



**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2017 - 2018**

**Mara Center for Early Childhood  
Development**

At The

Meadowlands Area YMCA

390 Murray Hill Parkway

East Rutherford, NJ 07073

Phone: (201) 955-5300 Fax: (201) 955-2055

[www.MeadowlandsYMCA.org](http://www.MeadowlandsYMCA.org)

[www.YMCAinfo.org](http://www.YMCAinfo.org)



## **The Meadowlands Area YMCA Mission Statement**

The YMCA's mission is to serve the residential and corporate communities of the Meadowlands Area by offering services and programs that build healthy bodies, minds and spirits; so that men, women, and children of all ages, incomes, abilities, races and religions, can participate in programs resting on Christian values that will help them develop as individuals and as citizens of their communities.

### **Program Philosophy**

YMCA childcare programs stress care and safety, as they nurture the children's natural desire to learn and explore through developmentally appropriate activities. The scheduling, pacing, and rhythm of these activities are consistent with recognized principles of early childhood education, which let each child develop at his or her own rate. The children's experiences shall stimulate physical, social, intellectual, and emotional growth. Fostering self-esteem and respect for others is central to the YMCA's philosophy. Children are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings, which fosters their emotional, social, and language development.

The family is the most vital element in the child's life; therefore, the YMCA has an open door policy for enrolled families and encourages parents to be active and involved in their child's education.

### **Program Goals**

The YMCA wants to help children develop to their fullest potential. The Program will promote children's growth and learning through these 14 goals.

1. Involve children in their community to develop their social and living skills.
2. Encourage expression and acceptance of feelings, whether sad, joyful, or otherwise.
3. Encourage children to be involved in other YMCA programs, such as swimming, parent-child programs, music, and art and movement education.
4. Our school is a haven where children reach their potential.
5. Each child's strengths are valued.
6. Each child's learning style is supported.
7. Each child is given opportunities to demonstrate what he or she knows in a number of ways
8. Each child learns to acknowledge the worth of every individual, and all students know they make a difference in the world.
9. Our community's cultural diversity is celebrated.
10. Parents are partners, and "home" and "school" are synonymous.
11. The entire community is involved in the education of our children.
12. Our students and their parents know we care about children.
13. The success of each child is a commitment, not just a concept.
14. There is truly equal educational opportunity for all.

### **Hours of Operation**

Regular Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. ....Monday to Friday

### **Arrivals and Departures**

Each child must be signed in and out each day upon arrival and departure. This is very important for a fire drill or in an emergency. The sign-in/sign-out sheets are used to double check on the whereabouts of the children. Sign-in sheets are located at the front receptionist desk. Please walk your children to their classroom door and pick them up from their classroom each day. Your child is considered in our care when they arrive in the classroom and our staff acknowledges their arrival. Children are no longer in our care when the teacher has released them from their class to a parent or an authorized pick-up person.

### **Absences**

In the event your child is sick, please notify the Center (201 955-5300). Please also alert your child's teacher of vacation plans. Credit or make up for days missed due to illness, vacation, inclement weather or holidays cannot be given.

### **Termination of Service**

The Meadowlands Area YMCA will make every effort to serve all children registered in the Center and to work with parents to insure continuation of services. However, we reserve the right to terminate service if the following conditions occur.

- Child is constantly unable to obey the YMCA's standards of conduct. Please see the Positive Guidance and Discipline Policy and Expulsion Policy.
- Accounts must be current.
- Failure to complete necessary forms or maintain accurate information.

### **Fire Drills**

The Bureau of Licensing requires fire drills at least once a month. Parents and visitors must evacuate the building as well as children and staff during a fire drill.

### **Policy on the Release of Children**

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parents to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

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, maintain a copy on 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 a child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child is supervised at all times;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. 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 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 parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgement of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual;
2. Staff members attempted to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. If the center is not able to make alternative arrangements, a staff member should call the *24-hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873)* to seek assistance in caring for the child.

For school-age child care programs, no child shall be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instructions from the parent(s).



## **2017- 2018 Center Closings**

Labor Day	Monday, September 4, 2017
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 23, 2017
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 24, 2017
Christmas Day	Monday, December 25, 2017
New Year's Day	Monday, January 1, 2018
Memorial Day	Monday, May 28, 2018
4 <sup>th</sup> of July	Wednesday, July 4, 2018

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER /EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICY**

It is important for all parents to be aware of our Inclement Weather/Emergency Closing Policy for Center closings, delayed openings, or early dismissal. Every attempt will be made to open during bad weather, but occasionally we may deem it necessary to close for the safety of the children and adults involved if the weather is very bad or if there is an unforeseen emergency. Accordingly, there will be no refund on these days.

The YMCA will make every attempt to open the center. Occasionally, weather conditions may warrant a school closing. Traditionally we abide by the East Rutherford School District's Delayed Openings/Closings. If the East Rutherford School District has a delayed opening, we will open at regular time (7:00 am), if East Rutherford's School District is closed, we will have a delayed opening (9:00 am). The YMCA may be closed in the event a "State of Emergency" is declared by the Governor of New Jersey. Parents should call our office at (201) 955-5300 ext.227 or check our website; [www.ymcainfo.org](http://www.ymcainfo.org) for updated information. Parents should make sure the school is open before leaving home. A delayed opening means the center will be open by 9:00 a.m.

When snow falls heavily during the day, parents should plan to pick up earlier than the regular dismissal time if possible. In the event we need to close early, because of an emergency or because weather conditions worsen during the day, parents will be called at work or home with the designated time. If parents cannot be reached, we will try emergency contacts. Please have a contingency plan in place for your child's care during inclement weather.



## “OUR DAY AS HAPPY PRESCHOOLERS”

**7:00-9:00 AM** Arrival and  
Free Play Center Time Breakfast  
Story Time  
Diapering/Potty Training

### **9:00-12 Noon**

**Circle Time:** Intro to Weekly Themes, Academics

**Language Arts:** ABC's – Sign Language, Phonics, Sight Words, Reading Readiness, Story Time, Dramatic Play.

**Math/Science:** Numbers, Shapes, Colors, Sequence, Patterns, Puzzles, Cooking, Sensory Play, Science Experiments

**Social Studies:** USA Map, Globe & cultures around the world

**Fine Motor Skills:** Writing, Coloring

**Large Motor Skills:** Outdoor Play, Themed Games, Nature Walks  
Arts & Crafts, Music & Movement, Snack, Diapering/Potty Training

### **Noon-3:00 PM**

Lunch Time, Diapering/Potty Training, Nap/Rest Time

### **3:00-6:30 PM**

Review Circle Time Activities  
Arts & Crafts  
Music & Movement  
Outdoor Play Center  
Time Departure

**Healthy U** is the nation's largest and most comprehensive childhood obesity prevention program. Created by the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey in collaboration with the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance, the program utilizes the evidenced based CATCH curriculum. Healthy U Preschool was launched in the fall of 2012 in 80 YMCA preschool sites to over 4500 three to five year olds. Preschool youth in the YMCA programs will experience games and physical activities that provide and environment for success in skill development and exercise. Nutrition lessons are taught through circle time activities and exploration activities. This program also provides parents with valuable tips and suggestions for use at home. CATCH is the acronym for Coordinated Approach To Child Health which emphasizes healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors

In response to a call for action by Former First Lady Michelle Obama, the Meadowlands Area YMCA has signed on to be a part of the YMCA of the USA's commitment to the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) to focus on ending the childhood obesity epidemic. The Y's will be implementing the Y's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity standards in our early childhood and after school programs.

### Guidelines for Positive Discipline

The goal of our staff is to work cooperatively with children and parents to help children develop self-control. We wish to help children of all ages become increasingly independent. We want children to feel good about him or herself and to learn to balance their needs with those of other people, to see the possible consequences of their actions and to accept alternate behaviors.

Discipline comes from gentleness, understanding, sensitivity and consistency. Effective discipline begins with prevention. Children need to know what behavior is expected while adults need to model positive behavior.

Actions and words should be used to guide a child. Do's should be used instead of don'ts, e.g. "feet belong on the floor" instead of "Don't stand on the table." Children should be encouraged to think of alternative solutions and the possible effects of taking those alternatives; teachers are present to encourage children to redirect their attention to positive behavior and activities.

Children's positive beliefs about themselves should be encouraged. A child with high self-esteem will display positive behavior patterns.

Above all, children should be treated with respect and expected to treat others with respect.

Under no circumstances shall discipline of a child involve hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating, or frightening treatment, unsupervised isolation, withholding of emotional responses or stimulation, enforced silence for long periods, association of a child's behavior with rest, toileting or feeding, or any other form of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Time outs may be used, 1 minute for each year of the child's age.

All discipline used at the Meadowlands Area YMCA shall be consistent with Division of Youth and Family Services policies.

New Jersey state licensing laws require mandatory ratio requirements to be upheld at all times. It is not the responsibility of the YMCA staff to offer one on one childcare to any child due to specific disciplinary issues with an individual. We will try our best to meet the needs of every child in our care to the best of our ability within state ratio requirements. If your child requires special attention due to disciplinary problems please see the director as soon as possible; however, keep in mind that we cannot offer one on one childcare.

In the event that inappropriate behavior continues to exist, the following actions will be initiated: (1) Discussion as needed between on-site teacher and parent/guardian which will be documented. (2) Parent/Guardian and coordinator will meet to discuss ideas on solving the conflicts. (3) Parent/guardian will be asked to keep the child at home for a few days. (4) If serious conflict still exists, the child's continued participation in the program will be jeopardized and ultimately terminated if improvement is not apparent. (5) The YMCA reserves the right to immediately terminate a child's enrollment if a severe and flagrant problem occurs, which jeopardizes the welfare of other children in the program. Please inform the staff if your Child is having a problem with other children. Please do not deal with it on your own. We believe in open communication between parent-teacher-director. The more we know about at home behavior the better we will be at teaching, disciplining, and redirecting your child's behavior. We appreciate your cooperation.

EXPULSION POLICY

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. 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.

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
- Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Outgoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Excessive biting
- Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_

PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT WILL BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT EXPULSIONS

- Try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Reassess classroom environment, appropriate of activities, supervision.
- Always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Praise appropriate behaviors
- Consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Give the child verbal warnings.
- Give the child time to regain control.
- Document the child's disruptive behavior and maintain confidentiality.
- Give the Parent/Guardian written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- Schedule a conference including the director, classroom staff and parent/guardian to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- Give the parent literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommend an evaluation by professional consultation on premises
- Recommend an evaluation by local school district child study team.

SCHEDULE OF EXPULSIONS

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. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or come to an agreement with the center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period and the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent an sufficient amount of time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

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 amount of time to make other child care arrangements.

## Health Policies

### Sending a Child Home

Usually a child's teacher will bring a health concern to the attention of the Director (i.e. the child seems warm or has an unusual rash). We will use the following criteria to determine when to send a child home:

- 1) The teacher and Director will assess the child by appearance, checking the child's temperature and evaluating whether the child's behavior is any different than usual.
- 2) There are also State licensing requirements that must be followed in determining when a child has to be sent home. See Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases below.

Occasionally a child is not ill enough to be sent home but is just "not themselves". The parent will then be called by either the Director or Teacher so a mutually agreed decision can be made as to what care should be given. You may decide to come for the child or have a back up caregiver come for your child. If your child has to be sent home, please remember that for your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion we ask that your child be picked up within one hour after notification.

### Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, 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.

- Severe pain and discomfort
- Acute diarrhea
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Lethargy
- Severe coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck

Once a child is symptom-free, or has a health care provider's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or others, the child may return to the center unless contraindicated by local health department or Department of Health.

### Excludable Communicable Diseases

A child or staff member who contracts an excludable communicable disease may not return to the center without a health care provider's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others.

Note: If a child has chicken pox, a note from the parent stating that all sores have dried and crusted is required.

If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, parents will be notified in writing.

### Communicable Disease Reporting Guidelines

Some excludable communicable diseases must be reported to the health department by the center. The Department of Health's Reporting Requirements for Communicable Disease and Work-Related Conditions Quick Reference Guide, a complete list of reportable excludable communicable diseases, can be found at: [http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable\\_disease\\_magnet.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf).

### **Fever/Contagious Diseases**

**If your child went home with a fever, your child will have to remain at home for 24 hours, fever free without medication, before returning to the program.** In the case of a contagious disease, except chickenpox, a doctor's note will be required before the child can return. We understand that it is difficult for a parent to leave or miss work; therefore, we suggest that alternative care arrangements be made in advance. If a child has been absent due to a communicable disease, a doctor's note **MUST** accompany the child to school upon his/her return or he/she will **NOT** be permitted to stay in attendance at the YMCA for that day.  
(Please see communicable disease policy)

#### **Requirements**

If a child is sick or injured at the YMCA we will notify his/her parent. In some cases we may request that you immediately come for your child, in other circumstances we only inform you of your child's situation so that you can decide if some action should be taken.

#### **NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION**

Only the following non-prescription (over the counter) medication will be administered.

- 1) Antihistamines/decongestants
- 2) Acetaminophen
- 3) Cough suppressants
- 4) Topical ointments

State licensing requirements for non-prescription medication states:

". . . Which shall be dispensed in accordance with the recommended dosage, age and/or weight of the child, as indicated on the label."

Parent must then sign a Medication Permission form with the above note attached.

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### **GENERAL POLICIES FOR PRESCRIPTION AND NON PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS:**

Over the counter medication will only be given for 3 days with a physician's note. No medication is to be put in a child's food or drinks brought into the center. No child will be awakened from naps for medication. We reserve the right to limit amount of medications given at one time to a child. If we have any questions about medication, the child's physician will be called.

#### **Injuries**

We will notify you when your child is injured. Minor injuries are washed with soap and water, if necessary ice is applied, as well as a Band-Aid. Serious injuries, i.e. broken bones, lacerations that need stitches are reported immediately to you. If needed, an ambulance will be called. Minor injuries to the face and/or head are reported to you as soon as possible. Other minor injuries will be reported to you when you pick up your child. All injuries to a child will be documented in an Accident/Incident Report. All Accident/Incident Reports must be signed by the acting director and the parent of the child. No information of other children involved will be notated on this report. A copy of the accident report will be kept for the child's records. If a child causes an accident to happen then that incident will be notated in the child's file.

#### **Biting**

Though biting can be a normal part of early childhood development, it can cause problems in a daycare setting. For the safety of all the children, the following will be our guidelines for "biter and bitee": The parents of any child who gets bitten will be notified through an accident report. If the bite breaks the skin, we will ask that you seek professional medical attention as soon as possible. Once a child has bitten someone, we will notify his or her parents. We will offer the child something to bite or teeth on, explaining that biting people is not acceptable. If the child bites a second time, that child will have a time out. If the child bites a third time, that child will be separated from the group and then sent home. This often works as a child may bite for many reasons from a rough teething day to being tired and needing some home time, or in some cases a child will bite because they are in need of attention. If a child bites consistently, a teacher will shadow him. A conference with the parent will be necessary and we may ask the child's pediatrician for advice. If biting continues, a child may have to be kept at home until the behavior stops. The names of the children involved will be kept confidential.

#### **Emergency Forms/Immunizations**

State licensing as well as local and State health departments require that we keep immunization records on all the children. Please let the Director know when your child receives immunizations. For your child to continue in any group care (child care, public school) immunizations must be kept up to date and a record of the immunization reported to the center.

**Our consulting physician is Dr. Jo-Ann Marx, 1 Wesley Place, North Arlington and we will use Hackensack Medical Center in case of emergency.**

### **Diapering Procedure**

The following is our diapering procedure:

The changing station is cleaned with soap and water and then with bleach and water before and after each child is diapered. In addition, clean changing paper is placed on the table. There is a changing table in each classroom as well as running water that is accessible to both child and teacher after every change.

Teachers wear clean, latex gloves while diapering each child, when disposing of all diapers and when assisting a child with toilet training (changing gloves in between each child). All materials are discarded immediately after diapering. Teachers wash their hands before and after diapering, and the children wash their hands after diapering and toilet training. Children that are toilet training, train in diapers or Pull-ups. Please discuss with your child's teacher when you are ready to start potty training your child at home. When changing your child here, we ask that you follow the cleaning and disinfectant procedures. The classroom teacher will assist you.

### **Bottle, Sippy Cup and Drink Policy**

Bottles are allowed for children 20 months and younger. Sippy cups are allowed for children 18 months and older. Please label all items belonging to your child.

### **Policy on the Use of Technology and Social Media in the Classroom**

The YMCA recognizes that families and early educators have many different options for using technology with early learners. We believe that guidance needs to reflect the reality that families and early educators have access to apps, digital books, games, video chatting software, and a multitude of other interactive technologies that can be used with young children. Even as new technologies emerge, the YMCA believes that these principles apply, though guidance may evolve as more research on this topic is published.

Our four guiding principles for use of technology with early learners are as follows:

1. Technology, when used appropriately, can be a tool for learning.
2. Technology should be used to increase access to learning opportunities for all children.
3. Technology may be used to strengthen relationships among parents, families, early educators, and young children.
4. Technology is more effective for learning when adults and peers interact or co-view with young children.

Children under 2 years of age will have no screen time.

Children between 3 and 5 years of age will have a maximum of 30 minutes.

## Food Allergies

We have children attending the YMCA who have various food allergies. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing in any special treats for birthdays or parties.

Children with other food restrictions due to culture, religion or lifestyle; health habits (i.e. vegetarian) etc. must fill out the Medical Report in the Registration Package.

Children with food allergies either mild or severe must have an Emergency Health Care Plan Form filled out. **See Registration Package.**

**Special Note: We are a peanut free center. Children may NOT bring in any foods containing peanut butter or nuts of any kind.**

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**The following items are needed for all children as they enter Daycare.**

**Everything must be labeled with your child's name.**

- Child's size blanket and crib sheet
- Disposable diapers or Pull-Ups and diaper wipes, if necessary
- Complete seasonal change of clothes
- Food: Send in morning snack with drink; lunch with drink; afternoon snack with drink and any utensils that your child will need to eat it
- All food should be cut and ready for serving. Refrigeration available. Unused foods will be discarded if not consumed.
- Foods that need to be heated in the microwave should be ready for serving and require no more than a minute to be heated.
- All food and food bags should be labeled with your child's name.
- Sunscreen should be applied before bringing child to the Center. It will be reapplied if necessary later in the day.
- Please make sure to limit the number of items brought to school.
- Water Bottle

The Meadowlands Area YMCA acknowledges the importance of good nutrition in the healthy growth and development of young children. The eating practices developed in childhood tend to shape future food choices in the future. Presenting healthy foods to children in a positive and consistent manner begins the lifelong process of nutrition management. Children often require repeated exposure to new foods, sometimes up to 15 times, before acceptance. As such, our program has established recommendations for parent to follow when packing their child's daily lunch and snacks.

- Include at least one fruit and vegetable per meal. Avoid fruits in sugar-based syrup.
- Avoid foods that are high in fat, sugar, trans fats, and/or sodium.
- Water is the recommended beverage for children.
- Limit 100% fruit juice to 6 ounces per day and avoid all sugar sweetened beverages.
- Provide skim milk or 1% fat milk to children over the age of 2.
- Bananas, apples, oranges, clementines, grapes (pre-cut to prevent choking), mangos, as well as cubed honeydew, cantaloupe, and watermelon make wonderful choices for dessert; removing seeds where appropriate.
- Select bread and crackers with a high proportion of whole grains.
- Provide only healthy selections when bringing in birthday or holiday celebration treats.

### **INFORMATION TO PARENTS**

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52), every licensed child care 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 recordkeeping 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/CCManual.pdf> or obtain a 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, New Jersey 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 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](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/).

**(Keep This Page for Your Records)**

## Registration and Fees

1. Parents must complete a registration package prior to the child's admission into the program.
2. The days of the week must be declared at the time of registration. To change these days, approval of the Director must be obtained.
3. No refund/credit of days will be issued due to illness, center closing (Holiday and/or weather), or any other reason for absence.
4. The first month tuition, security, and registration fee **must** be paid in full at the time of registration. An interim tuition payment may be due if you are starting your child in the middle of the month.
5. A security deposit of \$375.00 will be due at time of registration. You must give 30 days written notice to withdraw your child from the program. The security deposit may also be applied to any outstanding balance at the discretion of the YMCA or will be refunded if all fees are current.
6. There will be a \$150.00 Registration fee required at the time of registration; which is non-refundable and is not applicable towards any other program. If a child leaves the program and wishes to return, a \$150.00 Re-Registration fee will be due. The child's spot in the Center is not guaranteed once they leave the program.
7. Scholarships are available. Contact the YMCA for a confidential application.
8. Fees paid after the due date are subject to a \$20.00 late fee. Consider signing up for the recurring payment option to avoid late fees. Payments may be cash, check, or money order. Checks should be made out to the Meadowlands Area YMCA.
9. A CHILD MAY NOT ATTEND WITHOUT THE PROPER FEES BEING CURRENT. There are NO CREDITS OR REFUNDS for days missed due to Holidays (see enclosed list), personal illness, emergency closing, or activities. Your fee pays for direct operating costs, such as staff and materials. All of these must be available for your child. When you enroll, you are reserving the time, space, staffing and provisions for your child whether the child attends or not.
10. If a check is returned uncashable, there will be a \$25.00 penalty fee. All subsequent payments must be made on a cash or money order basis.
11. In the event that any balance due is not paid, the YMCA may charge interest at 1.5% per month until the amount due is paid, plus reasonable attorney's fees in an amount not to exceed one third of the amount due.
12. The child(ren) must be picked up promptly by their registered pick up time (6:30PM for Full Time Children, 12 noon for Part Time Children) or there will be a late pick up charge of \$18.00 per half hour or any part thereof. If, after the first 15 minutes, we do not hear from a parent, an authorized adult on the emergency form will be contacted to pick up the child. If an authorized adult cannot be reached one hour after pick up time, the Director or Assistant Director will make arrangements with the Division of Youth and Family Services to care for the child until an authorized adult can pick up the child. Any child who is chronically picked up late will not be allowed to remain in the program.
13. A family with more than one child attending the Mara Center will receive a 10% discount off of tuition fees for the additional children; provided that these children are registered for the same number of days per week or less than the first child.
14. Tuition is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior. (i.e. September's tuition is due August 15<sup>th</sup> , October's tuition is due September 15<sup>th</sup>).
15. Please select your schedule carefully. The YMCA will try to accommodate any change in schedule from your original registration based on availability in the Center. Any changes must be made in writing at least 2 (two) weeks in advance and approved by the Director. There will be a \$17.00 fee for any changes made to your child's schedule.
16. A family may choose to pay their tuition with a recurring tuition charge payment option. This payment option can be submitted to the Meadowlands Area YMCA with an authorization for the Meadowlands Area YMCA to charge a recurring tuition to their credit/debit card (American Express, MasterCard or Visa only) on the tuition due dates. The parent/guardian assumes all responsibility to notify the YMCA in writing of any changes that may affect this agreement.

## Meadowlands YMCA's Commitment to Safety - Information to Parents

The Meadowlands Area YMCA is dedicated to providing you and your family with a safe, welcoming atmosphere in all of our programs. Our staff is critical to this goal. The YMCA has in place a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure to screen-out staff not suited for working with children. Additionally, our staff receives Child Abuse Prevention training and is required to adhere to a Code of Conduct, which prohibits staff in having planned contact with youth participants when they are off duty. Our Professional Directors welcome your suggestions, observations and/or comments.

### **Employee Code of Conduct**

1. In order to protect YMCA staff, volunteers, and program participants, at no time during a YMCA program may a staff person be alone with a single child where he or she cannot be observed by others. As staff supervise children, they should space themselves in such a way that other staff can see them.
2. Staff shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Restroom supervision: Staff will make sure the restroom is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway of the restroom while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff (not being alone with a child). If staff is assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open. No child, regardless of age, should ever enter a bathroom alone on a field trip. Always send children in pairs, and whenever possible, with staff.
4. Staff should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs - diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff shall not abuse children including:
  - a. Physical abuse - to strike, spank, shake, slap;
  - b. Verbal abuse - to humiliate, degrade, threaten;
  - c. Sexual abuse - to inappropriately touch or speak;
  - d. Mental abuse - to shame, withhold kindness, be cruel
  - e. Neglect - to withhold food, water, basic care, etc.No type of abuse will be tolerated and may be cause for immediate dismissal.
6. Staff must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Staff will have age-appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in pre-determined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), is only administered in a prescribed manner, and must be documented in writing.
7. Staff will conduct a health check of each child, each day, as they enter the program, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in a non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses will be documented.
8. Staff will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, or culture.
9. Staff will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
10. Staff will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents and staff.
11. While the YMCA does not discriminate against an individual's lifestyle, it does require that in the performance of their job, they will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the YMCA.
12. Staff must appear clean, neat and appropriately attired.
13. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
14. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
15. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.

16. Staff must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect the children's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.
17. Staff will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.
18. Staff may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting children to your home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrator approval.
19. Staff is not to transport children in their own vehicles.
20. Staff may not date program participants under the age of 18 years of age.
21. Under no circumstances should staff release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with the YMCA.)
22. Staff is required to read and sign all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and attend trainings on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor.
23. Staff will act in a caring, honest, respectful and responsible manner.

## **Our Commitment to Creating a Child Safe Environment**

The Meadowlands Area YMCA is dedicated to providing you and your family with a safe, welcoming atmosphere in all of our programs. Our staff and volunteers are critical to this goal.

The YMCA has in place a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure to screen-out staff and volunteers not suited for working with children. Additionally, our staff and volunteers receive Child Abuse Prevention training and are required to adhere to a Code of Conduct, which 1) prohibits them from being alone with a child at any point, including having planned contact with youth participants when they are off duty - including babysitting, play dates, and communication online; 2) prohibits them from giving children any personal gifts or asking them to keep secrets; and 3) prohibits them from using their own vehicles to transport children.

Parents place their trust in the YMCA to help their children thrive. Our core values – caring, honesty, respect and responsibility- are part of everything we do. Because of this, we place a great value on creating the most child-safe environment possible.

Parents are seen as program partners so your feedback is important to us, especially as it relates to the staff Code of Conduct. Please contact a Professional Director at the Main Office, by calling (201)955-5300 to share any observations, concerns, suggestions, and/or comments. You may also refer to our website for more information on this topic.