



We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

Lincoln Area YMCA * 604 Broadway, Suite 1 * Lincoln, IL 62656 *Phone: 735-3915 or 800-282-3520

PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Lincoln Area YMCA Preschool Play Center Programs. Our program aims to provide your children with a positive, secure and stimulating environment each day. We focus on promoting self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and character development through a preschool based curriculum.

The following information is designed to help you, as a parent or guardian, become familiar with the policies and procedures of our program. If you have any questions or concerns after reading this handbook contact the YMCA at 735-3915.

TUTION FEES/RATES

See attached tuition sheet for program costs, dates, ages, and other information.

YMCA MISSION

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

YMCA PRESCHOOL PLAY CENTER PROGRAM GOALS

- To provide new learning experiences with emphasis on quality programming.
- To promote the child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development through thematic lessons and activities.
- That each child will achieve alphabet, number, color, shape and name recognition upon completion of the program.

DAILY ACTIVITY INFORMATION

A monthly calendar and/or newsletter of activities and themes will be given to each parent. Please be sure to ask your child what they are learning, if they are having fun and give us the feedback.

DAILY PROGRAM

The YMCA Preschool Play Center Programs are divided in several units throughout the program times. There is a snack provided, large motor activity, games, art, character development lessons, reading time, learning time, play stations, and group circle time. Character development is a time when the children learn about the YMCA's four core values – Caring, Respect, Responsibility and Honesty.

ENROLLMENT

To enroll a child in the program the following is required:

1. A registration packet must be completed at the YMCA office at 604 Broadway St., Suite 1, Lincoln, IL. It will contain registration information, attendance schedule, health, medical emergency/release information, consent forms, and a handbook policy signature page.
2. Program registration fees are required. These are non refundable, non transferable and must accompany each registration packet in order to process enrollment. **The first month tuition is also due at time of registration**, unless other arrangements for payment have been made with the YMCA office.
3. All participants enrolled must be current YMCA members. Cost is \$33 per year per family. Annual membership is from January 1- December 31 each year.

4. Enrollment is limited to a predetermined number; once that number has been filled a waiting list will be established. Once the waiting list has reached the predetermined number a new class may be established.
5. Enrollment is open all year.
6. All Children enrolled in any Preschool Play Center Program must be toilet trained (except Toddler & Me.)

A one week notice is required at the YMCA office before withdrawing your child from the program, or you will be assessed and charged your weekly rate. This fee must be paid before your child can participate in any future YMCA programs.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial Assistance is available provided qualifications are met. Assistance forms are available at the YMCA.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

All participants enrolled in this program must be current YMCA members. The 2008 membership fee is \$33 and runs from January 1- December 31 each year.

PAYMENT OF FEES

Tuition rates are listed with this registration packet and are payable on a monthly basis. (See attached tuition information page.) Payment is due the last Monday of each month, unless other arrangements have been made with the YMCA Office. A \$15.00 late fee will be assessed after this date. **CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AT THE SITE.** You may make cash payment at the YMCA office at 604 Broadway Street, Suite 1, during office hours M-F, 8:30 a.m. - 5p.m.

ABSENCES

Please notify the program staff or the YMCA office if your child will be absent and state the reason. There will be no transfer or refund of tuition or deposits paid for absences with the exception of serious illness (see illness policy). Colds, flu, and lice are considered to be regular absences and do not fall under the communicable disease/illness policy. Payment is required for the days your child is absent.

HOLIDAYS/ SNOW DAYS

If the Lincoln Dist. 27 schools are closed due to inclement weather in the morning or notice has been given the night before, the Preschool Programs will also be closed. If you are unsure of the status of the weather, please watch TV channel 20 and/or 17, or call the Lincoln Area YMCA office at 735-3915. Preschool Play Center programs are normally not held on major holidays, therefore you are not charged for holidays. However you are charged for snow cancellations.

The Preschool Play Center programs will follow District # 27 Elementary School Calendar.

ILLNESS

If your child is sick 3 or more consecutive days you will not be charged for those days provided the YMCA office has received a **medical note** from the child's physician stating the illness and release of your child to return to the program. Upon receipt of medical note, a credit will be adjusted to your account. (A doctor's office appointment invoice is not acceptable as a medical note.)

ILLNESS EXCLUSION POLICY

Illness/conditions that require a child to stay home or to be sent home:

- A fever of above 100 degrees. A CHILD MUST BE FEVER FREE FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE PROGRAM.
- Vomiting: more than once in 24 hours, or in combination with another symptom.
- Diarrhea: more than one uncontained episode in 24 hours, or in combination with another symptom.
- Earache
- Conjunctivitis: commonly known as “pink eye”, it is an inflammation of the eye and is characterized by a white or yellow discharge and matting. It is highly contagious and a physician must be consulted for medication in order to return to the program.
- Sore throat: strep throat (a reportable disease that we will report to the local county health department).
- Any unexplained rash.
- Persistent cough and/or thick nasal discharge. (Remember, children and adults who experience these types of symptoms do not feel like attending work or school situations).
- Contagious skin infestation such as lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm.
- Chicken pox (lesions must be crusted over before returning to the program)
- Measles, mumps, or rubella

PROCEDURES IN CASE OF ILLNESS

- 1) Parents are asked to call the YMCA office or teacher if your child is absent from the program due to specific illness or medical condition.
- 2) When a physician diagnoses a child as having a highly contagious condition, parents are asked to immediately inform the teacher of the condition. The teacher will give other parents of children in the program written notification of the specific illness.
- 3) Staff members are knowledgeable about signs and symptoms of childhood illness, and are responsible for the initial observation of each child upon arrival at school as well as continued observation of each throughout the day.
- 4) Any child showing suspicious signs or symptoms of a short-term contagious illness will be placed in a designated isolation area with continual supervision by the staff. The parent or other authorized adult will be called immediately to come and pick up the child from the program.
- 5) In the event that a child’s illness becomes a medical emergency while at the program, the head teacher will call 911 and accompany the child to the hospital.

RECOMMENDED RECOVERY TIME

1. Children should remain home for **24 hours AFTER** their temperature returns to normal.
2. Children with a diagnosed strep throat **must** remain home for **24 hours AFTER** their **FIRST** dose of medication, to prevent the spread of the infection to other children.
3. Children who have had vomiting should remain home for **24 hours** after vomiting has ended.
4. Children should remain home with Chicken Pox until **ALL** poxes are completely scabbed. (At least 7 days.)
5. **Information concerning a change in the child’s medical status, illness, injury or hospitalization should be immediately shared with the YMCA office or class teacher.**
6. A child should not return until he/she can participate in all activities indoors and outdoors.

MEDICATION POLICY

If your child is on any kind of medication (including over-the-counter varieties), please tell the teacher. We will be better prepared to interpret behavioral changes in children if we are aware they are taking medication.

State law prohibits the program from administering any kind of medication without written authorization. In the case of extreme allergic situations, detailed authorization forms must be completed by the parent and physician before the school has legal permission to administer any kind of medication. See the director for the required forms.

LATE ARRIVAL

Parents are encouraged to bring their child to the program on time. Children brought to the program more than 20 minutes past program start times will not be allowed to attend that day. A portion of the time from opening the doors is spent allowing the child to adapt to the center. When a child is late to arrive, the child does not make an easy transition from home to program and therefore causes disruption for your child, staff and other children. The only exception to this policy is when the classroom teacher has received prior notice of conflict (doctor appointment or other just reason) either verbally (24 hour or more notice) or by phone call the day of instance. The teacher will have final approval/denial.

LATE PICK-UP

Parents who do not pick-up their child by the designated daily program closing times will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 per quarter hour, payable no later than the next day of operation. Emergency situations such as car accident, inclement weather, or other serious natured instance, would not apply to late fee, but would warrant a call in to the office staff or message machine and/or the program teacher for explanation. The program teacher is required to report all late pick-ups to the office for bookkeeping detail.

FOOD

The Preschool Play Days Program does not allow children to bring soda, breakfast, etc. to the program. If you would like to send birthday treats for your child please inform and speak with head teacher prior to that day.

TOYS FROM HOME

We ask that you leave your child's toys at home or in the car, (with the exception of early weeks of school when the very young child, for security reasons may need an object from home). The program provides many varied experiences for your child, and toys from home tend to limit the child's activities at the program. YMCA is not responsible for broken or stolen toys/items.

No guns, war toys, or other violent action toys are allowed in our program. These items encourage aggressive behaviors that are in conflict with the loving attitudes and actions we are reinforcing. It is very important for a child to have a means to express his feelings. We suggest clay to pound to release frustrations, paints to express emotions, music to soothe jangled feelings, and gross motor activities to ease tension.

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences provide a valuable opportunity for close communication and coordinated efforts between home and program. Two conferences are scheduled during the school year to discuss a child's progress in all areas of development. Our teachers value this time spent privately with parents and we request that you make arrangements for someone to care for your child and other siblings during conference time.

Conferences can also be arranged at other times during the year at the request of the parent or the teacher. Parent or teacher requests for special educational services or screening to evaluate possible developmental delays in children should be submitted to the Director.

DISCIPLINE

Our staff does not use harsh, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child will be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or others.

The YMCA staff employs positive behavioral management techniques and guidance such as redirection, anticipation, and elimination of potential problems. We strive to use positive reinforcements and encouragement, rather than competition, comparison or criticism. Consistent, clear rules are explained to children and lovingly reinforced.

Good and appropriate behavior is praised. The staff models consideration, patience, courtesy and helpfulness. Hugs and loving voices are used by the staff to express love and approval. Children are told that hurting others is not acceptable. Verbal expression of feelings and needs is encouraged to relieve frustration and anxiety.

In property conflicts, children are given words to say and are helped to say them, "May I have a turn?" "Give it back, please, I'm still using it." In all conflict situations, children are helped to listen to the other child. Listening is an important skill that must be practiced to become perfected. Children will be encouraged to resolve their own conflicts whenever possible. Teacher intervention is necessary when conflict is not being resolved.

Teachers try to refocus children from aimless or inappropriate activities to appropriate, constructive activities. Such redirection may include suggestions, arranging materials for a constructive experience or guiding a child to an alternative constructive play situation. The child may be given materials such as clay, water or blocks for play to relieve his feelings of frustration.

A child who is "out of control" is removed from the situation to a nearby spot where he or she can still be seen by a staff member. If the child is too upset to sit alone, a teacher may remove the child to a more private area and may even hold the child, if it is necessary for safety reasons. The teacher will try to calm him and will prevent him from hurting himself/herself or someone else. The child will be encouraged to return to the group and play as soon as possible, or parents will be called if it is a serious situation requiring prompt attention.

BITING

Biting is not allowed. It is dangerous and it frightens both the biter and the bitten person. The teacher first separates the two children. The assistant or another adult will help comfort the bitten child. The teacher will stay with the biter making it clear, immediately and firmly, that we will not allow biting. "I want children to be safe here." A soothing activity like water play or puzzles will be given to the child. The hurt child must also be comforted and encouraged to participate in an activity. Depending on the seriousness of the wound first aid will be applied.

Biting is wrong because it is hurtful and dangerous. Encouraging other children to bite back to show how it feels is not allowed. If biting persists, the biter's parents will be called and the child will be sent home. Some children bite for different reasons at different ages. Discovering the cause can be helpful in curing this unacceptable behavior.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

The YMCA van will be used whenever possible. Some trips are walking trips, and others will involve volunteer parents who will drive school children in their cars. Parents will be notified several days in advance and must have signed the field trip permission slip in the registration packet.

- All parents who drive must have proof of current liability insurance.
- All children must use legally approved car seats and ride in the back seat. This is a State Law!
- No child may go on a field trip without prior signed permission from a parent or guardian.
- Parents are responsible for moving and securing their child's car seat into the transporting car.

Field trips are worthwhile opportunities, with an educational focus, that help children discover the world around them. We greatly appreciate the parental support that makes these valuable learning experiences possible.