



EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY 2026 - 2027 HANDBOOK



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SECTION 1–WELCOME TO THE YMCA

Welcome to the YMCA of Southwest Florida Early Learning Academy!

We are pleased that you have chosen our program. We look forward to working with you and your child. Caring for your child is at once a privilege and a responsibility which we are proud to share with your family. Children at the YMCA of Southwest Florida Early Learning Centers are provided opportunities to develop an understanding of self and others and to develop mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally. The YMCA programs support and strengthen family relationships and provide a sense of community with other families.

YMCA Mission

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

Program Statement

The goal of our program is to implement best practices in early childhood education. We believe this to mean creating a climate that is safe, nurturing, and stimulating. Our intent is not to teach a selection of specific skills in preparation for the academic work of the elementary school; rather, it is to instill in the children an image of themselves as capable learners. It is to provide them with an environment rich in possibilities for child-initiated, child-directed, teacher- supported learning through active exploration and play.

Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of YMCA of Southwest Florida Early Learning Center not to discriminate in its education programs or educational activities based on sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status, or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society.

Smoke Free Facility

The YMCA of Southwest Florida buildings and grounds are smoke/tobacco and Vape free environments. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children.

Hours by Location

Bonita Springs YMCA Suwin Early Learning Center

- Monday–Friday 6:30am–6:00 pm

Venice Early Learning Academy

- Monday–Friday 6:30am–6:00 pm

Charlotte Harbor Early Learning Academy

- Monday–Friday 6:30am–5:30 pm

YMCA Early Learning Academy at PGT

- Monday – Friday 4:30 am to 6:00 pm



SECTION 2– ENROLLMENT

Eligibility

Children wishing to enroll in the early childhood education program must be at least six weeks of age.

Enrollment Policy

Prior to the first day of attendance an enrollment meeting with the Early Learning Center team and family is required to discuss child's development and needs, establish a communication plan and introduce the family to our procedures. Registration is not complete without a completed enrollment packet, registration fee and tuition, and all past balances are paid in full. The following forms are included in Early Learning Center enrollment packet:

- Early Learning Center Registration Form: Includes Acknowledgements, Rate and Bank Draft Agreement
- YMCA of Southwest Florida Early Learning Centers Handbook
- Get to Know You Questionnaire
- Permission Slips
- Child Care Food Program Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application
- Child Care Food Program Infant Feeding Form
- Holiday Schedule

The enrollment packet must be completed before the first day of attendance. Any questions regarding the completion of these forms may be forwarded to the Center Director.

Registration Fee

An annual non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of enrollment and yearly in March.

- \$150 per child or \$200 per family - New Families
- \$100 per child or \$150 per family - Current Families
- If childcare services are terminated, and a child is gone more than 90 days a \$25 reapplication fee is required.
- The registration fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.

Tuition Policies

- Tuition payments are billed in advance of services. Payments are electronically retrieved from a Bank Account or Credit Card. There are two payment options:
 - Weekly EFT drafts – Drafts occur each Friday for the following weeks tuition.
 - Monthly EFT drafts – Drafts occur on the 26th of each month for the following months tuition.
- A service fee of 2.73% for credit cards and \$0.39 for ACH drafts will be applied per transaction.
- Returned drafts need to be fulfilled by the end of the 3rd business day to continue attendance.
- All returned drafts will incur up to a \$30.00 processing fee. No exceptions.
- Registration fee and 2 weeks of tuition are required at the time of registration.
- A 2-week written notice prior to your draft date is required to withdraw your child.
- Notices received after the draft day will be charged tuition until the two weeks have been completed. There will be no refunds given.
- If your child has not attended the program for two consecutive weeks, without prior notice, it may result in the termination of your child's slot.
- If a balance remains on your account at the time of withdrawal from program, payments will continue until the balance is paid in full.
- The YMCA has limited scholarship funds available for families that meet our financial assistance guidelines. Scholarships can take up to 30 days to process and all families that apply for YMCA tuition assistance must also apply for a state subsidy with School Readiness Program through the Early Learning Coalition. Please ask your Center Director for assistance.

- Tuition is charged regardless of attendance.
- Tuition is charged for holidays, in-service training days, absenteeism, or inclement weather.
- An annual calendar will be provided to plan for center closures.
- Tuition is based on the classroom age group not the child's date of birth.
- Rates are subject to change at the discretion of the YMCA.
- The YMCA charges a differential fee to all School Readiness (SR) participants. A differential fee is the difference between the amount a provider charges the general public and the School Readiness (SR) reimbursement rate paid to providers by the program. To understand your specific costs, please see your Academy Director for the SR Parent Cost Calculation Form.

Late Pick Up

Our program closes at 6pm. If your child has not been picked up by 6pm and you have not contacted the staff, the following action will take place:

- Staff will try to contact the parents to determine arrival time.
- If contact can't be made, the staff will contact the alternate adults on the child's enrollment form to arrange pick-up.
- After 45 minutes and above actions fail, we are required by law to call child protective services for assistance.
- A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be applied.
- Our Early Learning Centers may disenroll a family from the Child Care Program if late pick-up occurs on more than three occasions.

Holiday Observances for centers

The Early Learning Academies will be closed on the following days:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| • New Year's Day | • Labor Day |
| • Martin Luther King Day | • Veteran's Day |
| • Presidents Day | • Thanksgiving Day |
| • Good Friday | • the day after Thanksgiving |
| • Memorial Day | • Christmas Eve |
| • Independence Day | • Christmas Day |

We will also close for two teacher in-service days a year. You will be notified in advance of all dates and any changes.

Inclement Weather-Related Closings

The YMCA reserves the right to close for:

- Extreme weather
- Facility emergencies
- Any unexpected situations

If the local County Schools are closed for weather emergencies, the YMCA may also be closed.

You will be notified of any closures.

Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is important for each child to meet their educational goals and develop attendance habits that will carry on throughout their school years. Please contact the center or use the Tadpole System by 9:00 a.m. if a child will be absent. VPK children must follow the attendance policy in the VPK contract (see section 4 VPK Program).

Parents are responsible for lost School Readiness payments due to excessive absences; defined as more than 3 absences per calendar month except in the event of extraordinary circumstances. Extraordinary circumstances does NOT include vacation or recreational time.

Arrival/Departure

Upon arrival, the parent/guardian must escort the child into the YMCA facility, sign the child in, and escort the child to their group. When picking up the child, the parent/guardian must sign the child out and escort the child out of the YMCA facility. Persons who are visibly impaired or appear to be under the influence will be encouraged to remain at the center until another emergency contact can be reached. If necessary, local law enforcement will be notified.

Class Rosters and Signing Children In/Out

Charlotte Harbor

Children may arrive at the center at the designated opening time and must be signed in on the class roster by signing the full name and the time (no initials or “mom/dad” are acceptable). Rosters are to be kept on the clipboards in the classrooms.

Bonita Springs, Venice, and PGT

Children may arrive at the center at the designated opening time and signed in through the Tadpoles System.

Alternative Pick-up

Only adults listed on the pick-up list may pick up your child. If we do not recognize the adult picking up a child we will ask for photo identification. You may add or remove anyone from your authorized pick-up list at any time.

Custody Agreements

If there are any issues regarding custody or restraining orders issued against any primary guardian or immediate relative of the child enrolled, a copy of those arrangements must be on file at the center. If these orders are not on file, the center will release the child to either parent. The custodial parent and proper authorities will be notified in case any issues or concerns relating to the arrangements on file arise.

Medical Statement/Immunization Policy

At the time of enrollment, unless for medical or religious reasons, enrollment form, physical examination and record of immunization must be submitted. These records **MUST** be kept current. Physicals must be updated every two (2) years. Failure to provide updated immunization records and physicals examination forms could be cause for suspension from the program.

We are required to use the form DH 680 from your doctor if your child has a temporary medical exemption and must be completed before or at the time of the expiration date. A Permanent Medical Exemption, documented on the Form DH 680, can be granted if a child cannot be fully immunized due to medical reasons. In this case, the child's physician must state in writing, the reasons for exemption based on valid clinical reasoning or evidence. We must have on file form DH 681 for religious exemption from immunization. This exemption is issued by a County Health Department (CHD) and based on established religious beliefs or practices only.

Section 3-Inclusion Policy

Inclusion Policy

We believe that an inclusive program provides the best educational setting for all children and that each child contributes his or her own personal value to our program. Children benefit from an environment that promotes diversity and respect for differences. All children learn best when they participate with others, even when some have different learning goals and abilities.

Our organization is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities. This may include providing reasonable accommodations where appropriate for an otherwise qualified individual to participate in the program. It is the parents' responsibility to notify the center director of the need for an accommodation, which includes administering medication or caring for children with disabilities. Upon doing so the center director will meet with the parents to discuss reasonable accommodations they believe may be necessary or the functional limitations caused by the disability. If a child is suspected of having a disability the center will run screenings and give referrals to outside agencies where appropriate. Parents are expected to follow up on these referrals to ensure their child's success, assist in setting the accommodations, and to maintain ongoing enrollment in the center.

The center will not exclude children with disabilities from the program unless their presence would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, themselves, or required accommodations are not deemed reasonable.

Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP)

We ask that families help us collaborate with other professionals working with a child by providing up to date reports and inviting YMCA Childcare staff to Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meetings. Our staff is happy to share our observations and assessments on a child whose family has signed a Consent for the Release of Information

SECTION 4- VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN (VPK)

What is VPK

The Voluntary Prekindergarten Program or VPK, prepares early learners for success in kindergarten and beyond. VPK is a free three-hour program for children 4 years of age. Children must live in Florida and be 4 years of age on or before September 1st of the current year to be eligible. Please see the center Director for information about enrolling in VPK.

VPK Arrival and Dismissal

For the program to be successful, regular attendance and timely drop off is imperative. Excessive tardiness or absenteeism is cause for termination from the program. As a courtesy, VPK morning only students are invited to eat lunch with their wrap around care classmates. VPK only participants must be picked up by 12:30pm. Parents must sign a monthly attendance sheet to verify the child's attendance.

Participants may arrive at the center as early as 8:30am, VPK will start promptly at 9am.

VPK Late Pick-up Fee

VPK ends at 12:30pm (unless you are enrolled in wrap around care) If your child has not been picked up by 12:30pm and you have not contacted the staff, the following action will take place:

- Staff will try to contact the parents to determine arrival time.
- If contact can't be made, the staff will contact the alternate adults on the child's enrollment form to arrange pick-up.
- After 45 minutes and above actions fail, we are required by law to call child protective services for assistance.
- A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be applied.
- Our Early Learning Centers may disenroll a family from the Childcare Program if late pick-up occurs on more than three occasions.

VPK Wrap Around Care

If your child needs more hours either before or after VPK, you can enroll in wrap around care for a small fee. Wrap around hours are any additional hours within the center's full operating schedule needed.

VPK Assessments

Florida law requires all private and public VPK providers to administer the pre and post assessment to all children attending a VPK program. All VPK providers are responsible for complying with administration and reporting results by specific deadlines. The VPK Assessment includes progress monitoring measures in the areas of print knowledge, phonological awareness, mathematics, and oral language/vocabulary that are aligned with the Standards for Four-Year Old's. The YMCA administers the Florida VPK Assessment three times a year. All VPK families will be notified of assessment dates prior to the assessments being administered. YMCA VPK programs also use observations, portfolio collections, and the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ's) to assess participants.

Section 5 – Early Childhood Education

Our Early Learning Academies expose children to a great variety of hands-on experiences. Our learning environment is organized into a variety of interest areas which may include block, home living, table toys, art, sand & water table, library, music/movement, outdoors etc. These areas support children's development particularly when experiences are supported and extended by an attentive and skillful teacher. Most importantly, each child must be encouraged to learn at his/her own pace and in his/her own way. An early childhood program gives every child the opportunity to excel and allows everyone to feel important and valued both for himself and for the part he plays as a member of his classroom group.

Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum Model and Learning Beyond Paper are used to assist our teachers in planning a classroom and outdoor environment. A wide variety of learning materials with curriculum goals in mind are provided so that no matter where the children choose to play, they are learning. The Creative Curriculum and Learning Beyond Paper are consistent with the Florida Standards and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices.

Our learning day starts at 9am. For your child to receive the full benefit of Early Education please try to have them dropped off by 9am. Lesson plans for each week will be posted in the classroom and on the Tadpole system, showing how activities are incorporated into the daily schedule.

Assessments

Our Early Learning Centers find that formative assessment creates a balance when assessing young children. Formative assessments can also shed light on social emotional skills and approaches to learning that sometimes other types of assessments overlook. We will use several formative assessments:

- Screenings using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)
- Teaching Strategies Gold
- Natural observations and documentation
- Anecdotal notes such as a toddler's discovery of different textures while playing with materials in the art area.
- Work samples or products that children generate or create, like a preschooler's painting. We will also ask families to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.
- Conferences are planned throughout the year. See your center director for schedule.

Outside Play and Learning

Daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits are provided. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active.

Toys, Phones and Electronics from Home

We ask that children do not bring toys, phones, or any form of electronics to the YMCA Early Learning Academies. The YMCA cannot be held responsible for any lost or stolen item. We will have special show n' share days, or electronic days. You will be notified by your child's teacher for that special day.

Pet Visits

Please do not bring animals into our school unless you have arranged the visit with your child's teacher. Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles including turtles, ferrets, or birds of the parrot family are NOT permitted.

Sample Daily Schedule

Infants

6:00 AM:	Arrival, Greeting and Health Check
6:45 AM:	Indoor Play
8:00 AM:	Breakfast, Clean-Up, Diapering
9:00 AM:	Tummy Time, Language, Developmental Skills or Buggy Rides
11:45 AM:	Lunch
12:30 PM:	Rest time
2:30 PM:	Snack
3:00-6 PM:	Play and Interaction with the Teachers

Toddlers

6:00 AM	Arrival, Greeting, Hand Washing, Free Play
8:00 AM	Restroom/Diapering and Hand Washing, Breakfast or Snack
9:00 AM	Circle Time (Songs, Finger Plays and Stories)
9:15 AM	Learning Centers-Science, Art, Music, Books, Dramatic Play
10:15 AM	Restroom and Hand Washing
10:30 AM	Outdoor Play and/or Gross Motor/Indoor Large Muscle Activities
11:15 AM	Prep for Lunch/Hand Washing
11:45 AM	Lunch
12:15 PM	Restroom/Diapering, Hand Washing and Transition to Naptime
12:30 PM	Rest Time
2:30 PM	Wake-Up, Restroom/Diapering, and Hand Washing
2:45 PM	Snack
3:00 PM	Outdoor Play and/or Gross Motor/Indoor Large Muscle Activities
3:45 PM	Learning Centers-Science, Art, Music, Books, Dramatic Play
4:30 PM	Restroom/Diapering and Hand Washing
4:45-6 PM	Free Choice, Songs, Finger Plays, Departures

Preschool & VPK

6:00 AM	Arrival, Greeting, Health Check, Hand Washing
8:00 AM	Restroom and Hand Washing, Breakfast or Snack
9:00 AM	Breakfast Snack
9:15 AM	Circle Time (Songs, Finger Plays and Stories)
9:45 AM	Outdoor Play and/or Gross Motor/Indoor Large Muscle Activities
10:15 AM	Restroom and Hand Washing
10:30 AM	Learning Centers, Science, Reading, Music, Math, Dramatic Play, Fine Motor, Art, Multicultural Activities
11:15 AM	Prep for Lunch/Hand Washing
11:45 AM	Lunch
12:15 PM	Restroom, Hand Washing and Transition to Nap Time
12:30 PM	VPK Dismissal for Morning Only Participants
12:30 PM	Rest Time
2:30 PM	Wake-Up, Restroom and Hand Washing
2:45 PM	Snack
3:00 PM	Outdoor Play and/or Gross Motor/Indoor Large Muscle Activities
3:45 PM	Learning Centers-Science, Art, Music, Books, Dramatic Play
4:30 PM	Restroom and Hand Washing
4:45-6 PM	Free Choice, Songs, Finger Plays, Departures

PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

Dress

Please dress your child for play and fun. An extra set of clothes should always be on hand in case of accidents or your child needs to be changed during the day. It is important that all children wear closed toe shoes. T-shirts and shorts should be an appropriate length and not offensive in nature. We recommend shorts under skirts.

Nap/Rest Time

Florida Department of Children and Families requires that all children be provided a regularly scheduled nap or rest time. We do ask you to please provide a crib sized bottom sheet and top sheet or blanket. Each week these items will be sent home to be laundered. Nap times for infants will meet the individual needs of each child, toddler and preschool children will nap no longer than 2 hours. Toddler and Preschool children are not required to sleep but do need to remain quiet on their cot if they do not fall asleep. If a child does not fall asleep after 30 minutes, the staff will provide quiet activities they can do on their cot.

Birthdays

We understand there are special days for your child. If your child would like to celebrate their special day at school, you may send in a favorite snack if it arrives in factory sealed wrapping or box. A healthy treat is best, examples of healthy treats include: whole grain, fresh fruits, vegetables and dips, etc. Please check with your child's teacher for allergies and appropriate snacks and treats. You may bring juice, plates, and napkins. Please do not provide balloons or party favors.

Families are welcome to attend during the snack or to spend the whole or part of the school session with the child.

Instead of birthday prizes for the children, we suggest that you donate a book to the school. We will affix our special bookplate to the book on which your child's name and the date of the gift can be printed. Ask to see our book list if you are interested.

Unless all children in the child's class are going to be invited, please do not distribute party invitations at the Center.

Gum and Candy

Please do not allow your child to bring gum or candy to school.

Infant and Toddler Information

Parents supply diapers, wipes, diaper cream, bottles, extra clothing, and pacifiers. Please label all items with child's name. Blankets are allowed for children over the age of 1 year. If you want teachers to apply diaper cream, you must sign permission slip. The center can supply soy or non-soy based formula as well as baby food.

Children may use pacifiers during rest time. To reduce the likelihood of spreading illness, pacifiers must be kept in a child's cubby or diaper bag during all other times of the day.

- Breast milk must be brought in ready-to-use containers. For health reasons, we are not able to store bags of frozen milk for extended periods of time. All bottles and breast milk bags must be labeled with a full name and date. If breastfeeding, accommodations will be made for parents wishing to breastfeed.
- All infants less than one year will be placed on their back to sleep. Infants shall not be allowed to sleep in a car seat or swing. Once a child can roll over independently, the child may remain on his/her stomach to nap.
- No blankets, stuffed toys or pillows should ever be placed in a crib. A request for alternative sleeping positions must be accompanied by a signed and dated physician's note stating the reason for the request.

Diapering and Toilet Training

- Diapering will be done in the designated area.
- Staff will follow proper diapering procedures.
- Staff will use only commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups unless the child has health provider documentation that notes the medical reason disposable diapers are not permitted.
- For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit.
- Cloth diapers or clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing to minimize handling) and sent home that day for cleaning.
- Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
- At all times caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
- Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of cross contamination.
- All families are asked to provide an extra set of clearly labeled clothing for their child in case of an “accident” or messy play.
- Toilet training will be determined by the combined efforts of your child’s teacher and parents.
- It is the expectation that children in the 3-year-old classroom and above are toilet trained.
- Space is prioritized for children who are toilet trained in the 3 years and up classrooms.

Biting

Biting is common amongst young children. During early childhood, children are sensory learners and often explore orally. If biting occurs, the children involved will receive an incident report. Teachers make every effort to minimize this behavior, however, it may still occur.

If biting becomes excessive or causes a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of others and all attempts within reason to redirect the behavior have occurred the YMCA may disenroll the child.

SECTION 6 GUIDANCE

Behavior Management Policy

YMCA believes that all children should experience success. We strive for a classroom setting that provides children with opportunities to explore their environment within consistent, age- appropriate limits; in such an atmosphere, most behavioral issues are prevented. However, if behavioral issues occur, our philosophy is to help children learn values, problem solving skills and to take responsibility for their own choices. By using the following progressive guidance techniques, we strive to minimize inappropriate behavior while creating a positive environment for all of our children:

I. Classroom Management

Our teachers will manage individual classrooms by:

- Modeling and reinforcing appropriate behavior and maintaining consistent supervision.
- Setting reasonable expectations for children’s behavior based on their developmental level and individual differences
- Becoming familiar with an individual child’s special needs.
- Providing interesting, challenging, age-appropriate activities to do in a timely manner

II. Ignoring Negative Behavior

- Some negative behavior is exhibited by a child to seek attention; however, it can be stopped when it does not get the attention desired. We will utilize this technique unless a safety issue is involved.

III. Redirection / Distraction

- We will offer alternatives to children engaged in undesirable behavior by offering a different toy, suggesting a new activity, engaging the child in an activity with a teacher or another child, or by suggesting independent play.

IV. Verbal Intervention

- The teacher explains to the child the inappropriate behavior, and shows him/her the appropriate way to handle the situation. For example, a teacher might say, instead of hitting Sarah, say, 'I am angry because you took my truck'.

V. Logical Consequences

- Here, the teacher helps the child understand the logical consequences of his/her actions by removing an object, activity, etc. that is causing the problem. For example, if a child uses blocks to hit other children, the consequence is to remove the blocks from the child.

VI. Calm Down Area

The child is encouraged to go the Calm Down Area, to allow him/her to relax and calm down, and to enable him/her to not be influenced by peers. The process used for "Calm Down Area" is:

- The child is encouraged to go to an area in the room where he/she can be supervised at all times.
- The child will have access to activities and materials while in "Calm Down Area".
- The child may return to the group as soon as the negative behavior stops or is significantly reduced.
- "Calm Down Area" will not be used for children under the age of 12 months; instead, redirection or distraction techniques will be used.

If the techniques above are not working effectively, the Persistent Inappropriate Behavior Procedure will be instituted.

Guidelines for Persistent Inappropriate Behavior (Suspension and Expulsion)

Persistent inappropriate behavior is any inappropriate behavior which continues after the progressive guidance steps have been used; any behavior which threatens the health or safety of themselves, other children or staff; or a continuous inability to follow the rules and guidelines of our program. YMCA will use the following progressive procedures:

1. We will observe and record the child's inappropriate behavior.
2. We will document what we have done to try to change the behavior.
3. Child will be referred to the Social Emotional Specialist.
4. The Center Director/Social Emotional Specialist may suggest outside resources to parents and we will work with any outside resource for further guidance in responding to the child's behavior.
5. If inappropriate behavior continues, parents will be asked to participate in an immediate intervention/Positive Behavior Support Plan with Center Director/Lead.
6. Teacher/Social Emotional Specialist. Children old enough to understand this process will be invited to attend. A specific action plan will be developed at this conference to address the behavior. The action plan will outline all steps the staff will take to change the behavior, all steps the parents will take within a 30 day probationary period. All expectations of the child's behavior moving forward will be outlined on a probationary letter.
7. If the inappropriate behavior persists during the probationary period, and all attempts within reason to redirect the behavior have occurred the YMCA will dis-enroll the child.

Guidelines for Immediate Disenrollment

- Certain behavior may cause a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of themselves, other children or staff. (For Example, a physical assault which results in serious bodily injury, an attempted physical assault which if completed, would result in serious bodily injury, setting or attempting to set fires, bringing weapons to the Center, substantial damage to real or personal property, etc.)
- YMCA will dis-enroll any child whose behavior creates a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of themselves, other children, or staff, without following the guidance steps outlined above.
- When family and YMCA staff, working together, cannot control a child's behavior, the YMCA Early Learning Academy retains the right to terminate care for the child.

Adult Expectations

The YMCA of Southwest Florida expects all adults to conduct themselves in a polite and respectful manner while present in our facilities. We reserve the right to remove adults from YMCA premises if the adult is causing a disruption, is inappropriate in their language or actions, or is a threat to the safety of staff, children, or other families. We also hold the right to dis-enroll any child from the program if their parents, guardians, or any other adult connected to them are exhibiting inappropriate or threatening behavior to any of the YMCA staff, property, children, and families. We will contact the appropriate authorities if we feel there is an immediate threat to the safety of our center by an adult whose child/children are enrolled in our center.

If you have concerns with another families child's behavior, please speak confidentially to a staff person and allow the staff to handle the child's behavior.

If you feel you must discipline your own child at the early learning center, loud yelling and physical punishments of any kind is not tolerated.

Forms of Unacceptable Discipline

- Our policy does not permit the use of the following forms of discipline: Corporal punishment Emotional punishment, including ridicule, embarrassment, or humiliation Punishing a child for lapses in toilet training habits Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing or medical care Physical restraint, other than the restraint necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
- The staff have received a copy of the Behavior Guidance plan and understand its' role in behavior management with children. This is reviewed yearly with staff and upon orientation process.

SECTION 7 – HEALTH AND SAFETY

Management of Illness

The symptoms for which a child shall be sent home:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, when in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness.
- Diarrhea (3 or more abnormally loose stools within a 24 hour period).
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
- Difficult or rapid breathing.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching.
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes.
- Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stools.
- Stiff neck with elevated temperature.
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation.
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.
- Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by other sign or symptom of illness.
- Any Covid-19 Symptoms

An ill child will be isolated, supervised by a staff member and the parents will be called to pick up their child. The child must be picked up one hour from the call.

A child sent home with a fever must stay home for the full day the following day and be unmedicated fever free. If the child has a communicable disease, a return note from the physician may be requested.

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which a child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home.

The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, contacted those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

Administration of Medication, Medical Food, and Special Services

We will administer physician prescribed medication only. In order to administer the medication we must have the following:

- Parent/guardian must fully complete the classroom Medication Log. An individual Medication Log sheet can be provided for ongoing medications, please ask your child's teacher or the center director.
- The medication must have a prescription label that includes the child's name, current date, and exact dose, specific number of dosages and route of administration.
- Medications prescribed on an "as needed" basis, such as asthma inhalers or epi pens, must be accompanied by a physician's note describing the symptoms that constitute the "as needed" situation.
- Parents must sign form that states they have trained staff in the administration of medication.
- Chapstick, lotion, hand sanitizer are not permitted at the YMCA without proper paperwork. Early Childhood children may not carry or store these items. These items will remain in the office area in a safe medication storage bin.

Sunscreen and Bug Spray

- Parents must sign a parental permission form for sunscreen and bug spray to be applied.
- Please apply sunscreen to your child before drop-off in the morning.
- Teachers will reapply sunscreen before afternoon outdoor play.
- Please provide your own sunscreen and bug spray labeled with your child's name.
- We will apply bug spray to children over 2 months of age.

Emergencies and Accidents

Incident/injury report will be completed by the childcare staff member in charge of the child when the following occur:

- An illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid treatment; or
- A bump or blow to the head; or
- Emergency transportation; or
- An unusual or unexpected event which jeopardizes the safety of children or staff, such as, a child leaving the center unattended.

Emergency Procedures

In case of severe emergency or accident a trained staff member will:

- Administer First-aid
- Contact the parent/guardian immediately and/or call emergency medical transportation if the situation warrants.
- Stay with the child until released to the parent or emergency medical transportation.
- Complete incident report and give to parent/guardian for signature.

Breakfast/Lunch/Snacks

YMCA of Southwest Florida Early Learning Centers participate in the Florida Food Program and Federal Food Program, providing nutritious breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack daily at no cost to our families. All families are required to complete Child Care Food Program Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application annually. See each center classroom or director for specific mealtimes.

Peanut Free

The YMCA Early Learning Academy is a peanut free environment. To protect our children with allergies, we ask that families refrain from sending in any foods that may contain peanuts.

Food Allergies

(Please notify school at time of enrollment or upon diagnosis and provide a Drs note)

Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day.

High risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served. For children younger than four years, these include hotdogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas; hard pretzels; chunks of raw carrots; or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Safety and Insurance

While in our program, every precaution is taken to assure your child has a safe and fun experience. If an accident should occur while your child is in the program, please note that the YMCA does not furnish accident insurance. All medical bills are the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian.

Cleaning and Hand Washing

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately. Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Nontoxic substances will be used whenever possible.

Frequent hand washing is key to preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink.

Child Abuse Prevention

The YMCA Early Learning Academy is concerned about children and has a responsibility to provide each child with a safe environment. As a result, we have several practices in place to assure the children in our care are respected and cared for properly. All employees are screened by the state and Federal screening tools prior to employment and are trained in our child abuse prevention policies. Teachers learn to watch for certain signs of abuse in children as well as for patterns of behavior that might indicate abuse. They are also mandated by the state to report any suspicions of abuse. Our programs have an open-door policy granting families the right to drop in at any time and supervisors to make unannounced visits to classrooms.

Registered Sex Offender of a Child Enrolled in a Center

If the YMCA of Southwest Florida is made aware that a parent/guardian of a child is listed on a registered sex offender database, the center director will be notified and the director will inform the center staff of the situation. Parents who are registered sex offenders are able to enter YMCA childcare programs for the purpose of enrollment, conferences and to drop-off and pick-up their children from the center. For the protection of the parent and the children, the parent/guardian must be under the direct supervision of a YMCA staff at all times when they are in the facility. The YMCA of Southwest Florida reserves the right to limit or refuse admittance to any center to any registered sex offenders if they do not follow our policy for staff supervision.

Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Procedures

The YMCA Early Learning Centers posts emergency evacuation routes in classrooms and hallways throughout the building. Our emergency procedures are updated annually and all YMCA staff are trained and drilled in the emergency procedures, annual fire safety training, and pediatric first aid and CPR annually. Fire and tornado drills are held monthly to ensure emergencies are understood and easily managed.

Section 8 Communication and Family Involvement

Our program is committed to forging a strong partnership between family and center to provide the highest quality of care and early childhood education for each individual child enrolled in the program.

Tadpoles

The YMCA Early Learning Academy uses the Tadpoles App for easy communication between teachers and parents. To access, you will be registered by the YMCA Early Learning Academy. If you prefer your communication not to be accessed through Tadpoles, please let the center director know and other arrangements will be made.

Please be sure that all important messages to teachers take the form of a written note or e-mail through the Tadpoles System.

Parent Teacher communication

In the event you need to discuss a private or sensitive matter with your child's teacher please leave a note and a staff member will get back to you, or you may call the front office and a teacher will return your call as soon as possible.

Parental Concerns

We want our families to feel that they can share their concerns. If you have any questions, please talk with your child's classroom teachers. If you want to take a suggestion or concern beyond the classroom teacher, please contact:

- The Assistant Director
- The Center Director
- Executive Director of Early Learning

Conferences

Regular conferences are scheduled twice a year usually in September/October and April/May. You will be notified about conference time through the Tadpole System or a note home. Classroom teachers post conference sign-up schedules in each classroom. If the listed dates and times are inconvenient for you, please arrange an alternate conference date with your child's head teacher. If at any time during the year you feel that an extra conference with either the child's teachers or the Center Director would be useful, please contact us and we will arrange for one.

Confidentiality

All information concerning individual children is kept on file in the office. All financial information pertaining to individual families is kept in the YMCA's business office in a locked file cabinet. People who have access to a child's files include: The Director, the Assistant Director, the child's classroom teachers, the child's parents, and the childcare administrative assistants. Only the fiscal assistance community and the family have access to a family's financial information. Files must not leave the office if a child is enrolled in school or childcare.

Whereas we respect the confidentiality of children's health assessments, these must be reviewed by our licensing agency, the Department of Children and Families. Files or information from the file may be released to schools or other agencies only with a signed parental consent form. Information about a child or his family is confidential and may not be shared with other families. Parents may submit a written request for a copy of their child's records. Requests will be responded to within 24-48 hours.

Transitions

Transition is the term used when a child is ready to move to the next age group classroom. Children moving to the next age group classroom will visit their new classrooms, engage in familiar activities, and meet with their new teachers several times before the transition. Transitions from one classroom to another might happen throughout the year depending on the needs of the child and the center. Families will be notified before any transition activities begin.

Employee Family Relationships

The YMCA of Southwest Florida has a policy that prohibits staff relating to children who participate in the YMCA programs outside of scheduled YMCA activities. This includes, but is not limited to, babysitting, social media, social outings and phone conversations.

Program Surveys

We ask that all families complete a survey once a year to help us evaluate our programming. The Family Survey provides a valuable opportunity for families to share with staff their thoughts about their children's care and education. Please make sure that you turn in your completed survey form.

Parent Visitation

Any custodial parent or guardian of a child enrolled in our program shall be permitted unlimited access to the center during its hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the center, or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the custodial parent or guardian shall notify the center director of his/her presence. If you are visiting a classroom, you may choose to either observe or to volunteer your help. If you are observing, you are welcome to enter the classroom quietly and to sit unobtrusively while you watch the children at work and play. Teachers will be glad to answer any questions you may have after class is over and all children have left the classroom.

Volunteers

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the teacher, the Center Director, or our receptionist if you would like to be a school volunteer. For safety's sake, if a volunteer will be working with children, he/she will be expected to meet the association's requirements for background screening.

- Volunteers are required to be at a minimum age of 16 years.
- Volunteers will be under the direct observation of staff.
- Volunteers must submit to required background screening

Child Care Center No Video Taping Policy

To ensure the safety, privacy, and confidentiality of children, families, and staff, the YMCA of Southwest Florida has a strict policy prohibiting video recording within the center's premises. This policy aims to protect children from potential exploitation, maintain a safe and respectful environment, and comply with relevant privacy laws.

No video recording, including but not limited to, filming, live streaming, or taking videos on personal or professional devices (smartphones, cameras, tablets, etc.) is permitted inside the child care facility, except by authorized personnel for approved purposes (e.g., educational recordings for staff training, or authorized media).