure that their child has personal medical coverage and accident insurance. The Y does not provide this kind of coverage.

### Immunizations and Other Medical Information

The OCC requires that all children have a Health Inventory and a Maryland Immunization Certificate completed before enrollment. The Health Inventory must indicate if a Lead Screening test was necessary for children under the age of 6.

## Child Health Services

Families may contact their local health department for help with routine wellness care, vision screening, hearing screenings, etc.

## Health Consultants

Utilizing health care consultants can help achieve the goal of providing safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate environments for our children. Our health care consultants have an interest in and experience with children, have knowledge of resources and regulations, and are comfortable linking health resources with our centers. We contact them for a variety of reasons, including developing a care plan for children with special medical conditions, or responding to an infectious disease outbreak.

## Exposure Control Plan

Our preschool centers are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children and teachers. We implement various methods of exposure control, including: universal precautions; work practice controls; housekeeping and sanitary cleaning guidelines per the Office of Child Care; and Bloodborne Pathogens training.

## Guidelines for the Exclusion of Care

Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. Children who have the following symptoms should be excluded from the center until: (1) a physician has certified the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent or they are no longer a threat to the health of other children at the center or (2) the symptoms have subsided.

If your child is sent home with a fever, vomiting or diarrhea, he/she must be symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to the center. At minimum, a child who is sent home for any potential communicable disease, must be out the following school day unless a doctor's note clearing the child is provided. The Y reserves the right to confirm notes from the doctor. Children who have been sent home with head lice must have had at least one treatment of medicated shampoo and have all live lice and nits removed from the hair before returning to the center. If your child shows symptoms of a communicable disease, then he/she must have a doctor's note to return to the center.

## Samples of Exclusions from Care

FEVER	ITCHING	LICE
An axillary (under arm) temperature of 100° F or greater.	Persistent itching or scratching of body or scalp.	Nits and lice are visible.
EYE/NOSE DRAINAGE	VOMITING	SORE THROAT
Thick mucus or pus draining from the eyes or nose.	One episode of vomiting.	Any sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.
RESPIRATORY SYMPTOM	DIARRHEA	SKIN PROBLEMS
Difficult or rapid breathing, or severe coughing: child makes high-pitched croupy sounds after he coughs; child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough.	Two occurrences of loose stools throughout the day. Other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain or vomiting.	Rash: Skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious. Infected Sores: Sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages.
APPEARANCE/BEHAVIOR	UNUSUAL COLOR	
Child looks or acts differently; unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, confused, irritable, and difficult to awaken. Not able to participate in daily activities.	Eyes or skin: yellow (jaundice) Stool: grey or white Urine: dark, tea colored These symptoms can be found in hepatitis and should be evaluated by a physician.	

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## Sick Children

Before your child is enrolled in a center, an emergency plan to provide alternate care in case of illness must be developed. Updated emergency cards allow us to notify you or your emergency contact when illness or serious injury occurs.

Children should be well enough to participate in the regularly scheduled activities of the classroom, including going outdoors. Our centers are not equipped or staffed accordingly to isolate sick children. The Maryland OCC does not permit children to remain in the center if they show symptoms of a communicable disease.

In case your child should become ill during the program hours, we will call you to pick up your child. Updated emergency cards allow us to notify you or your emergency contact when illness occurs. You or your emergency backup person must be able to reach the center within one hour of the phone call. If a child is not picked up within one hour, it is grounds for termination of care. Parents are required to report any case of illness to the center director.

## Communicable Disease Reporting

Our preschool centers are required by law to immediately provide the name and address of any child or teacher member who appears to be infected with a reportable communicable disease or has been exposed to a reportable communicable disease.

For contagious illnesses such as pink eye, strep throat, impetigo, head lice, or chicken pox, the director will post a sign informing parents of an outbreak. The sign will identify the illness but will not identify the specific child for confidentiality purposes.

Our preschools may not knowingly admit any child or teacher member to the center during the period of communicability, unless the child or teacher member receives a written approval by a licensed health care practitioner. A preschool may not knowingly admit any child or teacher member if they have been identified as a carrier of a reportable communicable disease unless the local health department grants approval.

## Medications

No child will be permitted in care without proper medication(s) and form(s) as indicated by a physician. Maryland child care regulations will not allow our preschool teachers or center directors to administer any prescription or non-prescription medication without a completed medication administration authorization form. This form must accompany each medication and must be signed by both a physician and the parent/guardian. The form must be reviewed and approved by the center director before any medication can be administered.

Please see your center director for the OCC medication administration authorization forms. The first dose of any medication must be given to the child at home (with the exception of epi-pens). This is for the child's safety in the event there is an allergic reaction.

Please do not send medications in with your child, in a lunch box, backpack, etc. Any medications should be given directly to the preschool director. Emergency medications are kept with your child's teacher in the classroom. Only teachers who have completed Medication Administration Training can administer medications to students and each time medication is administered it will be logged accordingly. Other medications are located in a central location at the school.

All prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy container and labeled with the name of the medication, current date, dosage, name of the child, physician's name, and any special instructions if applicable.

Topical medications such as sunscreen, diaper rash cream, etc. may be administered repeatedly with written parental permission as indicated on a medication administration authorization form and/or permission slip.

## Children with Asthma and/or Allergies

Students with asthma and/or allergies are required to have medical paperwork completed by their physician prior to starting our program. These forms along with the proper medication (in its original container with the prescription label) must be provided to the director. Please note that most of our preschools are not "peanut-free" environments.

## Asthma

If your child has asthma, then you will be required to complete an Asthma Action Plan. The plan should be completed by your child's physician and signed by both the physician and the parent/guardian. If the plan indicates that your child requires an inhaler (Ventolin, albuterol, etc.), then the medication will need to be on-site at the preschool.

## Allergies

If your child has an allergy requiring an emergency medication that would need to be administered on-site (Benadryl, Epi-pen, etc.), then you will be required to complete an Allergy Alert Plan. The plan should be completed by your child's physician and signed by both the physician and the parent/guardian.

## Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted on preschool property, including playgrounds and parking lots (signs are posted).

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## SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Y in Central Maryland has more than 2,000 trained teachers and volunteers working with children and youth in the many programs we offer.

### Teachers

To keep children in our programs safe, we take the following steps in our intensive screening of employees and volunteers:

- Detailed application forms
- Comprehensive interview process
- Reference checks
- Criminal background record checks
- Fingerprinting for all licensed child care programs

In addition to extensive training requirements, all Y preschool teachers receive training on the Prevention and Identification of Child Abuse.

As stated in the Maryland State Board of Education Child and Family Daycare Center Licensing Regulations, child care providers are required to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to Protective Services. We are mandated reporters and the law requires us to report all suspected cases of abuse or neglect.

### Volunteers

To ensure that individuals who regularly perform volunteer activities at the Y do not have a history of criminal or child abuse convictions that may impede their ability to perform their job responsibilities, or potentially cause harm, the Y will conduct a background investigation for all applicable volunteers before they begin their assignment and periodically thereafter.

### Babysitting

Employees are often asked to provide babysitting and other services on their own time to Y members and families. The Y in Central Maryland does NOT permit employees to provide babysitting or other services to families or children they meet in Y programs. In addition, teachers should not provide transportation in a personal vehicle or be in contact with your child outside of Y programs.

Families are prohibited from contacting teachers outside of the preschool including non-y email, social media, texting, letters, etc. Such policies are designed to protect children and teachers from child abuse and/or false allegations.

### Child Abuse Prevention

Trust your instincts and watch for signs of abuse:

- Unexplainable bruising or other physical markings
- Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns
- Abrupt changes in behavior – anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal, depression
- Fear of certain person or place
- Discomfort with physical contact
- A child who abuses other children

Listen and watch for signs of your child receiving special attention that other children or teens are not receiving, including favors, treats, gifts, rides, increasing affection or time alone, particularly outside the activities of school, child care, or other activities.

Every once in a while, ask your child these questions:

- Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
- Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
- Has anyone said anything to you that made you feel bad?
- Is anyone touching you in a way that you don't like?

Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if anything happens to him or her.

The Y wants all children to be safe. Unfortunately, child abuse does exist, taking many different forms:

**Emotional** – Threatening a child or using words that can hurt a child's feelings and self-esteem; withholding love and support from a child

**Physical** – Causing injuries to a child on purpose, such as bruises, burns, scars, or broken bones

**Sexual** – Having sexual contact in any form with a child, including exposing, fondling, intercourse, pornography, or internet solicitation.

**Neglect** – Not providing children with enough food, clothing, shelter, medical care, hygiene, or supervision.

Child abusers can be parents, caretakers, friends, neighbors, or anyone who comes in contact with your child – even other youth.. Talk to your child about his or her experiences in Y programs, school, sports, and other activities.

It takes everyone's help to stop the cycle of abuse. If you think your child is physically injured, seek out appropriate medical attention. If you see signs of distress, withdrawal, or acting out, consider counseling for your child. Talk to your Y preschool director for assistance. Call Child Protective Services (CPS) or the police to report any abuse.

Parents are asked to report any violation of this policy to Y management or to the Y Child Safe hotline 443-322-8086.

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## Supervision and Ratios

Our preschool centers will maintain the appropriate teacher-to-child ratios as required by the OCC at all times. The OCC regulations regarding ratios are as follows:

- 1 teacher for every 3 children (Infants – 24 months)
- 1 teacher for every 6 children (Two year olds)
- 1 teacher for every 10 children (Three to Five year olds)
- 1 teacher for every 15 children (School-age children)

For those times when teachers are absent, we provide substitute coverage by qualified substitute teachers to maintain proper ratios. At no time will children be unattended by an adult. Children will be within sight and sound of our teachers at all times.

## Fire and Emergency Evacuation Drills

We conduct fire and emergency drills every month and have bi-annual emergency evacuation drills. Parents, teachers, and children are not notified of drill dates and times in advance.

During a fire and/or emergency evacuation drill, parents may not sign children into or out of the school. We ask that you wait until the drill is complete and the children have returned to the building.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director will provide the teacher with specific instructions according to our emergency preparedness plans. All licensed preschool centers in the State of Maryland are required to have an emergency preparedness plan. Our plans provide clear guidance to teachers to ensure the safety of everyone in the event of an emergency. If it becomes necessary to remove the children from school property, each preschool has a designated local emergency evacuation site. Parents will be notified of any emergency situation as soon as it is possible to do so without interfering with the safety of the children and teachers.

## Emergency Contacts

Because the unexpected sometimes happens, a backup plan should be established should you be unable to pick up your child in the event of illness or an emergency. The Maryland OCC requires at least one alternate/emergency pick-up person. Any changes in contact information should be given to the center director immediately. You are responsible for alerting teachers to your alternative plan either in writing or verbally. Teachers should review the plan with you. All children's records must be updated each year.

## Drop-off and Pick-up

For the safety of the children, families must accompany their child at all times. In addition, per MSDE OCC regulations, children must be signed in and out of the preschool daily by an adult 18 years of age or older. Children will only be released to authorized adults. Adults will be required to show photo ID.

If we have reason for concern regarding the safety of a child's release to a parent or other adult, we may call the police. Cause for this course of action includes:

- Parent/adult suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Parent/adult is abusive or threatening to the child

If the center has a key coded entry, families are not permitted to share the code with any other adult or child.

## Parking Lot

Per Maryland State law, children are not allowed to be left unattended in a vehicle. Failure to comply with this law will result in a formal police report.

Vehicles should never be left running in the parking lot.

## Firearms and Weapons

We do not allow firearms or weapons of any kind on Y property. For those authorized to carry concealed weapons, we ask that any weapons be left in your vehicle when you enter our centers.

## Cell Phone Policy

Transitioning into and out of the center can be both overwhelming and exciting for your child. As such, we ask that you put your cell phone aside and provide your child with your full attention while in our center. Your child's teacher may have important information to discuss with you and will need to know that you're available to talk without the distraction of a cell phone. Furthermore, for the safety and the privacy of the other children in our program, our preschool centers are no cell phone zones.

## Cleaning Products

The Y Preschool centers follow OCC licensing guidelines in regard to cleaning and sanitizing the toys, equipment, etc. in the center. We utilize a bleach and water solution and a soapy water solution as required by the OCC. We also strive to utilize environmentally safe cleaning products as much as possible and ensure that all of our cleaning products are stored in a safe manner.

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## MEMBERSHIP: OUR GIFT TO YOU

The Y in Central Maryland is pleased to offer a complimentary three-month family membership to all full-time preschool enrollees. A child is considered full-time if they are enrolled five full days per week. If you would like to join the Y after your three-month trial membership, speak with a membership service representative at your local Y in Central Maryland Center.

## Y IN CENTRAL MARYLAND FAMILY CENTER LOCATIONS

(Full service fitness center, gym, etc.)

### Anne Arundel County

The Y in Arnold	410-544-2525
The Y in Pasadena	410-437-4242

### Baltimore City

The Y in Druid Hill	410-728-1600
The Weinberg Y in Waverly	410-889-9622

### Carroll County

The Hill Y in Westminster	410-848-3660
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### Harford County

The Ward Y in Abington	410-679-9622
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### Howard County

The Dancel Y in Ellicott City	410-465-4334
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### Northern Baltimore County

The Y in Parkville	410-663-1300
The Y in Perry Hall	410-529-1999
The Orokawa Y in Towson	410-823-8870

### Southern Baltimore County

The Y in Catonsville	410-747-9622
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## Y IN CENTRAL MARYLAND SWIM CENTER LOCATIONS (Pool only)

Baltimore County	
Y Swim Center at Dundalk	410-285-7616
Y Swim Center at Randallstown	410-496-4272



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**The Y in Central Maryland • It's deeper here.®**