



NORSAC School Age Child Care Parents Handbook 2009/2010

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Introduction

We'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the YMCA/North Rockland School Age Care program (YMCA/NORSAC). All children regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, special need or ability to pay tuition are welcome to join our program. Programs are filled on a first come first served basis. If the program is filled when a parent calls, the child's name will be placed on a wait list to fill vacancies as they occur. This handbook is created to answer the most common questions parents may have regarding this program. Please keep this document as a reference during the course of the year if you are uncertain of any policies and/or procedures at the YMCA/NORSAC program.

Our History

The North Rockland School Age Care Program (YMCA/NORSAC) was developed by Child Care Resources of Rockland (CCRR) in 1981 in response to concern for the growing number of school age children who were being left unsupervised after school hours. Starting in September 2009, the YMCA/NORSAC program will be administered through the Rockland County YMCA.

Our Philosophy

We recognize that school age children spend 80% of their waking hours out of school and that this time can have a powerful and positive effect on their growth and development. We believe that children do not stop learning simply because they have left the classroom. When children play in a healthy environment, they learn to cooperate, to acquire new skills and sharpen old ones, to make decisions, accept responsibility and initiate activities. Our main focus is the social and emotional development of children.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe, caring, and stimulating environment that supports our philosophy in which children can grow and learn at their own pace. We strive for parents, as well as staff to be facilitators for that growth.

Program Content

Each day your child will be supervised at a ration of 10 children to one trained YMCA/NORSAC staff member. Children will choose from a variety of experiences both quiet and active, such as arts and crafts, gross motor activities, reading, indoor games and outdoor activities. Your child will be able to begin/complete their homework with the assistance of YMCA/NORSAC staff. A group sharing time and snack time will take place daily as well.

Hours of Operation

The YMCA/NORSAC program follows the North Rockland School District calendar. Our program is open every full school day. The AM program begins at 7am and operates until the start of the school day, including half days. The K-Care Program starts at school dismissal and closes at 6:30pm. The PM program starts at school dismissal and concludes at 6:30pm. The YMCA/NORSAC PM programs do not run on half days.

Inclement Weather/Emergency Closings

YMCA/NORSAC will be closed when school is cancelled in the morning or when school is dismissed early for snow and other emergencies. The AM program will be closed if there is a delayed opening. If school is open but cancels after school activities, YMCA/NORSAC PM will operate that day.

For updated announcements regarding YMCA/NORSAC closings, call (845) 942-7607.

Staff

All YMCA/NORSAC staff are required to receive trainings each year in medication administration, CPR, First Aid, child development, regulations, nutrition, security, child abuse protection and best practices. All YMCA/NORSAC staff are fingerprinted and cleared through the NYS registry.

Program Director- Supervises the entire YMCA/NORSAC program. The Program Director may be contacted at (845) (845) 942-7607 for any issues, questions, or concerns that may not be addressed at the site level.

Site Director- Must have a minimum of two years of college, Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or Child Development Equivalency credits AND at least two years experience working with children. Site Directors are also required to obtain at least 15 hours a year in training, as well as attend monthly Site Director meetings.

Assistants- Required to obtain at least 15 hours a year in training.

Program Nurse –Trains staff on specific health needs of the children and develops a program Health Care Plan that is filed accessible at each site.

Administrative Assistant – Receives YMCA/NORSAC tuition and other related fees, processes monthly credit card payments and is available for YMCA/NORSAC parents regarding payment questions at 845-942-7621.

Orientation

The YMCA/NORSAC program will offer a formal orientation for parents before the school year begins. This is an opportunity for everyone to get better acquainted and for questions to be addressed. For those families entering the program after the start of the school year, we offer a private orientation. Additionally, the YMCA/NORSAC Director, Administrative Assistant and Site Directors orient parents via telephone and/or in person regarding missing components of the application, individual family concerns and a tour of your child's YMCA/NORSAC site.

Parent Involvement

As a child care program, we believe an association between parents and staff is in the best interests of the children. We maintain an open door policy and welcome parent visits at all times.

We encourage parents to take part in the YMCA/NORSAC program by sharing personal experiences with the other children and staff; cultural traditions, language, hobbies, careers and any other special interests. At the start of the school year, YMCA/NORSAC will distribute a survey to assess which activities you may wish to share with your child's group.

Communication

YMCA/NORSAC offers many opportunities and welcomes parent and child communication feedback. Feel free to touch base with staff daily. Each year we ask parents and children to complete a questionnaire. We value the results of these surveys that help us make program improvements. Each site has a parent center that contains information about YMCA/NORSAC, the community at large and a suggestion box.

Required Forms

In order for our staff to care for your child, it is important for us to have all of the following documents:

- **Child's application**
- **Blue Emergency Card**
- **Medical Forms and/or Court Documents** -special circumstances only

Registration and Fees

An annual non-refundable registration fee is due at time of enrollment. The registration fee made before July 1st is \$35; anytime thereafter, the fee is \$75.

YMCA/NORSAC's budget is based on the cost of providing care for your child per day, multiplied by the number of calendar days in the school year. The total cost is then divided into ten equal monthly tuition payments.

Monthly tuition is due by the 15th of the previous month. Any questions regarding fiscal matters should be directly addressed to the YMCA/NORSAC main office at 845-942-7607.

Tuition Assistance

If you find that you need help paying for your child to attend the YMCA/NORSAC program we offer the following possible solutions:

- YMCA/NORSAC accepts child care subsidy monies through the Office of Children and Family Services. To find out if you qualify call (845) 574-4600.
- Families that do not qualify for child care subsidy monies may apply for our scholarship program funded by the Rockland County YMCA and the Rockland County Youth Bureau. You may call the Program Director at (845) 942-7607 for an application. This form must be submitted with your most current tax return, copies of two recent pay stubs and/or a copy of your bursar's receipt from college to be considered.

Funding

The Rockland County Youth Bureau has provided a scholarship fund for families that meet eligibility requirements. YMCA/NORSAC participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) as well as Eat Well, Play Hard in order to promote healthier eating and increased physical activities among children. This year we are pleased to be receiving additional funding from Orange & Rockland Utilities to help with training staff to improve the gross motor portion of our program.

Change of Enrollment/Withdrawal

If you need to change your child's enrollment or withdraw them from the program we require notice in writing. All families wishing to add to or discontinue services should complete the applicable forms – Change of Enrollment/ Letter of Withdrawal. Unless written notice is received by the YMCA/NORSAC main office you will continue to be charged and will be held responsible for the payments.

Signing Your Child In/Out

Parents are required to escort their children into the AM program and sign them in. In the afternoon, parents are required to sign their children out of the program. A comment area is provided for special reminders for the staff.

For the safety of the children, only the legal parent or guardian will be permitted to pick children up unless we have written permission from the parent on the pick up list in the application. **No child will be released without advance written permission from the parent.** Any person picking up YMCA/NORSAC children should be prepared to present identification.

Late Pick Up

Please be aware that the YMCA/NORSAC program closes and is only insured until 6:30pm. Therefore, it is extremely important for you to make every attempt to be on time.

Parents/Guardians picking up their children after 6:30pm will be charged a \$20 late fee. Families with three (3) late pick-ups will be asked to withdraw from the program. YMCA/NORSAC reserves the right to involve the assistance of the police for any child that is not picked up by 7pm.

Transportation

YMCA/NORSAC children will be transported to their designated YMCA/NORSAC sites from their home school (if the YMCA/NORSAC program does not take place at their home school), by the North Rockland School District.

AM Kindergarten children enrolled in YMCA/NORSAC will be bussed from Neary, North Garnerville, Stony Point and Thiells to the K-Care Program and West Haverstraw Elementary School. Farley and Willow Grove children will be bussed to Haverstraw Middle School. It is the parent's full responsibility to provide transportation from the YMCA/NORSAC program. All YMCA/NORSAC staff are prohibited from transporting children enrolled in YMCA/NORSAC.

Field Trips

Occasionally YMCA/NORSAC will take children for walks or hikes off school property. We consider any time we leave school property to be a field trip, whether it is on foot or by bus. Therefore, you will receive written notice from us with details about the trip. You will need to give written permission for your child to participate in any field trip we take during the year. We do not participate in trips that require motor vehicle transportation

Special Needs

YMCA/NORSAC enrolls children who may have specific needs that pertain to their mental or physical health and well-being. There is a section on the application that pertains to the IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Please provide us with a copy of your child's IEP or any information that may help the staff to make YMCA/NORSAC more accommodating for your child.

In a case of medical emergency during YMCA/NORSAC, the staff will administer first aid and you will be notified. However, if we are unable to reach you, we will contact those people you have designated as your emergency contacts. If additional medical attention is required, the staff will call the local ambulance service, which will transport your child and one staff member to the local hospital.

Child Protection

Staff is required to report any suspected incidents of child abuse or maltreatment to the State Central Registry of Child Abuse and Maltreatment. As a NYS licensed child care program, ALL YMCA/NORSAC staff are mandated reporters.

Illness and Injuries

If your child should become ill, we will notify you immediately. Your child will be taken to an isolated area and kept as comfortable as possible by a YMCA/NORSAC staff member until you are able to pick him/her up. In the event any child in the program contract a communicable disease, parents will be notified in writing. No child may return to YMCA/NORSAC until contagion has passed.

Medication

If your child requires medication, you must contact the YMCA/NORSAC Program Director at 845-942-7607. She will need you and your physician to complete additional forms and will provide a safe place for the medication to be stored. Under no circumstances will children be permitted to self medicate.

Behavior

When a child demonstrates a new skill or participates in a new learned activity, the parents may receive a written report explaining the event. If a child is demonstrating unacceptable behavior he/she will be given a warning. If the child cannot continue to play appropriately, staff will assist in redirecting them to another area.

YMCA/NORSAC will not punish a child or ask the child to do something they are not developmentally capable of (example – separation from the other children for a long period of time, excessive time out or excessive time at homework and not allowing an child snack or outdoor play).

Parents may be given behavior reports on a regular basis to keep them informed of ongoing behavior issues. If a child continues to demonstrate inappropriate behavior, parents will be asked to attend a conference to work on possible solutions. **YMCA/NORSAC reserves the right to suspend or remove any child from the program.**

Cell Phones

Children are not permitted to talk on personal cell phones during YMCA/NORSAC hours. YMCA/NORSAC staff is supplied with phones to use in case of emergency ONLY. Below is a staff directory to be used in case of emergency.

Stony Point Elementary.....	845-596-3459
Thiells Elementary.....	845-596-0875
West Haverstraw Elementary.....	845-596-2505
K-Care.....	845-596-5414
Haverstraw Middle School.....	845-596-0701

Personal Items

Personal items that children bring from home may become lost, stolen or broken. YMCA/NORSAC staff cannot be held responsible for personal belongings. YMCA/NORSAC has many varied activities and program materials for your child to use during their time with us.

Food and Beverages

YMCA/NORSAC provides food that is recommended through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Eat Well, Play Hard program. All morning programs include an AM Snack. All afternoon programs include a PM Snack. The K-Care program includes lunch and PM Snack. Children and staff should not bring in any food or beverages from outside the program. **YMCA/NORSAC is peanut-free program.**

Homework Policy

A homework contract is included in your child's application and must be completed by you and your child. We at the YMCA/NORSAC program agree to provide homework assistance in a quiet area. We will not force a child to do homework.

Community Networking

The YMCA/NORSAC program encourages relations with outside entities in order to educate the children, parents and staff about our community. These include:

- Visits from various community members (i.e., police officers, fire fighters)
- Providing community information to the YMCA/NORSAC parents (i.e., pamphlets)
- Children's participation in community service (i.e., playground, park clean-up)
- Children visiting local community services (i.e., bank, post office)

Each year the staff plans an activity with the children that involves giving back to the community. Your child's Site Director will notify you when this event will occur.

YMCA/NORSAC holds an annual fundraiser. The profit from these events pays for activities that benefit the children.

No Smoking Policy

YMCA/NORSAC follows the New York State Law prohibiting smoking inside school buildings or on school grounds.

Closing

At YMCA/NORSAC we believe that an open relationship between parent, staff and child is needed to operate a successful program. We encourage you to speak to your Site Staff, Director, and Fiscal Department as the need arises.

