

# **Family YMCA of the Desert**

# **Early Childhood Education**

# **California State Preschool**

## **Program**

## **Parent Handbook**

## **2020-2021**



**Family YMCA of the Desert**

**43-930 San Pablo Ave.**

**Palm Desert, CA 92260**

**760-341-9622**

**[www.ymcaofthedesert.org](http://www.ymcaofthedesert.org)**

**Proudly Serving Families at the Following Locations:**

**Doris Mechanick CDC**

**44-700 Arabia Street**

**Indio, CA 92201**

**760-347-6698**

**Jean Benson CDC**

**75-433 Orange Blossom Ln.**

**Palm Desert, CA 92211**

**760-836-3336**

**La Quinta CDC**

**49-955 Moon River Dr.**

**La Quinta, CA 92253**

**760-564-2848**

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

*Effective July 2020*

# **Family YMCA of the Desert- Early Childhood Education Program**

## **California State Preschool Programs (CSPP)**

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## **About Us: The Family YMCA of the Desert Early Childhood Education Programs**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to the ECE program of the YMCA! We have three wonderful children child development centers to serve your family located in Palm Desert, La Quinta and Indio. We provide a safe and quality learning environment which provided optimum learning opportunities for your child. We are delighted you will be participating in our program. This Parent Handbook has been designed to give you an overview of our policies and procedures, and to explain our approach to planning educational experiences for children.

We believe children learn through play and active involvement with people, places, and things. Our curriculum is designed to be appropriate for the developmental capabilities of each child, and is implemented with attention to children's differing needs, interests, and backgrounds. We also value the rich culture and ethnic diversity of our families, and we hope that you will plan to visit your child's school often and participate in our special events. Our goal is to partner with you as your child grows, and provide the best possible environment for your child to learn and explore. If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions please contact us. Our goal is to work together, as a team, to provide a positive learning experience for your child, and support your family's needs in every way that we can.

Our staff members and experienced educators who strive to remain up to date to the changing needs of children and families. For the safety of your child, we follow Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing regulations that require staff members to complete a thorough background screening, T.B. test clearance and maintain current immunizations as required by law. We welcome the enrollment of children with disabilities, and understand the requirements pf the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make reasonable accommodations. What we expect of parents and guardians is that you read the handbook, notices, and newsletters that we send you. We also want you to feel free to be a part of our ECE program, by volunteering, offering suggestions, comments and moral support. The YMCA has an open- door policy which allows parents to observe the program during any time of the day. Although the Health and Safety protocols of the COVID-19 pandemic may limit visitors currently, please reach out to staff if you wish to virtually visit your child's classroom anytime, or have any communication needs that we will work with you to address.

### **Purpose**

The primary goal of our ECE program is to provide a quality early childhood education program for your child to learn and grow according to his/her own maturity level. We provide a safe learning environment for all children and a place where children will learn through play. The emphasis of the learning activities we offer are Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) individualized to meet the needs of each learner. We maintain low teacher-child ratios of 1 adult to 8 preschool children, allowing more opportunities to provide individual attention to each child.

### **Philosophy**

We, the staff of the ECE program, believe that...

- Children learn best when they are actively engaged in their daily experiences with material and people in a safe, loving and nurturing environment.
- Children develop and learn according to their own maturity level in the areas of Language Development, Social-Emotional Development, Cognition, and Motor Skills. Setting and inviting environment with activities that are developmentally appropriate is key to promote learning that challenges children.

- Modeling positive guidance and discipline techniques guide children to control their behavior. These intervention strategies teach children to work out conflicts on their own rather than solely relying on teachers to assist with managing behaviors. Staff members are proactive by arranging the learning environment and foresee possible conflicts, rather than react to situations.
- All children are unique individuals and deserve respect as a child and as a person.
- All children should be able to relate and to be proud of their own culture, as well as respect and relate to other cultures around them.

### ***Program Goals and Objectives***

Our goals and objectives as early childhood educators are to contribute to your child's overall development. We are sensitive to the fact that developmental ability and personalities can vary widely at any age. We help children build social skills and self-control and by working with your child, taking turns, working in a group, and learn to follow rules. We respect multiple learning styles and use a wide range of teaching mythologies so that all children are able to grow physically, emotionally, socially, and mentally. We respect all families as they are key members of the educational team.

In order to attain the above goals, the staff will help children:

- Gain pride in their own cultural background
- Learn to work and play indecently and with others by valuing one's own rights and the rights of others
- Develop self-identity and a view of themselves as having a competence and worth
- Realize many opportunities to strive and succeed physically, intellectually, and socially
- To wonder, to seek answers, to question, to explore, and to be curious while exploring their environment
- Strengthen physical skills, using large and small muscles.
- To offer learning experiences through play to enrich lives of children
- Explore creativity, science, music, drama, safety, sports, games, and multicultural activities, etc.
- Grow in ability to express feelings effectively
- To be partners with our parents for the well-being of their child(ren)

### ***Program Adaptations Due to COVID-19 and/or Other Emergencies***

At this time, we have had to adapt certain aspects of our program to prioritize the heightened health and safety practices that minimize risk to all participants. We have been guided in these changes by Community Care Licensing, California Department of Education, and Riverside County Health Department. Families will continue to receive updates when any practices are revised due to the pandemic or any other emergency. Our goal is to keep our services safe, open and available to the community, as an essential service, and thus we follow the strictest recommendations for group childcare. At any time, please reach out to Program Director Robin McConnell ( rmcconnell@desertymca.org, 760-341-9622) with any questions about current health and safety practices.

### ***Character Development***

The YMCA of the USA is introducing a recommitment to character development. The YMCA maintains that families are the key to character development. Parents and other caring adults have the primary responsibility to teach their children the values they feel are important.

The YMCA will support families in character development by challenging children to accept and demonstrate positive values. We will do this by providing an environment, role models, and activities conducive to character development. We will keep parents informed and involved. We also challenge all adults to be positive role models and valued educators. The YMCA has adopted the following four values: **Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility**. Children will learn about these principles through various elements of the curriculum and through reciting of the character pledge before snacks and meals. The YMCA challenges all parents to accept and demonstrate Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility.

### ***Ensuring Program Access for All Children***

The Family YMCA of the Desert does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability, in determining which children are served. The programs refrain from religious instruction or worship. Questions regarding this policy may be directed to the Program Director or the Chief Executive Officer at 760-341-9622.

The Family YMCA of the Desert, in keeping with its mission to help all people realize their fullest potential, encourages and supports the participation of all children in the YMCA Early Childhood Education program. Consideration is given to the individual needs of every child and reasonable ability of the program to meet those needs.

It is essential that all pertinent information about the child's needs be available to staff at enrollment and that a continuing bond of trust and mutual partnership exists between home and preschool for the benefit of the child. A parent/caregiver has the obligation to share significant medical, physical and behavioral issues at the time of enrollment and on an ongoing basis. If necessary, a meeting with the Program Director will take place prior to the child's start to discuss the program in further detail and what tools and strategies are available to support your child's needs.

### ***Types of Programs and Locations***

1. State Preschool Program (ALL DAY)- Doris Mechanick Child Development Center, Indio
2. State Preschool Program (ALL DAY)- Jean Benson Child Development Center, Palm Desert
3. State Preschool Program (ALL DAY)- La Quinta Child Development Center, La Quinta

**Due to program adaptations and limited capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic, our three locations will offer CSPP FULL DAY services in 2020-21.**

# Registration Policies and Procedures

## **Eligibility and Enrollment**

Family YMCA of the Desert and California Department of Education (CDE) welcome all children and families regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability. The child must be 3 years of age by December 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year. Children who have their third birthdays on or after December 2<sup>nd</sup> of the school year may be enrolled on or after their third birthday. A waiting list is maintained of eligible children when space is inadequate to meet the requests for California State Preschool Programs (CSPP).

Enrollment is granted for a period of no less than twelve months according to the California Department of Education's Eligibility and Priority Criteria:

**Full-Day California State Preschool Program (CSPP)** serves eligible 3 & 4-year-old children in an age & developmentally appropriate subsidized early learning & care program, designed to facilitate the transition to kindergarten. CSPP includes educational development, health services, social services, nutritional services, parent education & parent participation, evaluation & staff development.

## **Requirements:**

- Eligibility is based on either Child or Family Eligibility. A child is eligible based on receipt of Child Protective Services, or being at-risk of abuse and neglect or exploitation. A family is eligible if homeless, current recipient of aid, or income eligible according to California Department of Education (CDE) income ceilings
- Must meet need criteria: Employment, Seeking Employment, Vocational Training, Educational Program, Seeking Permanent Housing, Parental Incapacity, CPS/At-Risk, or Homeless. Documentation and verification for need is used to determine the childcare schedule needed. Changes in certified hours of care must be approved in advance, and changes will be processed once new information is verified.
- The family monthly income must not exceed the income eligibility guidelines for the current year as issued by the California Department of Education.

## **Admission Priorities:**

- ❖ Child protective services, or at-risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation (3 & 4 year olds)
- ❖ 4 year olds (Birthday on or before Dec 1<sup>st</sup>), not enrolled in TK that are eligible & meet need criteria. Admission priority:
  - Eligible children who were enrolled in CSPP as a 3 year old
  - Income ranking order. Within each ranking:
    - Exceptional needs child
    - Application date
- ❖ 3 year olds (Birthday on or before Dec 1<sup>st</sup> | If 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday is on or after December 2<sup>nd</sup>, child may be enrolled on or after 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday) that are eligible & meet need criteria. Admission priority:
  - Income ranking order. Within each ranking:
    - Exceptional needs child
    - Application date
- ❖ 3 & 4 year old children that meet eligibility criteria without establishing a need for services may enroll in income ranking order & within income ranking order enroll:
  - 4 year old
  - 3 year old
- ❖ For CSPP sites operating within attendance boundaries of a qualified FRPM school, 4 year olds may be enrolled with no eligibility requirements (to the extent possible, enroll in income ranking order) - *Doris Mechanick CDC, only*

## ***Required Documentation for the California State Preschool Programs***

Parents interested in enrolling their children submit proof of ALL income for current month, proof of address, immunization record, and birth certificate to determine eligibility.

The parents shall also provide the names of the parents and the names, gender and birthdates of the children identified in the family. The parent shall provide supporting documentation regarding the number of children and parents in the family. The number of children shall be documented by providing at least one of the following documents, as applicable:

- (a) Birth Certificates
- (b) Court orders regarding child custody;
- (c) Adoption documents
- (d) Records of Foster Care placements;
- (e) School or medical records
- (f) County welfare department records; or
- (g) Other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent.

**All documentation and attestations during the enrollment process are signed by parent under penalty of perjury. Individuals shall not provide fraudulent and/or deceitful information regarding their eligibility for child development services.**

Parents are required to prepare the registration packet and meet at the appointed time with a Program Eligibility specialist to review and complete the enrollment documents within five (5) days. The child will not be permitted to start unless the packet is complete and accurate. It is the parent's responsibility to keep all information current and updated. Upon enrollment, children will be expected to have health screening and physician's statement and be current with immunizations.

### ***Twelve Month Eligibility***

Once a family has established eligibility for the full day California State Preschool Program, a family shall be considered to meet all eligibility and need requirements for those services for not less than twelve months. If your family's basis for eligibility is income, the regulations require a family enrolled in subsidized child care program to report when their income exceeds the exit threshold. The income ceilings are based on family size and family's adjusted gross income (before taxes). These ceilings have been provided to you as part of the enrollment process. It is the family's responsibility to notify the site within 30 days if their income exceeds the exit threshold.

If a family wishes to change or update their contract in order to reduce family fees or meet family needs, they may do so by completing a Request to Change Services form and providing any necessary documentation. The family reserves the right to retain their current service level when voluntarily requesting a change to service.

At the end of the twelve month eligibility period, any family who wishes to continue enrollment in the program will be required to recertify. At that time, families will need to provide proof of eligibility and needs as requested.

### ***Notices of Action:***

A written Notice of Action (NOA) is hand delivered or mailed to inform the family of the approval or denial of their application for services. NOAs are also issued for any changes in the service agreement, such as when the family requests increased hours of care, the family size changes, family fee changes or the end of services.

### ***Parent Orientation***

A mandatory parent orientation will be held in late August or September. Families enrolling at later times of the year will be required to meet with the Site Supervisor for an orientation meeting within two weeks of the child's start date.

### **Fees for State Preschool**

State Preschool services are free to those who qualify. Eligibility will be based on where the families are placed on the current Family Fee Schedule (determined by the California Department of Education) according to both the gross monthly income and the family size; some families will be required to pay family fees for full day services.

The fee rate is determined by the State and adopted each year per CDE instructions. Family fees are to be paid for the month in advance.

- Fees are based on child enrollment not attendance.
- Fees will be due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.
- If the parent pays by personal check and the check is returned for insufficient funds, the parent will be required to pay both the owed fees and any bank charges.
- Family fees are considered delinquent after seven (7) calendar days from the date the fees were due. If fees are not received by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month, a Notice of Action will be issued to terminate services two weeks from the date of the notice for the delinquent fees, unless: all fees are paid in full before the end of the two week period, or the parent has arranged a reasonable repayment plan to the Family YMCA.

### **Delinquent Fees Policy:**

- For a first instance of delinquent fees, if fees are received by the end of the notice period, or a reasonable repayment plan is adopted to the satisfaction of Family YMCA, a Notice of Action will be issued reinstating services. We will continue to provide services to the child, provided the parent(s) pays current fees when due and complies with the provisions of the repayment plan.
- For a second instance of delinquent fees, the parent(s) must attend a meeting with the Program Director and Site Supervisor, in addition to paying fees or arranging a reasonable repayment plan. A Notice of Action will be issued reinstating services based on completion of these steps.
- For a third instance of delinquent fees, a Notice of Action for termination will be issued.
- Upon termination for nonpayment of family fees, the family shall be ineligible for child services until all delinquent fees are paid.

### ***Withdrawing from the CSPP program***

Written two weeks' notice is to be given to the Site Supervisor specifying the last day of attendance.

# Operational Policies and Procedures

## *Family YMCA of the Desert Early Childhood Education Program Policies*

1. Files are maintained on each child for health and attendance purposes.
2. Files are pertaining to eligible standards and family service records are kept confidential with limited access in secured files.
3. Release of information from parent files is only provided with the consent of the parent who enrolled the child into the program.
4. Attendance is taken on a daily basis.
5. Parents have the option to visit the center before their child's first day.
6. Every child is treated with respect and dignity.
7. The program refrains from religious worship and instruction.

## *Contract Hours/ Days of Operation*

Hours of Operation during the pandemic year 2020-21 subject to revision based on emerging parent need and staffing availability. If the center is closed due to State or County order, all CSPP services will automatically continue through distance learning and remote services support.

Full Day California State Preschool Program:

Monday to Friday

- 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Jean Benson Child Development Center
- 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Doris Mechanick Child Development Center
- 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, La Quinta Child Development Center

## *Vacations/ Holidays*

Child Development Centers will be closed in the observances of the following holidays:

Independence Day-	July 3, 2020 (Friday)
Labor Day -	September 7, 2020 (Monday)
Veteran's Day -	November 11, 2020 (Wednesday)
Thanksgiving Day & Day after -	November 26 & 27, 2020 (Thursday and Friday)
Winter Break -	December 24, 2020 thru January 1, 2021
President's Day -	February 15, 2020 (Monday)
Memorial Day -	May 31, 2021 (Monday)

## *Open Door Policy*

Our Centers have an open door policy and we urge you to visit the classrooms any time and volunteer in whatever capacity you feel is appropriate for you. Volunteer possibilities include helping with the daily classroom routine, sharing special activities (music, art, cooking), and/ or collecting classroom resources. Please note that classroom volunteers (including parents) are required to provide proof of immunization according to California law, and the Family YMCA also requires all volunteers to be fingerprinted. Please see your Site Supervisor for more information. **During the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteer opportunities may be limited to virtual visits only, and we will restrict outside visitors to our sites to minimize risk of virus spread to the children and your household. Virtual visits and prearranged parent visits may be arranged at any time, please contact your site staff. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our school community as healthy and safe as possible.**

## ***Enrollment Procedure***

**Parents are required to complete a registration packet by completing all forms and submitting required documentation.**

Parents will be contacted by the Administrative Assistant to conduct an eligibility/ enrollment meeting. Registration packets are required to be updated annually and a re-certification of eligibility is carried out according to CDE regulations for participants in the all-day CSPP program.

## ***Attendance***

It is required that children attend the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) according to the contracted hours. If your schedule needs change, you can submit a Request to Change Services form. When contracted hours are not followed, a Violation of Contract Hours form will be issued and family must meet with the Site Supervisor. Please review the Attendance Policy for further details..

## ***Signing In and Out Procedures***

A parent or designated person, who is at least 18 years of age, must sign the child in when brought to the center. **SIGN IN INCLUDES FULL NAME, THE EXACT TIME, AND MUST BE LEGIBLE** on the attendance sheets provided. This is in compliance with title 22 Licensing Regulations 101226.1 (b) and 101229.1 (a.1). The same process must be completed when picking the child up. **Additionally, on the last service day of each month, the enrolling parent/caregiver must sign off on that month's attendance record at the bottom of the Sign in/Sign out. Arrangements must be made so that the enrolling parent is at the site during the last week of the month to provide this required signature.**

## ***Authorization to Pick Up Children***

No child will be released to a person not authorized by a parent to pick up the child. We must have written authorization for persons picking up children who are not on the child's authorization list. Parents will be asked to list persons authorized when they register their child at the center.

## ***Divorce/ Separation***

In the case of separation/ divorce, court documents must be provided to inform the site of custodial rights and the days and if the non-custodial parent may pick up the child. No changes to the pick-up authorization form will be accepted by phone. Restraining orders must be on file with our office. In the event that custody of children is shared jointly, children will be released to either parent and to any adult listed on the emergency card provided by either parent. Should disagreements arise between the parents related to issues of who may pick-up the child, staff will follow any procedures outlined in court orders.

**ONLY** persons authorized in **WRITING** by the **PARENT** may pick up a child. This is for the child's protection. The staff will question anyone who is unfamiliar to them and check their ID and authorization to pick up a child. They will be stopped from taking the child if there isn't written authorization on file. If someone not on the authorization list is planning to pick a child up, **the parent must notify the Site Supervisor both verbally and in writing.**

**Reminder- Only written authorization will be accepted along with verbal verification from the parent. Staff will require that the person picking up the child show proper (photograph) identification at time of pick up.**

## ***Grievances & Concerns/ Chain of Command***

It is our desire to share in a mutually respectful relationship to help ensure your child's success in our program. If an issue or concern arises, your Site Supervisor will be able to assist you with most questions related to the program, including, but not limited to:

- Behavior Concerns
- Schedule Changes
- Program Concerns

The Site Supervisor will be able to work closely with you to ensure a positive YMCA experience for both you and your child. If, after working with your Site Supervisor, you are unable to reach a satisfactory resolution to a concern please contact the Program Director of the Early Childhood Education Program.

### **Licensing and Regulations**

Child Development Centers of the Family YMCA of the Desert are licensed by the State Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing and follow Title 22 regulations which establish health and safety standards for child care centers. A licensing analyst has the authority to inspect the facility and interview children in care. The findings of each visit are posted on the parent bulletin board or a copy can be requested from the Site Supervisor and or the Program Director. In addition, we abide by California Department of Education mandates according to Title V regulations.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

REMEMBER if you or anyone on your Emergency form changes jobs, offices, moves, etc. you must notify the Site Supervisor or Administrative Assistant and fill out a new Emergency Contact Information form with the revised information as soon as possible. This information is vital and needs to be kept current in case of an emergency or if staff need to contact you. **During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that authorized individuals are available to pick up children in emergency circumstances. Please ensure the people on your Emergency form know they may be called, and that the telephone number(s) listed are accessible to those people during the program's hours of childcare.**

### **Confidentiality**

All information is held in strict confidence. No information will be released without the prior written permission of the parent. Authorization information will be for the sole purpose of administration and teaching staff of the center, unless requested and/or authorization in writing by the parent or legal guardian.

### **Release of Children's Records**

Copies of children's records (i.e. sign in/out sheets, physicals, registration forms, etc.) can only be released to parents who have legal custody of enrolled children, unless a court order states otherwise.

The child's file for review by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Protective Services (CPS), Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD), Law Enforcement Personnel, California Department of Education (CDE) and/or authorized YMCA staff. We value your privacy and will restrict your child's file to only those necessary to ensure the safety of your child.

### **Termination Policy**

The Family YMCA of the Desert may terminate services to a family for the following reasons:

- Changes that make a family ineligible for services according to Federal Regulations, State Regulations, or Funding Terms and Conditions.
- Repeated delinquent family fees (see Delinquent Fees Policy for full details).
- Failure to submit medical information, or other required documentation immediately upon enrollment or subsequent re-certification forms by required date.
- Knowingly providing any inaccurate or false information on eligibility forms or sign-in sheets.
- Five (5) unexcused absences.
- Misuse of contract hours.
- More than three (3) late pickups per year.
- Insulting, berating, or threatening actions to staff of the YMCA.
- Consistent inability to abide by program rules and/ or agency policies.
- Failure of Social Service referral family to follow through with the assigned plan of action.
- The possession of illicit drugs, alcohol, weapons, or replicas of weapons on center property.

- Child who presents a health and/or safety risk to himself/herself, other children or staff, following due process of California Department of Education requirements to avoid expulsion because of challenging behavior.
- Parent or guardian who presents a health and/or safety risk to himself/herself, other children and/or parents, staff, or students.

### ***California Department of Education (CDE) Appeal Information***

Parents have the right to appeal any adverse action taken by the Family YMCA of the Desert regarding CSPP services. If you do not agree with the YMCA's action as stated in the Notice of Action, you may appeal the intended action. To protect your appeal rights, you must follow the instructions listed on the back of the Notice of Action. Details of the Appeals Process are also located in this Parent Handbook.

### ***Staff Providing Child Care***

All YMCA staff working directly with children are required to take training beyond their current education and experience in child abuse prevention and positive guidance before working with YMCA program participants and receive annual retraining as required. As part of our policies on the protection of children, staff is not allowed to relate to members/ participants outside of the YMCA programs. Please do not put staff in a difficult position by asking them to provide personal childcare or engage in any other outside events. In order to ensure professionalism and appropriate contact, teachers are not allowed to communicate with parents through personal cell phones or e-mail.

### ***Mandated Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting***

Under the law, mandated reporters are required to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of the Family YMCA of the Desert are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of the Family YMCA of the Desert are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the law, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at the Family YMCA of the Desert take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The law is designated to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of the Family YMCA of the Desert cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith." Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing related to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

In addition, if social workers or other designated employees from Child Protective Services which to interview your child at our facility, we are required by law to allow them to do so. Notifications parents that such an interview took place is not required.

### ***Religious Instruction***

The program refrains from religious instruction or worship in all classrooms.

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Family YMCA of the Desert prohibits any form of discrimination including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is abusive and illegal behavior that harms victims and negatively impacts the YMCA's culture by creating an environment of fear, distrust and intolerance. In order to provide a safe and healthy environment, we provide an educational employment environment free from sexual harassment.

### ***Photographic Release/Consent***

Family YMCA of the Desert will be taking photographs/ videos of the children and families for instructional, training and promotional purpose. Children take pride in seeing their pictures of themselves engaged in classroom activities. This is a very powerful motivator for learning. These pictures/ videos may be posted on our website or social media sites and may also be used for publicity purposes.

If you do not wish for us to take and/ or publish photographs/ videos, a request in writing must be given to the Site Supervisor. However, the Family YMCA of the Desert is not responsible for any photographs/ videos that may be taken/ published by other program participants (i.e. parents, grandparents, etc.).

### ***Learning Genie***

Families will be provided information on how to open an account on Learning Genie, a free app, upon enrollment. Learning Genie is a key tool of communication between home and school, and updates on your child's activities and school info and resources will be sent via this app regularly. The app translates messages automatically into your preferred home language, if desired. If it is not possible for you to use Learning Genie, please let the site staff know so we can keep you informed about your child and preschool events using an alternate method.

## Attendance Policy

Your child will have a more fulfilling experience if he/ she is here for their entire school day. It is important that your child attend class every day so that he/ she may take full advantage of what the program has to offer. It is essential that the child is present on the days he/she is designated to attend

### **Documenting Absences**

When a child does not attend child care on authorized days, the parent/guardian is required to indicate the specific reason for the absence and sign for each day of absence on the child's Daily Sign in/Sign out record. **It is imperative that parent/caregivers call the center whenever their child is absent, to inform the center of the reason for the absence. If your child is absent for three consecutive days and you have not contacted the center, termination from the program will commence.**

### **Absence Reasons & Limitations**

#### **Excused Absences:**

- Illness of enrolled child or parent/guardian (ailment, communicable disease, injury, hospitalization, or quarantine)
- Appointment of enrolled child or parent/guardian (doctor, dentist, mental health, social service, welfare, education, special education services, counseling, or therapy)
- Court-ordered visitation with a parent or relative, as required by law (court order must be on file) – custody arrangements are NOT the same as visitation
- Family emergency or unplanned situations of a temporary nature (court appearance, death, accident, no transportation, dangerous weather conditions, hospitalization of a family member, or illness of a sibling)

#### **Best Interest Days:**

[Maximum of ten (10) days per fiscal year (July 1- June 30)]

- Vacation
- Visiting relative or friend
- Attending a party, school program/sibling field trip
- Religious observance, holiday or ceremony
- Any absence parent/guardian determines to be in the best interest of the child/family

#### **Unexcused Absences:**

- Child did not feel like coming to school/care
- Parent or child overslept
- Abandoned services (did not show or contact)
- After the ten (10) best interest days are used, additional absences in the best interest category are considered unexcused
- Any absence the parent/guardian does not identify a reason for or as a best interest day

#### **Non-contracted Days:**

- Day that the parent/guardian does not have a need for service
- Day when the Center/Provider closed for a Holiday
- Child custody agreements (days that the child is not in the custody of the parent/guardian served by the program)

**Causes for termination: (A new Notice of Action is issued upon termination of services)**

- Failure to abide by Program Rules
- Absence of at least three (3) consecutive days without parent/guardian making contact with staff
- Five (5) consecutive unexcused absences
- More than five (5) unexcused absences in a fiscal year (July-June)

***Non-Attendance and Sporadic Attendance***

Actual attendance is to be consistent with authorized services. Excessive absences can be considered abandonment of services and may result in termination from the program. Excessive absences are those exceeding 50%, or more, of the authorized services.

***Notice of Withdrawal from Program***

Written two weeks' notice is to be given to the Site Supervisor specifying the last day of attendance.

***Late Pick-Ups***

Children need to picked up on time every day per their contracted hours. Excessive late pick-ups may result in termination for child care services. Notification does not excuse the later arrival/pick up. Any time a child is picked up more than fifteen minutes after their contract time, a Violation of Contracted Hours form will be issued for you to sign. After failure two times to adhere to scheduled hours, a meeting with the Program Director and Site Supervisor will be required. A third late pick up of fifteen minutes or more will result in termination of child care services and a Notice of Action will be issued. Late pick ups are accumulated for twelve months from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

## Classroom Policies

### First Day

Talk to the center staff about how to prepare your child for their first day. A virtual visit to say hello to the teacher and visit the room can be arranged when outside visitors are limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When it's time to leave your child in our care, say good-bye calmly, then go. A prolonged farewell often increases anxiety and sneaking out tends to scare the child and cause mistrust. Our teachers will be especially attentive to your child on their first day and during the transition period to help your child become part of the group, and will keep you informed about their adjustment to care.

### Curriculum

The YMCA believes that all children should be provided with nurturing, active, and challenging environment that encourages curiosity, hands-on learning activities, problem-solving skills, language development and a positive self-image. The curriculum is aligned with the CA State Department of Education Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Framework which guides teachers in supporting and extending each child's development and learning to establish a strong foundation for future learning. All instructional practice is supported by current educational research and best practices for Early Childhood Education.

The curriculum embraces children's natural curiosity and encourages them to explore, play, and engage with the world around them. Activities are organized into three ways of learning:

- Large group instruction- circle time and story time experiences
- Small group instruction- directed activities that build knowledge and skills in curriculum area
- Learning centers- intentional play, social interactions, child-initiated learning opportunities, exploration and skill generalization.

### COVID-19 Group Size and Staffing

Groups are currently comprised of no more than ten households, and are stable/do not combine with other groups for any activities. Siblings will be placed in the same group if possible. Group size is subject to change based on guidance from governing agencies and the County Public Health department. Two teachers work daily with each group, with one support staff member who is the designated substitute teacher for that group. These measures limit children's exposure to other households, and allow us to control contact spread should anyone amongst our staff or families become ill.

### COVID-19 Physical Distancing and Activities Guidance

Our goal is to increase physical distancing to promote the safety of all. Six feet apart is the recommended safe physical distance, and will be maintained to fullest extent possible. Social engagement is critical to our well-being, so as we increase the safety of all with physical distance, we will focus on increasing the wellness of all through social connection while responsibly upholding physical distance, teaching children this as we work with them.

Our classrooms have been arranged to increase physical distancing, and materials organized in creative ways to limit the amount of sharing by the group. Some harder-to-clean materials have been removed altogether, others stored in sets of ten, so children can play individually with their own set of legos, for example. Things like play dough will be bagged and labeled for each child, played with individually and never shared. Children will rotate through play centers so there is no crowding. With a small group size, everyone will be able to have access to all materials daily. Items used in the morning will be removed at midday and washed and sanitized. Items used in the afternoons will be washed and sanitized at end of day.

## **Sample Schedule- Full Day Program**

\*Detailed Schedule available on each class group's Parent Board\*

7:30am - 8:00am	Arrival & Individual Activities
8:15am - 8:30am	Circle Time
8:30am – 9:00am	Breakfast
9:00am – 9:55am	Outside Play
9:55am – 10:45am	Exploring in Small Groups/ Discovery Time
10:45am – 11:00am	Music and Movement
11:00am – 11:30am	Group Time/Story
11:30AM – 12:00pm	Lunch
12:00PM – 12:30pm	Transition to rest
12:30PM – 2:30PM	Rest time
2:30pm – 3:15pm	Quiet activities/ Discovery Time
3:15pm – 3:30pm	Snack
3:30pm – 4:15pm	Outside Play
4:15pm – 5:30pm	Story/Music/Departure

### **Morning Drop Off Procedures**

Morning drop off will occur outside the building during a window of time designated by each site. A “check in” table will be staffed throughout the drop off window, and staff will be wearing cloth face coverings and/or face shields for check in. Safe physical distance must be maintained at all times while checking in. A detailed health check and no touch thermometer reading of each child and brief questionnaire to each parent/caregiver will occur before the child is admitted to the program for the day. Health policies are described in detail later in this handbook. If child is deemed healthy, a teacher will walk the child in to his/her class, and a teacher will immediately wash child’s hands before interaction with others.

### **Afternoon Pick Up Procedures**

Afternoon pick up will also take place outside the building. A staff member will be outside, or, if needed, parents may telephone/ring doorbell at the center to let them know they have arrived for their child. Parents must physically come to the check out area (same as in morning) and sign out their child. If an unfamiliar person, staff will ask for ID to be presented and check the authorization on file for the child. A staff member will collect the child from the classroom and bring outside after sign out is completed.

### **Building Access**

Outside visitors are currently strictly limited, in order to minimize risk of COVID-19 spread. Parents will be able to visit the classroom day in progress virtually, or by appointment made with the Site Supervisor, subject to health screening. Staff and teachers will send updates on a child’s day, and keep you informed of what your child is learning using email and Learning Genie. **Parents are strongly encouraged to sign up for the free Learning Genie app.** Staff will provide the directions prior to your child’s first day. The app allows for teachers to send you photos, direct message updates, and reminders. You can reach staff directly using the app, as well. The preschool will utilize Learning Genie for newsletter, menu and lesson plan distribution, sharing resources, and important announcements about our program. It will be the virtual parent board for each group.

### **Quality Start Initiative**

The Family YMCA of the Desert’s three preschool centers participates in Quality Start Riverside County. To be a participant, a preschool program must undergo a comprehensive review process and be able to meet certain criteria for high-quality preschools. The Quality Start Initiative provides one-of-a-kind support to preschool programs by giving them tools they need to improve quality for children, such as:

- External reviews to evaluate program safety, environmental quality and adult-child interactions
- Customized coaching support responsive to the needs of each teacher and center

Quality Start participation helps us improve our classrooms and skills, and demonstrates our commitment to our children and families. For more information about this program, please see your Site Supervisor.

### ***Program Evaluation***

Our California State Preschool Programs maintain high quality, developmentally appropriate environments that meet or exceed standards set by the State of California. By using a variety of tools to evaluate our program we continually look for ways to improve. These tools include self-evaluation through the Environmental Rating Scale (ECRS), curriculum, staff development, parent engagement and satisfaction of our families. A plan of action is created each year to use that feedback and information to make further improvements to our centers. The Family YMCA of the Desert's California State Preschool Programs are licensed by the California Department of Social Services and undergoes periodic inspection to ensure continual compliance with all regulations.

### ***Assessment***

Children are assessed with the use of formal and informal assessment tools in order to individualize instruction. Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP-2015), anecdotal notes, photographs, are maintained as part of the child portfolio.

### ***Homework***

We encourage families to read for 15-30 minutes every day with their child. According to research, children who have been read to at a younger age become better readers and writers. In addition, this instills the love of reading. Some parents often request homework for their preschooler. A holistic approach to education recognizes that children need time for other activates (play, socializing, exercise, hobbies, dance class, karate, etc.) in order to thrive at a developmentally appropriate level.

Homework has a very little value for young children. In fact, research suggests that homework in the early years can be counterproductive. Therefore, it is the policy of the Family YMCA of the Desert to not assign homework to our Early Childhood Education program students. Many activities and meaningful lessons given in the home by parents can constitute as homework. Parents can encourage "spontaneous homework" where a child is inspired by a topic they are learning about in school and they find a book at home or at the library related to that topic.

### ***Items and Clothing from Home***

Toys and items from home will be largely disallowed for duration of childcare during the COVID-19 pandemic. We suggest keeping one jacket/additional layer permanently at school, labeled with child's name, and child can have for cooler days or as needed. **A change of clothing labeled with your child's name must be supplied in a sealed Ziploc bag.** **In the event clothing is soiled, it will be returned to you in the sealed bag at end of day and extra clothes must be replenished the next day of school.**

Our philosophy of active involvement, hands-on experiences, and learning through play often means children get 'dirty' during their stay with us, so please do not admonish your child to "Stay Clean!" We also believe children should be as self-sufficient as possible, so please dress children in clothing that will help him/her experience success as they learn to 'do for themselves' (no complicated belts, overalls or buckles while newly potty trained, no clothing that is too expensive to too valuable to get dirty). Children should not wear any clothing that may limit playing or movement. Clothing should be play-friendly, and as easy for your child to pull on/off independently as possible. **Shoes with covered toes must be worn.**

### ***Accessories***

Accessories such as bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and rings can cause a hazard in the classroom and on the playground. For this reason, accessories will be removed by staff and go home with your child at the end of the day. The YMCA is not responsible for lost accessories.

## **Naps and Blankets**

Naps are part of the full day program to give the opportunity to rest or sleep. Your child will be provided with a sheet and blanket for nap time. All bedding will be washed at the centers. Children rest on cots that are placed with maximum spacing possible, and positioned head to toe. In some cases where space is limited, clear partitions will be provided to further minimize risk of virus spread while children are resting. A small soft item (no bigger than an adult's hand) to help the child rest at nap time, if provided, will be washed regularly with child's bedding, and will be kept with the child's cot and blanket for naptime only. No naptime items can come back and forth to school with the child during the pandemic.

## **Bottles and Sippy Cups**

Age appropriate self-help skills are an important part of a quality early learning environment. Therefore, in an effort to prevent tooth decay and to promote self-drinking from cups, please do not send a sippy cup or bottle to school. Children will be provided with age and size appropriate cups and outside bottles and sippy cups will not be used. If there is a medical or developmental need for the use of a bottle or cup, please speak to your Site Supervisor about what accommodations can be made.

## **Tooth Brushing**

For everyone's safety during the pandemic we will not be able to have children brush their teeth at school. We encourage families to maintain healthy tooth hygiene at home, and will return to this practice as soon as it is deemed safe to do so.

## **Menus and Meal Times**

Meal times are posted at each center. Parents are shared a copy of the menu at the beginning of each month. Mealtimes, like any other time in a preschool class, are an exceptional learning time for children. Our program believes in serving meals family style. Children will learn the joy of independence as they serve themselves, eat in a group setting, and experience new foods. Children are encouraged to try new foods, but are not forced to eat them. Mealtimes are enjoyed in a relaxed setting with a group. Children will be encouraged to learn to use utensils, napkins, and basic table manners. They also learn by watching others, which is valuable for staff and volunteers to with them modeling correct behavior.

**At this time, due to COVID-19, we have suspended Family Style meals. Children's meals are pre-portioned by the center cook, and delivered to the classroom door for the two teachers to serve. Children are spaced at tables to maximize safe eating, and no sharing of food, utensils or dishes takes place. Meals are still an important part of the program day, with conversation and our typical delicious and varied menus. Families will be informed promptly if and when we are able to safely resume family style meal service.**

## **Access to Water Throughout the Day**

Currently the site's drinking fountains have been made inaccessible. A school-provided reusable plastic water bottle labeled with your child's name will be kept and washed regularly at school. No water bottles will be able to be brought from home. Indoors, staff will ensure that the bottles are filled each morning and refill as necessary, encouraging children to drink water throughout the day. Outdoors, igloo coolers will be available throughout the day with disposable cups.

## **Meals and Snacks**

The Family YMCA of the Desert will provide a healthy breakfast, lunch and snack with fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, and other nutrients at no additional charge to parents. These meals and snacks meet the guidelines set by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and are in accordance with licensing regulations. Since the YMCA provides meals, we require that children do not bring food to the center for meals or snacks unless the child is on a special diet prescribed by a physician and have completed the Site Diet Accommodation Form filled out by the physician. If your child has allergies to certain foods, require any special foods or eating apparatus please inform the Site Supervisor in order for

accommodations to be made. Accommodations will be made if possible. Such decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

The CACFP is available without charge to all eligible program participants. Children are served the same meals at no separate charge.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866)632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202)690-7442; or
- (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

*This institute is an equal opportunity provider.*

**Civil Rights Procedure-** Civil Rights Procedure and guidelines are available at each center. All staff members are aware to direct parents with any questions with this regard to Civil Rights to Vanessa Walker- Civil Rights Coordinator, tel. 760-341-9622.

### ***Birthdays***

Birthdays are a special time for children, and your child's class would love to help your child celebrate. In order to be consistent with our nutritional goals, school celebrations do not include concentrated sugary snacks (cake, cupcakes, ice cream, etc.). Fruit, cheese, muffins, or stickers are healthier choices for celebrating a special day. Please talk to your child's teacher in advance about any plans you wish to make to help celebrate your child's special day at school. A list of healthier food alternatives is posted at each center, or you may ask for a copy from the center's administrative assistant.

**Due to restricted outside visitors and meal safety during the pandemic, it is not possible to bring outside food to the centers. A virtual visit by the family, or other creative ideas to help make your child's day special, can be planned with your child's teacher. Thank you for respecting this policy adaptation to help keep our sites as safe as possible for the children.**

# Diapering and Toilet Learning Policy

## Policies and Expectations

- a. No child shall be punished, verbally abused, or humiliated for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.
- b. Toilet learning shall not be coerced.
- c. All policies and procedures must be followed consistently and reviewed periodically.
- d. Diapers will be provided by the family, with back up supply and wipes provided for my child at no additional cost.
- e. Topical ointments are considered medication and must be provided by the family accompanied by the parent consent for Administration of Medication form (LIC9221).

## Diapering Policy

- a. An adequate supply of clean and dry cloth or disposable diapers shall be maintained for each child, the child's parent/guardian is responsible for providing diapers. Parents/guardians will be notified when the supply is low. If a child runs out of diapering supplies, the Center will provide them until supply can be replenished. Wipes are provided by the Center.
- b. Each child's diaper shall be checked at least once per hour. These checks shall be documented on the Daily Diaper Changing Form. A copy of the form will be given to the parent at pickup. Each child's diaper shall be changed when wet or soiled.
- c. Each child shall be washed and dried with individual washing materials during each diaper change. After changing, the child's hands shall be washed with soap and running water. Hands shall be dried with disposable towels.
- d. Each child shall be changed on either a changing table or in the bathroom while standing, whichever is most appropriate for the child and classroom situation.
- e. If a changing table is being utilized, a disposable covering shall be used on the changing surface. The covering shall be large enough to adequately cover the surface and prevent the child from coming in contact with the changing surface. The disposable covering shall be changed and disposed of in a closed container after each child has been diapered.
- f. If a changing table is being utilized, the changing surface shall be washed and sprayed with a bleach solution after each child has been diapered. The bleach solution shall be prepared daily and appropriately labeled.
- g. If being changed away from a changing table, the teacher will use gloves and utilize proper cleaning techniques.
- h. Clothing or cloth diapers soiled by feces, urine, vomit or blood shall be placed in a sealed bag or container. These items will need to be taken home at the end of the day for laundering.
- i. Soiled disposable diapers shall be placed in a designated container with tight-fitting cover and a disposable plastic liner. These diapers shall be removed from the center daily or more frequently as necessary.
- j. Diaper pails must be emptied, washed and sanitized at least daily.
- k. Staff shall always use disposable gloves when diapering a child.
- l. After a diapering a child, educators shall wash their hands with liquid soap and running water using friction. Their hands shall be dried with disposable towels.
- m. Common changing tables shall not be used for any other purpose.
- n. A change of clothing shall be available for each child. Each child who is not toilet training shall be required to provide 2 changes of clothes, which should include a minimum a top, bottom, and socks. It is highly recommended to also include at least one pair of shoes.
- o. Running water shall be adjacent to the diapering area for hand washing.
- p. Diapering areas and hand washing facilities shall be separate from facilities and areas used for food preparation and service.
- q. Parents will be provided with a daily log that shows when diapers were checked and changed and whether the diaper was dry, wet, or had a bowel movement.

### **Toilet Learning**

- a. Toilet learning shall be done as requested by parents and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities.
- b. No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using toilet.
- c. Toilet learning shall not be corrected.
- d. Staff and parents will develop a written plan for toilet learning.
- e. Sufficient extra clothes, including underwear, shall be provided by the parent while the child is being toilet trained.

# Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy

Healthy living is an essential part of the goals and mission of the YMCA. We strive to teach children the importance and value of making healthy choices in their food choices and activities. In an effort to provide the best possible nutrition and physical activity environment for the children in our program, we have adopted the following policies. The administration and staff appreciate support from the parents in promoting the health of our children.

## Nutrition

### Fruits and Vegetables

- We offer fruit to children at least 2 times a day.
- We only offer fruit canned in its own juice (no syrups), fresh, or frozen.
- We offer vegetables to children at least 1 time a day.
- We only offer vegetables steamed, boiled roasted, or lightly stir-fried with little added fat.

### Meats, Fats, and Grains

- We offer fried or pre-fried (frozen) meats (chicken nuggets) or fish (fish sticks) twice a month or less.
- We offer fried or pre-fried potatoes (French fries, tater tots, hash browns) once a week or less.
- We offer high fat meats like sausage, bacon, hot dogs, or bologna twice a month or less.
- We offer processed meats once in a two-week cycle or less.
- We offer beans, lean meats or other healthy proteins at least once a day,
- We offer seafood (non-fried or pre-fried) at least twice a month.
- We offer vegetarian meals at least once per week and participate in “Meatless Mondays” where 11 meals served on Mondays will be vegetarian.
- We offer high fiber, whole grain foods at least 2x a day.
- We offer sweet or salty foods once a week or less.
- We do not offer sweetened grains/ baked goods (e.g., cookies, cakes, donuts, Danishes, etc.).

### Beverages

- We make drinking water freely available so children can serve themselves both inside and outdoors.
- 1% Milk is provided with breakfast and lunch daily.
- We do not offer sweetened drinks other than 100% juice.
- We do not have soda or other vending machines on site for families or children.

### Menus and Variety

- We have 3 week (or greater) cycle menu that allows for seasonal change.
- Our menus include healthy items for a variety of cultures.
- Our menus include a combination of new and familiar foods.

### Feeding Practices

- Our staff help children determine if they are full before removing their plate.
- Our staff help children determine if they are still hungry before serving additional food.
- Our staff gently and positively encourage children to try new or less favorite food.
- We do not use food to encourage positive behavior or discourage a negative behavior.

### Food Offered Outside of Regular Meals and Snacks

- We provide and enforce written guidelines for healthier food brought in and served for holiday and celebrations.
- We celebrate holidays with healthy foods or non-food treats.

## ***Supporting Healthy Eating***

- Our staff eat alongside children at the table for meal times.
- Our staff always consume the same food and drink as the children.
- We provide visible support for good nutrition at our sites through use of posters, pictures and/or displayed books.
- Our staff talk informally with the children about trying and enjoying healthy foods.
- We provide training opportunities for staff on physical activity and nutrition
- We provide teacher-directed physical education for children, 1X per week or more.
- We offer physical activity education to parents 2X per year or more.

## ***Nutrition Education for Staff, Children, and Parents***

- We provide training opportunities for staff on nutrition (beyond the requirements on food safety and food program guidelines).
- We provide teacher-directed nutrition education to the children, 1X per week or more.
- We provide nutrition education to parents each program year.

## ***Physical Activity***

### ***Active Play and Inactive Time***

- We provide at least 120 minutes of active play time to all children daily.
- We provide opportunities for outdoor play 2 or more times per day (weather permitting)
- We ensure that children are rarely seated for periods of more than 30 minutes.
- We do not withhold active play time for children who misbehave. Instead, we provide additional active play time for good behavior.
- We rarely show television and videos.

## ***Play Environment***

- We provide fixed play equipment (tunnels, climbing and balancing equipment) that is extensive and varied for all children.
- We provide portable play equipment (wheeled toys, balls, hoops, ribbons) that is diverse and available for children to use at the same time.
- We make outdoor portable play equipment freely available to all children all of the time.
- Outdoor play space includes open areas and a track/path for wheeled toys.
- Indoor play space is available for all activities when weather does not permit outdoor play.

## ***Supporting Physical Activity***

- Our staff often encourages children to be active and often join children in active play.
- We provide visible support for physical activity at our sites through use of posters, pictures, and/or displayed books.

## ***Physical Activity Education***

- We provide training opportunities for staff on physical activity (beyond the required playground safety).
- We provide teacher-directed physical activity education for children, 1X per week or more.
- We offer physical activity education to parents.

# Health and Safety Policy

## Health Checks & Exclusion Policy

Health checks have always been a routine part of childcare, but are now more rigorous due to the current pandemic. Now more than ever, all children and staff must be in good health each day when they arrive at the center. **We will not allow children or staff who are ill to enter the school.** Upon arrival in the morning, all staff will have their temperature checked and screening questions asked before entering for the workday.

Adults dropping off and picking up the child should be in good health. Older grandparents and those with underlying health conditions are not recommended to accompany the child to/from preschool at this time. Although we will have limited contact during the check in and out process, we appreciate your cooperation by following current guidance and wearing a cloth face covering, respecting the distance recommendation of six feet apart, and helping us to keep our preschool a healthy environment so that we may continue to protect all our staff and families.

**Children with fever or respiratory or gastro-intestinal symptoms like a cough, congestion, runny nose, diarrhea or vomiting should stay home. Any child whose household members are ill with COVID-19 indicated symptoms should stay home. Call the center to report your child's absence, and guidance will be provided as to when they may return.**

During the child check-in time, a staff member will take each child's temperature with a no-touch thermometer. **Temperature threshold is 100.4 degrees** - that is considered elevated and under no circumstances will the child be admitted. If your child has a temperature slightly under 100.4 degree threshold, but other signs of illness are present, it is at the Site Supervisor's discretion to exclude the child for the day.

In addition, the parent/caregiver will be asked the following questions before admittance to the center:

- Have you or a member of your household traveled to another country in the last 14 days?
- Have you or a member of your household been in contact with someone under investigation for, or with a confirmed case of, COVID-19?
- Have you or a member of your household been instructed to self-quarantine?
- Has your child been experiencing symptoms of illness? If so, what symptoms?

The Site Supervisor has the right to refuse admittance of any child if they have any signs of illness. These signs include, but are not limited to, runny nose and/or eyes, coughing or skin rashes. It is the parent's responsibility to call the site if the child is going to be absent. All diagnosed contagious illnesses such as strep throat, pink eye, lice or ringworm must be immediately reported to the YMCA so that we can check all children and take steps to halt the spread of the problem.

KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME FOR NON-COVID SIGNS OF ILLNESS SUCH AS:

- Has been on antibiotics for less than 24 hours
- Has vomited within the last 12 hours
- Has head lice\*
- Has heavy nasal discharge
- Has any symptoms of possible communicable disease, such as sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, abdominal pain

\*A child may not return to the program until they are lice and nit free. A staff member will check the child before they are admitted back into the program.

**Children may be excluded from the program day for ANY illness concern at the discretion of the Site Supervisor.**

## ***Isolation Procedures***

If any symptoms of illness appear during the day, the child will be removed from the group immediately and a staff member will stay with child in the site's designated isolation area. **Parents and/or additional contacts on the Emergency Contact form on file will be contacted to pick up the child immediately.**

During this pandemic, staff members attending a child in isolation will wear face covering and gloves. The isolation areas will be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and ventilated immediately after the child leaves the site.

Upon arrival at the center, parent/caregiver picking up sick child will be met outside the center to sign the child out. As always, staff members will ensure person is aged 18 or over, authorized for pick up, and may ask for ID before child is can be signed out.

## ***Maintaining a Healthy Environment***

During COVID-19, cleaning and disinfecting of all learning environments inside and out will be intensified. High touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times a day, shared materials washed and disinfected twice daily, playground equipment disinfected every time a group exits from outside time. Toileting and diapering, and food preparation areas will be maintained with the strict cleaning and disinfecting guidelines always recommended. Outdoor time will be maximized as much as weather allows, and each group of ten children will rotate and have time during the cooler portions of the day. Classrooms will be ventilated with outside air to the fullest extent possible each day. Due to the hotter weather, the open space in each classroom inside will also be utilized to provide physical activity opportunities with children safely spaced out. Dancing, jumping jacks, yoga poses and other activities can encourage physical activity even when it is too hot to go outdoors.

## ***Cloth Face Coverings on Adults***

CDC recommends that people wear a cloth face covering over their nose and mouth in community settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since many people who have COVID-19 don't have symptoms, wearing masks can help reduce the possibility that someone without symptoms can transmit the disease to others. Teachers will wear face coverings throughout the day. Cloth face coverings must be washed daily to be hygienic and effective.

Staff at check in and check out will be wearing face masks and/or shields and/or gloves, and we urge all families to follow the current guidelines, and wear face masks when coming to pick up or drop off their child for the safety of our preschool community.

## ***Cloth Face Coverings on Children***

Children under the age of 2 should never wear face coverings. Current guidance from the CDC advises children ages 3-8 to wear cloth face coverings when closely supervised and taught to use hygienically. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that young children 3-8 benefit from wearing face coverings in places where they encounter people at a closer than 6 foot range. Situations in which children should NOT wear a mask include:

- Children under the age of 2 years, due to risk of suffocation
- If the only face covering available is a possible choking or strangulation hazard
- If the child has difficulty breathing with the face covering on
- If the child is developmentally unable to remove the face covering without assistance
- If wearing the face covering causes the child to increase risk of getting exposed to the virus because they are touching their face more frequently

**Again, all teachers in the CSPP program will wear face coverings throughout the day, as caring for young children requires them to be in close proximity to each child throughout the day. If you send your child wearing a face covering to preschool, teachers will encourage it being worn safely and hygienically to fullest extent possible. No face coverings will be worn by children during rest time.**

## **Health & Hygiene Education**

Teachers will educate children in age appropriate ways about how to keep their school community and home community safe during this pandemic. Discussions will take place about *how we keep each other safe*, keeping space, handwashing frequently and thoroughly, etc. Daily activities are adapted accordingly. Morning meetings will still occur with the children physically spaced so children can interact and share their experiences. We will support children's social and emotional needs as always, and keep parents informed about how their child is coping with all the changes that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought.

### **Proper Handwashing**

All children and staff wash their hands immediately upon entering the site each day. Teachers work with children throughout the day to wash hands thoroughly for twenty seconds, and the hand washing procedure is posted near all sinks. All adults and children need to wash hands with soap and water:

- Upon entering the classroom
- After messy play
- After toileting
- Before AND after eating meals and snack
- After using a tissue
- And remember to turn off water using a PAPER TOWEL, NOT CLEAN HANDS.

Please ask your site staff if you need support or creative ideas to help your child practice safe hygiene and proper frequent hand washing at home.

### **Immunizations**

To attend a Family YMCA of the Desert Early Childhood Education center, your child's Immunization Record must show the date for each shot required. If you do not have an Immunization Record, or your child has not received all required shots, call your doctor now for an appointment. A personal beliefs exemption is no longer an option for entry into child care. If a licensed physician determines a vaccine should not be given to your child because of medical reasons, submit a written statement from the physician for a medical exemption for the missing shot(s), including the duration of the medical exemption.

### **Medication**

Medication will be dispensed to a child only if the medication is in the original container with the child's name, drug name, dosage, time to be given and length of time medication is to be given. Written consent from the parent is required. A "Medications Release Form" can be obtained from the office. Permission given by phone will not be accepted. No over-the-counter medications, including aspirin, cough medicine, etc.; will be given without a doctor's note. A child may not administer medication to him/herself. \*

\*Exemption to the policy of children not administering their own medications is the use of asthma inhalers. Parents are to send a doctor's note explaining dosage, time to be given and how the child uses his/her inhaler. Additionally, parents will need to review proper usage with center staff.\*

### **Allergies**

Please be sure to notify the staff of any food or non-food allergies your child may have. When a medical statement is provided, food alternatives will be substituted. All food allergies that are documented by a physician are posted for our cook and classroom staff. During COVID-19, we encourage parents to also obtain a physician's statement if your child

experiences more chronic nasal congestion or weepy eyes due to allergies, to support our stricter health screening process during the pandemic, and ensure your child is not excluded from the program day due to allergy symptoms.

### ***Ages and Stages Questionnaire***

Each family registering a child is required to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). By including the family in the assessment process the teacher takes advantage of parental knowledge of the child and builds a partnership with the family. The ASQ is a screening tool with high validity when administered by the parent or teacher. The ASQ covers five developmental areas including communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and personal-social. It is used as a first-level comprehensive screening for developmental delays and also communicates to families the stages of a child's development in their child's age group. The ASQ is scored by our staff. The results are shared with teachers to inform their classroom practices and guide them in individualizing curriculum to meet the developmental needs of the children in their class. If score indicates a concern regarding an individual child the Site Supervisor will meet the family to consider further assessments. If staff and parents agree that further testing is needed the family is referred to local resources for additional screening and/or services.

### ***Developmental Concerns***

If you have any concerns of the overall development (vision, hearing, speech, motor, social, language, behavior etc.) concerns of your child, please talk to your child's teacher, Site Supervisor and/or Program Director. We will be happy to meet with you for a Student Study Team (SST) meeting and assist you to locate and obtain resources.

### ***Campus Safety***

Each preschool site's staff and volunteers have the primary responsibility to provide a safe indoor and outdoor environment for children and adults. All staff are current in CPR and First Aid training. Everyone is required to follow all YMCA safety policies, and participate in monthly safety trainings throughout the year. Safety procedures are reviewed and posted throughout the sites. If, at any time, you are concerned about the safety of a particular situation, please speak with your Site Supervisor or contact the Program Director.

- ***Emergency Drills***- Earthquake, fire and lockdown drills are conducted regularly. All individuals practice evacuating the center in the event of earthquake or fire. Lockdown drills are held in an age-appropriate way, without specific language but helping the children to practice following the direction of the teachers, staying quiet and still until the "all clear" is given.
- ***Evacuation*** - In event of a real emergency, evacuation will happen following the guidance of the Family YMCA head office. Parents will be notified about the evacuation as soon as possible. Staff will remain with the children at all times, and a notice will be posted at the center stating directions for the parents. Children will be released only to parents, or those individuals you have authorized on your Emergency Contact form.
- ***Emergency Preparedness***- Each site has a supply of drinking water and emergency supplies on the premises.

***It is for your child's safety that all pertinent emergency contact information such as, phone numbers, available trusted adults, etc. are kept up-to-date.***

## ***Illness / Serious Injuries***

In case of accidental injury we make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If necessary we will also call the ambulance or the paramedics. Until the arrival of the parent, an ambulance or the paramedics, the Site Supervisor will be in charge and make all decisions about the care of the child. Parents will be expected to assume responsibility for any resulting expenses. The YMCA will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision.

## ***Blackouts / Loss of Power***

Blackouts are not expected to exceed an hour in length. If a blackout should occur, all children will be kept inside and will be given quiet activities such as reading, puzzles, board games, or they can use the time as a rest period to engage in. All sites will have plenty of water available and battery operated lighting. Do not call the YMCA if you suspect a blackout at your child's center. The telephones operate with electricity so alternative communication will be available (i.e. cell phones) and we must keep these lines clear. YMCA staff members are trained in CPR and heat exhaustion prevention. If a black out presents conditions that are unsafe, you may be called to pick up your child.

## ***Accident Insurance***

The YMCA does not provide accident insurance.

## ***Ouchie Report***

An incident Report, also known as an "Ouchie Report", is given to the parents to explain minor injuries that happened while in care. Reports may not be given for minor bumps, scratches, etc. that do not require any immediate treatment (such as a band aid, ice pack, observation, etc.).

## ***Sunscreen***

Please bring your child to care in the morning with sunblock applied. After rest time, if the weather is such that the group will be going outside in the afternoon, a staff member wearing cloth face covering and gloves can administer an application of sunscreen to your child. We cannot at this time of the pandemic accept a family's choice of sunscreen, but the site can provide you with the brand name and SPF level they keep on site for this use. **Sunscreen is considered a non-prescription medication and requires a consent form to be filled out by the parent.** If you would like us to administer sunscreen to your child, please ensure that you have completed the appropriate form.

## ***Excessive Heat and Outdoor Play***

Safety is our first priority and for the protection of your child, if it is excessively hot, precautions including reducing or eliminating outside play time will occur.

## ***Children Left in Cars***

Due to the extreme heat we experience in the Coachella Valley, it is imperative children NOT BE LEFT ALONE IN CARS. This is a California law as well as safe practice. Because they are supervising children or at the front desk, our staff is unable to supervise a child left in the car. If a child is left in a car, we are required by law to contact the police and report it.

*California Vehicle Code 15620. (a) A parent, legal guardian, or other person responsible for a child who is 6 years of age or younger may not leave that child inside a motor vehicle without being subject to the supervision of a person who is 12 years of age or older.*

## ***Car seats***

It is also the law that children be secured in a car seat appropriate for their age and weight.

*California Vehicle Code 27360. Babies and young children must ride in the back seat, properly buckled up, in a safety seat or booster until they are at least 8 years old OR are at least 4'9" in height.*

If program staff determines that a child is being transported to and/or from the program without the proper car seat, we are required by law to report this to the police. If a parent consistently transports a child without the proper car restraint, program staff is required to contact Child Protective Services (CPS) and file a child endangerment report.

### ***Animals***

For the safety of the children, please do not bring any animals to the program without prior approval of your Site Supervisor.

### ***Fingernails***

As a safety measure, please make sure that your child's fingernails are groomed to an appropriate length to ensure that other children will not be injured if scratched. If a teacher notifies you that your child's fingernails are too long, your child will not be allowed to return until they have been properly trimmed.

### ***Parent Conduct Expectations***

Parents and families are always welcome and we enjoy their attendance in our program. However, Parents and visitors are expected to be a positive presence and conduct themselves appropriately. The following behaviors are unacceptable and visitors will be asked to leave the premises, and we reserve the right to terminate the child's enrollment of the offending parent/guardian if they are being exhibited:

- Disciplining any child in front of other children, either verbally or physically
- Talking "negatively" about a child in his/her presence
- Smoking is not allowed on the program site
- Custody and visitation disputes are not to be argued on site
- Rude and/or malicious actions toward program staff, other parents, or children, including the use of profanity
- Causing injury to another child or staff member, or threatening to do so
- Making slanderous, libelous or otherwise disparaging remarks about the YMCA and/or its programs
- Violations of California Education Code regarding firearms, alcohol, drugs, physical altercations, theft, and destruction of property, immoral conduct, etc.

# Behavior / Discipline Policy

## Behavior Guidelines

- Children are taught to be RESPONSIBLE for their actions
- Children are taught to RESPECT each other and the environment
- Children will learn that HONESTY is the basis for all relationships ad interactions
- Children will learn to CARE for themselves and those around them

## Discipline

We strive to prepare our children to understand who they are, so they will not be deprived of educational and cultural advantages. Our goals are realized as our children, one by one, enter school for the first time, ready to participate, and bearing the strength of personal pride.

The Family YMCA of the Desert's Early Childhood Education Program's children are not subjected to physical (corporal) or psychological punishment, humiliation, mental abuse, or punitive interference with the daily functions of living such as eating, sleeping, or toileting (CCL Sec I 012230). This includes "spanking", or the threat to use any of these methods of punishments. These forms of punishment will not be implemented UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES even at the parent(s) request.

In order to guide children in positive ways towards appropriate behaviors, the following methods of discipline are integrated into the daily learning experience.

1. Redirect Activities: Simply changing the environment, activity, or materials that seem to be contributing to the inappropriate behaviors can modify a child's behavior. For example, if children are throwing books, the teacher may get out the bean bag for a tossing game or gather the children in the group and model appropriate ways of using books by reading a story to them. This way the children can learn appropriate behaviors without constant corrections by the teacher.
2. Natural Consequences: Children are asked to correct what their behavior has caused. For example, spilled milk gets wiped up, thrown table blocks get picked up, a hurt child gets soothed (if appropriate according to the circumstances). This teaches children that all behavior has effects on their surrounding environment and on the people around them.
3. Conflict Resolution between teacher and child: When children are disruptive or out of control teachers will help children talk through conflict first. If the child is upset and unable to deal with the situation, they may need to find a calm or quiet place in the room where the children are able to regain self-control; followed-up by active communication between teacher and child. It is never used as "punishment".

TIME OUT IS NEVER TO BE USED. Physical punishment is never used for any reason. Additionally, no child will be left alone without adult supervision.

Through these methods teachers are able to maintain an environment conducive to self-control and autonomy for the children without fear of losing self-respect by making a mistake or testing a limit. Thus, each child will gain a sense of self-worth and ultimately self-discipline.

It is our policy to only discuss children, or any concerns regarding children, with appropriate staff for professional consultation when it is necessary to assist a child in developing appropriate behaviors. The teaching staff and parents/guardians work cooperatively in an effort to foster acceptable behavior, and follow the due process requirements set by the California Department of Education in cases of challenging behavior that is preventing the child from safely participating in the program.

## **Incident Reports**

Incident reports will be filled out, a copy given to the parent and a copy placed in the child's file, if the child displays behaviors which are concerning to staff which may include, but are not limited to:

- Hitting, kicking, or biting the staff or other children
- Running away from the program/teacher
- Damaging property belonging to the center, school and/or other children
- Abusive, foul or on-going unacceptable behavior
- Defiant, disruptive and/or out-of-control behavior

In the case of multiple incident reports being issued, the Family YMCA of the Desert reserves the right to discontinue services under the following circumstances:

- When it has been recommended that the parents and family participate in therapeutic intervention and such recommendation has not been followed and the child's dangerous or abusive behavior persists.
- If after appropriate therapeutic intervention, the child's dangerous or abusive behavior persists.
- When it has been determined through due process that the child needs an environment that we are unable to provide.

## **Student Study Team (SST) Process**

When repeated Incident Reports are written and discipline intervention becomes necessary, we do it with Positive Behavior Support (PBS). The child is taught of the acceptable and unacceptable according to his developmental level.

**Safety of all children is the highest priority for setting the discipline policy.**

1. When there is a serious concern about a child's behavior, the parent will be called by the Site Supervisor and/or the Program Director to schedule a Student Study Team (SST) Meeting in order to discuss strategies to best help the student be successful. Staff members of the SST are: Child's teacher(s), Parent(s), Site Supervisor and the Program Director.
2. Data will be collected using a variety of data collection methods (Antecedent Behavior Consequence (ABC) charts, anecdotal notes, interval data, time sampling data...etc.) in order to learn the motivation of the behavior.
3. All staff members will work with the child and the family in providing techniques of a Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) in assessing the behavior.
4. Staff and parents will collaborate and decide if screening may be necessary for developmental delays or other issues which may be contributing to the behavior.
5. Special Circumstances Policy- The team meets weekly and/or as needed to provide parents with community resources, chart progress and/or concerns. The goal of the team is to find a replacement behavior which is socially acceptable and teach the child of desirable behaviors.
6. It is the family's responsibility to seek the help of a professional in cooperation with the center's efforts to best serve the child. During the time of intervention, should the child's behavior escalate and he/she becomes a danger to self, to others (children of staff) and/or to property, the child's parent will be contacted to pick the child up.
7. If the family does not seek the professional guidance, if required, and the child's needs are beyond the recognized capabilities of the center's staff, the center reserves the right to disenroll, in accordance with the California Department of Education guidelines.

## **Biting Policy**

Biting is a natural, developmental behavior in which many young children engage, especially during their second and third years of life. We recognize that biting is a distressing activity for parents, staff, and the child who had been bitten. Because biting is so distressing, everyone involved would like to eliminate it quickly. Unfortunately, a "quick fix" is not usually available. However, biting does require immediate action by staff to comfort the child who has been bitten, express disapproval to the biter, and to find the cause of the biting.

Children bite for a variety of reasons so it's important for adults to get to the cause of the behavior. Most of the reasons for biting are not related to behavior problems nor does biting make the biter a "bad child". Since biting is developmentally related, it is more common for toddlers to bite than for older preschool age children.

### How Staff Respond

Staff members respond to biting as they would other aggressive behavior – by:

- calmly, yet firmly telling the biter that biting hurts and is not allowed
- by comforting the victim immediately and providing first aid if needed
  - wash the bite with soap and water
  - apply ice to reduce swelling
  - if the skin is broken, universal precautions are followed and an injury report is written by documenting the biting in an incident and/or Ouchie report

When a particular child bites on a regular basis, the center staff attempt to find the cause of the biting and take action to prevent future incidents. The staff looks at:

- the precipitating factors such as time of day, area of the classroom, the activity, the other children involved, etc.
- changes in the child's life such as health problems, teething, the absence of a family member, the birth of a sibling, transitions, etc.

The staff then develops strategies to help prevent further biting. These might include:

- Ensuring that there are enough materials, including duplicates, for children to use
- Ensuring that there is enough space in the classroom and that there are quiet times in the schedule
- Shadowing a biter in situations and times when the child has bitten before
- Providing teething toys for children who are getting new teeth
- Showing disapproval of biting
- Working collaboratively with parents to reduce or eliminate biting

### How Parents Are Informed

The parents of a bitten child are notified of the incident the day the incident occurred. Confidentiality prohibits the staff from divulging the name of the biter. The parents of the biter are informed personally and privately the same day.

It is important to recognize that this behavior is a normal part of children's growth and development. However, biting is usually upsetting to all parents involved (including the family of the child who bit). During this difficult transition, we ask that parents be patient with the children and staff as they identify patterns or reasons and implement a plan of action to prevent it.

If we see that there is a consistent biter these steps will be taken.

- If a child bites more than two times in a day, the child will be sent home to protect the safety of the other children in the room. If a child bites more than twice on two separate dates, a conference will occur with the Site Supervisor, classroom teacher, parent, and, if necessary, the Program Director. A plan will be put in place for techniques to use in the classroom.
- If after techniques are in place and there is still no improvement or the child continually goes back to biting, other interventions may be implemented. These may include but are not limited to a change in classroom environment, parental observations, behavior charts implemented and considering special education supports and services.

Our program puts the welfare of the child first. If the needs of the child are more than the YMCA can provide, or if the safety of other children or staff are put at risk, disenrollment may occur after due process requirements have been exhausted.

### ***Counseling Centers***

The YMCA cannot recommend the use of certain counseling centers. The choice and decision has to be made by the parents and guardians of the child. We suggest contacting Riverside County Behavioral Health's Website at <https://www.rcdmh.org> where there is information and telephone numbers to locate a wide variety of counseling services.

## Family Involvement

### **Parent Participation and Parent Volunteer Program**

We invite you to get involved in your child's educational journey by volunteering in our ECE program. You may participate in activities such as: serving in the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), assisting in the classroom, assisting in the office, or assisting with projects like take home activities, special holidays, cultural celebrations or outside gardening. While visitors inside the site buildings are limited, we are open to creative suggestions to keep you involved and in touch with your child's education. Please talk to your Site Supervisor for ideas and details.

### **Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)**

A Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) will be compiled each year. The goal of the PAC is to encourage parent involvement and parent communication. The parents on the committee will be a representative for the classroom. They will meet at least every other month and discuss any concerns or suggestions that could enhance the program. The PAC will assist the center with parent surveys and parent volunteer program. All parents/guardians are invited to participate on the committee. See your Parent calendar for details on the meeting dates.

### **Parent Surveys**

The Desired Results Parent Survey issued by the California Department of Education (CDE) is given annually. The Survey asks for your feedback pertaining to your child's education and the quality of our program. We at the YMCA are very interested in how our early childhood education program is meeting your child's learning and developmental needs. Your responses will be confidential and will help us to improve the services provided to you.

### **Parent Conferences**

Parent conferences are scheduled with staff twice per year, and are MANDATORY for the state program. Teachers are also available by appointment throughout the year for additional conferences and discussions. Conferences are an opportunity for teachers to share information about the child's development as reflected in the Desired Results Developmental Profile, the teacher's anecdotal records and the child's portfolio. The parent and teachers will work together to jointly develop a plan to support your child's development. We encourage your input regarding your child's development.

Parents are encouraged to talk with teachers on a daily basis and to share special information that may affect the child. (for example: moving, divorce, new pet, late night, missed breakfast, etc.) This information will help the staff in meeting your child's needs. Please be aware that a teacher will not be able to engage in a lengthy conversation while they are working with children during class time and need to be providing adequate supervision. Please contact the site at any time to schedule a meeting with your child's teacher when you have need.

### **Parent Bulletin Board**

A bulletin board is reserved for items that parents need to read. It has information and notices about the center and its activities. The bulletin board and the sign in/out table should be checked daily in order to keep up with everything that is going on at the early childhood education/preschool program. While preschool arrival and departure is occurring outdoors during the pandemic, the parent board information is posted through Learning Genie to keep you informed so you can talk to your child about their daily activities.

### **Parent Newsletter- Y CONNECT**

At the beginning of each month, the Y Connect Parent Newsletter will be shared with each parent. It contains information about learning experiences, program information and other resources for families. Since it will contain important information, keep it posted during the month for reference.

### *Social Media*

Each site has an active Facebook page where events, reminders and photographs are routinely posted. We encourage families to “like” their center page to keep updated. Please see your Site Supervisor or Administrative Assistant for more information.

## **YMCA Sexual Harassment Policy**

Sexual Harassment includes:

- Unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances
- Requests or demands for sexual favors
- Engaging in sexually oriented contact that interferes with another's work performance

Creating a work environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive because unwelcome or unwanted sexually oriented conversation, suggestions, requests, demands, physical contacts, attentions or the presence of sexually oriented materials.

Complaint Procedure:

- Any parent, general public, or employee who believes he/she has been harassed by a co-worker, supervisor, member/participant, volunteer, vendor, teacher or any employee of the YMCA shall promptly report the facts of the incident to Human Resource Department or the Associate Executive Director.

Amanda Henn  
43-930 San Pablo Ave  
Palm Desert, CA 92260  
(760) 341-9622

- Any employee who has knowledge of any harassment of employees, parents or the general public must immediately bring such information to the attention of Human Resource Department or the Associate Executive Director.

Human Resource Department will promptly investigate all such claims and take appropriate corrective action. All complaints are investigated confidentially to the degree possible. The YMCA will not tolerate any type or retaliation against any person, who in good faith brings fourth information regarding alleged harassment.

## **Family YMCA of the Desert Uniform Complaint Procedures**

It is the intent of the Family YMCA of the Desert to fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Individuals, agencies, organizations, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding the discrimination (Ed Code sections 200 and 220 and Government Code section 11135) in any program or activity funded directly by the state or receiving federal or state financial assistance.

Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the California State Department of Education.

Early Education Support Division  
Complaint Coordinator  
1430 N Street, Suite 4310  
Sacramento, CA 95814

If the complaint is not satisfied with the final written decision of the California Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing in this event.

A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violations of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders.

*Legal Reference: 5 CCR, Chapter 5.1. Uniform Complaint Procedures*

## Appeals Process

Whenever there is a change in service, including termination of a child from the California State Preschool Program, the enrolling parent must be issued a Notice of Action (NOA), which describes the action and why it was made. If you disagree with the action set forth on the NOA, you may appeal it to a hearing officer, who shall be higher in authority than the person issuing the NOA. Your request for a local appeal hearing must be received by the agency by the deadline written on the NOA. If you file an appeal, the intended action will be suspended and any services you currently receive will continue until the review process has been complete. \*\*If you do not submit an appeal request before the deadline listed, you will lose your appeal rights and the action will become effective on the date listed on the NOA.\*\*

**STEP 1:** To request a local appeal hearing, please fill in the boxes which are located on the second page of the Notice of Action.

**STEP 2:** Make a copy of the page and fax, mail or hand deliver to the agency as follows:

Family YMCA of the Desert  
43-930 San Pablo Avenue  
Palm Desert, CA 92260  
ATTN: Robin McConnell, ECE Program Director  
(760) 341-9622 / (760) 779-9651 Fax  
[rmcconnell@desertymca.org](mailto:rmcconnell@desertymca.org)

Please keep a copy of both sides of this form for your records. \*\*

**STEP 3:** The agency will notify you of the time, and location of your hearing within 10 days of your request. If the time and place of the hearing are not convenient for you, please contact the agency immediately to reschedule. \*\*If you do not get written notification of the date, time and location of your appeal hearing within 10 calendar days of submitting your request, please contact the local agency listed above immediately.\*\*

**STEP 4:** Arrive at the scheduled hearing at least 10 minutes in advance. You shall have an opportunity to explain the reason(s) you believe the NOA was incorrect. \*\*If neither you nor your authorized representative appear at the time and location of the scheduled hearing, you will be deemed to have abandoned your appeal, the intended action on the NOA will no longer be suspended and the action will become effective.\*\*

**STEP 5:** Within 10 calendar days after your local appeal hearing, you will be issued a local hearing decision letter.

\*\*If you do not receive the decision letter, please contact the local agency listed above immediately.\*\*

**STEP 6:** If, after your local hearing, you disagree with the local hearing decision letter, you may ask for a review by the Early Education and Support Division (EESD). To request a review, write a letter explaining why you believe the local agency's decision letter is incorrect. Your request must include: 1) your letter, 2) a copy of this NOA, and 3) a copy of the agency's decision letter. **The EESD must receive the request within 14 calendar days from the date on the written decision letter. Mail or fax your appeal to:**

California Department of Education  
Early Education and Support Division  
1430 N Street, Suite 3401  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Attn: Appeals Coordinator  
FAX: 916-323-6853

**You may contact the EESD at 961-322-6233 for additional assistance.**

# Facing the Facts about Child Abuse

## A Parent's Guide to the Understanding of Child Sexual Abuse

The State of California requires that parents of children enrolled in preschools receive information about child sexual abuse.

### What is Sexual Abuse?

The sexual abuse of a child occurs whenever any person forces, tricks, or threatens a child in order to have sexual contact with him or her. This contact can include such “non-touching” behaviors as an adult exposing himself or asking a child to look at pornographic material. It includes behaviors ranging from the sexual handling of a child (fondling), to actual genital contact, to intercourse, to violent rape. In all instances of child sexual abuse, the child is being used as an object to satisfy the adult’s sexual needs or desires.

### Who Gets Sexually Abused?

- Any child of any age is a potential victim of sexual abuse. Some important facts to keep in mind:
- Although the majority of adults do not sexually assault children, most sexual abuse occurs with an adult the child knows and trusts.
- Most sexual abuse goes unreported and undetected.
- Although we do not have exact numbers, some studies have found that one out of every four girls and one of every ten boys become victims of child sexual abuse by the age of eighteen.
- Children often keep sexual abuse a secret.

Involvement in child pornography and oral sex usually presents no physical signs of abuse. But, if a child has been physically harmed as a result of sexual abuse, the following may be signs of this occurrence:

- A discharge from the vaginal area or penis
- Injury to the genitals or anus
- Pain, Itching or bleeding in the genital or anal area
- Discomfort in walking or sitting
- The discovery of a sexually transmitted disease

Children, especially very young children, are many times unable to verbalize that they have been molested. The following are some indicators that sexual assault may have taken place:

- Nightmares and sleep disturbances
- Bedwetting
- Loss of appetite
- Behaving as a younger child (such as an older child sucking his or her thumb)
- Unexplained changes in behavior at school, day care, or in relations with peers
- Withdrawal
- Acting out the abuse with dolls, friends or through drawings
- Excessive masturbation

While everyone should report child abuse and neglect, the California Penal Code provides that certain professionals and laypersons must report suspected abuse to the proper authorities. The mandated reporters include:

- Any Child Care Custodian (teachers, licensed day care workers, foster parents, social workers)
- Medical Practitioners (physicians, dentists, psychologists, nurses)
- Nonmedical Practitioners (public health employees, counselors, county welfare department employees)

Failures to report suspected abuse by a mandated reporter (listed above) within 36 hours is a misdemeanor punishable by 6 months in jail and/or a 1,000 fine.