



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT*
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CHARACTER BUILDERS

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS
CHILD CARE PARENT HANDBOOK



www.ymca.org



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Dear YMCA Family,

Welcome to the YMCA's school-age before- and after-school Character Builders program. Our focus is on whole child development through character building activities, developing them as assets and integrating learning experiences. Your child will learn social skills, academic skills, work on homework, engage in physical activities, positively connect with adults and strengthen his or her values through character development.

We are committed to providing a family-friendly environment. You are welcome to visit the program at any time to see how your child participates in the program. Other opportunities for families to get involved include family events, volunteering on field trips, volunteering for our annual campaign to raise funds for scholarships, and by joining your site's Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). The PAC meets four times a year to discuss program improvement and enhancement.

This publication is your guide to the YMCA school-age before- and after-school Character Builders program. It explains operations, policies and procedures, safety precautions, activities and communication. If you have a question that is not covered in this handbook, please contact the program director.

We look forward to helping your child grow to their fullest potential and building lasting relationships with your children, your family and our community.

Sincerely,

YMCA Character Builder Staff Team



About the YMCA

Mission

The YMCA of San Diego County is dedicated to improving the quality of human life and to help all people realize their fullest potential as children of God through the development of spirit, mind and body.

In the school age before- and after-school programs, children experience the YMCA mission by participating in activities that:

- Developing the SPIRIT by building self esteem, willingness to help others and personal values. Arts and Humanities, Character Development, Service Learning and Social Development provide activities that include collaborations, conversation, development of conflict resolution skills and opportunities for success, regardless of ability.
- Developing the MIND by learning and applying new information. Homework support, literacy, science and technology are activities that provide opportunities to assimilate new information, use knowledge gained at school and develop problem-solving skills
- Developing the BODY by participation in health and physical activities. Health, wellness and fitness provide active sports and games that include and encourage wellness, physical fitness and hands-on activities.



Philosophy

The YMCA before- and after-school program respects the values and diversity each family holds, and we will care for each child with warmth and compassion assuring that each child is safe. We will always represent ourselves as honest role models and embrace strong, positive self image through all our activities.

YMCA Child Care Program Goals

- To provide all children in our care with an environment that is safe, one in which they feel supported, cared for and most of all, a place they can have fun.
- To help develop and demonstrate the YMCA's four core character values for all children.
- To increase the physical fitness and self awareness in all children.
- To strengthen the interpersonal and social skills of all children.
- To foster an appreciation for diversity and cultures of the world.
- To complement and integrate the children's educational experiences with well-rounded curriculum using the YMCA's School-Age Care Curriculum.
- To support and strengthen families, focusing on:
 - ▶ Improving communications among family members
 - ▶ Increasing family members' abilities to work and play together
 - ▶ Helping families share their values with each other
 - ▶ Increasing families' sense of community with other families



Our Programs

All our school-age before- and after-school child care sites are licensed by the State of California.

Minimum Days & Holidays

Before- and after-school care will be provided on minimum days but not on holidays or school breaks. The YMCA offers camps on many of those days for an additional cost.

The YMCA is closed for both camps and child care on the following days:

New Year's Day

Labor Day

Fourth of July

Thanksgiving

Christmas Day

Late Pick Ups

In the event a parent should pick up his or her child after the 6 p.m. closing time, a late fee will be assessed. We charge \$1 for every minute after 6 p.m.

Parents who have not notified the child care site that they will be late can expect the following to occur:

1. For the child's safety, we will attempt to make contact with all authorized guardians and pick-up persons on the child medical release card.
2. In the event that no authorized guardians or pick-up persons can be reached within 30 minutes, the local police department will be notified. Your child will be taken into their custody.
3. If a child is continually picked up late from our program, actions such as dismissal from our program may be necessary.



Dress Code

Attire should be appropriate for a child's environment and allow participation in the wide range of activities.

Toys and Games

Toys and games are provided by the YMCA. Toys brought from home often cause problems with other participants. These items often end up lost or broken. We ask that children leave personal items at home.

Lost and Found

If your child loses an item in child care, please ask a YMCA child care staff to direct you to the lost-and-found bin located inside the child care room.

Babysitting

It is the policy of the YMCA that our staff do not accept babysitting assignments from families involved in YMCA programs.

Bathroom Policy

Staff members will escort two or more children to bathrooms and position themselves to visually observe the child enter and exit the restroom. Staff must have auditory awareness of the children. Staff are not allowed to be alone with a child in a restroom.

Termination

The YMCA does not make it a practice to suspend or remove children from our programs. However, the YMCA reserves the right to do so if the behavior is not conducive to the safety and well being of other children enrolled in the program or your child's own personal safety. The YMCA also reserves the right to terminate services for inappropriate behavior of parents or guardians.



Enrollment Policies and Guidelines

Registration

Registration is required for your child to begin in one of our child care programs. You can register by coming into the YMCA's membership office anytime during regular business hours.

Please note that after registering, it may take up to five (5) business days before your child can start in one of our programs. This is to allow time to review paperwork and transfer information to the site supervisor.

In the event your registration is not complete, your child will not be able to start in our program.

Paperwork and Forms

All child care participants are required to have specific paperwork in their file for licensing purposes. All forms and documents must be updated yearly, and can be found at your child's site, school office, YMCA registration desk, or at your local program and online at www.ymca.org.

Please note that you may be required to fill out all paperwork and forms if the information has changed. Parents must keep the YMCA informed of all changes to their information, including address changes, phone number changes for work, home and emergency contact persons and authorized pick-up people.



Fees and Payment Calculations

Payments are calculated by the 180-day school year. A daily rate is calculated and then multiplied by the 180 days the child care program operates; the figure is then divided by the 10 months the children are in school. This formula results in an equal payment each month your children are school.

As an enrolling parent, you are responsible for all fees related to your child's participation (co-pays, family fees, registration fees, late pick-up fees). This includes families who receive assistance financially from third-party agencies (CDA, CRS, and YMCA). These also include all gaps in financial coverage by these agencies and the costs of our program. You are responsible for payments of all fees due.

All child care payments are processed by bank draft or credit card draft. Bank draft takes place on the 25th of each month. The first bank draft for the school year will begin August 25 and credit card draft will begin August 15.

In order to be fair to all before- and after-school child care participants, those who do not pay program fees, have recurring non sufficient funds (NSF), and/or returned payments will be suspended or terminated from the program.



Credits and Refunds

There are no adjustments in the monthly fees for absence or non-participation. When you enroll your child, you are reserving space, time, staffing, and provisions, whether or not he or she attends.

If your child starts our program mid-month, you will be required to pay the entire month's fees and any registration fees up front, but we will prorate your first month's draft to reflect the time not used in our program.

Exit Policy

Participants looking to leave the before- and after-school child care program are required to notify the YMCA in writing at least 30 days prior to your child's last date of attendance in the program. The "Childcare Program Exit Form" is available from your site supervisor or online at www.ymca.org. If 30 days written notification is not received, you will be financially responsible for those 30 days, regardless of your child's participation.

Changes in schedules or days of attendance also require two (2) weeks notification to make the changes to your accounts. If two (2) weeks written notification is not received, you will be financially responsible for those two (2) weeks, regardless of your child's participation. A "Change of Schedule Form" is available from your site supervisor or online at www.ymca.org.



Financial Assistance

Financial assistance and scholarships are available for those families who qualify. They are made available through generous donations from participants, members, community residents and fundraising events. Confidential applications are available at the front desk, at your school site, or online at www.ymca.org. If taking advantage of this opportunity, we encourage all recipients to volunteer for our YMCA.

The YMCA of San Diego County also accepts payment made from third-party agencies such as Child Development Associates and Childcare Resources Services. Please visit the Childcare Resources website at www.ymcacrs.org.



Attendance Policies

Sign In and Out Procedures

- It is a requirement to sign the child(ren) in for AM care and out for PM care daily.
- Drop-off and pick-up persons will need to legibly sign their full name and note the exact time on the sign-in and out sheets. Failure to do so can result in your child's termination from the program.
- Please keep current authorized or unauthorized pick-up persons with the site supervisor. This information can be located at the bottom of your child's sign in and out sheet.
- Pick-up persons are required to escort their child(ren) to and from the YMCA child care program center.

Authorized Persons for Pick Up

For your protection, only authorized persons may pick up your child(ren). Your authorized pick-up persons are located on the bottom of the child's sign in and out sheets.

To add persons to your children's sign in and out sheets, a request will have to be submitted in writing. Please include the following information: the person's full legal name, phone number and relationship to the child.

All staff members are required to ask for photo identification of all persons picking up your child(ren) that they do not recognize. Always be prepared to show your picture identification when picking up child(ren) from our programs.



Unauthorized Persons for Pick Up

Any unauthorized persons must have a restraining order/court order on file at the site. In addition, all child custody papers and visitation schedules must be on file at the site. Without a court order stating otherwise, we are legally required to allow children to go with either parent.

Daily Absences

If your child is going to be absent from the program, it is very important that you notify the site supervisor. Please leave us a message, if necessary. In the event that you do not notify us of your child's absence, we will attempt to contact you to verify the absence. Repeated failure to report your child's absences may result in their termination from our program.

Extracurricular Activities

If your child participates in extracurricular activities on campus, that require your child to be out of our program for a period of time, you will need to notify the site supervisor in writing. Please include the following information: Days and times, expected arrival to our program, type of activity and authorized escorts to and from the activity. The YMCA will not release your child from the program without the above information.

The YMCA is not responsible for escorting students to and from extracurricular activities.



Parent and Program Communication

Parent Board

When signing your children in and out of the program daily, please check the parent's board for all up-to-date program information, licensing information and daily schedules. We will frequently post new information on this board.

Parent Communication Binder

If at any time you have something to tell the staff at your site, please feel free to use the communication binder. Near the sign in and out books will be a binder for you to write us notes about your child. This binder is a great tool to write down absences, vacations, additions to the pick-up list, extracurricular activities and anything else you would like to tell us about the program.

Newsletters

Monthly newsletters will be sent out via email. Newsletters will highlight themes of the weeks, important activities, and student stand out awards. Please review the newsletter carefully, as it will include information on upcoming field trips and events. Please make sure that your site supervisor has a current email address for your family.



Parent Advisory Committee

Get involved in your child's program by joining the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). The PAC meets four times throughout the year (September, December, March and May) for an evening meeting that lasts no longer than one (1) hour. Dinner and free child care are provided. Parents and staff members come together to share ideas and suggestions regarding program content and quality, family activities, enrichment programs, fundraising and other items of interest.

Parent Concerns

The YMCA of San Diego County is dedicated to developing and maintaining high levels of member service. We want to hear from you if we have not accomplished this goal. Any one of our YMCA staff is available to assist you with your concerns or questions and will work with you to find a resolution. In the event that a concern is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may contact your site supervisor or the program director.



Curriculum and Activities

YMCA School Age Care Curriculum

The YMCA School-Age Care Curriculum is centered in the YMCA mission and program goals. In school-age care, mission activities look like this:

- **Youth Development** refers to learning and to activities that promote learning. YMCA activities include and encourage solving problems, using school-gathered knowledge, and having high expectations each time an activity is undertaken.
- **Healthy Living** refers to health and wellness and the activities that promote these qualities. YMCA activities include and encourage physical fitness and active games.
- **Social Responsibility** refers to self-esteem and willingness to help others, and the activities that develop these qualities. It also includes a sense of fun and a climate of positive energy. YMCA activities include collaboration with others, conflict resolution skills, and opportunity for success, regardless of ability.



There are eight core components that the YMCA's School-Age Care Curriculum focuses on:

1. **Arts and Humanities** (drama, art, music, poetry)
2. **Character Development** (caring, honesty, respect, responsibility)
3. **Health, Wellness and Fitness** (active games, sports, nutrition, healthy snacks)
4. **Homework Support** (daily quiet time for homework completion with assistance from a staff member)
5. **Literacy** (reading, writing, speaking, critically thinking)
6. **Science and Technology** (biology, environmental awareness, problem-solving skills)
7. **Service Learning** (civic awareness, volunteering, leadership skills)
8. **Social Competence and Conflict Resolution** (strategies to deal with conflict, positive interactions, socialization)

All of the contexts above are presented or done in both outdoor and indoor environments.

The specific activities associated with the eight core components generally take place in one or several of the following contexts, each of which is balanced throughout the day or week.

- **Free Choice:** Participants have the option of choosing from several activities, some relatively unstructured and some that are staff-designed learning centers.
- **Small Group and Individual Activities:** The activities available may be done either in small groups or alone. They may be initiated by the staff with the expectation that the children will work on the activity (i.e.: homework or quiet time) or initiated by the children themselves.
- **Project Time:** Time set aside for participants to begin or return to a long term project needing certain space, materials, tools, or leadership.
- **Large Group:** Activities are designed for large group participation, under the leadership of a staff member (i.e. read aloud, or active games like soccer).
- **Indoors and Outdoors:** All of the contexts above are presented or done in both outdoor and indoor environments.
- **Snack:** A nutritious snack with a minimum two food groups is served daily.

Although the framework prescribes eight core areas, Y staff, parent advisory committees and the participants are encouraged to collaborate. This collaboration works to design a well-balanced curriculum that meets the needs of children and families.



Parent's Night Out

Our sites will offer Parent's Night Out, which is an evening for the parents to go out without their children and know they are safe with the staff from the YMCA. These will run based on the interests and needs of the parents. There is an additional cost to participate in these events.

Field Trips

Our sites will offer field trips to various educational and fun venues around San Diego County. Field trips will usually occur on minimum days to provide the participants with enough time to enjoy the activity planned. Your site supervisor will inform you of these trips and a signed permission slip will be required. Please note that your child will not be available for pick up from your site during a field trip. If you do not want your child to participate in the field trip, you will need to make alternate arrangements in advance for that day.

Fundraising Activities

Each year, the YMCA of San Diego County participates in fundraising activities to help raise funds for the individual sites, field trips and for our financial assistance. These events include but are not limited to the rummage sale, Parent's Night Out, Jog-A-Thons, bake sales and spare change jars. We thank you for your support and participation in advance. New ideas are always welcome so please let your site supervisor or Parent Advisory Committee know about your great ideas.



Guidance, Discipline & Behavior Management

Rules and Expectations of Participants in the Program

Our intent is that all the participants enjoy the activities provided by understanding that they are responsible for their own actions. YMCA rules and conflict-resolution strategies are posted at each site. Character Development is an important part of our program. We will use positive reinforcement by consistently acknowledging good behavior.

Our expectations for each participant are:

- Respect for yourself, for others and for property
- Safety first
- Speak for yourself and listen attentively
- Be responsible for your words and actions



Discipline

The YMCA defines discipline as behavior which allows students and staff to perform effectively in a child care setting. To carry out this policy and to establish standards of behavior, the student, parent, and staff are all responsible.

The student is responsible for:

- Respecting the authority of staff
- Behaving in a manner that does not disrupt or interfere with the rights of other students and staff
- Attending the child care program on scheduled days and arrives on-time

The parent is responsible for:

- Accepting, respecting, and supporting the right of the YMCA to require discipline standards of behavior for all students

The staff is responsible for:

- Modeling appropriate behavior and redirecting negative student behavior and by offering opportunities to be successful



Behavior Management

The YMCA of San Diego County maintains a positive approach to managing a child's behavior at all times. We do so by teaching self control and learning to live within the expectations and guidelines set forth. Positive behavior is self-rewarding and allows the program activities to occur. When children choose to misbehave, consequences are required to stress the importance of safety. The overall safety of all our participants is our highest priority.

We will use the following techniques to help with inappropriate or misbehaviors:

- Reasoning and redirection: Every effort will be made to help the child understand why it is inappropriate. Children may be redirected to alternate activities. When conflicts are child to child, every effort will be made to have them reason together, facilitated by a staff member.
- Removal from a specific activity: When reasoning has been used and the behavior has not changed, removing the child from the activity may become necessary.
- Child/site supervisor conference: When staff are not successful with correcting a child behavior, the site supervisor may meet with the participant to redirect to proper conflict resolution strategies.
- Parent conference: If the parent needs to be formally involved in the process, a behavior contract will be issued. Whenever possible, the child is present and participates in these conferences. The goal is to define what changes need to be made to help be successful in our program.



Removal from the Program for Inappropriate Behavior

The YMCA reserves the right to remove a child from the program if he or she endangers the well being of themselves or others.

The overall safety of all our participants is our highest priority.

- Please remember that an immediate suspension is a serious decision and will only occur in the most serious of situations. Parents will be requested to pick up their child immediately if their child engages in behavior that threatens the safety and well-being of the other children and/or staff.
- If it is decided by YMCA staff that a child poses a serious disciplinary problem; the child may be suspended from the program for a period of 1-5 days, or may be removed from the program entirely.
- All YMCA school-age before- and after-school programs follow all school rules and policies. If a child is sent home from school or suspended from school, he or she is not allowed to attend the YMCA program during the entire time of suspension.
- There is no refund or credit given in the event of a suspension/termination from a YMCA program.



Health & Safety

Child Abuse Prevention

Section 11166 of the California Penal Code requires any Child Care Custodian (includes teachers, licensed day care workers, administrators, foster parents and group home personnel), medical practitioner, or employee of a child protection agency who has knowledge of or observes a child or suspects the child has been a victim of child abuse, to report the known or suspected instance of abuse to a protective agency immediately. A phone call and written report will be filed within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

If you suspect abuse, call Child Protective Services (CPS) at (800) 344-6000.

Medications

Any medication which needs to be administered during program hours must:

1. Be accompanied by a "Permission to Administer Medications Form" (available at each site and online at www.ymca.org under the child care link).
2. Be brought to the site supervisor in its original container with the child's name, physicians name and drug name clearly labeled on the container.
3. Must have specific dosage amounts and times.

YMCA staff members are not allowed to administer any over-the-counter medication such as aspirin and cough medicine without having written instructions and dosage provided by the child's physician. The YMCA will not administer insulin shots.



Chronic Health Issues

If your child requires any special accommodations, please complete the accommodations form. This form will allow our staff team to better understand the needs of your child and allow us the opportunity to provide the best care possible for your child.

Illness During Program Hours

If your child becomes ill during program hours, he or she will be isolated from the other participants and you will be contacted to pick up within one (1) hour. The YMCA is not equipped to handle ill children beyond securing their immediate comfort. Please be sure to keep the YMCA informed of any changes in your work or emergency phone numbers. If you cannot be reached, we will contact someone you have authorized.

If your child is absent from school, they cannot attend the YMCA program on the same day. If your child goes home from school, please call the site supervisor to report the absence from the program.

KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF...

- Child has a fever or had one during the previous 24 hours
- Child has a cold with heavy nasal discharge
- Child has a constant cough
- Child has contagious symptoms (an active cold, sore throat, vomiting, sniffles, coughs, fever, rash, etc..)

Should there be an outbreak of a communicable disease, parents will be notified in writing and the center will be properly treated. Our priority is the safety and well-being of all participants in our program.

Parents can help to prevent the spread of communicable diseases by conducting routine screenings, and when ill, keeping the child home until cleared by a physician.



Injuries during Program Hours

If your child is injured during program hours, the staff member in charge will take whatever steps may be necessary to obtain emergency medical care as warranted. These steps may include but are not limited to:

1. Provide immediate first aid
2. Attempt to contact a parent or guardian
3. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, we will attempt to contact others listed on your registration forms
4. In the case of serious injury, appropriate emergency medical assistance will be contacted (911 will be called). A YMCA staff member will remain with the child until the parents or another authorized adult arrives. YMCA staff may not transport program participants.

Anytime a participant hits his/her head, a parent or guardian will be contacted immediately. Please note: all expenses for emergency medical care are the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian.

Emergency Procedures

Fire and emergency disaster drills are scheduled regularly to ensure the staff and program participants are prepared in the event of an emergency. In the case of an actual emergency parents will be notified of their child's well being as soon as possible. If your child's site must evacuate due to an emergency, participants will go to the site listed on the "Emergency Care and Disaster Plan" located on the Parent Board at each site. Check our websites during natural disasters for updated information on YMCA branch emergency care.

There will be no refunds or credit given for closures due to natural disasters.

Adult to Child Ratios

The YMCA of San Diego County Character Builder Program strives to meet a 1:14 adult to child ratio.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT*
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Community Care Licensing Contact Information

State of California
Department of Social Services
Community Care Licensing – Mission Valley
7575 Metropolitan Drive, Suite 110
San Diego, CA 92108
619-767-2200

Contact Information

YMCA of San Diego County
www.ymca.org



Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the YMCA child care:

- Parent's Handbook
- Parent's Rights
- Personal Rights
- Admissions Agreement
- Fee Schedule

I understand that this policy supersedes any other policies I may have received during my participation in the Character Builder YMCA before- and after-school child care program.

I understand that it outlines my privileges and obligations as a participant in this program.

I will familiarize myself with the information herein, which describes the policies of the YMCA before- and after-school child care program.

Child's Name (please print): _____

Parents Name (please print): _____

Parents Signature: _____

Date: _____

This page becomes part of your child's participant file.

