

# Raritan Valley YMCA Parent Handbook



**Early Childhood / School-Age / Vacation-  
Snow Camp / Child Watch**

**Raritan Valley YMCA Child Care Center**



### **About the YMCA**

The Raritan Valley YMCA was founded in New Brunswick, NJ in 1867 and incorporated in 1871. Demographic shifts saw the establishment of branches in Piscataway and East Brunswick in 1969. By 1982, all programming was consolidated at the East Brunswick location. Since its founding, the Raritan Valley YMCA has been meeting the needs of children, adults, and families in our community.

In the mid 1980's, urged by the United Way to reevaluate its program priorities, the YMCA began a modest childcare effort built around day camp, nursery school, and a newly started latchkey program.

The YMCA purchased the former Center for Professional Advancement at 144 Tices Lane in East Brunswick on January 28, 2003. A committee of dedicated volunteers worked to develop plans to convert and expand their purchase into a full facility YMCA.

With a grant from the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority and proceeds from the sale of the YMCA property on Dunham Corner Road, construction began in fall 2005. New construction included renovation of the existing building into a full-service daycare and fitness center. The new childcare facility opened in March of 2006, and the Wellness Center opened in August of that same year.

#### **Raritan Valley YMCA Mission Statement**

The Raritan Valley YMCA is committed to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities throughout our area. It is charitable; not for profit organization that welcomes all people regardless of age, race, religion or economic status and strives to enrich each and every life through a unique, dynamic combination of programs that strengthen spirit, mind and body. The Raritan Valley YMCA embraces the values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. We believe in working together as one community for youth development, for healthy living and for social responsibility.

#### **Non-Profit Status**

The Raritan Valley YMCA is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit agency with three areas of focus including: youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. funded through donations, grants, memberships and program fees. We serve East Brunswick, Franklin, Helmetta, Highland Park, Jamesburg, Middlesex, Milltown, Monroe, New Brunswick, North Brunswick, Spotswood and South River.

## **Policies and Procedures (Alphabetical)**



### **Absences and Tuition Credit**

We are responsible for your child upon parent/guardian sign-in each morning for Early Childhood and Vacation Camp programs. If your child will be absent you are required to call the Y to inform them. If a child is ill, we must inform other parents about potential communicable diseases/illnesses. **Tuition credits are not given for illness, vacation, inclement weather, or holidays.**

### **Accidents & Injuries**

All injuries or illnesses will be communicated to the parent once proper first aid has taken place and the child is made comfortable. Staff will complete injury reports for all injuries while attending YMCA programs for pick-up at the sign-out location. Children will be allowed time to rest before returning to activities or being picked up by a parent, if necessary. In severe injuries needing higher medical attention, arrangements will be made for further medical attention and then the parent or guardian will be contacted immediately. We will call 911 for an ambulance to transport the child (and child's file) to a hospital where a staff member will wait with the child until the parent or emergency contact arrives. Medical Release Forms must be on file for each child in case of emergency. An incident report will be completed and on file at the YMCA.

### **Activities**

From our youngest infant to our oldest student, children enrolled in Early Childhood Learning and School Age Enrichment programs participate in a daily schedule of age-appropriate activities geared toward individual growth, academic achievement, physical/social development, and fun.

The benefits of enrolling in YMCA childcare in addition to all classrooms is our spacious facility, including gymnasium, aerobics studio, outdoor nature center, multi-purpose room, outdoor playground, and campgrounds, and reading room. Children do not spend their entire day in one classroom performing activities, ensuring a healthier experience.

Details of each age-appropriate activities are described in their own sections of this document. Infants are stimulated by a variety of toys and social interactions. Energetic toddlers are encouraged to develop their self-help skills, including buttoning and zipping clothing, putting on their coat, choosing what to play with, and putting toys away when they have finished

playing. Curious preschoolers expand their social and emotional skill set, explore beginning STEM concepts, grow their fine and gross motor skills, and take part in programs promoting health and wellness.

Raritan Valley YMCA has also adopted the **Healthy U** program to educate our children and communities on the importance of healthy living. The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey Healthy U Initiative is designed to combat childhood obesity by instituting behavioral changes in children using a multi-pronged approach that includes nutrition education, increased physical activity and a focus on family. Preschool and After School **CATCH** (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) curricula are also adopted by the YMCA to promote physical activity, and healthy food choices in children.



### Arrivals

Early Childhood Care is available starting at 7:00am and the core program begins at 9:00am. Parents are responsible for escorting their child to the assigned area to meet with a teacher where they will be signed in with the date and time. We encourage eating a healthy breakfast at home before arriving at the daycare. Food and extra clothing should be placed in their appropriate areas, and ***all belongings should be labeled*** with the child's name. Upon arrival, our staff will briefly evaluate your child's health to ensure their overall wellbeing. After this health check, your child will be expected to wash their hands according to CDC standards before they begin their activities.

Always be sure to say a brief goodbye to your child, even if tears occur. This will let them know that you have not vanished and will return later to pick them up. Emotional separation is prolonged if parents delay their departure by lingering outside of classrooms.

School-Age Care starts at 7am and runs until school begins. After-school starts at your child's school dismissal and goes until 6pm. Vacation/Snow Camp participants may be dropped off as early as 7:00am for scheduled and pre-registered days. Children must be signed-in and out each day for all childcare programs.

### Babysitting Policy

As per the National YMCA Code of Conduct, staff and volunteers should not have outside contact with children they meet in YMCA programs or at the YMCA and should never be alone with children they meet at the YMCA outside the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, inviting children to your home and any contact via electronic means. Staff and volunteers are expected to notify the YMCA if a pre-existing relationship with a child or family exists.

### **Bathroom Breaks**

We take bathroom breaks every 2-3 hours, or as needed, throughout the day to help encourage independence. For convenience, please be sure your child wears easy access clothing. Elastic waistbands and dresses are encouraged while your child begins using the potty. Avoid buttons, snaps, onesies, or overalls. Also "Easy-Ups" or "Pull-Ups" are required for easy up/down when your child begins using the potty.

Learning to use the potty can be a slow process, and patience is the key. Children need to know what is expected of them. Accidents will happen. If you have a method that has been working for you, please let us know and we will adopt it for your child so we can be consistent.

There are many issues caregivers and families must consider before and during the process of learning to use the potty for it to be a successful experience for everyone. When your child shows signs of being physically and emotionally ready for using the potty, YMCA staff will work with parents to develop a routine that is right for your child.

We use a low-key approach with lots of praise. If a child shows no interest or is unsuccessful in learning to use the potty, we may choose to discontinue and try again at a later time. YMCA staff will never punish or shame a child for having an accident. Plenty of extra clothing is needed if/when your child does have an accident to ensure changing them will be a calm and non-threatening experience. Due to health regulations, we cannot rinse out soiled clothes. They will be bagged and sent home to be laundered.

### **Behavior Management, Positive Guidance, Discipline, and Expulsion Policy**

Staff members are trained to encourage positive behaviors and handle discipline in an age-appropriate manner. All unsuccessful behavior management actions will be reported to the program director.

A child shall not be deprived of food, isolated, subjected to corporal punishment or abusive physical exercise as a means of punishment either by staff or by another child. A child shall not be disciplined for failing to eat, sleep, or for soiling himself/ herself. A child who is experiencing difficulties with separation and/or adjustment, whose behavioral issues require more than a reasonable amount of the teacher's time/attention, will be brought to the attention of the child's parents and the program director. A plan for helping the child adjust will be established and communicated to the parent and child by the program director.

Children requiring discipline shall initially be taken aside by the group leader and told why the negative actions may jeopardize the group's safety or effectiveness. The group leader then decides if the child's continued participation in the activity is in the best interest of the group. If needed, a child shall be separated from the group for a period of time under the supervision of the staff member to regain control, think about their actions, or take a break. Repeated cases or situations deemed more serious by the group leader shall be brought to the attention of the program director. The director will determine if parental involvement, removal from the group, or expulsion from the program are warranted.

Parents/guardians will be notified via phone calls of any serious situations to determine how the Y can partner to redirect negative behavior, and sufficient notification will be given before expulsion to enable parents to make alternative childcare arrangements or to take the necessary corrective action to allow the child to remain in the center, except in circumstances that may warrant immediate expulsion from the center.

Children may be expelled from the program for any of, but not limited to, the following reasons: disruptive behavior; dangerous or threatening behavior; posing risk to the physical or emotional safety of another individual; not following instructions; touching, pushing, shoving, or striking another; excessive horseplay including bullying; taking or defacing another's property; littering and/or refusing to clean up after one self; leaving assigned area without staff permission; transportation violation; possession of a weapon of any kind, vandalism or destruction of property, sexual misconduct, possession or use of tobacco, alcohol or controlled substances. The center shall not expel a child based solely on a parent making a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violation of licensing regulations or questioning a center directly regarding policies and procedures.

If the child continues to be disruptive and all methods of discipline and positive redirection have been exhausted, the child may be removed from the program, or expelled, permanently. The YMCA reserves the right to suspend or expel any child who poses serious or continual discipline problems, whether or not all of the steps in the progressive discipline plan have been completed.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are an important milestone in a young child's life, and we like to celebrate them. As a promoter of the Healthy U program, we would like our parents to choose healthy options to celebrate birthdays. For example instead of cupcakes, bring in special fruits your child likes to share. Licensing regulations also prohibit any type of open flame in the Center therefore birthday candles are not permitted. **Please speak to your child's teacher ahead of time for any necessary planning.**



### **Biting Policy**

Biting is common in group settings of young children, and it can be disturbing to both parents and staff. Our staff will work with parents to understand why children bite and take measures to prevent potential bites from occurring. We will supervise children carefully; react quickly when children are in dispute; pay extra attention to children who have been known to bite; provide enough toys, activities and space to minimize frustration; provide aids to children who are teething and meet children's needs promptly before they become frustrated.

If a bite occurs, our staff will notify parents in writing. If a child establishes a pattern of biting, our staff will work with parents to develop an action plan. The center does not usually expel children for biting unless it becomes excessive or dangerous to other children. We understand that biting like other behaviors are developmentally typical characteristics in young children and will subside as they grow.

## **Breastfeeding Policy**

Because breastfeeding has been shown to be the best form of infant nutrition, providing a multitude of health benefits to both infant and mother, and because breastfeeding parents/guardians and employees need ongoing support from childcare providers to provide their milk for their babies, Raritan Valley YMCA Childcare Center subscribes to the following policy:

- Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided a place in the YMCA to breastfeed or express their milk if asked for. This excludes the classrooms as currently visitors are not permitted in these rooms.
- A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breast milk. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date.
- Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies. The childcare center is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and evening and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Artificial baby milk (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless the mother has requested it. Babies will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped.
- Staff shall be trained in handling human milk. All childcare center staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers. The center will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in ensuring that breast milk is properly treated to avoid waste. Special precautions are not required in handling human milk.

Storage Guidelines for Human Milk:

[http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling\\_breastmilk.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm)

- Breastfeeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks in accordance with Raritan Valley YMCA Employee Handbook.
- Breastfeeding promotion information will be displayed.

No provision of this policy applies or shall be enforced if it conflicts with or is superseded by any requirement or prohibition contained in any federal, state, or local law or regulation. Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, a mother shall be entitled to breastfeed her baby in any location at this location wherein the mother is otherwise permitted.



### **Bullying Policy**

Bullying is when one or more people exclude, tease, taunt, gossip, hit, kick, or put down another person with the direct or indirect intent of hurting another due to color, race, sexual orientation, national origin, and/or physical or mental disabilities. Bullying happens when a person or group of people want to have the power over another and use their perceived power to get their way, at the expense of someone else. Bullying can also happen through cyberspace: through the use of emails, text messaging, instant messaging, blogging and other less direct methods.

At the Raritan Valley YMCA, bullying is inexcusable, and we have a firm policy against all types of bullying. Our childcare philosophy is based on our mission statement which ensures that every child has the opportunity to build a healthy spirit, mind and body. We work together as a team to ensure that children gain self-confidence, make new friends, and go home with great memories.

Unfortunately, persons who are bullied may not have the same potential to get the most out of their childcare experience. Our leadership addresses all incidents of bullying seriously, and trains staff to promote open communication with parents and children, teach an acceptance of diversity, and create an atmosphere of inclusion so that all staff and children will be comfortable alerting us to any problems during their childcare experience. We stress to parents to speak openly with their children about the effects of bullying and communicate concerns immediately to childcare directors so that we can address any bullying issues. Only with joint parent and staff involvement can we stamp out bullying altogether.

### **Character Development**

The YMCA has four core values that we strive to model and teach to our children on a daily basis. They are Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility and are incorporated into our programs, discipline techniques and projects.

### **Child Abuse/Neglect Prevention and Reporting Procedures**

Gentle touching, hugging, and holding can be important and memorable aspects of all YMCA youth program experiences. The Raritan Valley YMCA prohibits inappropriate touch and verbal and physical abuse. If this occurs, the following prompt action will occur:

Per the New Jersey State childcare licensing requirements, staff and parents must report legitimate child abuse concerns to the authorities and follow procedures set forth by the state. The state regulations require that:

“The sponsor, sponsor representative, director, or any staff member shall verbally notify the State Central Registry Hotline (1-877 NJ ABUSE/1-877-652-2873) immediately whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect by a staff member, or any other adult, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.9, 8.10, 8.13 and 8.14. 34 (b) In addition to the reporting requirements specified in (a) above, the sponsor, sponsor representative, director, or any staff member shall advise the parent(s) of the occurrence of any unusual incident(s) that occurred at the center and that might indicate possible abuse or neglect involving the child...”

Child safety is of the utmost concern. As part of YMCAs across the country, the Raritan Valley YMCA has embraced and implemented the practices of the USA Child Abuse Prevention

Training with our staff and within our program operations. Good management policies and practices help ensure safety and protect children. Parents should discuss any concerns they have with a YMCA Director.

### **Closings**

School-Age Care programs operate only when schools are in session according to your child's school calendar, including early dismissals. The Early Childhood Care programs will be closed on the following holidays when they fall during the work week:

New Years Day	Labor Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Independence Day	Christmas Eve
Christmas Day	New Year's Eve

### **Communication with Parents**

Daily communication with the Childcare Directors will be available, in person and electronically through email or phone, so parents can be informed and discuss their child's progress. Parents should allow a few minutes at the end of the day to discuss their child's experience. Individual conferences can be scheduled, as the parent or center staff deems necessary. The Childcare Directors will also be available for phone conferences, if preferred. Information and updates are sent via email and posted on the YMCA website and social media sites. Please ensure all contact information is current with the Welcome Center to receive all notifications.

If a child exhibits any symptoms of communicable disease (see Health section), the child should not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group, and parents will be called to take the child home. Children with symptoms cannot return. If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, parents will be notified in writing.

### **COVID-19 Exposure and Procedures**

The RYYMCA will continue to screen children and staff upon arrival for symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms include fever of 100.4 or greater, shortness of breath, and/or cough. Children and Staff who present with symptoms of COVID-19 will be excluded from the center. Children excluded from the program during screening must be recorded on the illness log. Children can return to the program if they are 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medications. Staff or children who test positive for or are diagnosed with Covid-19 must be excluded from the center until they are symptom and fever free for at least 24 hours. The RYYMCA must report positive cases of COVID-19. If a child test positive we ask that you please notify the center. All childcare staff are required to provide either proof of vaccination or weekly COVID-19 test results.

Beginning March 7, 2022, masks will no longer be required children. Masks will still be required for staff and emergency personnel in the classrooms. Enhanced cleaning procedures will continue to be followed in the classrooms to help stop the spread of germs.

## **Drop-off and Pick-up**

Drop off and Pick up will take place outside of the building at designated areas (Please see the diagram below). The following guidelines will be implemented during drop-off and pick-up:

- Children and staff will be required to wash hands upon arrival, and wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after signing in and out.
- Parents should drop off children at the designated drop-off area, limiting adult entry into the facility.
- Staff will meet children as they are dropped off.

### **Designated Location – Infant/Toddler (Playground via Alvin Court)**

- First, enter the YMCA parking lot via Tices Lane using the YMCA side street (Eagle Road).
- Next, park your vehicle in the parking spots in front of the mural (gym doors)
- Exit your vehicle, and walk along the side of the building (Alvin Court), through the playground to the infant/toddler door
- A staff member will be waiting at the door for drop off/pick up.
- Parent will not be allowed to enter the classroom.
- Childcare staff will do the health screening before receiving the child from the parent.

### **Designated Location –Preschool 1(Preschool 1 Room via Alvin Court)**

- First, enter the YMCA parking lot via Tices Lane using the YMCA side street (Eagle Road).
- Next, park your vehicle in the parking spots in front of the mural (gym doors)
- Exit your vehicle and walk along the side of the building (Alvin Court), to the Preschool 1 door.
- A staff member will be waiting at the door for drop off/pick up
- Parent will not be allowed to enter the classroom.
- Childcare staff will do the health screening before receiving the child from the parent.

### **Designated Location – Preschool 2 (Preschool 2 Room via Alvin Court)**

- First, enter the YMCA parking lot via Tices Lane using the YMCA side street (Eagle Road).
- Next, park your vehicle in the parking spots in front of the mural (gym doors)
- Exit your vehicle, and walk along the side of the building (Alvin Court), to the Preschool 2 door
- A staff member will be waiting at the door for drop off/pick up.
- Parent will not be allowed to enter the classroom.
- Childcare staff will do the health screening before receiving the child from the parent.

### **Emergencies**

Parents/guardians can contact our main office at 732-257-4114. The Childcare Director and School age Childcare Director have cell phones that may be contacted by the office if your child is on a field trip or in transit.

### **Enforcement**

Enforcement of childcare standards will be carried out by the Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, other entities with applicable authority, or the Department of Health as appropriate.

### **Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitation Procedures**

- Staff will increase the frequency of cleaning toys, equipment, and surfaces, especially doorknobs, light switches, countertops, and restrooms.
- Staff shall clean, sanitize, and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared objects (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles) multiple times per day.
- If groups of children are moving from one area to another in shifts, cleaning measures must be completed prior to the new group entering the area.
- Toys and items that are not easily cleaned or disinfected will not be utilized in the program.
- Toys from home are strongly discouraged unless they are used to lull an infant/toddler to sleep. Items from home may only be utilized if they are not shared with another child and must be returned home with the child each day for washing.
- Machine washable cloth toys should be used by one child at a time or not used at all. They should be laundered before they are used by another child.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or are contaminated by body secretion or excretion shall be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves.
- Daily, staff will clean and then disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often. This includes restrooms, water coolers, desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys.
- Bedding that can be washed will be used. Staff will keep each child's bedding separate and stored in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags. Cots and mats will be labeled for each child.
- Children, families, and staff are advised to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Outdoor surfaces, including outdoor playground equipment, should undergo normal routine cleaning on a daily basis, but do not need to be disinfected between uses.

## **Expulsion Policy**

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we must expel a child from our program. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

### **IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION:**

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

### **PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION:**

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse to staff.

### **CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION:**

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

### **SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION:**

If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate childcare (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety).

### **A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED IF A PARENT/GUARDIAN:**

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
- Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other childcare arrangements.

## **Field Trips**

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each field trip. All field trips transport children in YMCA chartered buses equipped with seat belts and driven by experienced, state licensed bus drivers. We will notify parents in advance of the location, date and times of the trip, and any additional fees.

## **Financial Assistance**

We accept payments from the NJ Childcare Subsidy Program through Community Childcare Solution. Please visit their website at <https://www.communitychildcaresolutions.org/families>.

Financial Assistance is available with funds raised through our annual campaign efforts to those who qualify. The YMCA Annual Campaign is supported through community donations,

foundations and events ensures that all youth who qualify have the financial assistance needed to participate. You may apply by completing an application for assistance, following all instructions to apply for other opportunities, and submit the required documents with a completed registration packet. At least 2 weeks is required for review and notification of scholarship awards. Please apply early or choose to register with fees dues at time of registration until a decision is made. Spaces will not be held without an award letter or payment in full, including deposits and membership fees.

### **Fire & Evacuation Drills**

Fire drills are held at least once a month by all YMCA childcare programs allowing staff and children to become familiar with evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency. For safety and quick evacuation of the infants and toddlers, we have evacuation cribs. These cribs are on wheels and reinforced to hold additional weight. The children are placed in the crib, attendance is taken. Children are wheeled to the designated area by staff, where staff waits for the “all clear” to return to the building. Fire Drill procedures are posted throughout the building for reference.

### **Health Records**

All health records, including immunizations, must be updated yearly, unless these are significant changes which require immediate updates. It is the parent’s responsibility to inform the YMCA in writing of any changes in health or health records.



### **Health Policy**

The Raritan Valley YMCA’s Childcare Center is licensed and equipped to care for children in good health. Parents and staff working together promote a child’s total well-being. Each child enrolled in the Raritan Valley YMCA’s childcare programs must have up-to-date documented health records. Children enrolled in school age care must have vaccination records on file with the Board of Education, be in good health and have permission to engage in all the normal activities of the program.

For children enrolled in early child programs, these documents include the ***Universal Child Health Record***, which requires a physical examination and an immunization record history that is in compliance with licensing requirements. These forms must be filled out by your child’s doctor, signed, stamped and returned **prior** to enrollment.

The current seasonal influenza vaccine is required every year for those children 6 months through 59 months of age. Students who have not received the flu vaccine by December 31st must be excluded (not allowed to attend childcare/preschool) for the duration of influenza season (January 1 through March 31), until they receive at least one dose of the influenza

vaccine or until they turn 60 months of age. Children enrolling in childcare/preschool after December 31st, must provide documentation of receiving the current seasonal flu vaccine before being allowed to enter school. Students enrolling in school after March 31st are not required to receive the flu vaccine; however, flu season may extend until May and therefore getting a flu vaccine even late in the season is still protective. NJ accepts valid medical and religious exemptions (reasons for not showing proof of immunizations) as per the NJ Immunization of Pupils in School regulations.

The YMCA reserves the right to deny any child's admittance to the program on any given day for reasons of obvious illness. The YMCA may request early departure should symptoms become obvious during the course of the day.

**Note: Tuition will not be adjusted due to absence.**

### **Hours of Operation**

The YMCA Early Childhood operates **Monday through Friday 7:00am-6:00pm** and Afterschool Enrichment Program/Vacation/Snow Day Camp programs operate **Monday through Friday from 7:00am-7:00pm** for all participants. School age children will be transported from their schools at dismissal times, including early dismissal days, until up to 7:00pm.

### **Illness and Prevention**

The Raritan Valley YMCA is committed to ensuring the safety and health of our youth, families, and employees. This guide outlines the policies and procedures that are implemented at our childcare center. These standards are based on the guidelines and recommendations set forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), NJ Department of Children and Families (NJDCF) Child Care Licensing, as well as the State and local Health Department, and are subject to change.

In an effort to reduce communicable illnesses, hygiene practices and handwashing techniques are implemented. Children are required to practice frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. They must wash their hands upon arriving at the center, before meals or snacks, after outside time, after going to the bathroom, and prior to leaving for home. Centers must be equipped with adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol), and tissues. .

Children's clothing shall be changed if they have been contaminated by secretions. All contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag or washed in a washing machine. Infants, toddlers, and providers should have multiple changes of clothes on hand.

### **Local Health Department Information**

#### **Directory Information**

**East Brunswick** is served by **Middlesex County Office of Health Services.**

Health Officer:

**Lester Jones, Jr.**

Health Officer Contact:

**732-745-3100**

Emergency After Hours Contact:

**732-745-3271**

### **Inclusion Policy**

At Raritan Valley YMCA, we actively promote inclusion to best meet the need of the children, families, and staff at our center. All children are welcome to attend our day care center regardless of ability, need, background, culture, religion, gender, or economic circumstances. However, some students may require additional aides and/or support through other entities the Y partners with such as: early intervention specialists, Perform Care, local school district aides, etc. Every child is unique, requiring different needs which the Y will accommodate whenever possible. Through inclusive practice, we aim to reflect our wider community and promote positive attitudes to both the similarities and differences in each other.

### **Indoor Time**

Children enrolled in the Raritan Valley YMCA early childcare program will have a base classroom where they will participate in their daily curriculum activities. The new YMCA offers children the opportunity to utilize wonderful facilities outside of the classroom, including the dance studio with wood flooring and mirrors for music and movement activities. The mini gym is for sports and indoor play, and the multi-purpose room is for physical activities, group activities, or special events.

The mini gym is a wonderful resource, but it does have a limited supply of sports materials. For example, only ONE ball will be used per every 9 children. Staff will keep note of all equipment (balls, cones, etc.) during the allotted time period.

The YMCA also values that community items remain sanitized and clean to reduce communicable illnesses. After activities are completed, all equipment will be sanitized with disposable wipes. All children must cleanse their hands with soap and water OR hand sanitizer. And all doorknobs/handles must be sanitized with disposable wipes. Tissues, gloves, and trash will be properly disposed into the garbage bin.

### **Insurance**

The YMCA does not carry or provide accident or medical insurance for the children participating in our childcare programs. Your personal health insurance is the primary coverage for your child.

### **Late Pick-Up Policy**

The YMCA Childcare Program ends promptly at 6:00pm. Of course, emergencies occur. We kindly ask you to consider your child's health and emotional well-being as well as our staff's responsibilities outside of the YMCA. Their time is also valuable, and they may have other obligations. Please call the center if you anticipate being late on any given day. Calling does not waive late fees but does allow the YMCA to make arrangements for supervision of the child until the parent or alternate contact arrives. Please have local emergency contacts on call to pick up your children should you work out of town or get stuck in traffic.

Parents/guardians must pay a considerable late fee if the child is picked up after the registered pick-up time. **Late charges of \$15.00 for each 15 minutes will apply for any child at the center beyond closing time** and are due before you sign your child in again. Auto-draft payment accounts will charge the card on file at time of late pick-up. AFTER 3 LATE PICK UPS, YOUR CHILD(REN) MAY BE SUSPENDED FROM THE PROGRAM.

**Examples: 6:01-6:15 = \$15.00, 6:16-6:30 = \$30.00, 6:31-6:45 = \$45.00**

If the parents or persons authorized by parents fail to pick-up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, the procedure shall require:

The child is supervised at all times. Staff attempt to contact the parents or persons authorized by the parents. An hour or more after closing time, provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parents or additional authorized contacts have failed, and staff cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, staff shall call the Division's 24- hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parents/authorized contact is able to pick up the child.



### **Meals and Snacks**

Morning and evening healthy snacks must be provided by parents for children enrolled in Early Childhood programs. Please provide your child with several healthy selections to choose from. A healthy balanced lunch including sufficient protein for the noon meal must also be brought from home. Parents should bring the child's lunch along with labeled water bottle each day to the center in a lunch box and ***all belongings should be labeled*** with the child's name. Drinking water is always easily available to our children in each classroom throughout the day to refill labeled water bottles.

Parents should inform staff of any dietary restrictions the child may have with regards to preparation of snacks, parties, cooking or special occasions (ex: if the child is a vegetarian). YMCA staff will be happy to share ideas for healthy lunches and snacks that have been successful with other children if necessary.

Parents of infants can develop with their child's caregiver a feeding schedule that is appropriate for their child. Parents of infants and/or younger toddlers should bring food, formula, breast milk and bottles as needed for your child's feeding schedule. Infant Feeding Plan forms will be kept each day and given to each parent at pick-up time.

Due to undiagnosed allergies and the recent rise in peanut allergies, **we do not allow any peanuts or peanut products in our Early Childhood Learning Center**. School Age Care participants with peanuts or peanut products will be asked to sit separately from others to ensure a peanut-safe environment for the safety of those with allergies. **Please inform your child's teacher/caregiver of any dietary restrictions for the child to be considered in the preparation of snacks, parties, and cooking or special occasions. (i.e. if the child is a vegetarian).**

The School Age Care Program provides one serving size snack each day. If your child is very active or needs more than one serving, please send an additional item to help keep them

energized until you arrive. Water bottles are also highly recommended to ensure continuous hydration.

Meals and snacks will be mainly served in the classroom (in the children's assigned seats) to prevent a large congregation. Occasionally and weather permitting, food will be served outdoors where children are seated on benches. Staff must be conscious of how they deliver food to the children and how to handle silverware and plates (i.e. avoid cross-contamination). It is recommended for children to use disposable plates and utensils that may be discarded after a single use. Staff should also be prepared to handle silverware and ceramics with proper sanitary routines to avoid cross-contamination.

When handling food, staff should wear gloves and should avoid touching common contact surfaces. Both staff and children are required to wash their hands before and after meal/snack time. All tables are to be cleaned and sanitized before and after use by groups.

The following link provides more information on utensil recommendations:

<https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/4.5.0.2>

### **Membership Privileges**

**YMCA Program Membership** is required for all program registrations. This type of membership also provides access to family events, open family gym time, priority registration in other programs such as youth sports and enrichment programs, swim lessons, and other year-round programs and events.

To support healthy families, facility memberships are awarded **at no additional cost** to two adult parents/guardians of full day (5 days/week only) early childhood program participants. **Full Facility Memberships** provide access to all wellness center equipment and fitness classes. Please request a keycard at time of full-time care registration to access the facility.



### **Medication Administration (compare to licensing suggestion)**

The Y does not dispense any medication without a completed **Permission to Administer Medication Form** which must be on file at the center for each medication, provided the medication is in its original container and labeled with the child's full name, doctor, and dosage instructions. Over-the-counter medication must be in its original container with dosage instructions to accompany the form. All medication dispensing requests must be approved by the Child Care Director. Under no circumstances should medication be in the possession of the child. Medications will be disbursed by the Childcare Director only and will be documented. We ask parents to keep staff informed daily about the continuing medical needs of their child and any changes in medical information. The form applies to all over the counter and prescription medication brought to the center.

### Outdoor Activities

The childcare facility has a fenced playground area on site. In addition, the adjacent township park will be used for outdoor walks and nature discovery. Staff will ensure that the children have an opportunity for two outdoor periods per day in full day programs, weather permitting. Outdoor activities are strongly encouraged in lieu of indoor activities whenever possible. To mitigate communicable and/or respiratory illnesses, special care will be taken to perform activities that produce respiratory droplets, including singing, chanting, shouting, or playing an instrument.

Staff will spend outdoor time engaging with, but not interfering in, the children's play. Children on playground equipment will have staff in close proximity at all times. Children will be taken out if the temperature is over 35 degrees with no precipitation. In winter or other cold spells, please be sure children are provided adequate outdoor attire.



### Payments and Deposits

A current YMCA program membership is required for participation in all YMCA programs as well as all deposits. The first tuition payment (weekly for early childhood and monthly for school age care) is also due at time of registration unless the auto-draft option is chosen. Early Childhood Care weekly tuition is due on or before each Monday. After School payments are due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. **If payment is not received within two weeks of the due date, parents will be advised that their child's space and deposit may be forfeited.** Parents are encouraged to speak to a director regarding any delay in tuition payments. Auto draft payment may be required if deposits are used due to non-payment or subsidized payments are not managed properly in accordance with electronic swipe timelines.

Cash, personal checks, MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover, and ATM debit cards are accepted as forms of payment. Please make all checks payable to **Raritan Valley YMCA**. Auto-Draft Payment Forms are available and strongly encouraged to ensure continued participation in the program without interruption.

#### ***Pay by mail or in person***

Raritan Valley YMCA  
144 Tices Lane  
East Brunswick, NJ 08816

#### ***Pay by Phone***

732.257.4114  
Mon-Fri 7:00am-7:00pm  
Sat 9:00am-1pm

The YMCA **does not** send tuition bills.

**Tuition payments are required regardless of absence due to illness or vacation.**

### Personal Belongings

Please leave toys and personal items at home other than items specifically requested by your child's caregiver/teacher. These items may become lost or broken or swallowed. The toys and equipment at the YMCA have been specifically selected to be stimulating, educational, fun and safe and are in compliance with state licensing and accreditations. Food and extra clothing

should be placed in their appropriate areas, and ***all belongings should be labeled*** with the child's name.

### **Registration and Enrollment**

Registration is open to all Raritan Valley YMCA members and is enrolled on a first come, first serve basis. Current participants receive priority enrollment each year.

**Early Childhood Care:** a two (2) week deposit is due at time of registration. This deposit is applied to your child's final two weeks in the program, with at least two weeks' written notice of final child's final participation date. **If the auto draft option is chosen only one (1) weeks deposit is due at time of registration.**

**After School:** a one (1) month deposit is due at the time of registration. This deposit is applied to June or your child's last month in the program, with at least 30 days' written notice of your child's final participation date. Monthly fees are based on 180 days of school and include early dismissals.

**Vacation/Snow Day Camp:** No deposits are required. All fees are required at time of registration. Space is limited and will be filled in the order registrations are received. Two (2) business days' notice is required to register to ensure we can prepare for the safe arrival of your child. Two (2) days' notice, in writing, is required if to cancel my registration for any day. Snow Day Camp requires registration and payment at time of drop-off.

**Child Watch:** The monthly fee for this program will be added to your monthly membership dues and does not require a deposit.

For your child's safety, no child will be admitted to any program unless the following forms are returned with all applicable membership and program fees.

#### **Registration Form**

**Personal History for Caretakers Form (early childhood only)**

**Medical Release Form**

**Parental/Guardian Agreement Form**

**Late Pick Up and Sunscreen Policies**

**Universal Child Health Record signed by a physician (early childhood only)**

**Immunization Record by physician including influenza shot (early childhood only)**

**Alternate Pick Up Form (if necessary)**

**Permission to Administer Medicine Form (if necessary)**

**Sign-In/Out Waiver Form (school-age only, if necessary)**

### **Release of Children**

Any person visiting and/or picking up a child may be asked to provide photo identification upon arrival. Children will only be released to parent/guardians or additional contacts authorized, in writing, to take the child from the center and assume responsibility for the child, including emergencies and situations where a parent cannot be reached. This written authorization, including name, relationship to child, and telephone number is requested on the original registration form and shall be maintained on file.

Additional authorized contacts may be added, in writing, at any time to your original registration paperwork as someone authorized to pick-up your child(ren) and assume responsibility for them. In an emergency situation, you may email a director or fax written authorization for someone who is not on file to pick up your child to 732-257-5762. Only the names of those listed on the registration form are permitted to remove your child from our care. We can also take the name of an emergency contact over the phone for emergency situations when the call has been initiated by a YMCA contact person from the phone numbers listed on the original registration form.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access or granted limited access to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect and maintain a copy in the file and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up the child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

- The child is supervised at all times
- Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
- An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member(s) shall call the *24-hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873)* to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

If the parents/guardians or additional authorized contacts appear to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the procedure shall require:

- The child may not be released to such an impaired individual; and
- Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternate persons authorized by the parents; and
- If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements as noted in above, a staff member shall call the Division's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

For school-age programs only, children may be released from the program unsupervised upon written authorization with a **Sign-in/Sign-Out Waiver Form, enabling your child to walk home unsupervised** which can be requested by the program director. If your child is responsible enough to walk to and/or from the YMCA unsupervised, then written permission is required and this form must be turned into the program director at least 2 days prior to the first time this request is expected to occur to allow proper communication to staff.



### Screen Time

Raritan Valley YMCA provides an activity-based learning environment. We believe that children learn best through active participation, hands on experience, interactive conversation and exploration. Raritan Valley YMCA follows the recommendation established by the American Academy of Pediatrics, which has found that too much TV viewing has been linked to poor performance in school, overweight children, and the establishment of poor dietary habits. <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx>

For children at Raritan Valley YMCA Childcare Center, television screen time is limited to 60 minutes per month only if viewing material is age appropriate, educational and supports the learning topic. Computers use, where available, is limited to children of school age for homework purposes under supervision only. Screen time is prohibited for children under 2 years of age.

### Snow/Weather/Emergency Evacuation and Closings

When local public schools are closed due to inclement weather, the YMCA will open, pending the ability to provide a reasonably safe arrival for members and staff. We may also attempt a delayed opening unless weather conditions are extreme. Decisions are communicated via our social media pages and email as early as 6:00am.

In case of an emergency closing while the center is in session, you will get a call from the center in regard to our closing time. Please have local emergency contacts on call to pick up your children should you work out of town or get stuck in traffic.

The Y may also open during some school emergency weather closings for Snow Day Camp. Please see Vacation/Snow Day Camp section for more details.

Please be aware that safety is our first priority! The center reserves the right to close in extreme weather conditions. There is no monetary credit given for emergency closing at the early childhood learning center. For school-age children, the days will be made up in accordance with the public-school schedule. We will offer Snow Day Care if conditions are safe for us to open for an additional fee. Please call our main office to find out what time we will open the center.

### Sunscreen Policy

Children spend a great deal of time in the outdoors and are thereby exposed to the sun's harmful rays. Since it is our commitment to promote healthy spirits, minds and bodies, we have made the following policies in this regard.

**The Y reserves the right to disallow anyone to participate in the childcare program at any time for failure to comply with our sunscreen policy.**

- All children should wear sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 on exposed skin.
- Parent/guardian will apply the first layer of sunscreen prior to drop off.
- Parent/guardians will provide the children with enough sunscreen (in a sealed labeled container) for later applications. One container per child, please. Childcare center standards recommend that a sunscreen spray or "roll-on" is provided to the staff to minimize skin contact.
- Staff will be responsible for thorough follow-up applications after one hour in the water, after 2 hours of activity in the sun (due to perspiration), and/or any other time that it is needed. Please note that your child may have sunscreen applied on them by the childcare staff. Please explain this to your child before drop-off.

## **Supervision and Staffing**

While video cameras can be highly useful documentation tools, they should not be a substitute for supervision in childcare programs. The most effective monitoring and supervision is accomplished by well-trained staff and supervisors who are committed to providing a safe environment for children.

All staff members are chosen through a very thorough screening process. Education, practical experiences, outstanding references, as well as an understanding of children's developmental stages are examined and reviewed closely. All staff members are required to attend required staff training and additional professional development throughout the course of the year enabling us to provide a higher quality of care for your child.

Our low staff-to-child ratios meet state requirements. Small groups mean more individual attention for each child. Each infant/toddler child will have a primary caregiver, who will be responsible for feeding, diapering, assisting in toilet training, recording unusual incidents, and informing parents about their child's day.

To the greatest extent possible, efforts shall be made to minimize the rotation of staff between groups to control viral spread between groups. Staff members who have been fully vaccinated may, however, move between groups as necessary to accommodate breaks, fluctuations in center attendance, substitutions, and other operational needs of the center. Copies of documentation demonstrating staff vaccinations shall be retained by the center and available for inspection by the Office of Licensing upon request or maintained by staff on their person and available for inspection upon request.

**1:4 - infants    1:6 - toddlers    1:10 - 3 years old**  
**1:12 - 4 years old                      1:15 - over 5 years old**

## **Technology and Social Media Policy**

Technology and social media refer to any public or private media outlets, including but not limited to social networking sites, blogs and forums, media sharing services, and other collaborative online spaces.

As part of our commitment to protecting children, it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families. All media footage taken of members by YMCA-designated personnel during YMCA activities may be used for publicity purposes by the organization and community partners unless otherwise instructed at time of enrollment. Parents, staff, volunteers, committee members, etc. are prohibited from posting any media images of any child other than their own without consent of the other child's parents. No public discussions or comments should be made on any media outlets regarding YMCA youth participants (except where appropriate for marketing fund raising events) that could have any impact on the Y's reputation or that would offend any member, staff, or family at the Y. Any comment deemed to be inappropriate is to be reported to the director and any action will be taken at his/her discretion, which may include termination from the program.

The Raritan Valley YMCA reserves the right to take any corrective action it deems appropriate where, in its opinion, someone acts in contradiction of the interests of the Raritan Valley YMCA or its clients or interferes with the relationships between the Raritan Valley YMCA and its clients, its employees, and the public-at-large.

As such, the following is advised to all parents, staff, volunteers, etc:

- Posting of photographs or videos of children, other than your own, is prohibited.
- Personal security settings should be managed to ensure information is only available to people they choose to share information with.
- Avoid personal communication with others whom they act in a professional manner with.
- Remember that no information sent over the web is totally secure or non-public.
- Maintain professionalism, honesty, and respect when posting.
- If naming the YMCA, do so in a way that is not detrimental to the organization or its members.
- Do not share information you would not want children or colleagues to view.
- Report any concerns to the director.

### **Termination & Withdrawal Policy**

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the center director to decide to discontinue a child's attendance. Such a decision would be based on whether it is in the best interests of that child, the other children in the class and the overall operation of the center. Every reasonable effort should be made to correct a problematic situation before a final decision to terminate is made. Reason for termination of enrollment may include, but not be limited to the examples in the discipline policy or lack of payment.

Whenever possible, written notification will be provided to the parent one week in advance of termination of enrollment. There are no refunds of membership or deposits if you withdraw voluntarily or not. There is no guarantee your child's placement will be available if you withdraw and have a desire to return.

### **Transportation Policy**

YMCA ratios and supervision standards apply during transportation. Bus Drivers are YMCA employees or contracted drivers and subject to state and YMCA background checks, drug and alcohol testing, and annual licensing. All students must wear seat belts at all times during transportation and follow all bus travel rules.

### **Visitation Policy**

To limit exposure to various communicable diseases, the YMCA maintains a no visitation policy. Visitors are not allowed inside of the classrooms but are welcome to look inside the windows during drop off and pick up. Tours of the classrooms may be scheduled for hours after operation. Emergency personnel may enter the classroom during operational hours for routine inspections and emergencies.

Essential visitors such as therapists, tutors, and other professionals who are vital to children's growth will be allowed admission into the childcare areas. They are expected to adhere to the mask requirements and hygiene procedures that all staff practice.

Visitors who are not working with the children – such as repair persons, delivery persons, and prospective staff – may be allowed access to the classrooms when the children are not in attendance. All reasonable efforts will be made to minimize visitor contact with children and staff unless the purpose of the authorized visitor is to directly assist the children (e.g. therapist) or to observe the care provided to the children (e.g. a DCF licensing inspector).

Special events requiring the attendance of parents and other visitors, including graduation ceremonies, are permissible in spaces outside the classroom. These events should be held in areas separated from non-participating children and staff.



# INFANTS/ TODDLERS

## **Infant & Toddler Program Objectives**

The Raritan Valley YMCA's infant/toddler program is designed to care for your child in a secure and nurturing environment. Your infant will be held and cuddled creating a sense of trust and comfort with his/her caregiver. He/she will be stimulated by a wide variety of small muscle and gross motor activities as well as songs and stories to develop language skills.

Curious toddlers are encouraged to explore their environment. Play in a variety of learning centers including blocks, art, books, puzzles, and dress up, fosters a sense of independence and an interest in learning. Participating in circle time activities enhances this interest and develops early socialization skills.

Toddlers are always on the move. We meet this need by providing music and movement activities as well as indoor and outdoor play that include running, jumping, and climbing.

The happiness, safety, and well being of your child is our primary goal. Our staff will strive to provide a child friendly environment featuring hands on learning activities designed to enhance your child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development, thereby creating an atmosphere parents will feel comfortable leaving their child.

## **Infant & Toddler Curriculum**

The YMCA uses *The Creative Curriculum® for Infants and Toddlers* which is an early childhood curriculum that helps teachers appreciate and find joy in the everyday discoveries that delight a child-the sound a rattle makes; the leaves blowing in circles by the wind; the ball that unexpectedly rolls across a child's path; the ants marching across the pavement. It is a comprehensive curriculum that helps teachers achieves the very best program for children under three. If the interactions children have are nurturing, consistent, and loving, and the experiences they have are appropriately challenging, then infants, toddlers, and twos grow and flourish. In such an environment, children learn to trust and joyfully explore their surroundings, making discoveries and developing a sense of themselves as competent learners and caring human beings. The everyday activities consist of:

- **Sensory Activities**

Curious infants and toddlers are discovering how to interact with their environment. Children will play with teething toys, busy boxes, rattles and squeeze toys. They will enjoy looking at themselves in the mirror and watching mobiles. This area will stimulate your child's sense of sight, hearing and touch.

- **Dramatic Play**

Children learn by imitating adults. In this area, your child will play with dolls, puppets, stuffed animals, and kitchen sets. Infants will look at and cuddle soft dolls and animals. Toddlers will have fun pretending to be like mommy and daddy going to work or taking care of the baby and home. This is an area where your child will begin to develop socialization skills.

- **Language Arts**

In a calm and cozy atmosphere, your infant will be encouraged to babble and repeat sounds they hear. They will be spoken to and read to often to promote language development. Infants and toddlers will look at pictures and books and play with toy telephones. YMCA staff will engage your toddler in conversations throughout the day to enhance vocabulary skills and language development.

- **Manipulative Activities**

Little hands need a variety of squeeze and grip toys, sorting and stacking toys, beginner puzzles, threading toys, pull toys, and small blocks to develop fine motor control and hand-eye coordination. Your child will have fun learning and playing in this area.

- **Building Activities**

Children love to build things. In this area, your child has a choice of several kinds of blocks, small wheel toys, animal and people figures, stacking rings and nesting toys. Infants and toddlers will have hours of fun creating structures, knocking them over, and building them up again. This is an area where your child will begin to explore a variety of math concepts.

- **Large Muscle Activities**

This is an exciting time for your infant. Whether it is rolling over, sitting up, or crawling, there are a lot of exciting "firsts." YMCA staff will help your infant/toddler develop large muscle control through the use of low climbers, slides, rocking toys, balls, tunnels, gym mats, and riding toys.

- **Music**

Children will be encouraged to explore musical mobiles and busy boxes as well as a variety of instruments. Various types of music will be played often throughout the day. Children will learn that music can be upbeat, soothing, silly and fun. Children will be encouraged to move and dance to the music. Toddlers will participate in musical games such as "Hokey Pokey" and "Ring Around the Rosey."

- **Art**

Crayons, collage materials, and paint will be available to the toddlers for their first artistic creations. Children will be encouraged to experiment with the various materials. All masterpieces will be displayed in the classroom. In this area, your child will express creativity.

- **Recreational Swim**

Children will be introduced to water safety education as well as seasonal introduction to water play and recreational swim during warmer seasons and when the Y's Outdoor Teaching Pool is open. Appropriate staffing is available to ensure the proper ratio of staff/volunteer: children.

Learning opportunities to stimulate the senses will be provided for infants who are awake and being cared for in cribs or playpens; Non-ambulatory infants will be carried around the center periodically; Infants will be given the opportunity to leave cribs and playpens to have appropriate tummy time, crawl, toddle, walk and play.

Participation in these program areas will enhance your child's physical and social development while they are having fun. Infants are stimulated by a variety of toys and social interactions. Energetic toddlers are encouraged to develop their self help skills, including: buttoning and zipping clothing, putting on their coat, choosing what to play with, and putting toys away when they have finished playing.

### **Naptime and Sleeping Procedures**

Parents of infants may discuss sleeping/napping schedules with their child's primary caregiver to establish a routine that best suits your child's needs. Infant/Toddler Parent/Staff Communication forms will be sent home each day informing parents how long and at what time your child slept.

### **What to Bring for Infant/Toddler Childcare Participants**

Healthy Snack (morning & evening)

Lunch **(No Peanut Products / No Glass Containers)**

Juice / Water

Formula or Milk

Sippy Cup / Training Cup

Forks/Spoons (as needed with lunch/snack)

Blankets, Sheets or Sleeping Bag (pillow optional)

Wipes (as needed)

Diapers / Diaper Rash Cream (as needed)

2 complete change of clothing (including shoes)

Bibs

**ALL UTENSILS NEEDED FOR LUNCH / SNACK MUST BE PROVIDED**



# **PRESCHOOL**

### **Preschool Learning Objectives**

The main objective of the Raritan Valley YMCA's preschool program is to promote the ongoing development of your child in a rich learning environment. Children will develop at their own pace as a caring and experienced staff guides them through a curriculum including Language

Arts, Math, Science, Art, Music, Foreign Language and fine, and gross motor activities. Daily activities from each of these curriculum areas will help enhance your child's cognitive, physical and social development.

### **Preschool Curriculum**

The YMCA uses *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool* which is an early childhood curriculum that focuses on project-based investigations as a means for children to apply skills and addresses four areas of development: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. The curriculum is designed to foster development of the whole child through teacher-led, small and large group activities centered on 11 interest areas (blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, discovery, sand and water, music and movement, cooking, computers, and outdoors). Preschool everyday activities consist of:

- **Language Arts**

Stories, discussions, flannel board, show & tell, letter identification and recognition

- **Math & Science**

Counting, sorting, number and shape recognition, weather, observation, plants, water and magnet activities

- **Art-Drawing**, coloring, painting, cutting, gluing and play dough

- **Manipulative**

Puzzles, peg boards, lacing cards, tabletop and building toys

- **Dramatic Play**

Dolls, dress up, kitchen set, dishes, play food and puppets

- **Music** – Instruments, songs, tapes, CD's and dancing

- **Large Muscle**

Balls, bean bags, mats, balance beam, wheel toys, outdoor play equipment

- **Building**

Blocks, people and animal figures, small wheel toys, outdoors and play equipment.

- **Recreational Swim**

Children will be introduced to water safety education as well as seasonal introduction to water play and recreational swim during warmer seasons and when the Y's Outdoor Teaching Pool is open. Appropriate staffing is available to ensure the proper ratio of staff/volunteer : children.

- **Fitness & Physical Education**

Children will be lead through a series of basic locomotor's movements, including running, jumping, hopping, skipping, and galloping. Preschool CATCH (Coordinated Approach To Child Health) is implemented once a week which promotes team work and physical activity in our children. Children will progress from these fundamental movements into the basics of sports and exercise. So that the family adopts an active lifestyle, a free wellness membership is issued to each parent who has a child enrolled full-time in our childcare program.

Independence is encouraged as children explore the environment. Learning centers will stimulate your child's critical thinking skills and allow him/her to make choices in a relaxed

atmosphere. Our goal is to make learning fun and exciting which results in high self-esteem for each child.

In addition to the daily curriculum, special monthly/seasonal units of study will be addressed in the areas of healthy and safety, wellness, nutrition, holidays, multiculturalism, Activate America and community helpers.

### **Naptime and Sleeping Procedures**

The children will have their own cot marked with their name for exclusive use. Parents will be asked to bring a sheet and blanket or a sleeping bag to the center each week for use at naptime. These items will be sent home to be laundered regularly. For emergencies, please make sure we have two (2) complete change of clothing on hand at the center.

Children who have difficulty sleeping (after being allowed a short time to fall asleep on their own) can have their backs rubbed by a staff person to help them fall asleep. Parents can inform preschool staffs about particular sleeping routines which may help the child relax in the center environment. Parental input in this area is helpful and requested to insure continuity for the child.

### **What to Bring for Preschool Participants**

Healthy Snack (morning & evening)

Lunch **(No Peanut Products / No Glass Containers)**

Forks/Spoons (as needed with lunch/snack)

Blankets, Sheets or Sleeping Bag (pillow optional)

2 complete change of clothing (including shoes)

**ALL UTENSILS NEEDED FOR LUNCH / SNACK MUST BE PROVIDED BY PARENTS**



# **AFTER SCHOOL**

### **After School Program Objectives**

We currently provide our before and after school program for both Spotswood Elementary Schools (Appleby Elementary and Schoenly Elementary). As well as providing a drop-off after school program at our Facility located on Tices Lane in East Brunswick. Our program objectives are to help the students develop their fullest potential. The program focuses on increasing confidence and self-esteem, developing healthy lifestyles, fostering responsibility, building positive character and values, and improving physical fitness.

These objectives will be met by using non-competitive games that are challenging and fun in our C.A.T.C.H. fitness program which includes vigorous and moderate physical activities, arts

and crafts, cooking, fitness center, tutoring, homework assistance, quiet activities, outdoor and indoor enrichment games, special theme and holiday celebrations, volunteer activities and special guest presenters.

Overall, we strive to strengthen the family unit, provide supervised before and after school care in a positive environment, enhance each student's development, and build interpersonal relationships.

### **Attendance Notification Policy**

Parents must notify their child's school office in writing of their child's enrollment in the program. Tuition credits are not given for illness, vacation, inclement weather, or holidays.

### **Homework Policy**

Our YMCA Kids Club program supports and encourages students to work on homework for up to thirty (30) minutes each day. During this time, students need to be working on homework or participating in a quiet reading activity.

Please understand it is not the staff's responsibility to ensure homework is completed. The staff is there to assist with the directions and guide the children with their homework. We feel it is the parent's role to review the work with their child each night and provide additional support with any unfinished homework.

### **Other Activities**

The Y offers activities that encourage children to try new things, build new friendships, and experience success. Activities include: C.A.T.C.H. Nutrition and Physical Education. Outdoor Play, Gaga, Tennis, Basketball, Volleyball, Golf, Soccer, Other Sports and Games, Arts, Math and Literature, Science, and More!

We also include other featured events throughout the year including many family and holiday special events. These are incorporated into the monthly themes and parents are always invited to experience and participate.

### **Program Rules**

We work to maintain a positive atmosphere with emphasis on our four-character development values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. Proper participation and conduct by your child are expected.

Rules the students are to follow are:

- HAVE FUN!
- Respect each other's feelings and property.
- No fighting, hitting or touching another person or their belongings.
- Cooperate with each other and be sure to SHARE!
- Listen to staff at all times.
- Never walk out of an activity area without staff.
- Use proper language and tone of voice.
- Communicate to staff if someone is bullying or bothering you.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Do not bring toys to the program (electronic games, radios, I-pods etc.).



# VACATION / SNOW DAY CAMP

The Y's Vacation-Snow Day Camp Program is for students in grades K-8 and is offered when most planned school closings or emergency school closures occur. Daily activities between 7:00am-6:00pm include crafts, games, sports, nature, and outdoor play. Themes with special activities or trips to local venues with contracted bus services and our year-round trained staff may be planned for expected high-volume days. All trip and transportation fees, activity supplies and PM snacks are included. Details about the activities for each day's theme can be found on our website.

Vacation Camp programs are not a part of the After School Program. An additional fee is charged for these programs. A registration packet (or after school care packet) must be completed and on file to register for any Vacation/Snow Day Camp Programs in compliance with NJ State licensing requirements. The complete vacation camp packet including dates, trips and activities is available in August for the upcoming school year on the Raritan Valley YMCA website or upon request. Children will be active all day. Please send your child with sneakers, comfortable clothing, a healthy lunch and morning snack, and any money for trip souvenirs, if desired.

Please register early. Space is limited and will be filled in the order registrations are received. Two (2) business days' notice is required to ensure we can prepare for the safe arrival of your child. Two (2) days' notice is also required, in writing, to cancel registration for any day. Dates/trips are subject to change due to school closure changes. Cancellations may occur due to low enrollment with 2 days' notice.

The Y is also open during some school emergency weather closings, pending our ability to open the Y safely. These dates will be communicated via our Facebook page or email as early as 7:00am. Registration and payment for snow days must be made at time of drop-off in the morning. It is suggested that a complete registration packet be sent for our files prior to needing the snow day emergency care for a smooth registration process.



### **PARENT STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

The following information is important for the safety and protection of your child. Please read the information.

YMCA staff and volunteers are not allowed to baby-sit or transport children at any time outside the YMCA program. If a violation is discovered, the YMCA will take immediate disciplinary action toward staff and/or volunteers.

Staff and volunteers are not allowed to initiate contact with members and program participants outside the YMCA, unless necessary in certain limited cases for the smooth operation of a YMCA program. If deemed necessary, contact should be made with the program participant's parent or guardian. Contact includes, but is not limited to, sharing of phone numbers, e-mail addresses, personal websites and/or web logs. If a violation is discovered, the YMCA will take immediate disciplinary action toward staff and/or volunteers.

I understand that I am not to leave my child at the YMCA or program site unless a YMCA staff or volunteer is there to receive and supervise my child. I understand that my child must be escorted to and from the program area by me or another person on my authorized list. Children may not just be dropped off at the door. Note: The YMCA's policy is that children under the age of 14 may NOT be alone in our facilities/program sites.

Children should not receive excessive gifts (e.g. toys, video games, jewelry) from YMCA staff or volunteers, and you should report this to a supervisor if they do.

Children are not allowed to leave the program with an unauthorized person. Any person authorized to pick up your child, including relatives, must be listed with the YMCA and must be of the age required by this YMCA. Any other alternate pick-up arrangements must be made in writing by a parent/guardian. Phone notification of an alternate pick-up arrangement is only accepted in an emergency.

Should a person arrive to pick up your child who appears to be under the influence of drug/alcohol, for the child's safety, staff may have no recourse but to contact the police. Please do not put staff in a position where they have to make this judgment call.

To ensure your child's safety, you can take an active interest in his or her YMCA experience. You can monitor volunteer and staff interactions with your child and ask specific questions about program activities and volunteer or staff relationships with your child.

**The YMCA is mandated by state law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation.**

Department of Children and Families  
Office of Licensing  
**INFORMATION TO PARENTS**

Under provisions of the *Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52)*, every licensed childcare center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents and staff this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent and staff member's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there

is a licensing complaint OOL/Information to Parents/April 2017 Page 2 of 2 investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary

Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at <https://data.nj.gov/childcare-explorer>.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to [www.state.nj.us/dcf/](http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/).

## **Policy for an Anonymous Reporting Mechanism for Employees and Volunteers**

While we hope that our employees and volunteers feel that they can openly communicate any concerns, complaints, or grievances directly to someone in the YMCA, we understand that doing so can often be difficult. Because it is important to us that everyone be able to share their concerns regarding inappropriate behavior of employees, consumers, or volunteers, we provide the following mechanisms through which you can make an anonymous report:

The following are 2 anonymous reporting methods.

1. Send by postal mail a typed letter of concern and mail to Executive Director at Raritan Valley YMCA, 144 Tices Lane, East Brunswick, NJ.
2. The Praesidium Helpline at 855-347-0751. See more information below:

We have partnered with Praesidium to establish a helpline that is available to everyone (employees, volunteers, parents/guardians, youth, community members, etc.) 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

What is the Praesidium Helpline?

The Praesidium Helpline is a consultation line anyone in the YMCA can call to discuss observations of inappropriate behaviors, suspicious behaviors, policy violations, instances of youth sexualized behavior, and any other abuse prevention questions and issues.

What can you expect when you call?

One of Praesidium's experts will answer or return your call and gather any information relevant to your concern or question. If the matter the caller shares, is one deemed to be suspected or known sexual abuse, the caller will be instructed by Praesidium to immediately call the civil authorities. Praesidium will staff the concern or situation and develop recommended responses and next steps. Praesidium will then share the concern and the recommendations with stakeholders at the YMCA.