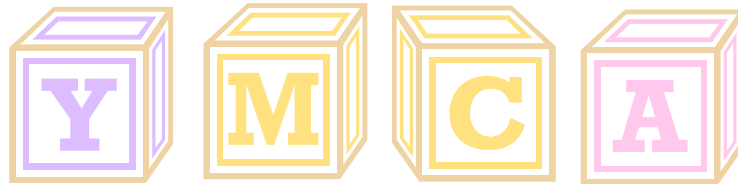


ROCKLAND COUNTY

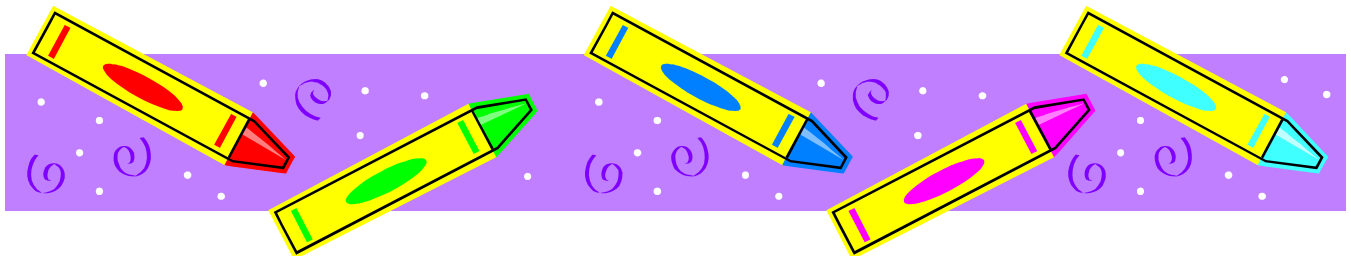


CHILDREN'S CENTER



Parent's Handbook

91 Washington Avenue
Suffern, NY 10901
845-357-4404



OPENING STATEMENT

The YMCA Children's Center is a division of the Rockland County Young Men's Christian Association. The Y Children's Center is a non-profit organization serving children toddler through kindergarten age. We are dedicated to providing quality programs to children from diverse economic, social and ethnic backgrounds. Our purpose is to provide needed care and protection, and to promote the physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth of each child while building a strong sense of self-esteem. The YMCA has operated Nursery programs since 1968, pioneered programs for toddlers, and established numerous child care centers. The Y Children's Center is licensed by the New York State Department of Social Services to operate a full-day program. Thanks to the generosity of local and state governments, businesses, educational, civic and community organizations, fund-raising events, volunteers, individual support and tuition, we are able to provide this greatly needed service for young children.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world that we live in.

In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, listening, smelling and looking).

In using real materials such as blocks and trying out their ideas, children learn about sizes, shapes, and colors, and they notice relationships between things.

In time, they learn to use one object to stand for another. This is the beginning of symbolic thinking. For example, they might pretend a stick is an airplane or a block is a hamburger. These early symbols - the stick and the block - are similar in shape to the objects they represent. Gradually children become more and more able to use abstract symbols like words to describe their thoughts and feelings. They learn to "read" pictures, which are symbols of real people, places and things. This exciting development in symbolic thinking takes place during the early childhood years as children play.

Play provides the foundation for academic or "school" learning. It is the preparation children need before they learn highly abstract symbols such as letters (which are symbols for sounds) and numbers (which are symbols for number concepts.). Play enables us to achieve the key goals of our early childhood curriculum. Play is the work of young children.

GOALS

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

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development:

- Social: to help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are part of a group.
- Emotional: to help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.
- Cognitive: to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- Physical: to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule and talk with children, are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.

PROGRAMS

The YMCA Children's Center offers NYS Licensed Day Care programs for children 18 months to 5 years.

TODDLER

Children between the ages of eighteen months and three years are eligible for this childcare program.

The toddler program is a developmentally appropriate program, that is designed to meet the individual needs of toddlers to explore sand, water, play dough, crayons, paint, music, indoor and outdoor climbing, bikes and one to one time with a teacher. Two nutritious snacks and lunch and a naptime are provided.

Each day's schedule will be flexible so that it is dictated by the children's needs. At the same time, the sequence of the day's events is predictable to help children feel secure.

The classroom will be divided into interest areas including small group play, a quiet area, exploratory activities, dramatic play, and construction.

Equipment is provided which supports solitary and parallel play (i.e., duplicates of the same toys).

Each day, time is provided for staff to read and sing to toddlers individually and in-groups. In addition, other opportunities for language exploration will be provided, including flannel boards, puppets, etc.

Opportunities to enjoy music will be provided, including a variety of recorded music and rhythm instruments.

Opportunity to explore and manipulate art materials will be provided with paints, glue, crayons, markers, paper and other materials. Also, opportunities will be provided for other exploratory play, such as sand and water play.

Opportunities for large muscle development will be provided indoors and outdoors, including climbing, crawling, riding and running.

Materials will be provided which aid in the development of pretend play (dress-up clothes, household play equipment, dolls, puppets, etc.).

Materials will be provided which aid in the development of matching, understanding cause-and-effect relationships, and the development of problem solving.

PRE SCHOOL

Children between the ages of three and four years are eligible for this program.

The Pre School child care program is planned to provide a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences allowing a child to develop social and other learning skills at an individually suited pace. Incorporated into the daily schedule is an appropriate balance of active and quiet type experiences, indoor and outdoor experiences and those, which are choice and planned. Two nutritious snacks, lunch and a rest time are also provided.

The programs for these children will be based on individual differences in the abilities of the children, their developmental levels, their interests, and their own approaches to learning.

Children will be given opportunities to plan and select their own activities from among a variety of interest areas provided, including dramatic play, construction, science and math, manipulative, listening, art and music.

Group activity time is provided daily, both with the entire class and in smaller groups.

Teachers will interact with individuals to help children acquire new skills and understandings.

Positive guidance techniques will be used to assist in the development of social skills, self-control, and self-regulation.

The curriculum will include a variety of disciplines, such as math, science, and social studies. The projects, play and other learning experiences will be used so that children can explore and develop key concepts, achieve important developmental and learning goals, and make connections across disciplines.

Opportunities will be provided daily to develop children's language and literacy skills through, for example, stories and poems, seeing print in use, dramatic play, experimenting with writing, and dictation.

Opportunities will be provided daily to develop children's aesthetic expressions and appreciation through art and music. Opportunities will be provided daily to support children's fine and large motor development.

The diversity among the children will be used to develop cultural activities so that each child will have the opportunity to share his or her home culture and language.

2008 Child Care Fees

Toddler Room & Pre-School Room

\$225 weekly if attending full time

\$60 per day if attending part time

Upon registration a \$30 processing fee ,along with a youth membership to the YMCA at a cost of \$75 is due; along with a two weeks deposit.

The two-week deposit will be used towards the last two weeks of attendance.

\$450 to reserve a full time placement

\$360 to reserve a placement for three days

\$240 to reserve a placement for two days

Registration must be received at least one week prior to the child's starting date.

Weekly payments are due each Monday of the week in which childcare is provided. Payments not received by Thursday of the week that care is provided are subject to a late fee. If payment is delinquent, the Y reserves the right to remove a child from the program.

All checks should be made payable to the Rockland YMCA. Payments must be sent directly to:

The Rockland County YMCA
91 Washington Avenue
Suffern, NY 10901
Attn: Early Childhood Registrar

ALL PAYMENTS ARE NON REFUNDABLE

It is the policy of the Rockland County YMCA that, subject to available YMCA resources, no person shall be denied participation in a program due to his or her inability to pay the prescribed fees. Financial assistance is allocated from funds donated to the YMCA through the Annual Support Campaign, the United Way and the Rockland County Legislature. Financial Assistance may take the form of reduced payments and/or a special payment program.

TUITION PAYMENT POLICIES

Tuition is based on enrollment and not on attendance. Therefore fees are due and payable even if a child is absent from the center, regardless of the reason for the absence, including vacation, and illness. Full tuition is expected when the center is closed for holidays and emergencies. The center must be notified, in writing, at least two weeks in advance of the date a child will be withdrawing. If this is not done, the full tuition will be charged until another child is found to fill the slot.

TERMS OF PAYMENTS

The center operates 52 weeks of the year and childcare fees are divided into 52 equal payments. Payment is due by the first day of each week, one week in advance of services.

Payments are payable in the form of a personal check or money order (made out to the Rockland County YMCA). No bills will be issued. It is the responsibility of the parents to make payments when they are due. Receipts will be issued upon request.

All payments must be sent to:
Rockland County YMCA
91 Washington Avenue
Suffern, NY 10901

TUITION ASSISTANCE

Scholarships may also be available for families of demonstrable need, subject to review by the Scholarship Committee. For more information and applications, see the Program director, Rose Marie Mursch.

REGISTRATION

A \$30 fee is payable at the time of registration and is not refundable.

LATE PAYMENTS

The operation of the center requires that payments be made on time. A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for any account one week overdue. Families, who fall behind by more than 30 days, will forfeit their placement at the center.

MEMBERSHIP

An annual membership fee is required in all YMCA programs.

Youth membership is \$75.00

ATTENDANCE AND CLOSING

All childcare children should arrive at the center by 9 AM to enable them to participate fully in the day's activities. Children attending the full day childcare programs may be brought to the center no earlier than 7 AM. The center closes promptly at 5:30 PM.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

Parents must accompany their children into the classroom each day and check in with the teacher. ***Parents must sign their child in and out each day.*** Parents are also asked to help remove outer clothing, being sure to hang them in the proper area. This not only insures the safety of the children but also provides an opportunity for parent, teacher communication. If your child is attending for the first time, please be prepared to spend some time with him/her in the classroom. We recommend at least a half an hour per day for the first week.

Children must be picked up promptly. The center closes at 5:30 PM sharp. If you are late, there is the following late fee, which is strictly enforced:

FEE: \$10.00 for 6 to 15 minutes 5:30 – 5:45
\$20.00 for 16 to 30 minutes 5:46 - 6:00
\$30.00 for 31 to 45 minutes 6:01 – 6:15
\$40.00 for 46 to 60 minutes 6:16 – 6:30

Tardy parents will be asked to sign a late slip by a YMCA staff member, who will submit a written report to the YMCA office. If there are three offenses, parents risk losing their spot in the program.

For the safety of your child, he/she will be released only to persons whose names have been given to us by you as being authorized to pick up your child.

When picking up your child, always notify a YMCA staff member that you are taking your child and sign out for the day. To insure the safety of children, parents and staff, the following rules have been implemented:

1. Do not leave your car running in the parking lot.
2. Do not allow your child to run or walk unaccompanied in the parking area.
3. Do not leave children unattended in a car.
4. Do not send siblings to pick up your child, no one under the age of 16 will be allowed to pick up your child.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

In case of snow or other emergency, parents are advised to listen to **WHUD (100.7 FM)** for notification if the center will be closed or on a delay. If weather conditions or other emergency should necessitate closing during the course of the day, parents/guardian, or their designated alternates will be contacted to pick up their children immediately.

HEALTH CONCERNS

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS- The regulations of the State of New York require that your child be immunized against diphtheria tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, mumps and HIB bacteria. Physical examinations and all necessary immunizations must have been performed within 30 days prior to admission. **New medical forms must be submitted each year. A medical form is included in the enrollment packet and must be signed by a physician.**

MEDICATIONS- **Under the provision of the New York State Education Law, persons in childcare centers can dispense prescription and orally-administered over-the-counter medications upon written authorization of the parent and written instructions from a health care provider, a copy of which must be on file at the center.** The order must state that the YMCA Children's Center is permitted to administer the specific medication to the child in question. The medication must be in the original container with the child's name clearly written. The parent must request in writing that the center administer the medication. The center has developed a prescription medication request to be used for this purpose.

If a child becomes ill at the center, parents will be called at work or at an emergency number. Kindly keep your emergency information current. **A child sent home ill must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the center.**

Please call in on contagious diseases (chicken pox, strep, conjunctivitis, etc.) as soon as diagnosis is made so we may inform other parents. A physician's note is required upon return to the center.

FIRST AID AND EMERGENCIES- The staff is prohibited from giving any treatment other than first aid and then only if the injury occurs at the center. The center will maintain emergency phone numbers for each child. Each list will include both your work and home phone numbers and the phone number of a neighbor or relative in case you cannot be reached.

All children must have a notarized medical emergency treatment form on file with the center. This form gives the center the authority to get emergency medical treatment, if we cannot reach either parent or guardian.

ALLERGIES– Allergy lists are posted in every classroom for the safety and well being of your child. If your child has any new allergies or is not able to tolerate certain foods, please inform the center.

NUTRITION– Children enrolled, depending upon the hours of attendance and program, receive one or more nutritious snacks and a lunch. Please do not send your child in with candy, gum or soda. Good nutrition is emphasized at our center.

Health checks are made daily by the staff. This includes checking the children for signs of child abuse and molestation. According to the State Day Care Rules and Regulations, we are unable to accept at the center any child with a diagnosed communicable disease (measles, mumps, chicken, pox, etc.). Therefore, please do not bring your sick child to the center having signs of diarrhea, abnormal temperature, skin rash or pink eye. If a child becomes ill at the center, the parent will be notified and must pick up the child immediately. The child will remain isolated until the parent arrives.

In order to protect your child and the others at the center; please keep your child home when:

1. **Rectal and/or digital temperature of 101F:** A child should be presumed ill who has an elevation the night before attendance. If temperature is “normal” only with Tylenol, your child is still contagious.
2. **Diarrhea:** Listless children with 2 or more loose, watery stools generally have an infectious diarrhea and should be kept home. Please do not return you child until bowel movements are normal and fluid intake is good.
3. **Vomiting:** A child who has vomited more than once in the preceding 12 hours should be kept home. He/she should be able to tolerate a regular diet during the day. If vomiting occurs at the center, it will be cause to send your child home.
4. **Upper respiratory symptoms** should be presumed to mean acute infectious illness, for which your child should be kept home. These symptoms are: **profuse nasal discharge, recurrent sneezing and/ cough, listlessness** and inability to keep up the day’s activities or fever. Asthma related problems are excluded from this.
5. **Undiagnosed rash** – Unless specifically diagnosed by your doctor as non-contagious, the center will send home any child who has or develops a rash during the day.

6. Specific infectious diseases or communicable conditions and appropriate recuperation times:

- a. **Otitis Media Ear Infection** – Your child should be free from ear pain and symptoms of upper respiratory illness. Properly labeled medication will be administered during the day only upon a physician’s written authorization to the center.
- b. **Chicken Pox** – The rash generally erupts for three days. Your child is contagious until the last lesion has a dry crust. This usually takes seven days.
- c. **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)** – Under treatment, with no further eye discharge.
- d. **Impetigo (Staph Infection)** – Under treatment with antibiotic by mouth for 24 hours. If topical medication is being used at your doctor’s recommendation, a note that he/she is not contagious is required.
- e. **Ringworm** – A skin fungus infection, it may be treated orally or topically. Once diagnosed and treatment has begun, your child may return.
- f. **Scabies** – A very contagious skin infection. Child may return 24 hours after treatment.
- g. **Head Lice** – An infectious insect in the scalp hair. Child may return 24 hours after treatment but must be nit free.
- h. **Pinworm** – A parasitic intestinal infection. Child may return 24 hours after the family has been treated by a physician.
- i. **Roseola** – A viral infection with a rash following fever. Child may return when rash is gone.
- j. **Bronchitis or Bronchiolitis** – infectious upper respiratory illness. Child may Return when free from fever for 24 hours and has no symptoms of upper respiratory illness.
- k. **Meningitis or Encephalitis** – serious illness of the central nervous system. Your child may return when free from fever for 24 hours and has not symptoms of upper respiratory illness.
- l. **Cammpylocacter, Shingella** – Other infectious diarrhea diseases requiring medical treatment. Child may return when your doctor determines that stool cultures are negative and documents that your child is no longer contagious.
- m. **Strep throat** – A bacterial pharyngitis. Child may return after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.

Parents will be required to bring in a physician’s note allowing children to return to the center for all of the above illnesses.

Please inform the center if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease. The center will notify parents if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease. These precautions are taken for the protection of your child as well as the other children entrusted to our care.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Visiting the center – You may visit the center any time during the hours of operation, no appointment is necessary. We encourage parents to contribute their time and talents to the programs.

Progress reports / Conferences – Sharing of information about the child's progress and experiences in the program is vital to the parents as well as the child. Therefore, progress reports will be sent home at least once a year. Please review and bring any comments or concerns to your child's teachers. If you feel there are issues you would like to further address, a conference can be scheduled.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is also a part of the curriculum for young children. We have two basic rules for the whole center. (1) This is a safe place. Therefore we will not allow you to hurt yourself or hurt anyone else. (2) You may not destroy anyone's property. This includes center toys, equipment, other children's block building and artwork. Obviously we need to help young children learn about what this means. Young children need to feel that they have ownership before they can share. Therefore it is not appropriate to tell children under the age of three that they have to share. We try to have two or more of the toys that the children especially enjoy. In the toddler room we try to redirect the child or distract them with something else. We put our statements in positive words rather than negative. We say "use walking feet" not "don't run". We say, "bean bags are for throwing", not "don't throw toys".

In our center we tell children, "Use your words." When young children are angry or frustrated they may resort to hitting, kicking, screaming or even biting. They do not have the vocabulary to express anger. We try to help by saying, "You feel angry that Joey took the toy you were using." We then try to give the children the words that they need to use to solve situations. The younger the child the more difficult this is but we continue to help children find the words.

Toddlers sometimes bite. They bite because they are teething, it feels good, they get a reaction from another child, or because they are frustrated. With toddlers, we first soothe the child who has been bitten and then talk to the biter.

We try to let children know what will happen next. We give them warnings when it is ten, five and two minutes to clean up time. We try to make transitions smooth for the children by singing songs or making up games for clean up or lining up, etc. We always help so that we are modeling the behavior that we expect from the children.

We avoid many discipline problems by having realistic expectations for young children. We expect them to spill, make messes, argue with friends, jump in the mud and sometimes say “NO”. We also prepare the environment so that what is at a child’s level is meant for them to use. We appreciate the differences among children and are aware that when a child is hungry, tired, frustrated or bored they may not be able to follow our directions.

The best motivations for encouraging positive behavior are modeling, praise, realistic expectations and the child’s own inward satisfaction.

In keeping with our rule that we will not allow anyone to hurt anyone else, we will work with a child to try to correct the situation. If our efforts are not productive and the safety of the other children is at stake, it may be necessary to ask a child to leave the center. The center may not be the best place for the child at this time. The child may need more attention than the staff at the center can provide.

ACCESSORY ITEMS

Clothing – All children are encouraged to participate in all activities at the center and are to be dressed appropriately. Weather permitting, we plan to take the children outdoors every day (snowy days included). Whenever possible, children should wear clothes and shoes with simple fastening. Sneakers are safest for play.

Things to bring – **extra clothing** – shirt, pants, socks, underwear, sweater, sweatshirt, to be left at center, toddlers also need diapers, wipes, bottles, etc. Clearly label all items to avoid loss and confusion, and store them in a bag with handles or in a labeled shoebox.

Nap time – a small pillow, small blanket and/or a special item for comfort.

Toys – for the safety and protection of your child, be certain that he/she does not bring in broken or any projectile toys to the center. Books and records from home are always welcome. **Guns and weapons are not acceptable play items at our center.** The YMCA Children’s Center will not be responsible for lost or broken personal items. Any item brought in is the responsibility of the child. A rule of thumb for bringing in toys, “If it doesn’t fit in the cubby, don’t bring it!”

MISCELLANEOUS

Birthday Parties – Birthdays are a very special event in the life of a young child. Since we believe that each child is special, we wish to recognize individually each child's birthday. Parents are welcome to supplement our classroom snack with a special treat. Please make arrangements at least one day in advance with your child's teacher.

Notices and Newsletters – Frequent notices are sent home to advise parents of center events. We often pass along important and interesting information about what is happening in the field of childcare and parenting. Articles from parents and friends are welcome.

CLOSING COMMENTS

As your child's first teacher, you have provided love, nurturance, and education for your child during his/her life. We look forward to getting to know you and your child and hope that you will share the knowledge and understanding that you have about your child and family with us so that we can build our partnership with you in caring for and educating your child.

Very truly yours,

Rose

Rose Marie Mursch
Program Director

YMCA Children's Center
91 Washington Avenue
Suffern, New York 10901

I understand and agree to the YMCA Children's Center policies as outlined in the Parent Handbook and will comply with them while my child is enrolled at the center.

Signature:

(Parent/Guardian)

(Child's Name)

(Date)