



# Y's Beginnings Toddler Program Parents Handbook 2009/2010

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## **OVERVIEW**

The Y's Beginnings Toddler program is a division of the Rockland County Young Men's Christian Association, a non-profit organization. The Toddler program serves children from 18 months to three years from diverse economic, social and ethnic backgrounds. Our purpose is to promote the physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth of each child while building a strong sense of self-esteem.

## **ADULT & TOT**

A unique experience, Adult & Tot is an opportunity for both adult and child to explore and share activities together. It is a slow introduction to a classroom setting for the child who is not yet ready to separate. Both adult and child will participate in many activities, which include creative art, story time, finger play and music (song & dance). Adult & Tot programs meet once a week on Friday's for 1-1/2 hours and children should be 18 months or older.

## **TODDLER & JUST 3'S**

Children from 2 years to 3 years of age participate in a 2-hour nursery program, and do not need to be trained for these classes. Children are involved in creative art activities, music, blocks, etc. These activities are designed to build self-confidence, develop language skills, encourage recognition of shapes and colors, increase interest in books & music, promote socialization, and improve coordination.

The goals of these programs are to assist the child to gradually separate from the parents, to build trusting relationships with our teachers and to learn to use language to express themselves. The children begin to develop an awareness of other children and relationships with regards to sharing, taking turns, etc., in a fun and friendly environment.

## **SUMMER PROGRAM**

The Toddler Summer Program is open to children 2 to 3 years of age. It is held in July and August from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon. A typical day consists of art, music, outdoor activities, water play and snack. The summer program is run 2, 3 or 5 days a week in two-week sessions.

## **REQUIRED FORMS AND INFORMATION**

### **WE MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON FILE IN ORDER FOR YOUR CHILD TO ATTEND THE PRE-SCHOOL:**

#### **Health History Form**

Must be signed by the child's physician. All immunizations must be up to date.

#### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

This release on your registration form enables your child to be treated medically. Without it, emergency staff would have to await your arrival to proceed, which could be life-threatening in certain circumstances, but in any case unpleasant. Of course, before using this, every effort will be made to contact you or any of the emergency contacts named by you. However, if we are unable to reach anyone with the authority over the child, this form becomes necessary. In the event of a non-serious injury, we will treat the child with ice packs, antiseptic, and band-aids, and give you a call to let you know what happened. Please refer to the section on illness and injury.

#### **Emergency Numbers**

You must provide us with emergency contacts. These contacts must also be on the Child Release & Carpool form in order for us to be able to release your child. Please make sure these contacts are aware that they are on the list. Also, make sure they are able to respond, e.g., they have a car, and are physically and mentally capable of picking up your child and understanding how to proceed in an emergency. These numbers will be used if your child becomes ill or injured or if it is late and no one has picked up your child. We will contact parents first and proceed through the list in order.

#### **Child Release Contacts & Car Pool**

List the names of any capable persons whom you will allow to pick up your child.

**WE WILL NOT RELEASE A CHILD TO ANYONE FOR WHOM WE HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN WRITTEN PERMISSION BY THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN TO DO SO. RELEASE BY TELEPHONE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

**\*\*ANY OTHER PERSON THAN THE USUAL PICK-UP PERSON MUST BE ON THE LIST, AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD, SHOW A PICTURE I.D. AND KNOW THE CHILD'S RELEASE PASSWORD.**

**WE WILL NOT RELEASE A CHILD TO ANYONE WHO IS INEBRIATED OR OTHERWISE DEEMED INCAPABLE BY OUR STAFF OF CONDUCTING THE CHILD HOME SAFELY.**

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Our lives after the World Trade Center and Pentagon disaster have left people concerned about the possibility of future incidents in the United States. With the war and the rising level of possible terrorist attacks, people can feel uncertain and stressed. We have set up some emergency procedures you should be aware of.

The school is on a reverse 911 list. We will be notified of all emergency situations in our area.

Please listen to Emergency Alert System Stations. WHUD, FM 100.7 will be called for our school and 1640 AM is the Rockland Resident Information Stations.

Because of the need for Emergency Preparedness, we have set these procedures in place.

In case there is an emergency evacuation at Y's Beginnings, all children will be evacuated to the following locations. Please ensure that we/I have the latest emergency contact names and telephone numbers for you and your emergency back-up adult who can be notified in case there is an emergency.

If we must evacuate to a location nearby, we will walk to Richard P. Connor Elementary School at 13 Cypress Road, Suffern, N.Y. 10901 (845) 357-2858. This location will be called Emergency Evacuation Location I.

If we cannot evacuate to location I, we will walk to Mahwah Elks Club at Foxwood Lane, Mahwah, N. J. 07430 (201) 529-2906. This location will be called Evacuation Location II.

A sign will be posted at the front entrance indicating which location we have evacuated to.

If a situation arises, chemical spill, etc., that we must "shelter in place" in the Downstairs Hall & Toddler Room, a sign will be posted at the front entrance of the building. If we shelter in place we will not be able to release the children until the emergency has passed. In that case, you should remain in your homes, etc. We also will notify class parents for each class to contact parents in any emergency.

Regarding Indian Point:

We are outside of the 10-mile zone, but they may change it to 20 miles. If this happens we will be given a location to transport to and buses will be used.

For all other emergencies, we will notify you to pick up your child from school.

No plan can ever completely address all problems. We will be adapting our plan to what the situation may be.

A good phone number to call for general emergency information is The Resident Information Network (845) 364-8990.

All teachers have emergency forms that you have completed. Please keep your emergency information updated! Thank you for your cooperation.

## HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES

### Medications

Medications will not be administered under any circumstances.

### Illness and Injury

#### At Home

Your child will not be able to get the most from his/her day if he/she isn't feeling well. Also, one sick child can lead to an epidemic. Please DO NOT send your child to school with:

diarrhea - - upset stomach - - complaint of unusual pain - - heavy cough  
discolored discharge from the nose - - conjunctivitis (pink eye)  
severe cold - - rash - - fever

A child must be without fever, diarrhea, or an upset stomach, or on an antibiotic treatment for 24 hours before they may return to the program. Any child requiring a throat culture should stay home until the results are known.

If your child happens to contract a contagious disease (e.g. chicken pox, conjunctivitis, etc.) please let the director know as soon as possible so that we may send a letter home to the other parents. Please call to let us know if your child will be absent for more than one week.

#### At School

Should your child become ill while attending the program, we will call you and/or your emergency contacts in their listed order, and ask that someone come to pick him/her up. Please have alternate plans ready in case a situation such as this does occur.

If a child becomes seriously injured or ill while at school, an ambulance will be called to take the child to Good Samaritan Hospital. The parents will be called and asked to meet us there. If a child is injured less seriously, the parents will be called immediately and together the teacher and parent will decide how to proceed. If a child receives a minor injury, they will be treated by the staff at the Pre-School and the adult picking up the child will be informed of the injury at dismissal time. The teacher's in your child's classroom are certified in CPR and First Aid.

## **REGISTRATION**

Registration for the following school year begins in January of the present year for children already enrolled in a program at the Pre-School. Registration for others begins in February. We recommend that all those currently enrolled take advantage of the grace period since the programs will fill, and we may not be able to accommodate you if you wait until the spring. The last months tuition and a \$50.00 processing fee must be paid at registration to ensure your child's September placement.

## **TUITION PAYMENT POLICIES**

Tuition is based on enrollment and not on attendance. Therefore, fees are due and payable even if the child is absent from the program. The program office must be notified at least two weeks in advance of the date that a child would be withdrawing.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

An Annual Rockland County Membership is required of all individuals to participate in any YMCA Program. Membership fees are non-refundable.

## **TERMS OF PAYMENT**

The yearly tuition is divided into 10 (ten) monthly payments, with the first payment being due on August 1<sup>st</sup>. Payments are payable in the form of a personal check, money order or credit card.

Please make payable to: Rockland County YMCA.

Please mail or drop off the payment to: Rockland County YMCA  
91 Washington Avenue  
Suffern, NY 10901

Payments charged to a major credit card can be done so in person at the Washington Avenue location, or by setting up a regular charge the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.

A written, signed request is required (these forms are available in the office).

Payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to make the payments when they are due. There is a \$40.00 bank fee for all returned checks. All account information and billing records are located at the Washington Avenue Office and may be reached at (845) 357-4404 during business hours.

## **LATE PAYMENTS**

The operation of the program requires that payments be made on time. A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged to any account after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

## **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

Scholarships may also be available for families in need, subject to the review of the Scholarship Committee. All information is kept confidential. Applications and further information are available from the Director.

## **WITHDRAWAL OR DISCHARGE OF A CHILD**

Two weeks notice is required for the voluntary withdrawal of a child. Current tuition fees will still be owed.

The Pre-School may at any time permanently or temporarily discharge a child if, in the sole discretion and opinion of the teachers and director, the child poses a behavior or management problem which threatens the safety or welfare of the child, other children, or staff, or is otherwise inappropriate for the program (e.g. he/she needs a more specialized program). The Pre-School can, in these instances, refer the parent to outside agencies which may be more appropriate for that child.

A child may also be discharged from the Pre-School for nonpayment of tuition. Please refer to the section concerning payment of tuition.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIME**

Parents/Guardians must accompany their children into the classroom each day and check in with the teacher. Parents/Guardians are asked to help remove outer clothing, being sure to hang them in the proper place. If your child is having a separation problem, please be prepared to spend some time with him/her in the classroom and/or in the building during this important period. Please do not leave the building until it is cleared by the teacher. Parents/Guardians are asked to come into the classroom at the end of class. Your child will then be released to you. If someone other than yourself is picking up your child, please be sure that it is a person already listed on your child release contacts & car pool form, or send in a signed note that day to give to the teacher or office.

## **LATE PICK-UP POLICY**

The Pre-School has the following policy concerning the late pick-up of a child:

The second time a child is not picked up at the close of his program:

A grace period of 15 minutes will be given.

Between 16 and 30 minutes late will result in a fine of \$10.

Between 31 and 45 minutes late will result in a fine of \$20.

Between 46 and 60 minutes late will result in a fine of \$30.

Any other times a child is not picked up at the close of his program:

Between 5 and 15 minutes late will result in a fine of \$10.

Between 16 and 30 minutes late will result in a fine of \$20.

Between 31 and 45 minutes late will result in a fine of \$30.

Between 46 and 60 minutes late will result in a fine of \$40.

If there are more than three offenses, the child's enrollment may be ended.

When a child is picked up late, it is inconvenient to staff, hurtful to the child, and illegal for the program. Please plan ahead for traffic, parking, etc. If on occasion when you know that you will be late, make arrangements with a friend or relative listed on the Pick-Up Authorization form to pick up your child. And remember to let us know of your plans.

## CLOSINGS

The Pre-School follows the Ramapo Central School District calendar (with a few exceptions). If the district closes due to weather conditions we will also close. If the School District delays opening, we may or may not cancel our morning programs, depending on the weather prediction. In any case, please listen to WHUD, 100.7 FM in the morning for an announcement, or call the Pre-School for a recorded message.

If weather conditions or another emergency necessitates the closing of the Pre-School during the course of the day, parents or the designated alternative emergency contact will be called and asked to pick up their children immediately.

## CLOTHING

Please bring in a bag with diapers, wipes, and a full change of clothes (including socks). Make sure you label the bag and clothes with your child's name. During the winter, please make sure that all coats, hats, mittens, sweaters and boots are labeled.

Dress your child comfortably. We do get messy, so old play clothes are best for toddler school. Please put sneakers or rubber-soled shoes on your child, as they make climbing easier and prevent slipping.

Weather permitting, the teachers will take the children outside for activities and play, so please dress your child accordingly.

## ITEMS FROM HOME

Do not bring in food for your child only.

Cuddlies (i.e. teddy bear, blanket, etc.) are welcome if they ease separation. Please label all items from home with your child's name.

We ask that no toys or other belongings are brought from home without special arrangement with the teacher. They can be lost, broken, or go home with the wrong person, leading to upset all around.

**The YMCA is not responsible for any lost or broken personal items!**

## SNACKS

The children enjoy sharing with each other. It is also very special to be the snack person for the day. If you would like to provide a snack for the class, a sign-up sheet will be posted outside the door on the bulletin board. We will provide the milk & water to drink. Healthy snacks only please!!! Any food allergies? Be sure the teacher is aware of them. **NO POPCORN, GRAPES, PEANUTS, PEANUT BUTTER SNACKS OR ANY SNACKS CONTAINING NUTS PLEASE!!!**

Here are some suggested snack items:

Fresh fruit or vegetables with or without dip, dried fruit, mild cheeses, spreads with crackers, mini-muffins, rice cakes, bagels, pretzel sticks, and granola bars.

Please avoid sugar, salt preservatives, and artificial ingredients. We prohibit candy or gum from being brought into the school. Please do not bring any chocolate snacks or any sugar type treats. We will have to send them back home, and this can be upsetting to your child.

Extra foods such as crackers are always on hand in case a child cannot eat the food provided for health or religious reasons.

All children will sit “family style” for snack at a table with at least one staff person sitting with them. Children will not be forced to eat anything.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are a very special event in the life of a young child. Since we believe each child is special, we wish to recognize individually each child’s birthday. Parents are welcome to send in a special treat. Please make arrangements at least one week in advance with your child’s teacher.

PLEASE DO NOT hand out party invitations as the school unless the entire class is going to receive one. Children’s feelings can be hurt. Your child’s teacher will be happy to provide you with addresses.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The School’s approach to guidance is a positive one which encourages self-control, self-esteem, and cooperation. Consistent, clearly-defined rules are given which assist in the smooth, healthy function of the class. Since children lack experience in expressing their feelings constructively and resolving conflict, we show and encourage them to express anger, sadness, frustration, and other emotions through words. We do not permit hitting, pushing, biting, or any other acts or threats of physical aggression by both adults and children. When a child displays such behavior, we acknowledge his/her right to feel mad, frustrated, or upset, and gently remind them that we use words not our hands, and show the child better ways to accomplish their goal, or ask the child to show us a better way (e.g. asking to share, telling another child to stop bothering him/her, ask an adult for help, etc.). At times, it may be necessary to separate a child from the group if his/her behavior continues to be unacceptable. What this means is having the child sit in a chair for a few minutes (one minute for each year of the child’s age). If a child does not respond to such feedback after repeated incidents, we may need to refer the parents elsewhere. Please refer to the section concerning withdrawal and discharge.

Teachers will avoid the use of competitive situations, comparative remarks, threats, shaming or labeling. At no time will hitting, spanking, shaking or slapping be used, nor will children be deprived of meals or toilet use as a means of punishment, nor will any child be confined in an enclosed area.

The best motivation for encouraging positive behavior is modeling, praise, high expectations, and the child’s own inward satisfaction.

## **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Some of our most valuable communication concerning the child comes at drop-off and pick-up times. Please feel free to express concerns, ask questions, comment, or let us know of any changes anytime. Conferences may be scheduled at times if the parents or teachers feel it is necessary or desirable.

If there are any happenings at home, please let the teacher know, even if you cannot say what those happenings are. "Things have been stressful at home" can be enough to let us know to expect behavior changes in the child, or to understand why the child is acting differently. We can be of immense help to your child, assisting him in any adjustments, if only we know enough to be able to help. Even what to an adult is considered a change for the better (e.g. Grandma is visiting; a new bed; etc.) can result in a difference in behavior which can surprise and perplex the staff if we don't know why it is occurring. Try to keep us informed.

## **NOTICES**

Newsletters and notices will be sent home with your child. Please take the time to read these so you don't miss any special activities or events. Remember – if it weren't important, we wouldn't bother telling you about it.

## **ENTRANCE AND EXIT**

**\*\*THE CHURCH HAS REQUESTED THAT CHILDREN & PARENTS PLEASE ENTER AND EXIT THROUGH THE DOWNSTAIRS SCHOOL DOOR, NOT THE UPPER CHURCH DOOR.\*\***

**ONLY CHILDREN ASSIGNED TO THE UPSTAIRS CLASSROOM  
MAY USE THE UPPER CHURCH DOOR.**

## **PARKING**

The following rules have been put into place to ensure the safety of the children in the parking lot. To avoid a tragedy, we ask everyone to adhere to the following:

1. Enter parking lot SLOWLY following arrows in and out.
2. Pull into space straight and fully.
3. **Do not park along the curb, as it is a FIRE ZONE.**
4. Park in designated parking spaces only. Wait for a spot or park in the street if the lot is full. We will always take good care of your child while they wait.
5. Please make sure to hold your child's hand in the parking lot at all times.  
MRS. McCARTHY'S RULES!!!
6. **WATCH FOR CHILDREN AT ALL TIMES.**
7. Do not linger outside the building, as children will run into the parking area or woods.
8. Pick up your child at designated times & leave promptly to allow other parents parking.

**YOUR FULL COOPERATION & PATIENCE IS REQUIRED. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT OUR CHILDREN ARE SAFE.**

\*\*\* Please note: If you are dropping off/picking up more than fifteen (15) minutes from your scheduled class time, please check in at the office first.

### **CLOSING COMMENTS**

We are excited about meeting new friends and families! Please be assured that the staff is a group of very qualified, loving concerned individuals, who have your child's best interests at heart. Remember, communication is a must. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time about your child's development.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,

*Janey McCarthy*

Janey McCarthy  
Director