



YMCA CHILDCARE PARENT RESOURCE HANDBOOK

YMCA of EASLEY, PICKENS & POWDERSVILLE

EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2023

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WELCOME

Dear Parents and Guardians,

There is no organization quite like the Y. Deeply rooted in your community, our movement is made up of people of all ages and from every walk of life, all working side-by-side to ensure everyone, regardless of gender, income or background has the opportunity to live a meaningful and Christ honoring life. Being true to the mission, the YMCA is committed to providing a quality Christian childcare experience in a loving, caring, and safe environment. Following the example of Christ, we value Caring, Honesty, Responsibility, Respect, and Faith. All of our programs and events are rooted in these core values. Our staff at multiple sites in 2 different counties are all personally committed to helping families raise their children to their fullest potential.

The YMCA teaches, models, and integrates the YMCA core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility and Faith into all of our programs. In our Childcare programs, you will see these values embedded in our rules, incorporated into the daily curriculum, and modeled by both staff and children. Children are encouraged to put these values into action through their behavior, decision making and the way in which they treat others both inside and outside of the Y program.

We are the nation's leading nonprofit strengthening communities through Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. By focusing on nurturing the potential of every child, improving the nation's health and well-being and providing opportunities to give back and support neighbors, the Y enables all to be healthy, confident, connected and secure. We endeavor to provide an experience that models the best practices in keeping kids safe and delivering impact through quality, affordable childcare.

-YMCA Childcare Team of Easley, Pickens, and Powdersville

YMCA Mission:

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

ONLINE INFORMATION

So that you can receive the most accurate information in regards to Childcare programs, the following items can be found online at our website. Sites:

pcymca.net/after-school-programs and pcymca.net/programs/22518212/

- ☐ YMCA Leadership
- ☐ Contact Information (Email addresses and phone numbers)
- ☐ Program Locations and Schools Served
- ☐ Fees and Costs

PROGRAM HOURS

- Afterschool (August - May): Monday – Friday on school days from school dismissal until 6:00pm
- Holiday & Spring Break Camps/Inservice Days: Monday - Friday, 7:00am-6:00pm
- Summer Camp: Monday - Friday, 7:00am-6:00pm

CHRISTIAN EMPHASIS

The YMCA was founded in 1844 in hopes to improve the Christian Character of individuals in the community. Our YMCA holds true to this even today. The Christian emphasis within our programs, depending on the type of program, may include the following:

- Character Development: Caring, Honest, Respect, Responsibility and Faith.
- Prayer before meals, snacks or activities.
- Christian worship songs or cheers
- Biblical devotions and lessons

STAFFING

Each site is staffed by a Site Coordinator/Director and Counselors. Each staff member is chosen for their experience, education and love of children. The YMCA completes criminal background checks and 3 references on each employee before they can begin working. YMCA Staff are trained in behavior management, child abuse prevention, first aid and CPR. While DSS requires a ratio of 1:23, our YMCA maintains a 1:15 staff-to-child ratio.

ENROLLMENT

Y Childcare Programs are offered to children in Kindergarten through 8th grade, depending on the school served. Ages may vary in our After School programs depending on the site location and who attends the school in which we serve. Children who are enrolled in afternoon 4K programs may also enroll in After School. Enrollment may be limited due to constraints of space and staffing.

For After School programs operating at YMCA branches where children are bused and for all of our Camp programs, payment will be due regardless of attendance.

For Summer Day Camp, ages are rising kindergarten through rising 8th grade. To be eligible for kindergarten, you must be at least 4 years old on September 1st of the previous year.

INDIVIDUALIZED ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

In order to best accommodate any behavioral, social, and/or medical needs for your child, we require that you set-up a meeting or schedule a phone call with the Childcare Director prior to registration. It is very important that parents/guardians inform us of any and all special accommodations that your child may require. It is our goal to serve every child regardless of his or her needs. However, students must generally be able to follow directions and cannot place other children or staff in danger. YMCA Childcare programs are designed to be an active environment where there is a lot of stimulation.

If your child has special medical needs, allergies, or other concerns, the YMCA may require written documentation from a licensed medical doctor. All children must be potty trained before enrolling in YMCA Childcare programs.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

As a non-profit organization, the YMCA provides financial assistance to families in need, enabling them to participate in Y programs. Financial assistance is made possible through generous donations to the Annual Campaign by members, volunteers, staff and our community. However, financial assistance is limited and the amount of assistance is determined by family income and other factors. For more information, please visit pcymca.net/financial-assistance/ or email the Childcare Director. See website for current application rules, timeframe and eligibility.

ATTENDANCE

Once registered, your child will be expected to attend the program each day. Y staff will take attendance upon arrival. Please email your Y Childcare Director and/or Site Coordinator if your child will not be attending Y After School on a particular day.

PAYMENTS

By registering for Childcare programs, you are agreeing to follow all payment policies, and to pay all payments on or before the payment date. If you do not pay on or before the payment date, your children will not be able to attend the YMCA program until the outstanding balance is paid in full. If payment is late, a \$10 late fee may be added to the balance.

All Childcare payments are made by automatic draft. This information is provided to us through our online registration system. Weekly payments are made on Tuesdays for the week prior. Return drafts will automatically be redrafted on Wednesday after the initial attempt. The YMCA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to deny services for multiple returns, late payments or repeated issues with payment.

You will not be able to register your child for a new program until outstanding balances due on past programs are paid. Any registration fees, if required, are non-refundable.

To update your payment account information, please complete the [form linked](#) in the updates section below. Site staff do not handle payment accounts.

CHILDCARE TAX STATEMENT

Directions for how to access your tax statements through the YMCA's registration portal will be emailed no later than January 15 of each year. If you need your statement printed, please contact our Accounts Receivable Director. Tax statements for donations made to the YMCA are sent separately by the YMCA's Development Team.

Pickens County YMCA Tax ID #: 57-0405623

AUTHORIZED PICK UP

Any changes to your child's authorized pick up list must be updated through the [online form](#) in the updates section below. Requests must be made a minimum of 4 hours prior to dismissal. Permanent changes cannot be made at the Y program site.

If a same-day only change is necessary, please contact the Childcare Director and/or Site Coordinator with that information. They will confirm this change with your code word. Please make sure that all persons authorized to pick up your child arrive with their photo ID, code word, and/or car tag (if applicable)

UPDATING PAYMENT, PICK-UP AND ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Parents/guardians are required to update all information for their child's account when changes occur. This includes changes in authorized pick-ups, draft information, parent/guardian status, addresses, phone numbers, special needs, allergies, etc.

[Click here to update your enrollment or payment information.](#)

WITHDRAWALS

AFTER SCHOOL: You may withdraw from the program at any time. Dues for future weeks will be canceled upon withdrawal. As a reminder, for programs operating at the YMCA branches, weekly payment is due regardless of attendance as long as your child is registered for the After School program. If you choose to re-enroll the registration fee will apply (if applicable). Please see the website for the most up-to-date listing of fees. To withdraw, contact your Childcare Director.

CAMP: For Holiday Camp and Spring Break camp, all cancellations must be made on or before the date specified in the registration in order to be eligible for a refund of your weekly fees. For Summer Camp, cancellations can only be made for the entire summer rather than individual weeks. Registration fees are nonrefundable regardless of cancellation date. Weekly payment is due for the weeks you have registered for regardless of attendance. If you choose to re-enroll after withdrawing, the registration fee must be paid again, if applicable. Please see the website for the most up-to-date listing of fees. If you need to withdraw, contact your Childcare Director.

LATE PICK-UP FEE & PROCEDURE

Please understand that our Y site staff are not scheduled to work past 6:00pm. All children must be picked up no later than 6:00pm. **Any child who has not been picked up by 6:00pm will automatically be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute.**

If a child has not been picked up by 6:15pm, the Site Coordinator/Director will begin calling emergency contacts.

If the child has not been picked up by 6:30pm and we have not been able to contact a parent/guardian, we will call the local police to help us locate an authorized person to pick-up the child. Please keep contact information updated so we know who to call.

Help us avoid these steps. We suggest that you save the site phone number in your cell phone and call if you are running late. You will still be assessed a late fee, even if you call in advance. If a child is picked up late more than 3 times, we reserve the right to remove the child from the program.

HOLIDAY AND SPRING BREAK CAMP

The YMCA will provide full day care during the Christmas Holiday and Spring Break based on the school calendar. There is an additional fee for this. Parents will register their child for these camps separately from the afterschool program.

IN-SERVICE DAYS

The YMCA will typically provide full-day care on pre-scheduled inservice days based on the school calendar. Inservice times are typically Monday-Friday, 7:00am-6:00pm at various locations. There is an additional fee for this. Parents will register their child for inservice days separately from the afterschool program. Cancellations for these in-service days must be made a week in advance in order to receive a refund. If no cancellation is made, you will be charged for those days regardless of attendance.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

If the school closes at any time due to emergencies (i.e. weather, power failure, building emergency) the Y After School Program will not be provided that day. Every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians via text message or email as soon as possible. Please have an alternative child care plan in place for these occurrences.

HOMEWORK

The Y's After School staff understands the increasing demands on working families. As an organization committed to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities, we believe that it is important for Afterschool programs to provide an opportunity for children to work on homework during program hours. Time will be allotted and a quiet area will be provided each day for the completion of homework. The Y staff will be available to assist children with homework, but are unable to provide one-on-one assistance for extended periods of time.

It is the responsibility of your child to know their homework assignments and to bring all necessary books, papers etc. to the program each day. Children are not allowed to return to their classrooms once they have been checked into the Y program.

The YMCA can provide homework contracts as requested. These contracts outline your expectations of your child in regard to the completion of their homework during Y After School hours. This contract will be signed by the parent, child, and the Site Coordinator.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Weather permitting, children will have outside time daily. Please make sure to dress your child accordingly. This includes close toed shoes and clothing that your child can run, jump, and play freely in. Children will not go outside on days that are excessively hot or cold.

SNACK and LUNCH

Your child will be provided a snack each day. If your child has allergies or dietary restrictions, please let your Site Coordinator/Director know so we can provide alternative snacks. You are more than welcome to send your own snack to the program for your child. No candy or gum is permitted in the program.

Families are responsible for providing lunch for their child during full day programming. Paid and free lunch options may be available depending on the program and site. Paid lunch options are drafted the following week along with your camp fees. Please speak to your Site Coordinator/Director if you have questions regarding lunch.

SWIMMING

All children must take a swim test prior to swim time. Swimmers who do not adequately complete the test or who decline to take the test will be considered a non-swimmer. Non-swimmers will be provided a life-jacket by the YMCA to wear during swim time. YMCA staff and children will follow the YMCA's Aquatic Safety Plan during swim time.

MEDICATION POLICY

The YMCA does not normally administer medication and will do so only when directed in writing by the child's parent or guardian. The YMCA staff will not administer shots or medications that have to be inserted into body cavities. The one exception to the foregoing is Epi-pen injections.

If your child needs to take medication during program, you must:

- 1) Complete the Medication Form [found here](#).
- 2) Bring the medication and completed Medication Form directly to the Childcare Director or Site Coordinator. **DO NOT** allow your child to bring their medications with them.
- 3) All medications must be labeled with your child's name, name of medication, the dosage and frequency of administration.

Medication will not be administered without a medication form. Whenever practical, unused medication will be returned to the parents or guardians when no longer being administered. Within 3 days of the end of the program, any unclaimed medication will be turned over to a local hospital to be destroyed.

TRANSPORTATION and FIELD TRIPS

By registering for any Childcare programs, you are giving your consent for your child to leave the YMCA site, participate in YMCA trips, and ride in authorized vehicles for the purpose of transportation in connection with the YMCA program.

COMMUNICATION

Regular communication between the parent/guardian and Y staff is essential in providing a well-structured, high quality experience that meets the needs of your child. In addition to written communication you receive from the YMCA, we encourage all families to communicate regularly with Y staff. It is important to keep the staff informed of any changes occurring in your child's life that may affect their behavior or mood. These changes may include: moving, hospitalization of a family member, physical changes, separation or divorce, long term illnesses, death in the family, or issues with school.

Meetings and conferences with the YMCA staff are sometimes necessary to best meet the needs of your child. These meetings can be initiated by you or by the YMCA. If you are interested in having a conference, please speak with your Site Coordinator or Childcare Director to set this up. We encourage you to address concerns and make suggestions directly to your Site Coordinator. If you feel that any concerns or suggestions have not been addressed, or you need additional support in addressing them, please feel free to contact the Childcare Director. We encourage you to share your positive feedback directly with the Y Childcare staff and with the Childcare Director.

We strive to send regular email communication on program operations. Please ensure your email address in our online system is correct. If you need to update your email, please complete the [form linked in the updates](#) section above or on our website.

CHILD GUIDANCE, BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

Our Y Childcare Program environments are designed for children to grow and learn. As such, we believe that discipline should be a learning experience with important teachable moments. Our goal is to be proactive and preventive in our discipline procedures. Preventive discipline involves setting clear and consistent expectations, understanding of consequences, positive redirection, accountability/follow-through, and positive reinforcement.

Forms of behavior management actions may include (but are not limited to):

1. Redirection and encouragement to choose a different behavior.
2. Verbal warning and explanation of why the behavior is inappropriate.
3. Withdrawal from the activity.
4. Verbal communication between parent and staff including a written notice and action plan, if appropriate.
5. Suspension for a set period of time, generally from 1 day to 1 week.
6. Expulsion from all YMCA Childcare programs for one calendar year.

Immediate suspension or expulsion may occur if deemed necessary by the YMCA. If you cannot be reached, we will call your emergency contacts. Someone will need to come immediately should we need to suspend a child.

The following behaviors, but not limited to, may warrant immediate suspension or expulsion from YMCA programs.

Running - children who run away from their groups or activities.

Physical Aggression - Kicking, punching, biting, spitting, or throwing objects.

Inappropriate Language - use of curse words or similar words, sexual comments or disrespect to others.

Bullying - unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

Weapons - The possession or use of weapons (see Weapons section)

The YMCA will not share information, identity, or actions of other children in the program if there are behavior concerns that involve other participants.

The Pickens County YMCA reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, based on what it deems to be appropriate in any given situation. These policies are intended as guidelines for dealing with the behavior concerns. These policies and procedures are generally applicable; however, such policies and procedures may be changed by the YMCA without notice. Please discuss these procedures with your children.

PROGRAM SURVEYS

Parents/guardians are asked to complete surveys at least twice a year. These surveys provide valuable feedback as to how we can improve the program and better serve your needs. Although the surveys are distributed two times per year, we welcome and encourage your feedback at any time.

SCHOOL SITES

For programs that operate at the school, the YMCA is responsible for the Y After School Program, not your school administration. Any issues brought to the attention of school administrators will only be referred back to the YMCA. Please speak with your Site Coordinator/Director in regards to the YMCA After School program. The YMCA's leadership confers with your school's administration on a regular basis.

LOST AND FOUND

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to ask for items that are lost. The YMCA does not accept responsibility to care for or secure personal property that is lost by a child. Items that remain unclaimed will be either used by the YMCA, donated to another charity or disposed of. We highly recommend that parents label all items with their child's name.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There are many ways you and your family can be involved in our Childcare programs and within our YMCA. Below are some ideas as to how to become more involved:

- Assist in the creation of a monthly newsletter
- Assist your Site Coordinator in organizing a service learning project or special activity
- Share a skill, hobby, recipe, career or cultural tradition with the children
- Be a guest reader sharing a favorite book
- Help organize a Y Childcare Program family event

Ways to be involved with other YMCA programs

- Participate in the YMCA's Annual Campaign. This is our yearly fundraiser involving YMCA members, staff, board, and volunteers, all working together. Funds raised through the Annual Campaign give families, children, adults, and seniors an opportunity to participate in YMCA programs regardless of their financial circumstance. 100% of the money raised is used for scholarships in our community.
- Become a volunteer coach for YMCA Youth Sports
- Work with your family on a community service project at the Y
- Volunteer at YMCA special events
- Become a YMCA Mentor

Please note that, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, volunteer involvement in YMCA programs may look different.

CUSTODY CONCERNS

If there is a parent/guardian who is not, or is no longer, authorized to pick up your child, it is the responsibility of the registering parent/guardian to provide the YMCA with the most up-to-date legal documents confirming this information. The YMCA will abide by the legal documents provided. If the parents/guardians are unable to settle disputes relating to childcare, we reserve the right to dis-enroll your child until the proper documentation is received. For the health and well-being of the child, the YMCA expects parents/guardians to cooperate with one another on decisions that are in the best interest of the child.

PROGRAM HEALTH MEASURES AND INFORMATION

- If a specific school or classroom has been quarantined by the district, DHEC, or state officials, those students will not be allowed to attend the YMCA during the quarantined time period.
- If a school or schools are closed due to health concerns, parents will be charged the prorated amount for the week in question.

SIGNING YOUR CHILD IN

For all camps and full day programming, children must be signed in to childcare each day by an authorized parent or guardian.

RELEASING CHILDREN FROM THE PROGRAM

All children must be signed out daily by an authorized adult over the age of 16. The Y will only release children to their parents or those persons listed on their enrollment form as authorized. All additions and changes to authorized pick-ups must be made through the [online form](#) which can be found on our website or in the updates section in this document.

All unfamiliar individuals picking up a child will be asked to show a valid picture ID. We will not release a child to anyone who can not be properly identified. On occasion there may be a substitute YMCA staff member performing sign-out. Therefore, always be prepared to show your ID.

SICK CHILDREN

Children with a contagious illness or communicable disease including, but not limited to: COVID-19, conjunctivitis (pinkeye), pediculosis (head lice), scabies, ringworm, chicken pox, strep throat, fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, and/or any other contagious symptoms, such as a rash, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, or discolored mucus will not be permitted to attend or remain at the Y Program. If a child becomes ill during program time we will contact parents/guardians to pick-up the child.

Parents will be notified when a communicable disease has been found to exist within the program according to DHEC guidance. We ask that parents notify the Y site staff immediately if your child contracts a communicable disease that may be spread to, or impact, other children or staff.

ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

Although we take every effort to keep the children in our Y Childcare Programs safe at all times, accidents and injuries are a normal part of childhood. Should your child become injured during program time the following steps will be taken:

Minor injuries (scrapes, bumps, bruises etc.) will be cleaned with soap and water and treated with band-aid or ice packs as needed. Parents/guardians will be notified of minor injuries at pick-up.

Head injuries: Due to the possible implications of head injuries, we will treat all head

injuries as a serious matter. The staff will monitor the child for signs of a concussion and will provide ice if needed. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately of a head injury.

More severe injuries: If a child should suffer a more severe injury, we will attempt to contact a parent/guardian before seeking professional medical attention. If we are unable to reach a parent/guardian, we will call emergency contacts. If these steps are unsuccessful, we will seek professional medical attention and continue our attempt to reach parents.

Emergencies: If a child should need immediate medical attention, we will contact 911, parents/guardians, and the senior leadership of the YMCA. If the child is transported by ambulance, they will be accompanied by the Site Coordinator/Director or other designee. If we are unable to reach parents/guardians, we will contact the child's physician and/or emergency contacts as listed, and continue our attempts to reach a parent/guardian. We will immediately notify the parent of the hospital to which the child is being transported.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Participants are responsible for their own accident insurance when using the YMCA and when participating in YMCA programs or events. The YMCA does not carry any accident or medical insurance on program participants.

OTHER EMERGENCIES

Each site has developed emergency procedures for fire, tornado, lock down situations, and other emergencies. These procedures are reviewed regularly.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

As professional child care providers we are mandated by policy to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Staff will report all suspicions directly to the Y Childcare Director prior to calling the State of South Carolina Department of Social Services, to file a report.

If you, as a parent/guardian, have any concerns regarding the treatment of your child by a staff member, you should notify the Y Childcare Director immediately.

YMCA STAFF AS BABYSITTERS

While employed by the YMCA, staff are not allowed to babysit for program participants. The YMCA cannot and does not endorse or recommend its current or former staff members as babysitters to any parent or guardian of any child in any program. Staff also understand that all parent packets discourage parents from using YMCA staff for babysitting.

In rare and unique circumstances, Y staff can be permitted to babysit or serve as primary caretaker for children that are enrolled in YMCA programs. The parents/guardians of the children must reach out to the Childcare Director and request a staff member serve as a babysitter as well as sign a waiver releasing the YMCA from any and all liability. The Y staff must also agree to sign the waiver. The YMCA in no way will facilitate or coordinate these services.

PICTURES & VIDEOS

Periodically, the YMCA takes pictures and/or videos of children and activities for newsletters and for the promotion of programs in brochures or presentations. As part of your registration and your child's participation in the program, you are giving permission to the YMCA without limitation or obligation, to use photographs, film footage, or recordings which may include your child's image or voice for promotional purposes. If your child has unique circumstances (i.e., Foster Child), please reach out to the Childcare Director to discuss.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Children are not allowed to have electronic devices other than those issued by the school for educational purposes. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to: gaming systems, cell phones, iPods, music players, wearable internet or interactive devices, or tablets.

The YMCA is not liable or responsible for the care of or location of student's school issued devices or personal devices. Students are expected to be responsible and secure their own devices at all times. The YMCA will provide basic and general support for connecting to the internet for when homework or assignments need to be completed.

WEAPONS

Children are not allowed to bring weapons to the YMCA program. Weapons are defined as objects that are designed to inflict harm. This includes, but is not limited to: firearms, guns, knives, arrows, martial arts gear, etc. The YMCA staff will determine if items are considered weapons. If a weapon is found, it will be confiscated immediately and returned to the parents at pickup. If a firearm is discovered, local law enforcement will be contacted immediately as well as the parents.