

The Childers Family YMCA Preschool



Family Handbook 2011-2012



The Childers Family YMCA - 912-285-8660
1634 Plant Avenue
Waycross, GA 31501
www.ymcawaycross.org

WELCOME

Dear Family,

With so many demands on today's families, parents need all the support they can get. That's why preschool at the YMCA is about more than looking after children. It's about nurturing their development by providing an exciting, challenging and safe place to learn foundational skills, develop healthy trusting relationships and build self-reliance through the YMCA values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and citizenship.

We have many new and exciting things planned for the upcoming school year. For example, our qualified teachers will be using the Creative Curriculum as well as incorporating Christian values to stretch your child's skills mentally, physically and spiritually. Activities include creative arts, block building, dramatic play, and small and gross motor play, science, story time and music. Also, our team has demonstrated a commitment to excellence by setting a goal to reach national accreditation standards through the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC).

Thank you for choosing The Childers Family YMCA Preschool to meet your child care needs. As a mother of two young girls, I know the decision to leave your child in the care of another takes much thought and can often be a difficult one. With this in mind, our preschool department is committed to providing quality care to the children we serve.

One of my most important goals this year is to build strong relationships and keep the lines of communication open with you. My office hours will be Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 912-285-8660 or ahersey@ymcawaycross.org if you have any questions or concerns during the year.

I am delighted to have your child in our preschool program! I consider it a great privilege and responsibility to be your child's preschool director and look forward to providing him/her with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,



Andrea Hersey
Preschool Director
The Childers Family YMCA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT US	1
Philosophy.....	1
Mission.....	1
Goals.....	1
Certification	1
Hours of Operation.....	1
Holidays	2
Definition of Family	2
Admission & Enrollment.....	2
Inclusion.....	2
Non-Discrimination.....	2
Confidentiality.....	2
Publicity.....	2
Staff Qualifications	3
Child to Staff Ratios	3
Communication & Family Partnership	3
Complaints	4
CURRICULA & LEARNING	5
Learning Environment.....	5
Outings & Field Trips	5
Transition	5
Television Time	5
Electronic Media	5
Multiculturalism	6
Celebrations	6
Rest Time	6
Toilet Training	6
GUIDANCE	7
General Procedure.....	7
Acts of Aggression and Fighting	7
Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families	7
TUITION AND FEES	7
Payment.....	7
Late Pick-up Fees	8
Special Activity Fees.....	8
Late Payment Charges	8
Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges	8
ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL	8
Absence	8
Vacation	9
Withdrawals.....	9
Transfer of Records	9
Closing Due to Extreme Weather	9
DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP	9
General Procedure.....	9
Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up.....	9
Right to Refuse Child Release.....	10
PERSONAL BELONGINGS	10
What to Bring	10
Cubbies	10
Lost & Found.....	10
Toys from Home	10

NUTRITION	11
Foods Brought from Home.....	11
Food Prepared for or at the Center.....	11
Food Allergies	12
Meal Time	12
HEALTH	12
Immunizations.....	12
Daily Health Check	12
Illness.....	12
Allergy Prevention.....	13
Medications	14
Communicable Diseases	15
SAFETY	15
Clothing.....	16
Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play.....	16
Injuries.....	16
Biting.....	16
Respectful Behavior.....	17
Phone Calls.....	17
Smoking.....	17
Prohibited Substances.....	17
Dangerous Weapons.....	18
Child Custody.....	18
Suspected Child Abuse.....	18
EMERGENCIES	18
Lost or Missing Child.....	18
Fire Safety.....	18
Emergency Transportation.....	18
CENTER POLICIES	19

ABOUT US

Philosophy

The Childers Family YMCA Preschool is dedicated to providing the highest quality developmental care for each child in a stimulating, secure and caring learning environment. The staff establishes positive personal interaction, nurturing each child's growth and education. We plan for all areas of a child's development and education: cognitive, emotional, social, creative and physical. Individuality is acknowledged and respected as each child explores a child-centered environment at his or her own pace. A strong sense of identity and competence is developed as children are helped to feel good about themselves, their abilities and uniqueness. The preschool recognizes the need for working closely with families to achieve these goals.

We believe that young children learn best through play and exploration of a variety of materials and environments. This is facilitated by the teacher, who structures the classroom environment and schedules activities to provide many and varied interesting options in which children can participate individually, in small groups and as a class. Each classroom is organized with centers for creative art, literature, science, dramatic play and small and large motor development.

Mission

The Childers Family YMCA is dedicated to improving the quality of human life and to helping all people realize their full potential as children of God. The YMCA puts Christian principles into practice that build spirit, mind and body for all.

Our Preschool Goals

- To allow children to develop a healthy self-concept and positive self-esteem
- To allow children to learn to express thoughts and feelings in a creative, positive way
- To allow children to develop a degree of independence and responsibility for self
- To create a stimulating, accepting, safe and nurturing environment by establishing collaborative relationships with families

Certification

Bright from the Start Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
Continuing License (CCLC-2830)

Hours of Operation

Preschool services are provided from 6:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Holidays

We are closed for certain holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, National Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

A registration fee of \$80.00 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children who are two (2) and three (3) years of age.

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

If your child has an identified special need, please make sure to inform the classroom teacher as well as the preschool director.

Inclusion

The Childers Family YMCA Preschool believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At The Childers Family YMCA Preschool equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, special needs or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Publicity

Written family permission must be obtained before children's photos, video footage and/or digital imagery are made. Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

Staff Qualifications

Our qualified teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Lead Teacher	A majority has an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education	2 years
Teacher Assistant/Aide	Child Development Associate Certification	1 year

Caregivers participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by The Childers Family YMCA Preschool.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
Two (2) year olds	1:10	20
Three (3) year olds	1:15	30

Communication & Family Participation

Daily Communications. Daily notes from preschool staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes will be placed into your child's cubby at the end of the day.

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the preschool, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, family community involvement activities, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements and the like.

Newsletters. Monthly newsletters provide preschool news, events, announcements, etc.

Cell Phone Usage. The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with one another about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child, other children and adults who may wish to communicate with you, we ask that you not use your cell phone while visiting the center.

Email. We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged and permitted access to the program during all hours of operation. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal

with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving. Talk to your child's teacher regarding the best time to visit. If visitation disrupts the classroom, the teacher has the right to politely ask the visitor to leave.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year in November and May. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Family Support/Resources. Family support can be defined as whatever it takes to increase the family's ability to care for their child and improve the family's quality of life. We take great pride in the work we do and feel strongly about the entire family being at the center of all our services. The family support program offers: parent meetings, family activities, referral to community resources and social service agencies, information and education to improve care giving, and other formal and informal support and encouragement.

Role and Influence of the Family

The influence of family on a child can be the most important influence given to a child in life. We recognize that family involvement is vital to our program's success. There is a suggestions and recommendations box located in the preschool foyer. We welcome all suggestions and recommendations regarding our program.

COMPLAINTS

Our preschool believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our program and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the program. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

Step 1. Any family member who is uneasy about an aspect of the preschool should first discuss all of his/her worries and anxieties with

- a) The child's lead teacher
- b) The preschool director

Step 2. If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves on by making a formal complaint in writing to the preschool director who will investigate the complaint. The complainant can expect a written reply in acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint, as well as some indication of how and when the complaint will be addressed.

Step 3. When a formal complaint has been fully investigated, the preschool director should ensure that the person who made the complaint is informed, in writing, of the outcome.

Step 4. If the person who made the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, he/she should contact Jill Sloan, the Associate Director of The Childers Family YMCA. She is responsible for matters arising which cannot be resolved by the preschool director.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

Our preschool implements the Creative Curriculum. We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Copies of daily schedules are posted in each classroom.

Outings & Field Trips

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of child care programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

Transition

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transition from home to center. Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition between learning programs. Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

Television Time

Our normal daily routine does not include television watching, but from time-to-time, we may implement entertainment media usage as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. Television consumption will not be longer than two hours and the program will be screened prior to showing. Programs will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world.

Electronic Media

Internet sites and software are pre-screened to contain non-violence and high-quality educational content.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

For birthday celebrations, families may send store-bought cupcakes or cookies and individual juice boxes to be distributed during snack time. We ask that no gifts be given during the birthday celebrations. If gift bags are to be given to the children, we ask parents to leave them with the teachers to distribute upon departure.

Rest Time

After lunch, all children participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

- Individual sleeping and resting cots are provided for each child and are used by the same child daily and marked for individual use.
- Children that nap are allowed, and encouraged, to bring from home some comforts. These include, and are limited to: one small blanket, one small pillow, and one small stuffed animal friend, or doll. All of these items must fit inside a sealable bag such as a back pack and be individually marked. Large napping items, such as pillow pets, are discouraged.
- Pillows and blankets will be sent home weekly to be laundered or more frequently as needed.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically and emotionally ready. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns. During your child's toilet training, we request that you provide pull-ups to help him/her become accustomed to the toileting experience. It is the family's responsibility to provide all pull-ups (we prefer the kind with Velcro on the side) and sensitive wet wipes. Please label each item with your child's name.

- Each child must be toilet trained before enrolling in the 3 year old classroom.
- The classroom teacher will consciously monitor the child and document important times such as when the child attempts to use as well as successfully uses the bathroom.
- The times listed above will be communicated with the family on a daily basis.
- Positive reinforcement will be implemented.

- Punishment is never to be used on a child that has an accident or is having difficulty in the toilet training process.
- For safety concerns such as allergic reactions, it is our policy not to borrow pull-ups or extra clothing from other children within the center. If your child is out of pull-ups or has an accident and does not have an extra change of clothing, you will be contacted to pick up your child from the center.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Acts of Aggression and Fighting

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children.

Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child.

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. However, the teachers reserve the right to redirect unwanted behaviors and to utilize a period of reflection, or thinking time.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

TUITION AND FEES

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due monthly. This payment is due by the 5th of each month. Weekly payment plans may be set up in the business office if needed. If a weekly payment plan is in place, payment is due every

Monday. The tuition is \$380 per month for YMCA members and \$420 per month for non-members. Please send your payment in a sealed envelope with your child's name, lead teacher's name and amount on the front. You may also make your tuition payment in the front office. If payment is not received in a timely manner, a statement will be sent home with your child.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$1 per minute will be assessed beginning at 6:05 p.m. and will be due upon arrival.

Special Activity Fees

From time to time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip. There is a \$20 craft fee which is due in August and in January.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact.

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$5 if paying on a weekly plan or \$20 if paying monthly will be added.

If payment is more than 10 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

No Credits/Refunds

- **Credit will not be given for Sick Days** – there are no credits for sick days. Sick days are pre-considered in determining tuition and are not refundable.
- **Credit will not be given for Inclement Weather** - if we do not open due to inclement weather on a day that your child is scheduled to attend, your account will not be credited for that day.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 10 a.m., please call us at 912-285-8660. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Vacation

Vacation days only apply if your child is normally scheduled to attend on those days. Each child is given 5 vacation days each calendar year. Vacations are to be scheduled in advance in the business office.

Withdrawals

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in additional fees. Family members are asked to notify the child's teacher as well as the business office if a child is being withdrawn. It is our preschool's policy not to allow credits or refunds.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, families will be notified by telephone.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 6:15 a.m. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the facility opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

To help maintain accurate records of attendance, children must be signed in/out each day by an authorized person. When signing in/out, the authorized adult should write his/her complete proper name, not Mama, Daddy, etc., as well as the time of arrival/departure.

We close at 6:00 p.m. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Please make every attempt to drop-off your child by 10 a.m. This will aid in reducing any disruptions in instructional time.

For safety precautions, the preschool doors will remain locked except for during arrival and departure times. If you drop off your child during the normal school day and the doors are locked, please enter the facility through the front office. A member of office personnel will guide you to the appropriate classroom.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. These contacts must be eighteen (18) years of age or older. If you want a

person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after one (1) hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **2 year olds** – small travel pillow, blanket, one small stuffed animal friend or doll (to be used during naptime), pull-ups (we prefer the kind with Velcro on the sides), sensitive wet wipes, at least two changes of clothes, socks and shoes, and nutritional, balanced daily lunches
- **3 year olds** – small travel pillow, blanket, one small stuffed animal friend or doll (to be used during naptime), at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes, and nutritional, balanced daily lunches

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, pull-ups, blankets, pillows, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name and photo. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the lost-and-found box located in each classroom. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.
- A copy of Georgia's Bright from the Start Criteria for Sack Lunches will be given to each family.
- In order to maintain state regulated child: staff ratios, our teachers will not be heating up lunches. You are encouraged to send lunch items in an insulated food and beverage container in order to maintain proper warm and cool temperatures.
- A child may bring breakfast from home to eat in the preschool as long as he/she is dropped off by 8:00 a.m. This reduces disruptions in instructional time.

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
½ turkey sandwich Celery sticks Raisins Milk/water	Chicken strips Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk/water
Peanut butter on graham crackers Apple slices Carrot sticks Milk/water	Yogurt Crackers Sugar snap peas 100% juice

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Any snacks or food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

Lunches with adequate nutritional value are to be provided daily by the family. Morning and afternoon snacks are provided by the preschool. Monthly snack menus are posted for viewing in each classroom.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.

Peanuts, hot dogs, raw carrots, popcorn, fish with bones, and grapes shall not be served to the children less than three (3) years of age. Children older than three (3) years of age may be served these foods provided that the foods are cut in such a way as to minimize choking.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. We check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule annually. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Daily Health Check

We conduct a health check, as soon as possible, when each child enters the center each day. We look for skin rashes, elevated temperatures, itchy scalps, lethargy and changes from usual behavior. These are quick checks to protect the well-being of all children in the program. Please understand these are not physicals and do not substitute for proper routine pediatric care.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children, you may not bring a sick child to the preschool. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents the child from participating in activities
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide

- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth, above 102°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptom
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours
- Mouth sores caused by drooling
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics
- Severe or persistent cough or a croupy or whooping cough
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Dry, crusty or oozing skin patches
- Persistent scratching of the head or body

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Head Lice

- Children with head lice will not be allowed to return to the center until they have been treated and no further head lice or nits are detected during a health check.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in each classroom. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on his/her own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

Prescription medications require a note signed by the family and a written order from the physician stating the name of the child, times, and amounts of the prescription medication to be given. (This is indicated on the prescription label itself) and a completed "Authorization for Medication" form. Such authorization will include:

- the date
- full name of the child,
- name of the medication,
- prescription number,
- dosage
- the dates to be given
- the time of day to be dispensed
- signature of the family member

Written authorization to dispense medications shall be limited to two weeks unless otherwise prescribed by a physician. Medication shall only be dispensed out of its original container which must be labeled with the child's name. The sharing of medications is strictly prohibited, even among siblings.

The preschool will maintain a record of all medications dispensed to the child by authorized staff members to include the date, time and amount of medication that was administered, any noticeable adverse reactions to the medication, and the signature of the authorized person administering the medication.

We will only dispense medications once a day. If your child needs medication on a more frequent schedule, it is the responsibility of the family member to come to the center and administer the medication. Our preschool will not administer any twelve (12) hour medications or as needed medications.

The child's medication will be kept in a storage cabinet or container which is not accessible to the other children and stored separate from cleaning chemicals, supplies, and poisons. Medications requiring refrigeration shall be placed in a refrigerator that is not accessible to the children. Medications which are no longer to be dispensed shall be returned to the family immediately.

Non-prescription medications will not be administered to a child unless specifically requested by the child's physician with a written request. If the child's doctor orders a non-prescription medication, the preschool will require the same form and information as above for prescription medications. Non-prescription medications will not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.

Non-prescription topical preparations (e.g., diaper cream, sunscreen, insect repellent) require a completed "Authorization to Dispense External Preparations" form. These topical ointments/preparations will be administered in accordance to the directions on the label of the original container. Due to state regulations and safety precautions, no aerosol sunscreen will be allowed in the center.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Some communicable illnesses must be reported, even if there is only one occurrence. For the state of Georgia, these illnesses include:

- Campylobacteriosis
- Diphtheria
- Giardiasis
- Hepatitis A
- H. Flu Meningitis/Septicemia
- Measles
- Meningococcal Meningitis/Septicemia
- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Rubella
- Salmonella
- Shigellosis

The following illnesses must be reported to the local health department only if there is an outbreak in the classroom:

- Chickenpox
- Conjunctivitis
- Impetigo
- Influenza
- Lice
- Ringworm
- Rotavirus
- Scabies
- Strep Throat
- Viral gastroenteritis not listed above

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. Sandals and flip-flops make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities and center play.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Teachers will provide outdoor play unless there is inclement weather, a heat advisory, or it is below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Additionally, outdoor play will be cancelled if there is poor air quality. It is the responsibility of the family to dress your child in appropriate clothing for both indoor and outdoor play.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the Satilla Regional Medical Center immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among young children. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

It is the responsibility of both the teachers and the parents to make every attempt to eliminate biting. In collaboration, we expect that research-based guidance will be used. The following information is available from a *Vanderbilt* study:

Quickly yet calmly remove your child from the person he has bitten. Calmly (e.g. without yelling or scolding), clearly, and firmly say, "Stop. No biting. Biting hurts." Show and explain the effect of the bite on the other child. For example, you might say, "Jack is crying and sad because the bite hurts him."

Focus most of your attention on the child who was bitten. Understandably, adults often react strongly to the child who bit as they try to correct the biting behavior. However, even negative attention can encourage the biting. Helping to soothe the child who was bitten teaches empathy and helps the child who bit to understand the power of his actions. It might be helpful to say to the child who was bitten, "I'm so sorry this happened. I know biting really hurts," as a way to model apologies and empathy. Avoid trying to get your child to apologize. While it is important for your child to develop empathy, trying to get your child to apologize typically results in paying more attention to the biter and not the child who was bit.

Acknowledge your child's feelings. You might say something like, "You are frustrated. Let's find another way. Touch gently or ask for the toy. You can say, "Can I have that?"

When your child is calm (not in the heat of the moment), teach him/her other ways to express his/her needs and desires. For example, you might say to your child, "Biting hurts. Next time, if Sienna is grabbing your toy you can say stop or ask a grownup for help." It might be helpful to role play scenarios where your child can practice saying "stop" or "help."

It is not recommended to bite back or use harsh punishment and our staff will never encourage that outcome.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior (such as excessive biting) may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Phone Calls

You may call and check on your child during the course of the day. To reduce interruptions in supervision or instruction, these calls will be transferred to the preschool director.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with alarms and fire extinguishers.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the preschool during the first week of your child's attendance.

The handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are completed.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received The Childers Family YMCA Preschool Family Handbook. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask the preschool director any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure or information contained in The Childers Family YMCA Preschool Family Handbook.

Recipient's Printed Name

Date

Recipient's Signature

Date

Child's Name