



CHILDCARE PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2024

Gonzales YMCA Program Center
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Gonzales, TX
(830) 263-3031

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Dear Parents,

The YMCA of the Golden Crescent is extremely pleased to provide a Childcare Program for your child. By selecting the YMCA Childcare program, you are giving your child(ren) the opportunity to benefit from a quality program with a foundation of YMCA traditions and many years of experience serving children and their families.

We offer a staff of counselors that are trained in effective supervision and a positive approach to promoting the well-being of every child physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. Our programs are well-balanced with recreational, character development, and enrichment programs.

This parent handbook has been designed to answer your questions, promote communication between our staff and your family, and assist you in understanding our policies and procedures. The policies outlined in this handbook are intended to protect your child (ren) and to ensure that his /her experience with our Childcare Program is positive and rewarding.

Please read the handbook carefully and in its entirety with your child(ren) and refer to it as needed.

Sincerely,
YMCA Childcare Management Staff

OUR MISSION

To put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

YMCA POLICY

The YMCA prohibits behavior, which is inappropriate, relating to profanity, abusive language/behavior, sexual harassment, or removal of YMCA Property.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe in creating an environment for children where they have the freedom to explore experience, inquire, and discover while developing their maximum potential.

OUR GOAL

To provide the widest range of fulfilling programs to serve the changing needs of the community. We strive to help individuals develop intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

- Enrollment shall be open to any child, provided the program can meet the needs of that child.
- Enrollment shall be granted without discrimination regarding race, color, creed, religion, or political beliefs.
- Children must be enrolled in the program before they can attend.
- The enrollment form must be completely filled out to attend.

TERMINATION POLICY

Program participants may be asked to withdraw from the program for the following reasons:

1. Delinquency in fee payment with no immediate payment forthcoming.
2. The child shows an inability to adjust to the program rules, after all methods, including parent conferences, have been tried to affect a behavior change.
3. Parents are late twice in picking up a child.

POLICY UPDATES

Policies will be updated annually. Parents will be informed of any updates in person. Parents may request a copy of the changes. If parent is not available in person they will receive an email or text to inform them of policy changes.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

We are committed to creating an environment where all children thrive, including children with special needs. A child with special needs is one whom it has been determined requires special attention and/or accommodations based on physical, cognitive or behavioral challenges that the child may face. We desire to work with every child, but we must note that there are some circumstances where we cannot effectively meet the needs of the child.

Parents are required to complete the "Special Requests/Needs" section on our registration form. This helps us learn about your child's needs and their ability to manage everyday tasks or situations that our common in our program. Y staff will make a determination of whether or not the child needs one-to-one care and what program accommodations can be made. Based on its current funding levels, our childcare programs are not able to provide one-to-one staffing. This does not mean that children who require such care are excluded from the program, but only that the program cannot provide additional staff to meet that need. Where providing one-to-one care would allow the child to reasonably participate in the program, parents have the option of providing one-to-one care at their expense.

CCS CLIENT TRANSFERS

The CCS transfers pertain to parents who qualify for CCS. If your child is covered under CCS and care is needed for school breaks or full day care, the parent must transfer their child/children. This must be done 2 weeks prior to be able to have your child in attendance for the full day care breaks. The transfer must be approved by your CCS Caseworker to attend. If transfers are not approved and the parent needs the care this will fall under private pay for this parent.

STAFF REQUIREMENTS

Each staff member must meet the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Minimum Standards of education and work experience to qualify for being considered for a position. Gonzales County does not require tuberculosis testing so our staff are not required to have this.

STAFF VACCINE POLICY

This operation does not require our staff to receive any type of vaccine while employed with the YMCA.

CURRICULUM GOALS

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development which include:

- Social: Help children feel comfortable in the Childcare Program and trust their new environment, make friends and feel they are part of a group.
- Emotional: To help children experience self-confidence, develop independence and self-control and always a positive attitude.
- Cognitive: Help children become learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success. Helping them acquire learning skills such as solving problems, ask questions and describe their ideas, observations and feelings.
- Physical: To promote physical activity by **providing structured and unstructured opportunities for physical activity** and teaching students behavioral and movement skills associated with lifelong participation in physical activity.

ACTIVITIES

1. Staff will encourage each child to participate in all activities; however, no child will be forced to participate in any scheduled activity.
2. Outside play and activities may be limited to short periods due to the weather. We encourage outdoor play for all children daily, weather permitting.

The written activity plan includes at least the following:

1. The group activity plan is designed for and dates (daily, weekly or monthly) the plan covers:
2. A variety of activities daily.
3. Indoor and outdoor play in which the children make use of both small and large muscles. The amount of time spent outdoors will be 30-45 minutes daily weather permitting.
4. A balance of active and quiet play including group and individual activities both indoors and outdoors.
5. Regular meal and snack times (meals for full days).
6. Supervised nap times (no child will be forced to nap).
7. Both child-initiated and caregiver-initiated activities.
8. Sufficient time for activities and routines so that children can progress at their own developmental rate.
9. No long waiting periods between activities or prolonged periods during which children stand or sit.

DAILY ACTIVITY PLAN

Check-in	Roll Call and Announcements
Discussion	Activity themes and ideas, show and tell, circle time (ex. Sunshine/Cloud Activity)
Snack/Meal Time	Nutrition and Social Time
Outdoor Recreation	Organized Games/Free Time
Activity Centers	Enrichment modules on a varying schedule, arts and crafts, table games, and centers

SCREEN TIME POLICY

There is limited time of technology during our programs. Some of the curriculum may ask for a short video to be viewed or a game to be played. The children are awarded technology time for good behavior at the end of the week. The allotted time does not exceed an hour.

RULES AND DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES (All participants will be expected to abide by the following rules)

RULES

Follow directions.

Listen to leaders at all times.

Be respectful of others' feelings, belongings, and rights.

Use of appropriate language.

Let safety be your first concern.

Gum chewing is not permitted.

DISCIPLINE

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include the following:

1. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.
2. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements.
3. Redirecting behavior using positive statements.
4. Using brief supervised separation time from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to not more than one minute per year of the child's age.
5. Any child who **purposely destroys or defaces YMCA equipment or property will be held accountable.**
Parent/Guardian may be asked to replace or repair any equipment or properties destroyed or defaced by the child.
6. Any child who has continuous discipline problems despite time-outs may be subject to the following procedure:
 - a. **Child/Parent/Staff conference**
 - b. **Child/Parent/Director conference**
 - c. **Probation/Suspension**

There will be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child; the following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
2. Punishment associated with food and naps/quiet time.
3. Pinching, shaking or biting a child.
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument.
5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth.
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child.
7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed.
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for **the child's age.**

YMCA staff members will encourage and assist all children in following the rules. All children will be treated with kindness and respect. Any child's comments, suggestions, requests and complaints will be given sincere consideration.

CHILDCARE PARTICIPANT RULES

For us to assure that our program runs smoothly; protects the safety of all; promotes cooperation and assists our children in taking responsibility for their actions, the following rules will apply to all participants.

Participants must:

1. Check-in with Site Director immediately upon arrival each day.
2. Respect the property of the YMCA and the school.
3. Report to the director or group leader if they are sick or hurt.
4. Keep all personal belongings in their backpacks during summer camp hours, unless otherwise instructed.
5. Behave responsibly, be helpful, and be cooperative.
6. Demonstrate courtesy and respect for one another.
7. Respect Counselors and Program Leaders and follow directions.
8. Obey all school rules that are observed during the school day.
9. Be honest, truthful, and fair with others.
10. Comply with safety rules.

It is our goal that Site Directors, counselors, children, and parents work together toward good behavior and a cohesive atmosphere. However, in some cases, additional disciplinary measures may be pursued if a child inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, is dangerous to himself or others, or is physically or verbally abusive to staff and others.

In these instances, one or all of the following techniques may be used to achieve cooperation and safety.

1. Staff will notify parents of emerging difficulties and ask for behavior assistance management.
2. With parental permission, when appropriate, the input of teachers or school counselors may be sought.
3. Documentation of the child's behavior may be written and placed in his/her file.
4. The child may be placed in time out according to his/her age or development.

NOTE: The YMCA reserves the right to remove a child from the Childcare program after all attempts have been made to help the child and the family when the desired results have not been achieved. Please understand, however, that our primary goal is to avoid such action and to successfully meet the need of the participants.

GANG FREE ZONES

An area within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a gang free-zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties. Information is posted on our Parent Information Board.

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The caregivers that will work with your children must attend a training or workshop on child abuse and neglect and prevention. They will be trained on recognizing factors indicating a child is at risk, warning signs, and reporting abuse.

RESTROOM SUPERVISION

There will be two caregivers at all times that will assist the children in going to the restrooms that are located outside of the daycare area and will ensure kids are supervised at all times.

POTTY TRAINED POLICY

Children enrolled in the YMCA Childcare Program must be potty trained before attending our program. Children must be wearing underwear with very few accidents. A child having accidents daily or wearing pull ups would not be considered potty trained. We are not equipped for diaper changing or clothes changing.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

1. Toys are not allowed to be brought to the Childcare Program unless approved by the Site Directors for special activities.
2. All personal belongings are to be put in the assigned place upon arrival and left until departure. Each child will be responsible for his/her belongings, and the **staff will not be accountable for lost articles**. Please see that your child's items are marked with their names.
3. No sharp objects or exploding toys will be allowed.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Children who attend our programs are arriving from school so they are already wearing appropriate clothing when attending the program. We asked that your child be in closed toed shoes so they are able to participate in any outdoor activities that are scheduled. The summer months we asked that your child be dressed in clothing that will keep them cool during the activities we have implemented so that they are comfortable. Sandals are not allowed and it is best that you label you child's belongings. If your child may need an extra pair of clothing be sure to send this with your child.

WATER ACTIVITIES

All safety precautions as described in the Minimum Standards p. 145 (746.5001) will be followed.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthday celebrations are always welcome at our Childcare Program. Please notify the Site Director of your intentions so we can plan ahead for this. It will be the Parent/guardian's responsibility to provide any supplies that are necessary for this special event for the child's group.

PROVIDING AND APPLYING SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLENT

The caregivers will be allowed to apply sunscreen or insect repellent on the children if we have permission from the parent. The parent must sign a form giving permission for this to be done. The caregivers will apply under the supervision of another caregiver or director.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENING

The child(ren) enrolled in our program must have a vision and hearing screening done to attend the program. The parent must sign a written statement stating that their child's records are current and are filed at the child's school.

IMMUNIZATIONS

For our center to comply with TDFPS standards on immunizations we must have one of the following:

1. A copy of the current immunization record that is on file at the pre-kindergarten program or school the child attends.
2. A signed statement from the child's parent that the child's immunization record is current and on file at the kindergarten program or school that the child attends. The statement must be dated and include the name, address, and telephone number of the pre-kindergarten program or school listed in the statement

FOOD SERVICE

Daily Menus will be posted on the Parent Information Board

1. All Children's Nutrition Snack Program will provide a nutritious snack for the children.
2. Snacks will be nutritious and include at least one of the following:
 1. One serving from the fruit and vegetable group.
 2. One serving from the milk group.
 3. One serving from the grain group.
 4. One serving from the meat or meat alternative group.

NUTRITION EDUCATION AND PROCEDURES

The Y program must follow meal patterns established by the US Department of Agriculture.

Parents may provide their child(ren) snacks. The YMCA will not be held responsible for providing its nutritional value or meeting the child's daily food needs. Children will not be allowed to share the snack provided by the parent or the Childcare program with other children. If your child(ren) is on a special diet we must have written approval from a physician or a registered or licensed dietician in the child's records to serve a child a therapeutic or special diet provided by the parent.

All staff are educated on food allergies and take precautions to ensure children are protected. If your child is allergic or sensitive to a food, please note this on your child's enrollment form.

Morning snacks are provided in full day care. Afterschool snacks are provided daily when school is in session. All snacks provided by the Childcare Program will be nutritious and based on the daily food needs of that age group.

TRANSPORTATION (FIELD TRIPS)

To ensure the safety of all children on field trips our center must comply with each of the following requirements:

1. Signed permission forms from the parent for the child to participate in the field trip and to be transported to and from the field trip.
2. Staff will carry the emergency medical consent forms and emergency contact information for each child on the trip.
3. A list of all children on the field trip will be carried and reviewed frequently to account for the presence of all children.

4. A first aid kit will be available on all field trips.
5. Each child must wear a shirt or nametag listing the name of the childcare center and the phone number.
6. Staff will be in a YMCA uniform so that the children can easily locate and identify them.
7. At least one staff will have transportation and a cell phone available on each field trip, in case of an emergency.
8. Staff participation in field trips will be First Aid and CPR Certified with rescue breathing and choking.

ABSENCES

Children will benefit from attending daily to have the opportunity to be involved in our daily curriculum. They will learn and grow. Your child being absent does not affect your child's spot, just make us aware when your child will not be in attendance. If your child is registered for winter breaks or spring break and your child doesn't attend your account will still be charged and no refunds. If your child is out for vacation or illnesses out of your control your account will not be charged.

ILLNESS/ACCIDENT/MEDICINE POLICY

Illness: We urge you to keep children at home if they are ill. If a child is feeling ill during program hours for a duration of 20 minutes or longer or if the illness includes fever (100.4 degrees or higher), vomiting, or diarrhea, the Program Leader will contact the parent for immediate pickup. If the child has been exposed to a communicable disease, the Site Director should be notified at once. If children have been exposed to communicable disease at our Childcare program, we will notify the parents through a posted flyer in front of sign-in/sign-out forms at the Site Directors table or Parent Information Board Center.

Accident: If an accident should occur at the Childcare Program the Site Director will notify the parents at once. An accident report will be completed by the Site Director. We require that parents read and sign this document. If emergency treatment is necessary, the Site Director will immediately notify the parent or guardian and the child will be transported by ambulance to the hospital listed on their enrollment form.

Medication: Any prescription medication to be administered to your child by our Childcare staff must:

- Be brought directly to the Site Director by the parent or guardian.
- Parents must sign an authorization form and include times for child-care center employees to administer each medication according to label directions.
- The medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's full name and the date it was prescribed.
- The medication label must clearly give the physician's name and instructions on the time and dosage for the medication to be administered.
- A log will be kept at the center which will include the following:
 1. Full name of the child to whom medication was given.
 2. Name of medication.
 3. Date, time, and dose of medication.
 4. Full name of the employee administering the medication.
 5. Medication records will be kept for 3 months after administering the medication.
 6. Medications will be kept out of reach of children.
 7. Medications will not be administered after the expiration date.

CHECK-IN/SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES

Children enrolled in the Childcare Programs will meet in the cafeteria upon arrival. YMCA staff will check them in as they arrive. Parents are required to enter the facility and sign their children in and out each day.

Children must be signed out daily with the time of pick up listed. If anyone other than the parent is picking up a child, his/her name must be on the enrollment form. Picture identification will be asked if any unfamiliar person(s) on form claiming any child (ren) and license ID and number will be recorded by Site Director.

If a parent calls the site to authorize the pick-up of any children to someone not on the enrollment form, the Site Director will call that parent to verify. If we are unable to reach the parent at that number, the child **WILL NOT** be released.

No child will be allowed to leave the program area unless a parent or guardian or the designated adult you have listed on the enrollment form has signed them out. A child refusing to stay at the Childcare program and/or attempting to leave the Childcare program unattended will be subject to either temporary or permanent suspension.

OPERATIONAL POLICY

1. The hours of operation for the Afterschool Program is from the time of school dismissal until 6:00 pm.
2. Parents can visit the site anytime during the childcare center's hours of operation to observe the child, the childcare center's operation, and program activities, without having to secure prior approval. Parents can spend time with their children during an activity if they like and get involved as well. Parents will be notified of any changes in our operational policy or enrollment agreement at the Parent Information Board.
3. Parents can review a copy of the minimum standards and the childcare center's most recent licensing report. You can find these items at your child's site. They will be located at the director's desk or Parent Information Board.
4. Parents may contact Licensing Representatives at cell 210-268-2854. They are located at 3635 S. Military Dr. San Antonio, Tx. 78223. The Abuse Hotline is 1-800-252-5400 or at https://www.dfps.texas.gov/child_care/ for any concerns or questions you may have.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

We encourage both information and formal parent involvement in your child's care and education. Staff are available to speak to parents when they are not caring for the children. Parents can call the Childcare Program to check on their child during their stay.

Parent/Staff conferences are an opportunity for parents and staff to discuss the progress of their child in the program and any happenings at the Childcare Program. We will conduct parent/staff conferences twice a year as well as on a needed basis. Parents are welcome to visit their child's program during the hours of operation to observe their child.

The Childcare Program has a variety of opportunities for parents to participate. Parents are allowed to come volunteer during our program at any given time to see what their child is involved in on a daily basis. Parents are also encouraged to participate in any fieldtrips. If you will be a regular volunteer with the program you must have a background check done which is required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender conviction and /or open investigations in any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the Y program.

PARENT CONFERENCE/COMMUNICATION

Communication is very important to us. Upon a new family enrolling we like to be sure that we can openly share any concerns or questions that may arise. We welcome questions, feedback or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for the children. Sensitive issues will be discussed in private by telephone or conference.

- Pre-schoolers or older children will not receive daily notes unless there is an unusual reminder or situation that parent needs to be aware of.
- Parents are welcome to schedule a parent conference at any time
- A scheduled conference is offered to parents to exchange information 2 times a year. During this conference information from staff observations and written assessments is shared with parent.

PARENT CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATES

Parents can email the Program Director, Lauren Harris at lharris@ymcavictoria.org or Childcare Billing Manager, Elizabeth Orsak meorask@ymcavictoria.org with any updates to the child's form and staff will make the updates.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN

If inclement weather occurs in the course of the Childcare program and puts the children and staff in danger we will ask that the children be picked up at a designated time. The center's evacuation and relocation area are listed on the evacuation plan posted at the center. The children will either be transported by bus or if we can reach our location by walking them down to the area that is how it will be done. Our program is in the GISD school so we do follow GISD inclement weather plan.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Staff are trained in basic emergency procedures. Necessary responses to issues regarding natural disasters (floods, tornados, hurricanes, etc.) and fire escape routes are addressed in staff training. Monthly fire drills and periodic tornado drills will be conducted. In the event of an emergency at the center, staff will call 911. Staff will then gather the children along with their enrollment forms, first aid kit, and group sheets and exit out the door closest to their area. Staff will walk the children to the designated shelter in place listed on the evacuation plan posted at the site.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you have a grievance or concern, you are encouraged to discuss the matter with the staff who is most connected to the concern/situation, either in person, by phone or by email. If your complaint is not resolved or if you are uncomfortable discussing the issue with the relevant person, you can inform the Director of the program.

Every effort will be made to resolve complaints in a timely fashion. When receiving a verbal complaint, staff should listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it immediately. If follow-up is required, basic contact information including name, phone number, and email address should immediately be recorded.

Once you have registered a complaint, the YMCA is committed to handling the complaint promptly, consistently and fairly. You will be treated with respect and kept informed on the status of the complaint.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding our Childcare Program, you may call the Gonzales Program Director at 830-263-3031. Hours of operation are from dismissal-6:00pm.

CHILDCARE FEES

Registration Fee \$50

AFTERSCHOOL CARE	
Weekly	\$65 per child

SUMMER CAMP/HOLIDAY BREAKS*	
Weekly	\$110 per child

*For Holiday Breaks the \$50 Registration Fee applies if the child is not already enrolled in Afterschool Care

- **ALL CHILD CARE PROGRAM FEES ARE DUE THE FRIDAY BEFORE THE WEEK OF CARE.**
- A \$25 LATE FEE WILL BE APPLIED IF PAYMENT IS NOT MADE ON TIME.
- A \$30 RETURN FEE WILL BE APPLIED IF YOUR FINANCIAL INSTITUTION DOES NOT HONOR YOUR PAYMENT.

REFUND POLICY

Registration fees are **NON-REFUNDABLE**.

BILLING POLICIES

The following policies are in effect for all YMCA programs:

1. Payments are due every Friday before the week attending. Late fees will be assessed if your payments are not received on time. You will be assessed a late fee of \$25 if payment is not made on Friday by 8:00 pm.
2. Late payment arrangements must be approved by the Childcare Billing Manager, Elizabeth Orsak, by phone at 361-268-3846 or by email at meorsak@ymcavictoria.org.
3. Failure to pay and/or make payment arrangements may result in the removal of your child(ren) from our program.
4. Financial Aid is available to those families who qualify. Families requesting financial assistance must do so through the Financial Aid Manager, Valerie Ramirez by phone at 361-268-3845 or by email at vramirez@ymcavictoria.org.
5. A \$30 return fee will be applied if your Financial Institution does not honor your payment.
6. Late child care pick-ups will be charged \$1 per minute you are late.