



YMCA OF ST. JOSEPH, MO



# YMCA LITTLE EXPLORERS

PARENT HANDBOOK

## **YMCA LITTLE EXPLORER'S PROGRAM/PHILOSOPHY**

### **WELCOME TO LITTLE EXPLORERS**

We're so glad you're here. At the YMCA of St. Joseph, we take our role in your child's growth seriously. Our goal is to create a warm, safe, and engaging environment where your child can learn, explore, and thrive.

We believe parents and guardians are a child's first and most important teachers, so we value open communication and partnership. Chat with us at drop-off or pick-up, check the bulletin boards, and join us for events — you're part of our community.

### **YMCA PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

The YMCA Little Explorer's program nurtures children's natural desire to learn by providing ample opportunities to explore and learn through developmentally appropriate activities. The scheduling, pacing, and rhythm of these activities are consistent with the recognized principles of Early Childhood Education, which state that each child develops at his or her own pace.

**YMCA MISSION STATEMENT** - To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

### **AREAS OF FOCUS**

- **Youth Development** - At the YMCA, we believe all kids have potential and should have the opportunity to discover who they are, express themselves, and be nurtured in all their possibility.
- **Healthy Living** - We believe that everyone has the desire to be well and that well-being is best cultivated by providing supportive relationships and environments. We also believe that all people should have the opportunity to be well in spirit, mind and body.
- **Social Responsibility** - At the YMCA, we believe that we have a duty to try to help where help is needed. With support, resources and guidance, people can improve their own lives and the lives of others.

### **YMCA VALUES**

- **CARING** To have the heart to put others before you.
- **HONESTY** To act in such a way that you are worthy of trust.
- **RESPECT** To value the work of every person including yourself.
- **RESPONSIBILITY** To be accountable for your behavior and obligations

**HOURS OF OPERATION** - Little Explorers is open Monday - Friday, 6:30 am - 6:00 pm.

**LOCATIONS** - Lake Contrary: 1800 Alabama St., St. Joseph, MO 64504 Ph. 816-671-4009

**ALL Enrichment Centers** are presented as open-ended FUN activities, which encourage children to develop their organizational skills, critical thinking, conflict resolution, as well as their intellectual skills.

### **DAILY ROUTINES**

- **Self-Directed Time** - During arrival and departure times, children will be engaged in activities to capture their interests.
- **Large Group Activities** - Children are encouraged to interact in a large group, take turns, participate themselves and allow others to participate with them.
- **Small Group Activities** - Children are assisted in developing age-appropriate skills such as cutting, tracing, balancing, eye-hand coordination, color identification, lifetime hobbies, socialization, etc.
- **Enrichment Center Activities** - Children are provided with developmentally appropriate activities to choose from (listed above) page.
- **Story Time** - Children are exposed to appropriate literature and are encouraged to use their imagination to build vocabulary and to develop listening skills.
- **Meal Time** - Children will be encouraged to learn group cooperation, language development, social interaction, nutrition and to try a variety of different foods. Teachers sit with the children during meal times. When children are ready, family-style meal service is appropriate. The teacher may say a non-denominational prayer before meals.

- **Clean Up**

Children are encouraged to participate in the care of their environment and develop responsibility for the materials they use.

- **Nap/Quiet Time**

All children less than 5 years old will have a minimum of one hour per day rest period or nap time, as required by state licensing. Children may be given quiet activities, which will not disturb the other children.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

- The Missouri Department of Health requires children to have a minimum of one hour of outside time per day, weather permitting.
- **Please send your child with weather appropriate clothing.** On cool/cold days, children will be required to wear jackets or coats (please mark all items with your child's name).
- All children will go outside.
- Children may not stay inside during outdoor play time. If you want to keep your child inside for a few days, you are expected to keep the child at home until the child may return to full inside and outside activities, because we do not maintain Teachers to care for a child in this situation.
- **Excessive Heat** – Children will be kept inside and will participate in limited outdoor activities if the temperature and/or heat index is over 85 degrees or the temperature or wind chill is 25 degrees or below.

## **REGISTRATION/ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

### **ENROLLMENT FORMS**

Enrollment is not complete until all forms have been completed in full (**no blank spaces**) and returned. A non-refundable annual Registration Fee (per family) and the first week's tuition fee are due at the time of registration. Registration holds your child's space through approved start date. Failure to notify your Director on delayed start or extended absences may discontinue your registration and child's spot in the program. If discontinued, re-registration will be required and acceptance based upon availability.

- Registration Form.** This form registers your child for the Program (space permitting).
- Child Care Enrollment Form.** Please complete this form in full (no blank spaces). If a question does not pertain to you or your child, please write "N/A" on the line.
- Child Medical Examination Report.** This form must be completed and signed by a physician. A copy of this form must be on file to begin the Program.
- Payment Agreement Form.**
- Bank Draft Agreement Form.**
- Income Eligibility Form for Child Care Centers.** Little Explorers participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program reimburses the Center for the partial cost of meals provided to children and allows the center to provide nutritious meals.
- Family Handbook Sign-Off Form.**
- Medication Authorization Form.** (If applicable.)
- Third Party Responsibility Agreement.** (If applicable – only families receiving DFS or Voc Rehab assistance need to fill out this form.)
- Individual Plan for Specialized Care.** (If applicable). A copy of these documents must be provided to the Childcare Center Director with additional required paperwork to be reviewed before participation is authorized.
  - Our YMCA welcomes participation by children with all abilities.
  - Our YMCA provides a safe and supportive environment for children with and without disabilities through added support staff, when needed, to facilitate successful participation in programs, when appropriate.
- YMCA Change Form.** (When applicable.) This form may be used for schedule changes, disenrollment, or contact information updates. Current and accurate information is pertinent for your child's welfare.
- A copy of your child's current immunization record.** This must be on file to begin the Program. Immunizations must be kept up to date, including Hepatitis vaccinations. Each fall you will be required to update your child's medical record. (Form supplied by parent/guardian).
- Copy of court order, divorce decree, parenting plan, restraining order or other legal document.** (If applicable; See Legal Information for details.)

## **PROGRAM FEE INFORMATION**

### **PROGRAM FEE PAYMENT**

- **Weekly Tuition: \$175**
- Fees are subject to change.
- All families must use Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) for weekly payments. No exceptions will be permitted.
- Tuition drafts every Wednesday for the current week of care.
- If a payment is declined, the YMCA will attempt one automatic redraft. If the second attempt fails, you must pay in person at the YMCA Business Office. A \$10 service fee will be added.
- If payment is not resolved by Friday, your child cannot attend the following week. Missed days due to nonpayment are not refundable.

### **ABSENCES/CHANGES IN SCHEDULES**

- Please call YMCA 816-671-9622 by 10 am if your child will be absent.
- There may be days you change your child's schedule; please contact your child's Teacher and the YMCA Billing Department.
- If your child is absent without notification for two consecutive weeks, the child's enrollment will be discontinued; however, the two weeks absent are still billable.
- **There is no change in fees for absence or illness.**

### **WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD FROM THE PROGRAM**

We require a minimum of two (2) weeks written notice prior to your child's withdrawal. [YMCA Change Forms](#) are available from your Coordinator. Should a child withdraw from the Program and wish to return at a later date, the child will be placed on a first-come, first-serve basis with a new Registration Fee due.

### **CLASSROOM DISENROLLMENT**

The YMCA is an inclusive, family-friendly organization. We expect all our members, program participants and guests to model our YMCA values – Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility – in their conduct and language. The YMCA has the right to deny applications for the Childcare Center and to suspend existing participation in Little Explorers at our sole discretion if actions or behaviors are not deemed to be in the best interest of the organization. If participation in the Little Explorers is suspended, all fees already paid will be forfeited. The YMCA has sole discretion to reinstate participation privileges in Little Explorers.

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

YMCA Childcare Centers accept DFS Child Care assistance, Voc Rehab, and YMCA Fair Share assistance.

### **DFS ASSISTANCE**

- If you are eligible for DFS assistance, you are responsible for applying for this assistance and notifying DFS that your child is attending Little Explorers.
- An official letter of acceptance from DFS must be on file prior to your child beginning the Program.
- It is your responsibility to keep your benefits current.
- The registration fee and co-payment for the balance of weekly tuition not covered by DFS is required.
- If your benefits end for any reason, you will be responsible for 100% of tuition until benefits are reinstated.

### **Bullying**

Be aware the YMCA has a zero-tolerance policy relating to bullying of any kind. Any behavior by a participant or family member – whether it is in physical, verbal, or electronic form – intended to intimidate or harass another child or staff member or to cause physical or emotional harm to a person or their property is unacceptable. Any form of bullying behavior may lead to dismissal from the program.

## **REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

All YMCA staff receive training in the prevention of child abuse. As mandated reporters, staff are trained to recognize possible signs of abuse (physical, verbal, and sexual) and/or neglect. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect will be reported to the Missouri Department of Social Services.

In the event a parent of a child enrolled in the program suspects child abuse or neglect, this can be reported to the Missouri Department of Social Services Hotline at 1-800-392-3738.

## **YMCA SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE/FAIR SHARE PROGRAM**

- The YMCA of St. Joseph provides scholarships for families who are not eligible for DFS benefits, or receive DFS benefits but are in need of additional financial assistance, through our Fair Share Program. This scholarship is a percentage off your weekly tuition amount.
- All applicants eligible to apply for DFS assistance must do so and provide documentation prior to applying for assistance through our Fair Share Program.
- All applicants must complete the ENTIRE Fair Share application and must have ALL proof of income in order to turn in the application. Assistance will not be granted until all paperwork is complete.
- Full tuition rate will be the parent's/guardian's responsibility until the application has been reviewed and assistance is granted.

## **YOUR CHILD AND THE YMCA**

### **ARRIVAL TIME/SIGN-IN AND OUT**

- Children are to be escorted to their assigned area of the building and signed in upon arrival at the Little Explorers. Per state regulations, parents/guardians are required to sign their child in and out as they enter and exit the building.
- Children are required by law to be under adult supervision at all times.
- We ask parents/guardians limit the time to no more than 5 minutes to depart from the classrooms to minimize disruption of children's daily class routine. Should you wish to speak to your child's teacher at length, we are happy to make an appointment for you.
- Teachers are not allowed to sign a child in or out from the Childcare Center.

## PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP CHILD

- A child will only be released to persons authorized by the custodial parent/guardian on the child's **Child Care Enrollment Form**.
- If someone new will pick up your child, you must notify the Director in advance.
- Staff will ask for photo ID if they do not recognize the adult.
- If the person who has arrived to pick-up the child is judged by the teacher to be unsafe to drive a vehicle, the teacher will offer to contact an alternate on the child's enrollment form. If the person becomes uncooperative, the teacher will contact the police department to assist with the situation.

## LATE PICK-UP

- Your child **MUST** be picked up by Program closing time. If you cannot pick up your child by closing, it is your responsibility to make other arrangements. A phone call to the Coordinator is required.
- Frequent late pick-ups may lead to the suspension of your child's enrollment. If you are late more than three (3) times, your child may be disenrolled from Little Explorers.

## ESCORTING YOUR CHILD

Your child must be escorted in and out of the classroom, to the playground, or to a teacher. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** For their safety, please do not allow your child to run ahead of you. Any child visiting to pick-up a sibling enrolled in Little Explorers must be supervised at all times by their parent/guardian. Teachers are not able to supervise visiting sibling members.

## WHAT TO BRING

Please provide appropriate clothing for outdoor play. All children need a seasonally appropriate change of clothes in case of spilling, toileting or other accidents. The following items are things that parents must provide:

- One complete change of clothes, including socks and shoes (seasonally appropriate)
- Small travel pillow and small blanket for naptime
- **A photo of you and your child for their cubby**
- Weather appropriate clothing

All items brought to the Childcare Center should be conspicuously labeled with the child's first and last name. Extra clothing should be provided in a large Ziploc bag labeled with the child's first and last name, as seasons change and as the child grows.

## WHAT TO WEAR

- Children should wear washable PLAY clothes and comfortable shoes. Children may wear sandals if they have a back strap. Please do not send your child in open-toed shoes, flip-flops or slide-type sandals.
- During winter and spring months, children should have indoor and outdoor shoes (such as snow boots).
- Clothing that is simple for the children to put on and take off by themselves is recommended for preschool children to promote self-help skill development.

## ITEMS NOT TO BRING

Please do not send children to the Childcare Center with toys, games or other equipment unless requested. The YMCA does not accept responsibility for toys, games or other articles from home. "Share Days" will be planned one day per month. Parents will be notified in advance, and children may bring something from home to share with the class on "Share Days" only.

## LEGAL INFORMATION

### CUSTODY/PARENTING PLANS

- Copies of all legal documents (court order, divorce decree, parenting plan, etc.) regarding divorce/custody arrangement **must be on file and current** at the Childcare Program.
- In the event of a parent's divorce or separation, we are required to release the child to either parent unless a court order states otherwise.
- Divorced parents should submit a copy of the court order, divorce decree or other legal documentation to prevent an unauthorized pick up by the non-custodial parent. Documentation must be kept in the child's file.

## HEALTH AND MEDICAL

### CHILD INJURY

If a child is injured, an Incident Report will be completed the same day with copies given to the parent/guardian, the YMCA office, and one retained in the child's file.

- **Minor Injuries:** Injuries that require no more than washing, band-aid, and/or an ice pack.
- **Major Injuries:** Injuries that require more than washing, band-aid and/or an ice pack. Teachers, after evaluating the situation, will take whatever steps are judged necessary to obtain the appropriate medical attention. This may include contacting the parent/guardian or an authorized person to pick up the child or transporting the injured child to the nearest hospital via ambulance.
- If 911 is called and the child is sent to the hospital by ambulance, the Director will notify the parents/guardians and YMCA CEO immediately.
- The YMCA does not provide accident insurance for your child. This will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

### CHRONIC OR SEVERE HEALTH CONDITIONS

The following procedures must be followed should your child require the use of nebulizers, inhalers, EpiPens, or diabetes testing supplies or suffer from acid reflux or other chronic or severe condition.

- An **Individual Plan for Specialized Care** is to be filled out completely **by your physician and/or specialist**.
- A **Medication Authorization** form completed in full.
- Children will be accepted for care only after all above items and enrollment processes have been completed.
- The YMCA is a recreational/educational, not therapeutic program.

### MEDICATION

- Parents/guardians must complete and sign the **Medication Authorization** form.
- Parents/guardians should bring the medication in its original container to the Director. **DO NOT** send medication with the child or leave in their bag, backpack or cubby.
- The prescription label must contain the date, name of the drug, name of the child, name of the doctor, the dose, how it is to be administered and the expiration date of the drug.
- All medications will be kept in a locked box at the Center.
- Rescue inhalers must be on site if a child has a diagnosis of allergies or asthma.
- In Missouri, children taking medication for allergies, ADHD, or any other reason, must have an **Individual Plan for Specialized Care**, completed by the child's physician, on file at the Center prior to the child beginning care. Food restrictions must be recommended by the physician. All **Individual Plans for Specialized Care** must be updated by a physician annually.
- Food restrictions must be recommended by the physician.

### ILLNESS

- Children shall not be allowed to attend Little Explorers when ill. Upon arrival each day, children will be greeted by a teacher and shall be observed for symptoms of illness. If a child is ill, a parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to pick up the child from the Center within one hour.
- **Sign-Out is required.** The child may be isolated, within sight and hearing distance of a teacher, and made to feel comfortable until the parent/guardian arrives.
- A child shall remain home for at least 24 hours after a parent/guardian has been requested to take the child home due to symptoms of illness and must be symptom free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. This is to avoid illnesses being spread to other children.
- Children are expected to be on any medication prescribed by a doctor for 24 hours before returning to the Program, regardless of a doctor's release to return to the Center immediately.
- Examples of health symptoms that may require exclusion from Little Explorers include (but are not limited to):

<b>Exclude Child from Program:</b>	<b>Re-admit Child to Program:</b>
Fever of 100 degrees or more or 99 degrees under the arm, with or without other symptoms	Fever free for 24 hours without aid of fever reducers.
Eyes inflamed with discharge	Drainage has stopped; or treated for 24 hours with antibiotics
Drainage from ear	Drainage has stopped.
Diarrhea (2 or more loose or watery stools in clothes)	Diarrhea free for 24 hours
Vomiting – 2 times	Free of vomiting for 24 hours
Skin lesions: Athlete's Foot	Must keep shoes and socks on for all activities
Hand, Foot and Mouth	Fever free and no open lesions
Herpes	Not allowed to participate in activities where skin to skin contact occurs until 5 days after lesions have crusted or dried.
Impetigo/Infantigo	After receiving medical treatment for 24 hours

### **CONTAGIOUS/INFECTIOUS DISEASE GUIDELINES**

If a child is sent home with a communicable/infectious disease, Little Explorers may require a note from a physician if the YMCA believes the child can infect others. **The child will be excluded from the Program until a physician provides written authorization determining the child cannot infect others, or until the recommended exclusion period has passed.** (Physician's written recommendation may not supersede YMCA policies or Center Director discretion.) Please notify the teacher if your child has a communicable/infectious disease so that we may notify the other families and a sign will be posted.

### **HEAD LICE**

If a child has head lice or nits, the parents/guardians will be notified to come and pick up the child. The child may be isolated in the office or classroom, within sight and hearing distance of a teacher, and made to feel comfortable until the parent/guardian arrives. The child must be treated and cannot return to the Center until they have **NO BUGS OR NITS**. The decision will be made by the Director as to when a child may return back to the Center. The child **MUST** be checked the returning day before the parents/guardians leave.

### **HEALTH CHECKS**

Teachers are required to check your child for illness or injury upon arrival and authorized to deny care for the day if needed. Your child will not be accepted into the Center if she/he has symptoms of a contagious/infectious disease, illness or injury that might require medical attention. **Teachers have the right to take a child's temperature prior to being admitted for care and have the final authority if the child should be excluded from care.**

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

As a condition of enrollment, parents/guardians must keep current on child immunizations and follow the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Immunizations Requirements. Failure to do so will be grounds for suspension from the Program, unless the parent/guardian has signed and placed on file with the Center Director a Statement of Exemption. An exemption form can be obtained from the local health department.

### **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

#### **PRESCHOOL CENTER TEACHERS**

- All teachers and volunteers will receive an orientation, which includes written materials explaining YMCA policies, procedures and regulations.
- Teachers will supervise children at all times. Whether inside or outside, the teacher will position him/herself so that all children in the area can be easily seen.
- Teachers and volunteers are alert to the physical and emotional state of all children in the Center. When any sign of injury or suspected child abuse is detected, the Center Director will be notified immediately.
- YMCA teachers and volunteers will not verbally, emotionally or physically punish children. YMCA teachers and volunteers will not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care, such as food and shelter. Teachers provide redirection in the use of guidance techniques. We encourage conflict resolution skill building.

- Teachers and volunteers are carefully and thoroughly screened through the Missouri Family Care Safety Registry on an annual basis. This includes criminal, sex offender and child abuse screenings.
- Teacher training will include information about the signs of possible child abuse and the approved procedures for responding to the suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- The Coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day program and receives at least 12 hours of in-service training annually. Teachers receive at least 12 hours of in-service training annually.
- Teachers are trained in observing illness, child abuse and neglect, and are First Aid and CPR certified.
- Parents/guardians are invited and encouraged to visit the Childcare Center at any time and do not need to ask permission or make an appointment to do so.
- Childcare Center teachers are not supervised by the YMCA during their off-duty hours and are not acting within the scope of their employment. You are requested not to ask any Childcare Center teacher to care for your children outside of the Childcare Center.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

YMCA Little Explorers will maintain confidentiality and security of our files. The children's files will be locked at all times. Only the Childcare Director, Coordinator and teachers shall have access to the files. All records are the property of the YMCA. Employees of the Center shall not disclose or knowingly permit the disclosure of any information concerning the child or his/her family, directly or indirectly, to any unauthorized person. Licensing and Accreditation Representatives will be allowed to have access to the files as well. Parents/guardians will have access to their child's file with 48 hours notice. Parents/guardians will only be allowed to view their own child's files.

### **EMERGENCY PLANS/PROCEDURES**

#### **BUILDING EMERGENCY**

Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible with the location of their child. Please note that there are many children in each program and it will take time to contact each parent/guardian. When possible, the message on the YMCA phone will be updated. A sign will also be placed on the door to notify parents/guardians of emergency information. Once the Center Director has been given notice to return to the building, parents/guardians will be contacted again. Remember that if the program has evacuated the building, teachers will not be present to answer the telephone.

#### **TORNADO EVACUATION**

- Evacuation routes are posted in the classrooms to show where to go if there is a tornado.
- Prior to the drill or actual warning, the teachers will discuss with the children what the sound would be like, what to do and where to go if the siren goes off.
- When the siren goes off, the children line up at the door. Children are counted and attendance taken.
- The teacher begins walking with the children, and the last teacher counts one last time, picks up the attendance sheet and emergency files, and follows behind the children.
- Teachers and children will walk to the designated location, an area in the interior of the building where there are no windows or objects that may harm the children, and have the children sit with their heads down.
- Teachers will count and check the attendance list again to determine that all the children are safe.
- Teachers will sing songs and read books with the children to help keep them calm.
- Once clearance is given, the teachers and children will walk back to the room in the same fashion.
- Teachers will document the drill on the appropriate drill log.
- Tornado drills are to be held quarterly throughout the year.

#### **FIRE EVACUATION**

- Evacuation routes are posted in the classrooms to show where to go if there is a fire.
- Prior to the drill or actual warning, the teachers will discuss with the children what the sound would be like, what to do, and where to go if the alarm goes off.
- When the alarm goes off or the bell rings, the children line up at the door.
- Teachers check to make sure the area is safe and free from fire. The staff counts the children and attendance is taken.

- The teacher begins walking with the children and the last teacher counts one last time, picks up the attendance sheet, emergency files and gate keys, and follows behind the children.
- Teachers and children walk to the designated location, an area outside that is away from the building.
- Teachers count and check the attendance list again to determine whether all the children are safe.
- Teachers will sing songs and read books with the children to help keep them calm.
- Once clearance is given, the teachers and children will walk back to the room.
- Teachers will document the drill on the appropriate drill log.
- Fire drills are to be held monthly and, at least once a year, during nap time.

### **SEVERE STORMS/INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of severe storms (ice, snow or blizzard), the YMCA will make an effort to remain open. Safety for children, families and staff is of the utmost importance. When the local school district is closed due to ice, snow, or any other inclement weather situation, the YMCA CEO will determine if Little Explorers will remain open. On rare occasions, the Center may close due to inclement weather. Please watch Facebook or listen to KKJO 105.5 FM or Q Country 92.7 FM on inclement weather days for these closings, or late openings/early closings. Please be sure your emergency contact is close enough in proximity to the Center to be able to pick up your child.

### **NATURAL DISASTER**

A natural disaster includes, but is not limited to, power outages and water main breaks. In an event where a YMCA program experiences a natural disaster while the program is open, the YMCA CEO would be contacted. If the natural disaster happens when the YMCA is closed, the YMCA will notify KQ2, KKJO 105.5 FM, Q Country 92.7 FM or our Facebook page and website: [www.stjoymca.org](http://www.stjoymca.org) to announce the closing of the center. The YMCA will make every attempt to contact each family. In an event where the YMCA closes early or is closed due to a severe storm or natural disaster, the YMCA fees will not be prorated.

### **BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

#### **BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY**

Our program's philosophy is based on respect for the child's self-esteem, setting reasonable limits, and creating an environment that encourages self-discipline, problem solving, and conflict resolution. We see the opportunity to teach values of getting along with others, solving problems in a positive way and learning self-control as the key to a successful program. Teachers are dedicated to working together with the children and parents/guardians to resolve any concerns that may arise.

- Discipline or threat of discipline will not be associated with food, rest or toilet training.
- The use of physical punishment is never permitted.

#### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

The YMCA uses only positive behavior management techniques to increase students' self-esteem by helping them to become responsible for their own actions. It is important for students to grow to respect themselves as well as the rights and feelings of others. Behavior management techniques may include:

- Redirecting behavior by giving choices.
- Encouraging group consensus on problem solving.
- Discussing problems to discover causes, and guiding the child or group of children to find ways to resolve it.
- Assigning special tasks and responsibilities that will help to build their self-esteem (for example, special helpers, clean up supervisor, snack helper).
- Reflecting children's successes and accomplishments.
- Having a "Safe Place" area where a child can choose to get away, be alone, or take time out from activities while in view of the Teacher. This is also a space where children can think about what happened and what to do next time. The child chooses to leave this space when they feel ready to rejoin the activities or talk.

## **DISCIPLINE**

When a conflict arises concerning the rights of other people and/or property, our goal is to work with each child individually to solve the problem through effective communication and logical consequences. Other behavior management techniques, which include redirecting behavior or removal from a particular activity, will be used in situations where conflicts continue. The Teacher will send a note home to the parent/guardian each time there is a behavior issue with their child.

After three notes concerning behavior issues have been sent home, or when a child's negative behavior does not respond to the Teacher's behavior management techniques, the Childcare Center Director will contact the parent/guardian for a conference. The Coordinator and the parent/guardian will develop a Disciplinary Plan at this conference. In some situations, it may be necessary to restrict the child's daily attendance or require time away from the Center. In cases such as this, we emphasize communication between the parents/guardians, the Childcare Center teachers, Director, other administrative staff, and child.

Any child who is determined, at the sole discretion of the YMCA, to have intentionally harmed or attempted to harm another child, teacher or themselves will be immediately suspended from the Program and subject to suspension from all YMCA programs after review of the incident by the Director and CEO or designated YMCA supervisor.

If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency party designated by the parent/guardian on the enrollment form will be contacted. The child will be isolated from the other children. **Child must be picked up within one hour of call.** The late pickup policy will apply at the end of the one hour grace period. Failure to have your child picked up per guidelines will result in immediate dismissal from the program. **Sign-out is required.**

## **INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR**

Inappropriate sexual behavior of any child enrolled in any Y program toward any other child or teacher is strictly prohibited. Inappropriate sexual behavior is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other physical conduct of a sexual nature made by any child toward another child. Should this behavior continue, DFS may be contacted.

## **BITING POLICY**

With any bite, an Incident Report will be filled out by the classroom teacher. The parents/guardians of the child who was bitten and the parents/guardians of the child who has done the biting will be told about the incident and the parents/guardians will sign the Incident Report form. Any child who bites 3 or more times in one day will be sent home for the remainder of the day. If it is too late in the day, they will be suspended for the next day. If the biting becomes a continuous problem, the child may be suspended from the Childcare Center. All cases will be dealt with on an individual basis between the necessary parties.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

- The Y requires parents/guardians of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with courtesy, respect and Y Values. The Y goal is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the teachers, but the responsibility of each and every parent/guardian who enters the program. Parents/guardians are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents/guardians who violate the Code of Conduct may be dismissed from the program.
- **Swearing/cursing:** No parent/guardian is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language at the childcare program, whether in the presence of children or not. Such language is considered offensive and will not be tolerated.
- **Threatening of Teachers, children, or other parents/guardians:** Threats of any kind will not be tolerated.
- **Other children:** Parents/guardians are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent/guardian may physically punish another parent/guardian's child. If an parent/guardian should witness another parent/guardian's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent/guardian to direct their concern to the staff.

- **Confidentially:** It is inappropriate for one parent/guardian to seek out another parent/guardian to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the teacher's attention. The teacher will address the issue with the other parent/guardian. Although you may be curious about the outcome of such a discussion, Teachers are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in Y programs have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy.
- **Violations of safety policy:** Parents/guardians are required to follow all safety policies at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the children and teachers.

### **PROCEDURE FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN CONCERNS**

The teacher should always be the first contact in regards to concerns. If not satisfied with the teacher's action, the parent/guardian then contacts the Coordinator for further discussion. If not satisfied with the outcome of the discussion with the Coordinator, contact the Childcare Director at 816-671-9622.

### **PARENT/STAFF COMMUNICATION**

Communication is an important component to providing quality care for your child. We have the following systems in place to ensure good communication between you and the Y staff.

- **E-Mail:** To enhance communication, families are requested to provide a current e-mail address to assist in ongoing correspondence between the Y and families. E-mail addresses will be used for Y purposes only.
- **Lesson Plan:** Weekly/monthly plans are available to preview activities
- **Cubby:** Each child will have a cubby for artwork, notes, Y brochures and flyers for upcoming Y events etc.
- **Menu:** A menu will be posted each month listing breakfast, lunch and snack
- **Surveys:** An important component how we deliver and implement our programs depends on your opinion. Surveys will be sent via email or hard copy. Please take a few moments to share your experiences with us!

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

#### **TOILET TRAINING**

All children are required to be fully toilet-trained. Accidents are handled calmly and respectfully. Please send one complete change of clothes (including socks and shoes.) Even older children may need a change after messy play, spills, or outdoor activities.

#### **NUTRITIONAL PROGRAM**

- Your child's daily nutritional needs are met through planned, balanced meals that follow USDA guidelines. Menus are posted weekly.
- In order to meet licensing and CACFP nutritional guidelines, PLEASE DO NOT BRING YOUR CHILD TO THE CENTER WITH FOOD, DRINKS, ETC. ONLY CENTER-PREPARED FOOD IS ALLOWED TO BE SERVED.
- Little Explorers participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program reimburses the Center for the partial cost of meals provided to children and allows the center to provide nutritious meals. Children with food restrictions or special dietary needs must have an **Individual Plan for Specialized Care** completed and signed by a physician. Medically prescribed diets for a child enrolled in the Program shall be provided as ordered by a physician. Parents/guardians may be asked to supply special dietary items. Such diets shall be on file and adhered to in preparation and services.
- Teachers sit with the children during meal times. When children are ready, family-style meal service is appropriate.

#### **COMMITMENT TO SPECIAL NEEDS**

It is the policy of the YMCA Little Explorer's program to provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in programs and services pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities to the best of our abilities, we ask that you request your desired accommodation by contacting the Childcare Director.

#### **PHOTO/NEWS/TESTIMONIAL RELEASE**

It is understood and agreed that the YMCA of St. Joseph reserves the right to take and utilize pictures, likenesses, videos and testimonials of participants for promotional purposes including, but not limited to: reports, publications, brochures, emails, our website and other social media. Families may opt out by providing in writing desire to exclude child from above.