



FAMILY HANDBOOK

SARATOGA REGIONAL YMCA PRESCHOOL



CARING



HONESTY



RESPONSIBILITY



RESPECT

OUR MISSION: THE SARATOGA REGIONAL YMCA IS A CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION THAT IS DEDICATED TO BUILDING A HEALTHY SPIRIT, MIND AND BODY FOR ALL.

INTRODUCTION

All about our YMCA Early Childhood Programs

Welcome to the Saratoga Regional YMCA Preschool. We are happy you have chosen the Saratoga Regional YMCA for your child's early childhood experience. We hope your child will have many new experiences and opportunities to grow into a happy, self-confident child with a love of learning. The staff of the Preschool Program encourages you to take an active role in your child's development, and we welcome you to be a part of your child's school experience.

Newsletters, emails, and information sheets will be sent home with your child regularly in order to keep you informed of specific activities going on in the program.

This handbook has been designed to inform you of our policies and procedures. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Program Director, Colleen Girvin, at 583-9622 ext. 114, fax 581-7598 or E-mail colleen.girvin@srymca.org.

The Saratoga Regional YMCA reserves the right to amend the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook. Written notice will be provided of any modifications of policies.

PHILOSOPHY

The Saratoga Regional YMCA Early Childhood programs maintain a developmental philosophy designed to fit the needs of children according to their age and individual progress, as well as the YMCA's mission to build a spirit, mind and body. Through multi-disciplinary programming, the four core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility are taught throughout our curriculum.

GOALS

Play is a child's "work". Children learn by actively doing and they learn through play experiences. Therefore, we will take an active approach to children's learning in all areas of development.

We focus on developing the whole child academically, physically, socially and emotionally, without stressing one area of development over another. The program activities will encompass all of these areas, often simultaneously.

Classroom environments are designed to encourage both independence and a cooperative spirit. Sufficient time is provided for large and small group instruction and for children to choose their own activities. All children will be encouraged to learn by participating in group activities and in activities initiated by the teacher. Children grow in self-confidence as they gain independence. They also grow socially and emotionally as they learn to work with and care for others.

Parents are an important part of our program and are encouraged to speak with the staff about any questions or concerns they have about their child's involvement with the Preschool program and their development.

We promote the following goals in our curriculum:

- To provide a supervised childcare program in an environment that is safe, supportive and caring, but most importantly, in an environment that is sensitive to each child's individual needs and supports personal growth.
- To stimulate and facilitate cognitive, physical, social and emotional development in each child.
- To provide peace of mind to parents by making our Preschool the place their child looks forward to coming to everyday.
- Promote a love for learning while staying aligned with the New York State Standards.
- To strengthen and support the family unit by recognizing the importance of the parent as the primary influence in the child's development.
- To have FUN!!!

All of this is taught through the four core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility.

PRESCHOOL/UPK COVID GUIDELINES

- **Drop off and pick up protocol.**

- Arrival and dismissal will take place outdoors.
- Parents will be asked to check-in child(ren) as a single adult only with their children. Please do not have multiple adults/parents dropping off. Please allot additional time as we will have one health screening station per class.
- Your child will have their temperature checked, and you will be asked a series of COVID related questions. Your child's temperature, and your attestation to the COVID questions, will be recorded.
- If any child has symptoms of COVID 19 and/or a temperature of 100.0 or higher, they will not be permitted to enter.
- Staff will make a visual inspection of the child/ren for signs of illness.
- Staff reserves the right to not admit any child they believe to be ill.
- Once they are cleared, you will sign your child in.
- Teachers will escort your child into the building- parents will not be allowed into the classrooms.
- If there are multiple families in line waiting to drop off, we ask that you maintain 6 feet between you to support physical distancing guidelines
- There will be a one-way flow of traffic established. Please follow all directional signs related to this.
- All children are required to sanitize their hands before entering the building, and will wash his/her hands with soap and running water upon entering the classroom, before and after snack, after using the toilet, and when coming in from outdoor play.
- Drop off and pick up times will be staggered to allow for social distancing.
- A teacher will bring your child to you for dismissal at an appointed area.
- **Mask/face covering**
 - Masks will be required by all parents at drop off/pick up.
 - Masks will be required by all YMCA staff.
 - Cloth face masks are recommended and encouraged for children over 2. Mask breaks will take place though out the day during times of social distancing/ outdoors.
- **How we will be physically distancing children?**
 - The number of children in each classroom center will be limited to allow for distancing of children while engaged in play. Each classroom will not exceed 15 children.
 - Students in each of the 3 and 4-year-old classes will be divided in 2 small groups and remain with each other throughout the class to limit contact.
 - Outdoor instruction will be provided where physical space allows
 - Playgrounds will be utilized on a rotating basis.
- **Our Cleaning Procedures.**
 - We have provided each teacher with their own individual cleaning supplies with disinfecting and sanitizing products.
 - Each student will have their own most commonly used art supplies. Other art supplies will be assigned to each individual classroom to avoid sharing. Those will be disinfected at least daily.
 - Hand sanitizer will be provided throughout the day, as well as upon entry to the program each morning.
 - Staff will disinfect high-touch surfaces multiple times daily: Door knobs, light switches, bathroom surfaces, sink faucets, tables, chairs, countertops, classroom materials, soap dispensers.
 - Cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting products won't be used in close proximity to children.
 - Toys that can't be sanitized won't be used. Toys in need of cleaning/sanitizing throughout the class will be set aside for cleaning.
 - The YMCA has a Clorox "fogger" which is utilized twice weekly to sanitize all surface areas and toys. We have increased the frequency of custodial cleaning as well, and have allotted extra time between AM and PM classes for disinfecting.
- **Will the playground be open?**
 - Yes, and the same guidelines follow.

It will be used by groups of 15 or less at a time on a rotating schedule. Children will be asked to sanitize hands upon entering and exiting the playground to prevent the spread of germs on touch surfaces. Children will be required to wash hands with soap and running water upon re-entry to the classroom.

- **Does the SRYMCA have Merv 13 air filters.**
 - Yes, both our Saratoga and Wilton Branch have Merv 13 air filters.

- **What is the protocol if someone (staff or attendee) does test positive for COVID in terms of notification to attendees.**
 - Per the CDC, if someone fails our screening, they are sent home and asked to contact doctor (ex. If a child or staff has a fever).
 - If a child develops symptoms during Preschool, the child is immediately isolated to a dedicated isolation space and asked to be picked up ASAP.
 - Children who are being sent home because of a positive screen (e.g. onset of COVID19 symptoms) must be immediately separated from other children and supervised until their parent/guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from the program facility or area.
 - If they have a positive test they have to immediately notify health officials. We then work with local health department contact tracing officials to help identify who the person could have exposed. We will also notify all of the families of students that had direct exposure.
 - If the parent/guardian or other member of the same household as the child is exhibiting COVID symptoms, the child must quarantine and is not allowed to return until the quarantine period is complete, or the symptoms have subsided for at least 48 hours.
 - If the child has traveled to any state other than states bordering New York, these guidelines must be followed:
 - For travelers who were in another state for more than 24 hours:
 - Travelers must obtain a test within three days of departure from that state.
 - The traveler must, upon arrival in New York, quarantine for three days.
 - On day 4 of their quarantine, the traveler must obtain another COVID test. If both tests come back negative, the traveler may exit quarantine early upon receipt of the second negative diagnostic test.
 - For travelers who were in another state for less than 24 hours:
 - The traveler does not need a test prior to their departure from the other state, and does not need to quarantine upon arrival in New York State.
 - However, the traveler must fill out our traveler form upon entry into New York State, and take a COVID diagnostic test 4 days after their arrival in New York.

CURRICULUM

Program content is solely based on appropriate developmental levels. We follow New York State Core Curriculum standards as well as NAEYC, YMCA National, and New York State Office of Children and Family Services guidelines and include the teaching of the four core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility throughout our curriculum.

Our curriculum uses a thematic, balanced approach to reading readiness, language, science, math, art, music, social studies, multi-cultural activities, health/nutrition, fitness and social-emotional growth for children 2 years to 5 years of age. Field trips, class visitors, and family events complement classroom learning and special events held throughout the year.

Within our curriculum, we have a variety of art projects with different objectives. Some projects are teacher directed and others are child directed. Each has its own purpose and goal. Each activity also has a different objective. Some are designed to promote creativity, others to develop listening skills and to teach a variety of specific skills.

Teachers are certified in early childhood and/or hold two year, four year, or Masters Degrees.

CLASS LEVELS

Two Year Olds

(2 years by December 1st of that school year)

This program is specifically designed to prepare children for a preschool education. Developing positive social skills is an important focus in this classroom and is facilitated through open-ended play activities. Fine motor skills are further developed in this room through art, by painting, the use of crayons, markers, puzzles, manipulatives and play dough. The children learn work habits such as: following directions, listening to teacher suggestions, etc. while working on various projects. Gross motor skills are also emphasized with activities that include music, finger plays, storytelling, games and a variety of other creative activities designed to increase

attention span. Cognitive skills (shapes, colors, counting, letter recognition, etc.) are developed through free play, circle time, art projects and literature.

Development of independence is encouraged by allowing the children to use the bathroom and dress themselves. Children need not be potty trained to enter this room. Staff to child ratio in this room is 1:4.

Three Year Olds

(3 years old by December 1st of that school year)

This program is designed to prepare children for our pre-kindergarten program. Daily activities include the activities listed in the two-year-old classroom, but with more group activities such as circle time (calendar, weather, letters, numbers and stories related to a weekly theme). Social skills are also developed with the focus on self-esteem, following directions, respect for all, and working independently as well as in both small and large groups. Artistic development and creativity is encouraged through age appropriate projects. Music and various finger plays are also included within the curriculum. Speaking, listening and cognitive skills are developed during circle time, art activities and story-time. Reading readiness is facilitated through the reading of books, language experience charts, classroom, name and letter recognition and projects. Staff to child ratio in this room is 1:7.

Four Year Olds

(4 years old by December 1st of that school year)

In this room, activities include similar activities from the previous year, but cooperative learning, which emphasizes a classroom structure, is promoted to reinforce what is learned in the socialization process of kindergarten. Educational objectives include: mastery of the alphabet (symbols representing sound), beginning math skills (adding and subtracting), knowledge of the calendar (days of the week, months of the year and seasons). This classroom is structured by a Pre-K curriculum and follows weekly lesson plans based on a theme for the week. Our Preschool Curriculum has been approved for use in the Saratoga Springs City School District Universal Pre-K program that is part of our Saratoga Regional YMCA Preschool Program. Staff to child ratio in this room is 1:8.

Mixed-Age Class

(3 year olds must be 4 by April 1st of that school year and 4 year olds must be 4 by December 1st of that school year)

This class has a four year old curriculum, but modifies it for older threes. Staff to child ratio in this room is 1:8.

GENERAL INFORMATION

DATES OF OPERATION

The Preschool Program is open September through June. Our first day is usually the first Wednesday or Thursday after Labor Day and our last week ends in June. We follow the Saratoga Springs School District Calendar and are closed whenever they are with the exception of some half-days.

SNOW DAY/SCHOOL CLOSING POLICY

This year, the SRYMCA will be making the decision whether we will have preschool due to weather conditions. Be sure to sign up for your class REMIND APP with your child's teacher and check there for information about preschool on "iffy" weather days. Information of any closings will also be posted on the SRYMA Facebook page.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In case of a natural disaster - floods, water main breaks, loss of power or water, use, or any other emergencies or unsafe conditions that may occur, the program may have to be closed for the day. For emergency closings, tune to the major networks on your television or our web site Saratogaregionalymca.org. There will be no rebate in tuition due to emergency closings. If not sure, call the front desk of the Saratoga Springs Branch, 583-9622 ext. 0 or the Wilton Branch, 583-9622 ext. 250 after 8:00 a.m. for confirmation.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (H.E.P.A)

Our Preschool is committed to the education of healthy eating and physical activity to our students and strives to involve the whole family in our students' learning process.

SNACK – We ask parents to send in a healthy snack each day with their child along with a labeled water bottle. To promote good eating habits, we suggest sending in snacks such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, and whole grain crackers and water. The SRYMCA Preschool program is nut free. Please do not send in products that contain nuts, nut products or products processed where there are nuts. Some allergies are life threatening, so please take our guidelines seriously. Please also send a napkin with your child's snack. If

you would like to provide a snack for your child's classmates to celebrate his/her birthday, please communicate with your child's teacher. Snacks must be individually wrapped and follow these guidelines. Please no chocolate, cupcakes or other sweet treats. A nut-free healthy snack will be provided for the Universal Pre-K students each class.

Physical Activity - We incorporate age appropriate physical activity each class day which helps strengthen gross and small motor skills. Through music and movement, gym time, and playground time, our students are encouraged to participate in physical activity each day. We are looking forward to when we can once again include swim and gymnastics in our weekly classes.

WHAT TO BRING

A complete change of clothes should also be kept in your child's backpack. This change of clothes is not just for toileting accidents but for the occasional spill. Please label all clothes. We will be going outside as often as the weather permits, please send your child in rubber soled shoes and with appropriate outdoor gear. Your child's teacher will inform you when winter wear is needed during the cold months.

A security blanket or other item that the child is attached to is acceptable for 2 & 3 year olds. The teachers will work at weaning your child from using them at school on a daily basis. After they have gotten over any separation anxiety, they can keep them in their backpacks in case they are needed. Children's footwear should include sneakers and socks to ensure their comfort and safety during outdoor play and walks. Toys from home are discouraged. Please check with your child's teacher for class rules. On show & tell days, please only send in one item which will be kept on the counter until show & tell time.

SCREEN TIME

It is the policy of the Saratoga Regional YMCA to engage in activities that do not include television, video, DVDs, and other portable electronic devices. It is a rare and special occasion that screen time may be used for an educational presentation. Limited computer use for educational games occurs throughout the year

REGISTRATION

Children must be at the class age by December 1st of that school year. The mixed age class is the only exception. Three year olds for that class must turn four before April 1st of that school year. In addition to the online forms filled out to register the following forms are required:

- Child's Medical Report – including Immunizations
- Signed Parent Handbook agreement found at the end of this manual.
- Child's birth certificate and dental form is required for UPK students.

FEES

Tuition is payable in ten monthly installments through automatic draft of a checking or savings account or credit card. The first payment of 10% is due upon registration. The second payment was drafted on August 1, 2020 and every month thereafter until May 31, 2021. Tuition will then be paid in full. Late registrations must pay all payments due at a bi-weekly basis and then monthly thereafter. You are responsible for providing any changes or updates in your account. The first month payment is non-refundable.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

Two weeks written notice is required if a parent chooses to withdraw a child for any reason.

- Refund requests must be in writing and are subject to approval from the Executive Director for Child Care Services.
- Refunds will only be considered for medical reasons or relocation.
- No refunds will be given after May 1st.

DELINQUENT PAYMENTS/RETURNED CHECKS OR CREDIT CARDS

If you fall more than one month behind in your tuition payments, your child may not be allowed to return to class until your account is current. Please remember to provide any account changes to avoid falling behind.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid is available through the Saratoga Regional YMCA. The financial aid given to preschoolers is obtained through the generosity of community support and sustaining members (a donation membership). Financial Aid is available for "Y" membership and program fees for youth in need. The application can be obtained through the front desk or online. Once the financial aid is granted, the child who is applying for a scholarship may begin in the program.

ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE AND EMERGENCY CONTACT

Please see the current COVID guidelines for arrival and departure information.

Children will not be released to anyone who has not been authorized on the pick-up permission form unless we receive prior written notification. The staff will require a form of picture ID as proof of identification (i.e. driver's license). Unless we have received prior written notice, we cannot allow any children to be picked up by an emergency contact person. The person picking up your child must be at least 18 years old. If you are going to be late picking up your child, please notify the teachers by calling your child's classroom. Parents need to provide a number where they can be reached while their child is in class. We cannot be held responsible in the event that we are unable to reach a parent who has outdated phone numbers. It is the parent's responsibility to consistently update any important phone numbers.

In the event of a custody dispute, we cannot keep a child from a parent unless we have written legal proof that the child is not to go with the parent.

TOILETING AND POTTY TRAINING

Two year olds are not required to be potty trained. Three year olds should be, but accidents are understandable. We will work with you to help achieve this milestone. Be sure to send in multiple changes of clothing just in case.

FIELD TRIPS

We are looking forward to when we can once again go on field trips. The 3-year-old and 4-year-old Preschool classes hope to go on field trips later in the school year. On field trips, parents are encouraged to join the class and are counted on to provide the transportation. All students must use a car seat in New York State. The times of most of our field trips coincide with our class times so parents can provide transportation for their child. Permission slips must be returned to the teacher with any field trip fee before the day of the field trip.

OUT OF PROGRAM POLICY FOR STAFF

It is the policy of the Saratoga Regional YMCA to discourage staff, volunteers or other adults related to YMCA programs from spending any time with youth program participants/members outside of the YMCA programs and activities without parents present. This includes, but is not limited to babysitting or transporting. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including possible termination of the YMCA employee.

IMMUNIZATIONS

New York State law now requires that all of the SRYMCA preschoolers must have up to date immunizations. New York State is no longer allowing schools to accept religious exemptions. If your child is on a delayed or "catch up" schedule to comply with this new law, please be sure your child's teacher has a copy of the immunization schedule validated by the doctor.

All immunization records are due the student's first day of school.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

For safety, a fire drill will be conducted once a month and a "Safety Action Plan" will be followed. Four lock down drills will also be conducted each school year.

All staff has appropriate qualifications and/or safety training. The YMCA requires all staff be certified in First Aid, Blood Borne Pathogens, Child Abuse Prevention and CPR and AED. The staff also participates in numerous workshops, conferences and training. Certified WSI and PSI instructors teach in the pool.

MEDICATIONS

The staff will only administer prescription medication under the following conditions:

- A Written Medication Consent Form must be completed by both parent and physician allowing the staff to administer medication to the child. The form must state the child's first and last name, type of medication, dosage, route of administration and how often to administer the medication.
- Medication must be in the original container with a current date.
- The staff will only administer medication under the following conditions:

TOPICAL

A written note from the parent allowing the staff to administer medication to the child (This can be done only as directed per package instructions or a Dr.'s note will be required.)

ORAL

A Written Medication Consent Form must be completed by both parent and physician allowing the staff to administer medication to the child. The form must state the child's first and last name, type of medication, dosage, route of administration and how to administer the medication. Medication must be in the original container with a current date.

Due to risk to your child, as well as other children and staff in the program, and in compliance with COVID Health regulations, the child may not be at the program as long as your child is exhibiting:

- A fever over 100 degrees or chills.
- Cough (new or worsening)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (new or worsening)
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches or pains (new or worsening)
- New loss of taste or smell
- Headache (New or worsening)
- Sore throat (new or worsening)
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea or vomiting

Your child may not return to the program until 48 hours after these symptoms no longer exist. A COVID test may be required under certain circumstances and the negative result paperwork must be provided by the doctor and given to your child's teacher.

We ask you to immediately notify us if your child or anyone in your family has been diagnosed with COVID. We will then follow the guidance of the local health department.

We also ask that you notify us if anyone in your household must follow travel guidelines outlined by the Governor. If quarantine is required, please keep your student home until the full quarantine period has ended.

Please notify us if your child will be out of school due to any other contagious disease such as: Influenza, Chicken pox, impetigo, Cocksackie Virus, conjunctivitis, (pink eye), lice, parasites, etc.

- A medical release from the child's physician may be required before re-entrance by a child. Please communicate with your child's teacher to see if a medical release is needed.
- If for any reason your child is sent home from class with any of the illnesses listed above, he/she is not allowed to return until 48 hours after the symptoms no longer exist.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our staff uses positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem and self-control and reflect the YMCA four core values of honesty, respect, responsibility and caring. Through positive role-modeling, praise and encouragement of good behavior, redirection and reminders of behavior expectations; teachers foster positive social interaction. Students are encouraged to learn and use problem solving and conflict resolution skills. In rare instances a child may need time away from the area of conflict to regroup and calm down.

In the event of consistent behavior problems, an Incident Report will be written up. A conference with a parent and guardian may be requested and dismissal from the program is possible if working with the child and his or her parent or guardian has not been effective.

When a child in the class becomes a behavior problem, the teachers may not be able to discuss how they are handling it with other parents because of confidentiality rules. Every parent has the right to have all discussions and decisions regarding their child kept confidential. Parents should not discipline other people's children. Please refer all behavior concerns to either the teacher or the director.

POLICY ON BITING AND/OR AGGRESSION

Teething, frustration and anxiety are only some of the reasons toddlers bite others. The YMCA cannot be held accountable for biting occurrences. However, the preschool staff will do everything possible to make sure your child does not bite others and does not get bitten. However, biting does occasionally happen with children of this age. All incidents of biting and aggression will be recorded on Incident Reports and available for the parents to read, sign and have copied for their own records.

The YMCA believes in taking every step to help the children work through phases per incident and dealt with in the most efficient manner for that child's age and developmental abilities. If the aggression does not subside, the director will schedule a conference with the parents to discuss possible ways to deter the biting and/or aggression. All incidents will be documented at the time of occurrence for the parents to review: with parent's feedback welcomed on ways to assist the child through their phase of aggression. If after a conference with the parents, the child continues biting or aggression towards the other children occurs, the child's parent will be called to pick up their child immediately from the program at the time of occurrence that day. The child will be able to return the next school day. Additional incidents of biting or aggression will result in a second parent/Director conference to discuss the incidents and reinforce with the parents the possibility of suspension or dismissal from the Preschool Program. If suspension is necessary, the parents will be responsible for tuition during the period of suspension. The YMCA has the right to dismiss any child with repeated incidents of aggression or biting at the discretion of the Executive Director of Child Care Services.

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

- Hitting, pushing, biting, kicking, throwing toys, screaming, running indoors, spitting, etc., are not allowed.
- At snack time, self-help and table manners are encouraged. There will be no throwing or playing with food.
- No guns or pretending to play guns are allowed.
- No toys of a violent nature are allowed in the classroom. Toys from home are discouraged except for show & tell days.
- The children will be expected to line up with the class and stay with the teacher at all times.
- You must sign your child in and out each day.
- If your child has any special needs, please let your teacher know in advance.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- Parents will receive communication from the teachers though out the school year. You will receive many texts, emails, newsletters, forms and reminders throughout the school year.
- If at any time a parent would like a meeting with the teachers or the director, it can be arranged upon request.
- Whenever it is suspected that a child is ill while at class, the parent will be notified and the child sent home.
- Any new allergy reactions or changes in health conditions should be reported to staff immediately.
- If a child is injured during class, the parent may be notified and an accident report will be completed with the injury. This includes documentation of the accident.
- We hope to soon return to inviting parents into the classroom to be a part of your child's preschool activities.
- Your child's teacher is always open to communication with her students' parents. Please reach out at sign in or out time or through the Remind App.

CLASSROOM PHONE LINES

If your child will be absent, please let your child's teacher know via the Remind App or call your child's classroom extension. Be sure to ask for the extension for your child's classroom.

CONCLUSION

The Saratoga Regional YMCA Early Childhood staff takes great pleasure in creating a safe, healthy, exciting and stimulating learning environment. The Preschool staff takes pride in the classes they teach and students they nurture. We encourage you to contact the teachers, and Preschool Director with comments, questions, concerns, or praises about your child or the school. We hope that this YMCA Early Childhood program will be the first "step" in your child's involvement with the YMCA. Thank you for letting us be a part of your family.

AFTER READING THIS HANDBOOK, PLEASE SIGN AND PRINT THIS PAGE AND RETURN IT TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK

I,

, acknowledge that I have received

(Print name)

and read the Saratoga Regional YMCA Preschool Parent Handbook. The Saratoga Regional YMCA reserves the right to amend the policies and procedures set forth in this hand book. Written notice will be provided of any modifications.

(Signature)

(Date)

(Name of Child)

Please sign and return by November 25, 2020. Thank You.