



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

What We Provide

- Preschool Education for ages 3- 5 from 8:30 – 11:30 either T/Th for 3-year-olds or M/W/F for 4-5 year olds at the YMCA in the Preschool Education Rooms.
- A snack and beverage that meets nutritional guidelines is provided. (Parents who have children with special dietary needs must obtain the Director's permission to bring their own snack.)
- Swim Lessons will be offered as a component of the Preschool on a regularly scheduled basis beginning later in the year. You must send a note with your child on the days you do not want them to swim. The lessons will be supervised by certified lifeguards. The YMCA has certified lifeguards on duty at all times that the pool is open to the public and to the program. Parents are encouraged to volunteer during scheduled swim lessons. On these days, each child will be required to bring a swim suit and towel in a backpack.
- Creative time (self-directed time) Activities will include a variety of learning stations.
- Physical Activity and/or Swim Lessons (physical development time) This is a very important part of the day for active, physically oriented games, individual activities and special events.
- Project time (teacher-led activity) Projects are selected to stimulate creativity and challenge the children's present abilities while increasing competency levels (learning a new skill, developing better coordination, practicing leadership, etc.) Preschool children are usually interested in hands-on activities such as arts and special projects. These activities will be themed and will be age-appropriate. This includes arts-n-crafts, science and health, music, writing, sensory play, manners, etc.
- Socialization and Sharing (group discussion) This gives children the opportunity to become aware of their values, improve their decision-making skills, and to begin to understand the linkage between values and behavior.
- Literary Skills Children will engage in interactive stories, hear books read aloud, reading readiness, finger play, etc.

Goals of the Preschool Education Program

- To provide children with new and progressive opportunities and activities that are physically and mentally challenging.
- To encourage children to develop skills that will allow them to build positive relationships with peers.
- To give children positive relationships with an adult role model.
- To provide opportunities to accept responsibility, develop leadership skills and a good self-image, and give service to others.
- To help youth appreciate and respect the earth and understand their responsibility for the stewardship of our global community.
- To encourage youth to develop healthy habits through nutritious snacks and physical activity.
- Content includes, but is not limited to: a healthy snack and beverage, swimming and daily physical activity, environmental education, arts & crafts, storytelling, character development, games, devotion/circle time, field trips, guest speakers, and community service.

What to Expect

Going off to school is a very exciting experience for children and parents. It's natural for everyone to be anxious about the first day of school and meeting new friends. This extends to Y Preschool Education with familiar questions and concerns. Hopefully, the following will familiarize everyone with procedures and minimize first day anxiety. There will be an Orientation held prior to the beginning of the school year to familiarize children and parents with the program, the teachers, and the expectations.

Arrival/Departure Procedures

Please remember to sign your child in upon arrival (when applicable) and out when you pick up your child. You may not send a sibling in under the age of 16 to sign your child in or out. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to let the staff know that an individual other than the parents are authorized to pick up your child from the program. Children will not be released to anyone not authorized. Only those individuals listed on the registration form as authorized for pick up may pick your child up from the program.

Preschool Education Guidelines – All children are expected to follow these:

- Follow directions
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Stay in assigned area
- Respect yourself and respect others

Transportation

Thanks to the Marion Jackson Gardner Trust, the YMCA was able to purchase two mini-buses for field trips. Seat belts must be worn at all times. Any damage to the mini-bus or big bus by a child will be billed to the parents. Anyone who does not abide by the mini-bus or big bus rules could be suspended off of the buses or could be suspended from the program. Please help us to remind your child of the rules.

Staffing

A YMCA Youth and Family Program Director supervises this program. Preschool Education programs have well trained staff who are focused on meeting the needs of individual children and are committed to serving as excellent role models. Our staff members are certified in CPR/AED, First Aid, and Child Abuse Prevention. All staff is required to attend trainings prior to the beginning of the program. All staff must meet the requirements of the Department of Children and Family Services. We take pride in the expectations we set for our staff each year and evaluate them on a regular basis.

Staff Baby-sitting Policy

Our child abuse prevention policy does not allow our staff to baby-sit the children in our program. Staff work diligently with children throughout the day and need time to renew their energy in the evenings and on the weekends.

General Information

- Swimming will be included in the regularly scheduled programming and children should bring their swimsuit and towel on those days. Please label all items with the child's name.
- The Y is not responsible for lost or stolen items. We do provide a lost and found area. After 4 weeks, lost and found articles are donated to charity. We are not financially responsible for children's losses, but will make every effort to locate the lost item.

The following is required to attend the Preschool Program:

- A copy of your child's most recent physical (with TB test verification on it). A recent picture of your child for their file.
- A registration form must be completed for each child. Plus one week's deposit for the first week your child will attend and the \$25 activity fee. A signed form stating that you have read and understand the DCFS Standards Booklet is part of the registration packet and is also required.
- Payment must be made *prior to each month* your child is registered to attend. Payments are due on the first of the month prior to attendance. You must stay current and be paid up for the months your child attends. Late payments will result in your child's termination from the program, suspension of your Y membership privileges or denial to sign up for other programs in the future until the balance is paid in full. *Financial assistance is available. Please contact Member Services, at the Welcome Desk, for more information.

- In fairness to our staff, it is important that your child be picked up on time. **A late fee will be charged for each child not picked up by 11:30 am.** The fee will be assessed at a rate of \$5.00 for the first 15 minutes and \$1 per minute after the first 15 minutes.
- The Y reserves the right to request withdrawal of a child for one or more of the following:
 - The child is not participating in or benefitting from the program.
 - The staff cannot provide adequate or safe care for the child.
 - The staff cannot provide adequate or safe care to the other enrolled children due to the care needs or behaviors of the one.

Returned Check Charge

There will be a **\$25.00 charge for any checks returned** to the YMCA. After two returned checks, we will accept cash only. Outstanding balances resulting from uncollected returned checks must be rectified before the child may enroll or attend any Y program.

Changing or Cancellation of Month(s)

The deposit and activity fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. There are no refunds for days missed due to illness or other circumstances.

Emergencies

In case of an emergency, every effort will be made to reach you or the contacts listed on the information sheet. If none can be reached we will take the necessary actions for the health of your child. Should there be any changes in the emergency contact phone numbers, please notify us immediately.

A Y vehicle is available to transport any injured person to the emergency room of Blessing Hospital but an ambulance will be called first to transport any injured person.

Custody Issues/Policies

In cases of separated or divorced parents where visitation rights are denied to one parent, we cannot deny releasing the child to said parent unless a court decree or separation document is in our file expressly forbidding said parent from picking up the child from our camp. The court decree must also be specific to the rights of visitation on the YMCA property during preschool hours. The court document must specify in writing that visitation is permitted by the non-custodial parent. Otherwise, visitation will NOT BE PERMITTED.

Inclement Weather

Unscheduled/Emergency – when Quincy Public/Parochial Schools are closed due to inclement weather (heat or cold), the Preschool Education Program is also closed. We reserve the right to close when we determine that the roads are hazardous to children and staff, but will notify parents by 7 a.m. if such an event occurs.

Parent Understanding

- I understand that YMCA staff and volunteers are not allowed to transport children at any time outside of the YMCA program.
- I understand that I am not to leave my child at the YMCA unless a YMCA Preschool Education staff member is there to receive and supervise my child.
- I understand that state law mandates the YMCA to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

Medication Policy

If medication must be administered you should:

- Written clearance from parent/guardian must be given to the YMCA to administer the medication. We will provide you with the Administering of Medication Form. This form must include written instructions from a physician as to the quantity, time to administer the medicine and your name and phone number.
- Bring medication directly to the Lead Preschool Teacher or the Director of Youth and Family Programs at the beginning of each week.

Communicable Illness

Children who exhibit any symptoms of infectious illness in a 24-hour period are likely to be contagious and should remain at home. Examples of associated symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- Fever of 101.0 or higher when measured orally or higher when in conjunction with any other signs of illness
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period)
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray white stool
- Hacking or continuous severe coughing, which causes the child to become red or blue in the face or makes a whooping sound.
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Stiff neck
- Runny nose
- Sore throat with fever
- Loss of voice
- Bloody stool
- Nausea or vomiting
- Eye or ear discharge
- Body rash with fever
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Exposed, open skin lesions
- Lice or nit
- Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness

Any child that has pinkeye or conjunctivitis will not be allowed into the program until all medication has been taken and a doctor's statement has been received that allows the child to return to the program.

Discipline

The philosophy of the program is based on positive influences and consistent reinforcement of the goals and guidelines for all participants. We relate to children on an individual basis. Rules and expectations as well as consequences will be made known to the child upon entry into the program. Should a discipline problem arise:

1. The child will be spoken to in hopes that discussion, redirection, and diversion of the child to another activity is all that is required to correct the problem.
2. Children will be gently reminded of limits and will be encouraged to use their words to solve problems or to relay frustration or anger.
3. If the discussion and redirection does not seem to help, the child will be put in "time-out" for a short period of time and then we will discuss with him/her the reasons for the "time-out". For preschoolers, this will be no more than one minute per year of age, to a maximum of five minutes. The reason for the time-out will be thoroughly explained to the child, and they will be given the opportunity to make amends. This is a learning process for the child.
4. Should problem behavior continue the parent/guardian will be notified and documentation of the behavior, past and present, will begin. Parents may be contacted to remove the child for the day if the behavior is severe.
5. If these steps do not correct the problem, the parent/guardian, child, counselor and directors will meet to discuss corrective procedures and set up a behavior contract.
6. Should this process prove unsuccessful and behavior problems are not corrected, the child may be suspended, or even dismissed from the program.
7. If at any time a situation arises that could cause harm to the child, counselor or any other children, the parent/guardian will be contacted and documentation of the event will begin; suspension or dismissal will be based on the seriousness of the situation.

A child's behavior will be documented for the following offenses:

- not following the rules
- being disrespectful to staff and other participants
- yelling at other participants theft
- biting hitting
- kicking not following staff directions

After 5 written/verbal warnings, a child will be suspended for one day.

Children may be suspended for one or more days based on the following criteria:

- spitting on others wandering away from the group
- yelling at or threatening the staff vulgar language
- other scenarios may apply

After 3 days of suspension from the program, it is the parent's job to set up a counseling session between the parent, child, program coordinator and the program director. **After a child has been suspended for a total of 5 days the child will be removed from the program, permanently.**

Future participation in program will be evaluated in each individual case. After careful consideration, the decision that is best for both the child and the program will be made by the Program Director.

There are NO REFUNDS/CREDITS for time missed due to behavior.

Behaviors which may result in immediate dismissal of the program include (but are not limited to):

- Damage of facility or theft
- Assault (excessive hitting, biting, kicking, or throwing objects at child or staff)
- Possession of weapons
- Having tobacco products, illegal substances or alcohol on person
- Sexual misconduct

Parent Meetings

We will hold several group parent meetings to discuss our Preschool fundraiser, the graduations (for 4-year-old class) and other class parties. Parents are encouraged to attend and participate in these quarterly meetings.

Evaluations

We need your comments, inputs and ideas on how to make YMCA programs better for you and your child. Evaluations will be handed out towards the end of the program. Please take time to fill out the evaluation and return it to staff promptly. Evaluations allow us to make any necessary changes in the program and to recognize staff that is providing outstanding service to you and your family during the school year programs.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to read through the parent handbook. Please contact me or the site coordinators if you have any further questions. We're looking forward to a great school year!

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The Quincy Family YMCA is a non-profit charitable organization committed to strengthening the foundations of our local communities through programs and services that promote youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.