



WHERE LEARNING COMES NATURALLY

EARLY LEARNING CENTER PRE-SCHOOL
Parent Handbook

1806 Colorado Street
Victoria, TX 77901
361-575-0511
(Updated annually. Revised January 2025)

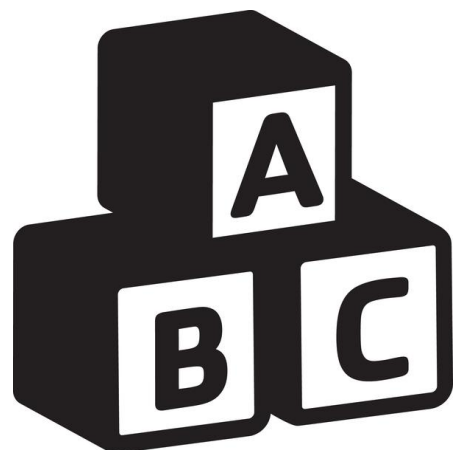


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WELCOME!

At The YMCA Early Learning Center, healthy child development starts early. That's why we offer Preschool programs that help children learn the essential skills they will need later on. Our trained, supportive staff works to help every child have the best possible start to their education.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

PHILOSOPHY

The YMCA is a community leader in the development of the whole child. Children will learn through discovery and play in a nature based environment. Our goal is to encourage a love for lifelong learning in a caring community.

AGES

We provide childcare for children ages 12 months-5 years.

ENROLLMENT

The following are required to enroll your child:

- Completed enrollment forms
- Immunization record
- Health Statement signed by a physician
- If your child is four years of age or older - vision & hearing screening

Due to state licensing standards, new enrollment forms are required by August 4 of each year. All forms must be completely filled out at the time of enrollment. It is very important that we can always reach you in the event of an emergency. Please remember to update your records should you have any changes in your personal information (i.e. address, phone numbers, emergency contacts, immunizations)

TUITION POLICY

All childcare fees are due in advance of care. Payments are due on Friday (before the week of care) before 8:00pm. Payments received after 8:00pm on Friday will have a late fee of \$25 added onto their childcare payment.

CCS payments are due by the first of each month. Payments must be paid in full for the entire month. Payments received after the first day of the month will have a late fee of \$25. In addition, if payment is not received by the third day of the month, a late payment notification will be submitted to your child's case worker.

To avoid late fees, you may have your childcare account set up for automatic payment on the Friday before the week of care.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A two week notice must be emailed to the Preschool Director at kbienek@ymcavictoria.org in order to withdraw your child from the program. Enrollment and tuition is considered continuous until notice of withdrawal is emailed.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent from childcare, notification is required to the Director by 9:00 a.m. Arrival after 9:00 am requires that the Director be notified via phone or email. If late arrival is due to a doctor visit, a doctor's note is required.

CHECK-IN

As an important security measure, we ask that you bring you child into the center and see that he or she is released to a staff member in their assigned room. You are required to sign your child in with the arrival time and your initials. Children will need to arrive to the center by 9:00 am. Morning snack is available until 9:00 am. No breakfast may be brought into the center after 9:00 am.

No child may be in attendance longer than 10 hours per day.

PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Each child must be signed out by an adult who is listed on their enrollment form sheet. Your child will be released to adults 18 years and older only. You may be asked for ID at any time. Please remember this is for safety of your child. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the center any time your child cannot be picked up prior to closing time or if your child is to be picked up by a person not authorized on the enrollment form. You are required to sign your child out with departure time and initials.

In the event that parents are not in the same household, each set of parents will be required to fill out a registration form. This would clarify who is an "authorized pick up" for each parent. YMCA abides by all legally served court orders. We must have certified court order on file regarding parental custody matters. Requests from one parent to limit access to a child will not be followed by staff unless court documentation is provided.

EMERGENCY PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Any time an emergency occurs and a child must be picked up by someone not listed on the child's registration form, Texas state law requires the following:

- Parent must call the YMCA office at 361-575-0511 giving the person's name and identification information.
- Person picking up child must present a picture ID.
- Staff must review the picture ID, record the driver's license number and record the car tag numbers

CURRICULUM

The YMCA curriculum is specifically designed to meet the needs of a child at his or her level of development. The curriculum will include science, music, drama, arts and crafts and literacy activities

- Social Skills Development components are incorporated in all activities.
- A balance of activities, have been designed to enhance the physical, social and emotional and cognitive development of your child.
- YMCA Character Development is interwoven through all curriculum components and focuses on positive values of caring, responsibility, respect, and faith as well as appreciation of healthy living habits

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.

ABOUT OUR YMCA STAFF TEAM

Our Staff must meet the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and YMCA standards:

- Submit to FBI finger printing
- Are first aid and CPR certified
- Receive 24 hours of pre-service training
- Attend continuous training throughout the year (a minimum of 20 hours)
- Staff will be trained in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children
- Staff will be given pamphlets with information to increase awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect and learn techniques on how to prevent child abuse and neglect.

SECURITY

The center has the following safety measures in place: Keypad controlled access door at the entrance to the center and cameras monitor the interior and exterior at all times.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

The YMCA recognizes that positive discipline teaches and encourages the healthy development of children's self-esteem. The YMCA does not allow the use of corporal or physical punishment. Caregivers employ positive discipline techniques which include praising, calling attention to appropriate behavior, and acting as positive role models to influence and reinforce positive behavior. The staff set limits that are developmentally appropriate and consistently enforced.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control

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

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language

CODE OF CONDUCT

Staff will encourage and assist all children in following the YMCA Code of Conduct (included in the registration form). Please go over this with your child and remind them of the rules and expectations. It is the expectation of the YMCA Preschool that all parents, family members, and associates of children enrolled in the program, conduct themselves in a manner which complies with the center policies and all federal, state and local laws, while at the center or at any YMCA activity. The YMCA reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any family not adhering to this policy.

PROGRAM DISMISSAL POLICY

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

- Delinquency in the fee payment with no immediate payment coming
- Failure to provide required records or to meet the standards of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
- Consistently late pick-up of a child.
- Child's needs cannot be met by our program.
- The child is unwilling to follow the YMCA procedures and rules (See Code of Conduct)

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If weather conditions warrant, the center may be closed without prior notice. This would happen in the event of ice, snow, excessive rain (flooding) or any weather conditions which would cause the highway department to close major thoroughfares. There will be no reduction of fees for these days.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Staff members 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 are conducted. The children will evacuate the Center and will be walked to the YMCA facility located at 1806 N. Nimitz and will be placed in the Nursery in the YMCA.

In the event of an emergency at the center the staff will call 911. The staff will then gather the children along with their enrollment form and exit out the door closest to their room. The staff will walk the children to the YMCA facility located at 1806 N. Nimitz. The children will then be taken to the Nursery which is located in the building and this will be our shelter in place.

DAILY ARRIVAL HEALTH CHECKS – ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION

When children arrive each morning, a staff member will check to see if he/she appears to be in good health in order to attend the center for the day. If a staff member determines that the child is unable to participate, the parent will be instructed to take the child home at that time. Children who become ill during child care hours will be subject to the below referenced policy.

Health Checks may include, but not be limited to staff observing:

- Breathing difficulties, severe coughing, discharge from nose or eyes, changes in skin color, bruising or swelling, cuts, sores, rashes, and/or child unusually warm, cold or clammy.

In an effort to maintain a healthy environment, the following guidelines **MUST** be strictly followed. Please respect the health of the other children in our care by cooperating with us on these state mandated rules, Article 746.3601 Texas Minimum Standards of Child Care Centers. Children who become ill may not remain at school, nor will an ill child be admitted. If a child becomes ill during the day, a parent will be notified to pick up the child immediately. If we are unable to reach the parents, we will then begin calling the persons listed on your enrollment forms.

For the safety of your child as well as the other children in their class, you may not bring a child to the program for one business day after having any of the following symptoms:

- A fever above 100.4 degrees
- Intestinal disturbance accompanied by diarrhea or vomiting
- Severe coughing or wheezing
- Any undiagnosed rash
- Sore or discharging eyes or ears
- Profuse, colored nasal discharge
- A communicable disease
- Head lice

Children must be free of all fever and all above symptoms for 24 hours and show no signs of illness when returning to school. All children must be able to participate in their normal daily schedule (outdoor play included). Please let us know as soon as possible if your child has a communicable illness or infection. This will allow us to notify the parents of children attending our program. Children with communicable conditions may not return to care without a note from their physician.

MEDICATION

A medication form must be completed if your child needs medication while at school.

- Must be in its original container
- Medication that is prescribed twice daily will not be administered at school

- Labeled with the child's name (we cannot share medications among siblings)
- Labeled with the date that the prescription expires
- Labeled with the dosage and directions on how to administer the medicine
- Include the name of the physician prescribing the medication

Over the counter medication will also require a medication form, including but not limited to sunscreen, insect repellent, and other topical medications. Staff will not administer breathing treatments. If your child requires breathing treatments during the day, they should not attend until treatments are completed.

MEDICAL PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)

The Texas Department of Health requires any child that is found to have head lice be excluded from school until the child has been treated. According to our policy, all eggs (nits) must be removed from the child's hair prior to returning to the center. The parent/guardian and child must visit with a staff member prior to being readmitted. Periodic classroom checks will be conducted. Parents/guardians can help minimize the problem by checking their own children on a regular basis and treating the hair if necessary.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Should your child require immediate medical attention while on our care, we will call 911 and then contact parent or guardian. Responding emergency medical personnel will make determinations whether the child should be transported to a hospital. We will provide them with information from your child's records as to your choice of hospital and physician. In the event that this information is not specified, the child will be transported to the nearest available hospital.

TRANSPORTATION (FIELDTRIPS)

In order to ensure the safety of all children on fieldtrips our center must comply with each of the following requirements:

1. Signed permission forms from the parent for the child to participate in fieldtrip.
2. Staff will carry with them emergency medical consent forms and emergency contact information for each child on fieldtrip.
3. A written list of all children on the fieldtrip will be carried and reviewed frequently to account for the presence of all children.
4. A first-aid kit will be immediately available on fieldtrips.
5. Staff will be in YMCA uniform so that children can easily locate and identify them.
6. Staff participating in field trip will be First aid and CPR certified with rescue breathing and choking.

NUTRITION

Your child will be served morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack each day. Our menus are carefully planned in accordance with USDA requirements. The menus include foods that are tasty and nutritious.

REST PERIOD

Your child's day at the center is planned to provide exciting, active learning experiences. A rest period is scheduled each day to maintain a balance between active and quiet times. TDFPS established a designated rest period for pre-school children (3 hours). YMCA staff encourages your child to rest quietly during this time. Infants in the 12-23 month old room will be allowed additionally rest periods as needed.

DAILY ATTIRE & EXTRA ITEMS

Children should be dressed daily for active play. Since all children will be going outside twice per day, weather permitting; please ensure that they will have weather appropriate attire. No open toed shoes permitted. Check in will not be permitted if your child does not have shoes on. All children must arrive with appropriate shoes on.

Each child needs a change of clothes for emergencies. This should include pants, shorts, shirt and underwear. Children being potty trained may require more than one change of clothing.

During rest time, a blanket and small pillow are allowed. Infants in the 12-23 month old room can use a pacifier during rest time, if needed. Ensure that all items are labeled. Please refrain from bringing toys or any other items from home. These will only be allowed on designated show and tell days. We are not responsible for any lost, stolen or broken belongings.

LOST AND FOUND

It is important that each item brought from home is labeled with your child's name to prevent them from being lost. Should an item of your child's be misplaced, it will be placed in the lost and found in the Director's office. These items will be donated to a local charity if left for more than 30 days.

WATER ACTIVITIES

All precautions will be taken to insure the safety of the child during any water activities. The YMCA Early Learning Center Preschool will abide by all TDFPS requirements for water safety.

GANG FREE ZONES

YMCA Early Learning Pre-school is a gang free zone, Under Texas Penal Code 71.028, 71.029, any area with 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang free zone, where criminal offences related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty. The gang free zone information is posted in the center and available for parents to view.

ANIMALS

Parents will be notified when animals are present at center; all necessary documents will be on file.

PARENT PARTICIPATION/CONFERENCES

Parents are welcome visitors to our program! Open communication is very important to the success of your child's experience. Parent conferences may be arranged at any time with teachers or the Director by appointment. We appreciate your input regarding suggestions, ideas and comments on ways to improve our service to you and your family. You may direct suggestions, concerns, compliments or complaints to the immediate caregiver or one of the Directors. Throughout the year we will host family events to provide an opportunity for you to get to know the staff and other families. If you would like to volunteer for an event at the program, you will need to have a clear criminal background and FBI check. Parents and volunteers are never left alone with a group of children and will have a staff member with them at all times.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

Parent notifications may be made in writing via texts, letters, emails, flyers and/or signage at the classroom door or reception desk. Notifications may also be made by phone calls or in person by center staff. Any policy changes will be provided to the parent or guardian in writing.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

The parents will be allowed to visit the childcare center during the hours of operation to observe their child, the childcare center's operation and the program activities, without having to have prior approval.

Parents are able to view a copy of the minimum standards and our most recent licensing inspection is located on the parent's information table. Parents are also welcome to contact a Licensing representative at 572-8241, an abuse hotline representative at 1-800-252-5400 or at www.tdfps.state.tx.us/childcare for any concerns or questions you may have. Parents will be given pamphlets as well with information to make parents aware of child abuse and neglect and will and to learn techniques on how to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The center will also have a centralized area with a seat within a classroom that will enable a mother to breast feed her child. Parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in care.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Program runs Monday-Friday from 7:00am-6:00pm. This is a year-round program running January-December of each calendar year.

Early drop off is not permitted. Please contact us if you are going to be late. If you are late more than three times, services may be terminated.

HOLIDAYS

Our program observes and will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

FEES

Texas Rising Star Daily Rates*	
12 – 17 months old	\$38
18 -35 months old	\$34
3 -5 years old	\$30

* Effective February 1, 2025

	12-23 Month Old	24 Months-5 Years
Enrollment Fee	\$75	\$75
Y Members	\$165	\$125
Community	\$170	\$140
Citizens Medical Center Employees	\$127.50	\$112
Victoria College Students & Staff	\$120	\$120

REFUND POLICY

- Enrollment fees, tuition fees, and field trip fees are **NON-REFUNDABLE & NON-TRANSFERABLE.**

BILLING POLICIES

The following policies are in effect for all YMCA Childcare Programs:

1. Tuition fees are due by 8pm, every Friday for the following week of care.
2. A \$25 late fee will be applied to payments made after the due date.
3. A \$30 return fee will be applied to payments declined by your Financial Institution.
4. A \$1 late fee will be applied to each minute your child is left past the designated pick-up time.
5. Late fees and return fees will not be waived under any circumstances.
6. Failure to pay past due membership fees, sports program fees, or childcare fees will result in the termination of all YMCA services.
7. CCS Accounts
 - Payments are due on the first day of every month for the full monthly Parent Share of Cost.
 - A \$25 late fee is applied on the second day of the month.
 - Unpaid balances are reported to the CCS Office on the third day of the month.
8. Changes to your childcare account must be approved by the Childcare Billing Director, Elizabeth Orsak, at meorsak@ymcavictoria.org or 361-268-3846.
9. Financial Assistance is available to those families who qualify. Applications must be submitted to the Financial Assistance Manager, Valerie Ramirez at vramirez@ymcavictoria.org or at the YMCA Front Desk.
10. Field trip fees are not included in tuition.
11. The YMCA or its employee's will not replace/reimburse for any items lost, stolen, or damaged while in our care.
12. Effective January 1, 2025, we impose a flex fee of 3% on all credit card transactions. This does not include debit cards with the Visa/MasterCard logo, attached to bank accounts.