ACHIEVEMENT. BELONGING. RELATIONSHIPS.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GUARDIAN HANDBOOK 2020
ABOUT THE Y

Mission
The YMCA of Southern Arizona is dedicated to improving the quality of human life and to helping all people realize their fullest potential through the development of Spirit, Mind and Body.

Values
Our programs and services are infused with our four positive character values: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. We are committed to challenging our members, staff and volunteers to demonstrate these values.

Purpose
Our purpose is to empower young people, improve health and wellbeing for every individual, and inspire positive action across our communities. We see the value in bringing together people from all ages and diverse backgrounds to create an environment where all can learn and grow from each other. YMCA staff members strive to ensure that every person entering our doors has access to opportunities they may not have outside our buildings.

Areas of Impact
For more than 100 years, the YMCA of Southern Arizona has been committed to strengthening our community through three areas of impact: Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. The Y continues to empower individuals from all backgrounds to reach their full potential by ensuring every person has access to resources, relationships, and opportunities. In 2019, more than $111,000 was awarded in Early Childhood Education financial assistance so all children (infant to preschool age) had the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. Nearly 200 children in this program would not have had the opportunity to grow in a safe and nurturing environment without receiving financial assistance. The YMCA of Southern Arizona provides $1.12 million in financial assistance to more than 15,500 children, adults, and families in our community to ensure they have access to necessary programs and services.

Program Philosophy
Our program philosophy is that children learn best through play and our developmentally appropriate learning atmosphere is designed to develop the whole child, spirit, mind and body. Young children are guided and encouraged to make choices that are based on their own interests. At the Y, our staff play the role of the mentor, educator and fun provider. Your child will stay healthy, active and engaged in a safe environment.

Nondiscrimination Statement
The Y is made up of people of all ages and from every walk of life working side by side to strengthen communities. Together we work to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race or sexual orientation has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity. Our values: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility guide everything we do!
GENERAL INFORMATION

Partners
Our Early Childhood Education program strives to improve and maintain quality programming by partnering with the following entities: Quality First, First Things First, CACFP and Arizona State Licensing.

Quality First and First Things First partners with Arizona child care and preschool providers to improve the quality of early learning programs. For more information on this program, please visit: http://qualityfirstaz.com/.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal program that provides some of our centers with reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks. For more information on this program, please visit: http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/cacfp/.

Our Staff
All staff meet and often exceed qualifications established by the State of Arizona and YMCA of the USA. As part of the application process, all staff is required to provide professional, personal/family, and peer references. Staff must complete a full background check, which includes fingerprinting. Child-abuse prevention training is mandatory for all YMCA staff. Additionally, staff is required to keep their skills up-to-date at all times, and their training is regularly monitored. Staff attends new training regularly so they are current with the latest developments in their areas of expertise.

Training topics may include but are not limited to: innovation, behavior management, safety and compliance, and leadership. Our staff development initiatives provide opportunities for our site directors and group leaders to initiate and implement best practices that engage your children in academic, social, and emotional learning that aids in the success of your kids’ futures.

Staff Ratios
The Y strives to meet Quality First Standards, which require small group interactions and attentive staff supervision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Requirements</th>
<th>Quality First Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:5 (6 weeks – 12 months)</td>
<td>1:5 (6 weeks – 12 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:6 (12-24 months)</td>
<td>1:6 (12-24 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:8 (2 years-old)</td>
<td>1:6 (2 years-old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:13 (3 years-old)</td>
<td>1:9 (3 years-old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15 (4-5 years-old)</td>
<td>1:10 (4-5 years-old)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note during unique circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the YMCA adheres to guidelines set forth by the local health department and government to determine staff ratios.

Registration Process
Families will be able to register by clicking the registration link on the YMCA website at www.tucsonymca.org/earlylearning. The required registration paperwork will be sent via email once the online registration payment is processed. All program fees must be paid in full and registration paperwork must be filled out and signed prior to the child attending the program. Families who receive DES state funding assistance for child care must secure authorization and then contact our main office at foryouth@tucsonymca.org or call 520-623-9481. Registration fees are not covered by DES. Registration is not available online at this time for families who receive DES or other third-party funding.
Serving All Children

The YMCA is an inclusive organization. In an effort to ensure all children 6 weeks to 5 years-old are successful in summer block programs, if an additional need is identified on the child’s paperwork, the YMCA will work with each family on a case by case basis to determine if the YMCA can support the child to their fullest potential. The YMCA will not discriminate against anyone because of a diverse ability and is willing to make reasonable accommodations in our program to meet the needs of all children, their families and program employees.

The YMCA does have limitations due to the ratio requirements and nonspecific knowledge of certain abilities or needs and requires all individuals who have been identified with a diverse ability to take part in an intake process as parent/guardian communication and support is essential in determining if the YMCA can meet the needs of the child. The YMCA relies on well qualified community partners and other subject matter experts to help us make decisions on reasonable accommodations and to determine a child’s path to success in our program.

Financial Assistance

As a charitable organization, the YMCA of Southern Arizona raises money in order to provide our families the opportunity to take part in our programs at a cost that suits their financial needs. We offer financial assistance and work with each family individually to ensure their financial needs are met. This includes assistance provided for the school year and also includes emergency assistance for families who experience a sudden hardship. Child care financial assistance forms can be found on our website or visit your nearest YMCA branch location.

The YMCA of Southern Arizona partners with the Department of Economic Security as well as other entities in the area that assist families with affording youth development programs. Please contact our office for more information about authorizations and registration.

Receipts and Tax Information

Receipts are available upon request after making a monthly payment. End of Year statements are available upon request after December 31st. YMCA of the Southern Arizona payments for youth development programs may qualify as a tax deduction. Tax ID # is 86-0101237.

Location of Children

Your child’s safety is the YMCA’s first priority, which is why all program participants’ whereabouts are being monitored at all times. Y staff will provide communication that informs guardians where their children will be during pick-up times. A note will be posted at the main entrance to indicate where a program is taking place (in or outside of the designated center). If in the event a child’s whereabouts are unknown, the YMCA staff will conduct a thorough search of the area. Guardians and police will be notified within 30 minutes if the child is not located. At the end of each day, all rooms are checked for children.

Participation in Activities

Our staff will never force children to participate; however, we ask that guardians encourage their child to participate in all programs. Should you have any questions in this regard, please contact the Youth Development Administration.

Check In/Out Procedures

Only persons listed on the registration form are authorized in writing by the child’s guardians may pick up or visit a child. For safety reasons, we will not release your child to anyone without authorization and all persons including yourself must have identification with them. All persons picking up your child will be asked for identification.

If you are more than 30 minutes late and the staff has not been able to reach you or anyone authorized to pick up your child, a YMCA staff member will contact the Youth Development Leadership. We will then notify the Department of Human Services and the local police.
**Intoxicated Child Pick-Up**
For the safety of the children, the YMCA has established a procedure in the event of anyone attempting to pick up a child while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If a staff person suspects intoxication, they will strongly encourage that someone else pick up the child. If the individual insists on leaving with the child, the staff will immediately contact law enforcement and advise them of the situation.

**Visitors**
All visitors must sign in on the designated visitor log before entering a program. Staff members are required to verify the identity of individuals by checking identification.

**Program Closure**
In the event of a YMCA program closing due to extenuating circumstances, guardians will be notified with as much notice as possible. Any fees that are paid without programming provided will be fully refunded or credited to the account.

**Personal Belongings**
The YMCA is not responsible for lost, misplaced or stolen items. Please do not send your child to the program with expensive/sentimental items or money. Mark all personal belongings with your child’s name. Lost and found items will be donated to charity if not picked up in a reasonable amount of time.

Cell phones and other electronics (including game players, iPods and e-readers) are generally not allowed in YMCA programs. We strive to create an opportunity for your child to unplug and take a break from electronics.
HEALTH INFORMATION

Immunizations
The YMCA aligns with state licensing agencies requiring a certificate of immunization. Your child will not be able to attend without supplying their immunization form. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in a delay for your child to start the program (immunization exemptions are accepted.)

Medications and Medical Oversight Plan
In compliance with the licensing requirements, the YMCA is required to have a medication administration handling policy. No medication will be accepted without the approved forms and properly stored medication. All medication MUST have a valid expiration date. Prescription and non-prescription medication will be administered to children only when the below standards are followed:

- A written health care plan from the health care provider is provided.
- Medication must be given to the YMCA in its original container with the prescription, dose and time to be administered (attached.)
- Medication must be current and will not expire in the next 30 days.
- Medication may only be administered to the child it is prescribed for.
- A written order is required from a prescribing health care provider if a child self-carries his/her own emergency medication and must approved by the nurse consultant.

Sunscreen
It is recommended during the summer season that you provide your child with sunscreen daily as well as apply it to your child prior to dropping them off. Your child’s sunscreen must be properly labeled with their first and last name. Staff will apply sunscreen prior to children playing outside. The YMCA will provide 30+ spf sunscreen (aerosol only) in the event that your child does not bring their own.

Allergies
For our staff to better serve your child, it is imperative that parents inform staff of any allergies that their child may have or had, for example, food, medication, environmental or other substances. The YMCA strives to be a nut-free zone, however, we cannot guarantee safety from exposure to foods that may cause allergic reactions.

Mental Health
YMCA staff will refer any mental health concerns to guardians and all other invested parties.

Closed Toe Shoes
All children are required to wear closed to shoes at all times to ensure your child’s safety. If your child is wearing any type of open toe shoes, you will be asked to provide an alternative before he/she can participate in programming at the center.
**Injury**
In the case of an injury on site, guardians will be notified immediately. A decision will be made between guardians and Y staff if a child needs to be transported for emergency attention. For any hospital or doctor required visits after an injury occurring in a Y program, it must be reported to the Youth Development Leadership.

**Illness**
According to state licensing requirements and for the protection of all children, the YMCA cannot accept children who have had the following symptoms in the last 24 hours.

- Elevated temperature (over 100.4)
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Undiagnosed rash
- Sore or discharging eyes or ears, profuse nasal discharge.
- Diagnosed contagious disease such as strep throat, chicken pox, or COVID-19

All children must be symptom free for 24 hours prior to returning to the program. In some cases, a doctor’s note of release will be required.

If children become ill during the day, guardians will be notified to come and pick up their child within the hour. They will be provided with a place to rest comfortably until they go home.

Please notify the YMCA if your child contracts a contagious disease, such as whooping cough, German or regular measles or hand, foot and mouth disease. It is a licensing requirement that signs be visibly posted to notify families.

**Documentation of Accidents & Injury Reports**
Y Staff are not allowed to provide documents such as incident or accident reports. Any issues related to the child will be expressed to the guardian at pick up. Communication about accidents/incidents will be made between the both of you and will not involve YMCA staff. The YMCA will only provide documentation through a formal court process by receiving a subpoena. Separated or divorced guardian will need to come up with their own method of sharing information.
BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Self-management skills and positive social interactions among children and adults are encouraged and maximize everyone’s enjoyment of Y programs. We use positive guidance methods including reminders, distraction, logical consequences and redirection.

Your child’s safety is our number one priority, therefore, a child whose behavior is dangerous or repeatedly disruptive must be immediately picked up from the program by someone designated through the departure and release procedures.

If a child is repeatedly engaging in disruptive or dangerous behavior their guardian will be contacted to discuss the incident, which will result in loss of privileges, activities, suspension, or termination from the program.

Conduct Policies

As in any activity, inappropriate behavior of a few children can have a dramatic impact on the experience of the entire program. Therefore, the following conduct policies apply directly to each individual child and will be used in determining the child’s eligibility to continue as a participant in the program.

A child may be suspended or released from the program, without refund, for the following behaviors while participating in program:

- Leaving the Y location without permission or going into unauthorized areas
- Using foul language, fighting, being rude or discourteous to staff and other children
- Verbal or written threats to staff or other children
- Defacing Y or school property or field facilities or any property visited such as a school, park, or other special event location
- Engaging in fighting, intentionally injuring another child or bullying
- Bringing or using any illegal substances and/or weapons
- Stealing or defacing another child’s property
- Refusing to remain with the group while at the program and during outings or field trips
- Refusing to participate in program activities

Disciplinary Policy

The severity of the incident may result in immediate suspension or removal from the program using the following guideline:

- First incident: Parent notified by director
- Second incident: Disciplinary write-up
- Third incident: The action taken at this point is at the discretion of the director after appropriate consultation with the parent. (Range of discipline: one-day suspension to removal from the program.)
SAFETY PLANS

Accidents and Emergencies
YMCA staff are First Aid and CPR/AED certified. Emergency numbers are available at each program. Plans for handling fire, floods, tornadoes, severe weather, lost or missing children, injuries and illnesses are on file at each site. We will call or contact an emergency contact person to notify of a minor accident or injury. When there is no question that a child must be taken to the doctor or the hospital, we will call to inform the contact of our course of action as soon as possible.

Natural Disaster
In the case of a natural disaster the YMCA will follow its emergency procedures and FEMA guidelines specific to the incident. If an emergency of this nature were to occur, parents would be asked to be available at the number they have listed.

The YMCA will notify the guardians via phone or email immediately once the participants are safe and the location is secure. In the case of a participant with a diverse ability, the emergency procedures will be followed and the buddy system with a staff will be followed to move them to a secure location where the guardian will be notified.

Safe Sleep Arrangements for Infants

Back-to-Sleep Positioning: Infants younger than 12 months are placed on their backs during nap time unless the child’s health care professional completes a signed-and-dated statement that the child requires a different sleep position.

Cribs: Infants always sleep in a crib on a firm surface. Infants who fall asleep outside a crib are put in a designated crib on their backs to continue sleeping.

Crib Contents: The only items allowed in the crib are a fitted sheet to cover the mattress and a non-stringed pacifier. There is also nothing attached to the crib or within reach of the child.

Pacifiers: Pacifier use is allowed only during sleep while the child is in a crib. Once the child is no longer using it, it will be taken out of the crib.

Prohibited Bedding: Water beds and soft bedding materials such as quilts, comforters, pillows, crib bumpers, are inaccessible to infants.

Overheating Prevention: Infants sleep in rooms that are comfortable temperature with clothing for warmth but that does not result in overheating. Infants are not able to be swaddled. Blanket sleepers or sleep sacks may be worn for warmth if sized to fit as garments that allow free movement of the legs and do not restrict chest movement.

Strangulation Prevention: There is nothing tied around the child’s neck or attached to the child’s clothing (i.e., no bibs, necklaces, hoods, pacifier strings).
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Curriculum
The early learning program offers a constructive balance of teacher-led activities and time for child exploration each day. Children make meaningful and intentional choices with hands-on activities focusing on physical activity, arts and humanities, STEM, team building, service-learning, and leadership opportunities.

In addition, daily activities include the following components:

- Music and Movement
- Community Time
- Enrichment Centers: Art, manipulative, blocks, dramatic play, music, science/nature, writing, sensory, and math
- Core Values
- Nap/Quiet Time
- Infant Specific: Tummy time, balancing, food textures, grasping visuals & mobility

Field Trips
All children participate in field trips unless otherwise notified by guardians. Attendance is taken before departure, at the destination and continuously throughout the field trip. Signed permission slips authorizing transportation are kept on file. Transportation is provided by the YMCA. Emergency evacuation drills are performed periodically.

If a child arrives late to the site and the remainder of the group is away, we will work with you to provide accommodations.

Meals
Healthy and developmentally appropriate portioned breakfast, lunch, and snacks are provided throughout the day. The YMCA is a nut-free zone, however we cannot guarantee safety from exposure to foods that may cause allergic reactions.

If your child has a food allergy or has a specific meal plan, you must fill out and submit a menu modification form.
FINANCIAL PROCESSING

Registration and Fees
Program fees must be paid in full and registration paperwork is required to be completed, submitted and approved by the YMCA prior to your child attending the program. Please Note: The state of Arizona requires the completion of the Emergency Card and a copy of your child’s immunizations to be included in each registration packet. You do have the option to register for personal exemption if you choose not to have your children immunized.

All accounts are required to have a stored billing method (credit/debit) to schedule and make payments. It is the responsibility of the participant to ensure that all payments are made.

The YMCA reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program upon notifying the parent. Refunds or credits will not be issued for dismissal from the program due to behavior.

For ALL families:
Payments are scheduled and due 10 days prior to the week of the program. Weekly fees are due in full regardless of attendance. Receipts are not automatically sent. They are available upon request after making each payment. End of Year statements are available upon request after December 31st.

Example pay schedule below for August 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of Camp</th>
<th>Payment Schedule Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, August 17th</td>
<td>Friday, August 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, August 24th</td>
<td>Friday, August 14th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Declined Payments: A fee between the amounts of $10 to $30 will automatically be charged to your account for any returned payments. All payments must be collected prior to your child attending the program week. If the payment declined on the scheduled payment date, the YMCA will attempt to reprocess the payment up to 3 times. If full payment is not received, the child will be removed from the program roster and will not be permitted to attend in a timely manner in order to avoid an interruption of care.

Cancellations, Withdrawals or Changes: It is the YMCA’s policy that notice of any changes or cancellations from the program must be completed through the online form: www.tucsonymca.org/cancel-request at least 3 weeks in advance of the start date of each week of the program. Fees may apply.

Refunds/Credits: Please note that refunds or account credits will not be provided due to participant non-attendance. All refunds or account credits have to be requested through the online form www.tucsonymca.org/cancel-request.

For families making split household payments:
Please contact the Youth Development Administration Office prior to registering for any programs. In most cases the YMCA will create two separate accounts for the child. Each account is required to store a billing method and have payments scheduled according to the charts above. However if either account defaults, the participant will no longer be able to attend, according to the payment decline policy above. Late fees will apply and will be split between the two parties.

The YMCA cannot and will not get involved in personal matters as it relates to custody of your children. Please do not share personal information with the onsite staff. Communication about your custody agreement and child registrations will only involve Youth Development Office staff if deemed necessary by the YMCA.
For families who receive DES assistance:

**Absences:** DES allows 2 absences per child each month. If your child is absent more than two days in any given month, you will be charged a daily rate for each absence thereafter. Absence fees will be charged to your payment method on file, immediately following the third absence.

**Hourly Attendance:** Children must attend at least 6 hours during all day programming. If your child attends camp for less than 6 hours, you will be charged the difference of what DES reimburses for the half day rate and the full day rate.

### Refund Credit Table:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Cancellation</th>
<th>Refund</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 week written notice</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 weeks written notice</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After program week starts</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal without written notice</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that cancellations and refunds will not be automatically processed. It is up to the participant to initiate contact with the youth development department through the online form. Any bank account or credit/debit changes must be made at least 5 days prior to the draft date of the scheduled payment.

**Late Pick Up:** If you are going to be late picking up your child, call your site immediately and provide them with a pick-up time.

- A $30 late pick up fee will be automatically charged for all late pick-ups after 6:01pm if you do not communicate with onsite staff.
- Multiple late pickups will place your child at risk of being removed from the program.
- If you are more than 30 minutes late and the staff has not been able to reach you or anyone authorized to pick up your child, the onsite staff member will contact Youth Development leadership. They will then notify the Department of Human Services and the local police.
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN & PROCESS

Open communication is essential in resolving conflict, whether it’s among children, staff, parents or the school. The YMCA aims to create a streamlined experience for each individual child between our program, their school and their home. Parents and staff are encouraged to address any concerns or questions with the onsite staff as soon as possible. If the onsite staff feels they cannot appropriately handle the concern or question, they will refer the participant to their Coordinator, who will reach out directly to the family within 24 hours of receiving their information.

In most cases the Coordinator is well equipped to handle most questions or concerns, however, if the Program Coordinator requires further assistance, the Executive Director will be communicated with and will work together with the Program Director and the family to address the concern or questions.

In some instances, the YMCA will alert the school leadership of concerns or issues, when deemed necessary.

The YMCA will address all questions or concerns on a personal and case by case basis. This will occur over the phone or through face to face interaction. The YMCA feels that resolving conflict through email is not the most appropriate avenue of communication to support the family.

MANDATED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

YMCA child care programs are licensed programs throughout the state of Arizona. The YMCA is mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse to the county. The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for the operation of a licensed facility. If you have not done so, please ask to see the license.

If you believe that your child has been abused, you should seek immediate assistance from your county Department of Social Services. Arizona law requires that licensed providers to report all known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

The telephone number to report abuse: 1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445)

Your child’s education, physical, emotional, and social development will be nurtured in a well- planned and run program. Remember to observe the program regularly, especially regarding children’s health and safety, equipment and play materials, and staff. For additional information regarding licensing, or if you have concerns about a facility, please consult the Arizona Department of Health Services Child Care Licensing at 520-628-6541.