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# ADVENTURES OF LEARNING

## DIVE IN & EXPLORE

Universal Preschool and Wrap Around Care  
YMCA OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

# YMCA OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

## Universal Preschool & Wrap Around Care Handbook

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# WELCOME TO THE YMCA UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL PROGRAM & WRAP AROUND CARE

Thank you for choosing the YMCA Universal Preschool Program (UPK) and Wrap Around Care. The YMCA is committed to making a positive impact on the lives of the children and youth while helping to prepare them for kindergarten.

## UPK BRANCH INFORMATION

### Hal Welsh East Area Family YMCA

200 Towne Drive, Fayetteville • (315) 637-2025

UPK Hours: 8:30am – 1:30pm

Wrap Around Care: 7am – 5pm

### Northwest Family YMCA

8040 River Road, Baldwinsville • (315) 299-9413

UPK Hours: 9am – 3pm

Wrap Around Care: 6:30am – 6pm

### Manlius YMCA

140 W Seneca St, Manlius • (315) 692-4777

UPK Hours: 8:30am – 1:30pm

Wrap Around Care: 7am – 6pm

### Southwest YMCA at OCC

4585 West Seneca Turnpike, Syracuse • (315) 498-2699

UPK Hours: 9am – 3pm

Wrap Around Care: 7am – 5pm

### North Area Family YMCA

4775 Wetzel Road, Liverpool • (315) 451-2562

UPK Hours: 9:15am – 3:15pm

Wrap Around Care: 7:30am – 5pm

**Please note:** Wrap Around Care is available for all UPK Programs. A separate registration and fee are required. More information can be found under the Wrap Around Care section of this handbook.

## OUR MISSION

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

## OUR COMMITMENT

The YMCA is a nonprofit organization governed by a Board of Directors that is made up of concerned and interested local community leaders. The Y is supported solely by those who choose to join and take part in the many programs offered as well as those who choose to make voluntary contributions.

Joined together by a shared commitment to nurture the potential of kids, promote healthy living and foster a sense of social responsibility, members and staff believe that lasting personal and social change can come about only when we all work together to invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors.

At the Y, we work side by side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. That's why we offer financial assistance to families who need help paying for membership or programs.

## NYS OCFS LICENSING

Our program is governed by the Office of Child and Family Services. We adhere to all the State of New York Licensing Regulations, Policies and Procedures. If you have any questions regarding OCFS regulations, please contact your UPK Director.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Our Annual Giving Campaign raises money for financial assistance to ensure that nobody is turned away due to an inability to pay. To apply for financial assistance or to make a donation, visit the Y today or go to [www.ymcacny.org](http://www.ymcacny.org). We handle all applications confidentially.

## OUR STAFF

The quality and effectiveness of YMCA services for children are directly related to the skills and personal characteristics of the staff. Recruiting, selecting, training and supporting the staff are essential, interrelated process in ensuring the success and integrity of the children's programs. Staff are hired based on experience working with children, educational background and the ability to positively represent our four core Y values. Our staff receives medical clearances, background checks and reference checks through YMCA and OCFS agencies.

## SPECIAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

The YMCA shall accept into the program all children who are able to participate within the regular activities and guidelines as part of a group with a ratio of 8 children to 1 staff. The YMCA will not exclude any child with a disability from the full and equal enjoyment of its services, unless the child poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others in the program.

In accordance with the requirements of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable state disability law, the YMCA will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of disability. The YMCA will consider reasonable accommodations and/or modifications to its policies and procedures as necessary to allow children with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in this program, unless the accommodations or modifications would pose an undue hardship or fundamentally alter the nature of the program.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

Our programs follow New York State OCFS and local Department of Health guidelines regarding all health and safety guidelines. Throughout the year, specific guidelines may need to go into effect. In these circumstances, please be kind to our team as we continue to support the health and safety of your children and our community.

### Illness

Sick staff and children should remain at home, both for their health and that of other staff and children in the program. Children who become ill may not remain in the program and will be isolated from other program participants until a parent/guardian or other authorized pickup person arrives to take them home. Pick up by an authorized person should be within 30 minutes.

### Monitoring and Supervising Sick Children

Children who become ill will be directly and actively supervised at all times. The isolation location and child must remain in the line of site visible by staff at all times. Staff will frequently check in with the ill child. Staff will position themselves in a way that they can supervise/monitor children within the program space and will refrain from having their back to children at all times. Staff will never leave children in the room unsupervised. Staff/child ratios will be maintained at all times.

### Medications During Program

If your child is required to take a medication during program, a written medication consent (OCFS document) must be completed by the child's physician and parent prior to starting program. We also are required to have the medication in the original box with the original prescription label. Medication forms and medications must match exactly and be provided prior to the start date of the program.

### Allergy Action Plans

An Individual Allergy Action Plan is required to be completed for any child with ANY known allergy (including a medication or seasonal allergy.) The childcare program must work with the parent(s)/guardian (s) and the child's health care provider to develop written instructions outlining what the child is allergic to and the prevention strategies and steps that must be taken if the child is exposed to a known allergen or is showing symptoms of exposure. This plan must be reviewed upon admission, annually thereafter, and anytime there are staff or volunteer changes, and/or anytime information regarding the child's allergy or treatment changes. This plan must be attached to the child's Individual Health Care Plan.

## HEALTH & SAFETY (CONTINUED)

### Medical Emergencies

If your child is injured during program hours, the staff member in charge will take all steps necessary to obtain emergency medical care as warranted.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, staff will provide first aid, contact parent/guardian immediately, contact emergency contacts if necessary and call 911.

### Child Abuse Prevention

All YMCA staff are mandated reporters and required by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. The Y provides all youth with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for youth that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success. Outside of the Y, staff members may not have relationships and be alone with youth when they meet in Y programs. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving, riding in cars, and inviting youth to their homes.

### Dress for Weather and Play

Please dress your child in washable clothes that are appropriate for weather and daily activities. For the safety of all participants, sneakers are required to be worn for physical activities in the gym, field, or playground spaces.

### Emergency Drills

Our program will conduct monthly evacuation drills, along with semi-annual shelter-in-place drills. Drop-off and pick-up during these drills are restricted. In the event a situation arises that is not a drill, families will be notified immediately of any change in location or situation.

### Nutrition

Our Y Universal Preschool program participates in the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) programs and adhere to Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. We provide a healthy snack during our afternoon wrap care program and on special registration days such as vacation days. Menus are distributed and posted within the program location. Note: some UPK locations will offer well-balanced lunch options as well. The healthy snacks provided during programs represent a minimum of two food groups, including a fruit or vegetable and a whole grain, lean meat, or dairy option. Water is served with each meal. If your child would like to bring their own snack from home, we encourage a similar healthy option and would prefer it to be a peanut/tree nut free snack. Each day and during days off, we will ask you to send a nutritious lunch that does not need to be refrigerated or re-heated.

If your child has any food allergies or special dietary needs, please let us know on the back of your child's registration form.

## WHAT TO BRING EVERY DAY

- Backpack
- Complete change of clothes (including socks and underwear) to be kept in case they are needed
- Blanket or sheet for cot for nap time (optional: stuffed animal)
- Water Bottle
- Lunch (nothing that needs refrigeration or reheating) – unless lunch is available at your UPK location

Please be sure to label all items with your child's first and last name.

## TOYS AND ITEMS FROM HOME

To prevent distraction, lost or broken items, toys or other items from home are not permitted, unless it is part of your child's specific learning or behavior plan. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items brought to the UPK program. Please connect with the UPK Director if your child requires a comfort item or fidget to be successful in program.

## PICKING UP YOUR CHILD

Parents or caregivers must sign their child out each day. The sign out sheet is a record of your child's attendance. For your child's safety, only parents or people you designate as Authorized Pick-Up/Emergency Contacts may pick up your child from the program. You may add additional people by submitting their name, phone number, and full address to the UPK office. All pick-up people must be at least 16 years old. Anyone, including yourself, will be asked to present a valid photo ID before signing a child out of program. We will deny access to anyone who is not listed as an Authorized Pick-Up/Emergency Contact. Please notify your UPK staff if any last minute changes occur.

### Contact Information Changes

Parents or caregivers are now able to access their child profile online and can make necessary changes to address, phone number, email, and authorized pick-ups. If any changes are made, the childcare office needs to be notified when the changes are made. You may also submit your changes in writing to your UPK Program Director. In the event of an emergency, it is critical that we are able to reach you.

### Divorce/Separation

If a non-custodial, biological parent arrives to pick up their child and they are not listed on the form (whether or not a court order is on file), we will:

1. Call the parent/guardian listed on the registration form
2. Explain to the non-custodial, biological parent that we cannot release the child to them and explain the release procedures to the non-custodial parent.
3. Call the police to release the child to the police. The police will then confirm the identity of the non-custodial, biological parent.

This scenario can place all parties in a very difficult situation. Often times, the person who will have the most difficult time is the child. Please discuss these implications with non-custodial parent, so that they will not show up at the program without prior arrangements. All court orders must be provided to the UPK office when updated to ensure appropriate information is at each site.

### Concerns for Safety

Safety is our number one priority. If we have reason for concern regarding the safety of a child's release to a parent or other adult, we may call the police. Cause for this course of action includes:

1. Parent/adult suspected to be "under the influence".
2. Parent/adult is abusive or threatening to the child, our staff, or any persons present.

If there is a concern for the safety of our program participants, please contact the UPK Director immediately.

## TRANSPORTATION

There are several school districts that provide transportation to and from the YMCA UPK programs. Please contact the transportation department to ensure transportation is arranged for your child.

\*Please note: Districts will not transport children outside of UPK School hours.

YMCA staff are not permitted to transport children in their personal vehicles.

## **FAMILY/CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT**

Parent support is critical to the success of the program. We have an open door policy and our families are encouraged to visit our program at any time. Please be respectful of the children's routines and program activities, as well as our staff's need to be with the children. We encourage you to schedule a time with the UPK Director to discuss your child's progress.

### **Newsletter**

You will receive a monthly newsletter outlining important information about the YMCA UPK Program, including upcoming special activities and days off.

### **Family Events**

Family events are held throughout the school year and provide an opportunity for families to spend time together, meet new friends and have fun.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Our first step in discipline is prevention. Our staff are trained to be proactive to prevent behaviors prior to the trigger.

- Staff will be proactive in preventing negative behaviors.
- Staff will address the behavior in a calm manner and redirect the child to a more positive behavior. Staff will discuss the occurrence and strategies implemented with parents at pick up.
- If behaviors continue, staff will complete a behavior reflection with the child to encourage alternative strategies for a better outcome. Staff will share this with the parents.
- After 3 behavior occurrences, staff will request a meeting with the parent to discuss the next step. The staff, parents, and child will determine an action plan to outline the steps everyone will take to create a positive experience.
- All staff will do their utmost to support students so that they may remain in school. Behavior that occurs during wrap around hours that exceeds 2 behavior modification reports may result in suspension.

\*The above steps can be bypassed based on severity of the actions and behavior.

**PLEASE REVIEW ALL POLICIES WITH YOUR FAMILY AND ADDRESS ANY QUESTIONS WITH THE UPK OFFICE.  
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ADMINISTRATION.**

# UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL (UPK)

## CHILDCARE PHILOSOPHY/CURRICULUM

Quality childcare isn't just the proper ratio of teachers to children or a clean program space. It's a commitment to meet the social, emotional, physical, and developmental needs of our participants. Staff provide structure, consistency, fairness, and love to every child who enters our programs.

### Goals

1. To provide quality care for all children regardless of their socio-economic background.
  - a. The YMCA provides scholarships to families who may not otherwise be able to afford childcare.
  - b. The YMCA accepts subsidized payments from the Department of Social Services.
2. To support and strengthen the family unit.
  - a. To provide a safe, healthy, & moral environment for all children.
  - b. To foster open communication with parents that allows for discussions regarding behavior, participation, illness, & attendance.
  - c. To plan & host Family Events with the goal of facilitating healthy family interactions & building a positive cooperative relationship with participant families.
3. To foster both intrapersonal & interpersonal growth with all participants.
  - a. To act as a positive role model for the children. This includes actions, speech, & attire of all staff.
  - b. To foster the growth of self-confidence & self-respect.
  - c. To foster the growth of respect for authority figures, property, & people from all cultural backgrounds.
  - d. To foster the growth of responsibility for one's own actions.
  - e. To foster the growth of caring & compassion towards others.
  - f. To foster the growth of honesty & reinforce the differences between right and wrong.
  - g. To teach healthy lifestyle choices in the form of physical activity & nutritious snacks.
  - h. To develop a sense of community responsibility through team building activities & service-learning projects.
  - i. To support educational goals & academic achievement through daily activities.

It is your commitment & dedication to the YMCA and the children who participate in our programs that will enable us to achieve these goals and others by providing wholesome, quality programs. YOU can positively affect the lives of each child enrolled.

The YMCA partners with the local school districts to deliver a tailored curriculum for our Universal Preschool (UPK) programs. We also emphasize the YMCA's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

## ENROLLMENT & REGISTRATION

Applications for enrollment must be submitted through your local school district in which you reside. Students are selected through an anonymous draft process without regard to race, religion, sex, ability, gender/gender identification, sexual orientation or national origin.

Registration of approved applications is required for attendance. Registration is online at **YMCACNY.ORG**. Only families that have been selected by their school district will be permitted to attend. Registration without approval through the district will not guarantee a spot in the UPK program.

## ATTENDANCE

The UPK Program follows the school district's policy on attendance. Full day attendance is expected of all students enrolled in the UPK program. To ensure your child's safety, if your child will not be attending our program that day, or will be arriving late, please call and notify the UPK staff before the scheduled arrival time.



## **SCHOOL CLOSURES & IMPORTANT DATES**

The UPK program will follow the district school calendar for week breaks and holidays only. Vacation weeks are a separate registration. A \$5 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit per day is due at the time of registration. The remainder of the fees are due on the 1st of the month of care. Written withdrawals must be submitted in writing via email to the UPK office by the 15th of the month in order to be removed from the next month's billing. Families will be responsible for the next month's full fees if cancellations are received after the 15th of the month prior to the vacation.

### **Vacation Weeks & Holiday Breaks**

Our UPK Program will follow your school district calendar for closures including vacations and holidays. Full day care is available for students on these days. This care requires a separate registration and has a fee associated with it.

### **Half-Days**

Our UPK Program follows your school district calendar for half-days.

### **Snow Days and School Delays**

We follow your school district's decision to close schools. In the instance of closure due to weather, Snow Day Programming will be available to students. This requires a registration and has a fee associated with it.

\*Please see more information regarding care on no school days within our Wrap Around Care section.

## **MONITORING & SUPERVISING QUIET TIME**

Children must be directly & actively supervised at all times. During downtime or quiet time, participants must remain in the line of site of staff at all times. Staff will position themselves in a way that they can supervise/monitor all children within the program space. Staff should refrain from having their back to children at all times. Staff/Child ratios will be maintained at all times.

## **EARLY DROP OFF/LATE PICK UP**

Students that are not enrolled in Wrap Around Care should be dropped off just before the start of program and should be picked up promptly at the end of the UPK program. If students arrive early, caregivers will need to remain in the hallway with that student until program starts. If students are not picked up by the end of the UPK day, a \$15 fee will be added for every 15 minutes after dismissal a child is in their teachers' care. If a child is picked up late 3 times, the family may be asked to register for Wrap Around Care for their child.

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# WRAP AROUND CARE

All of our YMCA branches provide wrap around care for UPK students. This care has a fee associated with it and families must register for this service separate from their UPK Registration.

## REGISTRATION

Once your child is enrolled in UPK through the school district, you will receive details about the program and the opportunity to register for Wrap Around Care, which will be available online. A \$50 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit per program is required at the time of registration. The UPK/Child Care office requires 3-5 business days to process your registration before your child may attend. A 15% discount is offered for any sibling registered in the same program.

## PAYMENTS

Payments are due on the 1st of the month. Payments can be made through automatic payment, online using a credit card or bank account, or at the membership desk using check, cash or credit card. A \$35 charge per occurrence will be assessed on all bad drafts, returned checks, or credit card transactions. Access your online account to schedule or modify payments. You are responsible for updating your payment method prior to the due date if you receive a new card number or expiration date. No payments are accepted at our school sites. Payment for Snow Days are due at the time of registration.

### Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP) Payments

CCAP payments are due on the 1st month for all weeks in the month. Before CCAP parent-pay portions can be approved, the YMCA must receive a contract from CCAP outlining the parent payment. If authorization is discontinued the parent/guardian is responsible for the full month's payment. We understand participants cannot attend when not authorized or when parent/guardian is not working. Participants should be authorized and in attendance for at least 60% of the registered program time (example: 3 out of 5 days) for the YMCA to bill CCAP. Absences for any registered vacation or half days will be billed in full to the family.

### Late Pick-Up

Please note your program's end time. If you are unable to pick up by the end time, please arrange for an alternate pickup person to pick up your child and notify staff immediately. If you arrive late, a \$15 late pick-up fee will be charged to your billing method on file for every 15-minute interval. Late Fee Example: Program ends at 6pm. \$15 will be charged for pick ups between 6:01pm - 6:15pm; \$30 for pick-ups between 6:16-6:30pm; and so on. Late payment fees will be charged to your billing method on file and you will receive an e-mailed receipt. Excessive late pick-ups (more than 3) may result in suspension or termination of services. If your child remains at the site more than one hour after closure with no contact from the parents/guardians, the child will be turned over to the local authorities.

### Late Payment

A late fee of \$35 per account will be assessed to you after the due date (1st of the month.) Late payment fees will be charged to your billing method on file and you will receive an e-mailed receipt. If full payment has not been made by the 15th of the month, your Wrap Around Care services will be suspended. Excessive late payments (3 or more) may result in termination of your services.

### Tax Statements and FLEX Reimbursement

You may access your full account, including record of registrations, payments, and tax statements on your online account at [ymcacny.org/myaccount](http://ymcacny.org/myaccount). Paper tax statements will not be mailed. You are responsible for maintaining your receipts for FLEX reimbursement. Please contact your UPK/Child Care office if you need a reimbursement signed.

### Non-School Days

Payments for non-school days (Half-Days, Vacation Days) are due on the 1st of the month in which they occur.

## WITHDRAWING FROM PROGRAM

Withdrawals from Wrap Around Care, Half Days and Vacation Days must be submitted in writing via e-mail to the UPK/Child Care office by the 15th of the month in order to be removed from the next month's billing. Any cancellations received after the 15th will be processed the following month and families will be responsible for the next month's full fees. Monthly fees will not be prorated.

### Credits/Refunds

The YMCA Wrap Around Care program does not issue refunds or credits, unless overpayment of fees occurs or the program is canceled. Refunds or prorates will not be given if your child is out of program for illness, suspended or terminated from the program or during a suspension period from school.

## VACATION DAYS

Our UPK programs offer Vacation Days during school breaks throughout the year. UPK participants have priority for registration. Please note that Vacation Days require separate registration and are an additional fee.

## HALF DAYS

The Half Day program will operate from the time school dismisses until the end of the program time at your location. Wrap Around Care participants receive priority registration for Half Days. Please note that Half Days require separate registration and an additional fee.

## WHAT TO BRING ON HALF OR VACATION DAYS

Your child will need a healthy bagged lunch, sneakers, a water bottle, and weather appropriate clothing. Some sites offer swim time during their day off programs. If this is the case for your local program, please pack a bathing suit and towel in a separate bag, if your child chooses to swim. Please label everything!

## SNOW DAYS AND SCHOOL DELAYS

Some Wrap Around Care programs are able to provide care on days where school is canceled due to inclement weather. Please refer to your branch's inclement weather plan for more information on how to register. Additional fees for snow days may apply.

## EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES

Depending on your UPK site, care may be available when schools close early due to an emergency or weather. Many, but not all, YMCA programs are able to remain open. Please check your program's inclement weather plan for specific details.

## ENDING CARE

We reserve the right to end your child's enrollment for the following reasons:

1. If you pick up your child after the program closes more than three times.
2. If you fail to pay your fees on a timely basis for two consecutive months.
3. If there are consistent disciplinary occurrences with your child that puts other children and/or program staff at risk physically and/or emotionally.
4. If Parent/Guardian is abusive or threatening to staff or program participants.

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