



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 for learning. We, the staff of the preschool program, encourage you to take an active role in your child's development. There are numerous opportunities for parents to participate in the program. 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, to keep you informed of specific activities going on in our 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. Each program is designed to fit the needs of children according to their age and individual progress and according to the YMCA's philosophy of the development of spirit, mind and body. It also teaches the four core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility throughout our entire 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.

We recognize that the major responsibility for raising children is with the parents. We strive to strengthen that relationship and to encourage parent participation in our programs. Parents 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.
- To stimulate and facilitate intellectual, 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 stay 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.

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 and whole language 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, 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 free play activities. We find children learn through play. 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 self-reliance skills 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 1:5.

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: similar activities as in the two-year-old classroom, but with more group activities such as circle time (calendar, weather, letters, numbers and stories interrelated with a weekly theme). Social skills are also developed with the focus on self-respect, following directions, respect for authority 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 songs 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, labeling in the 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 again include similar activities from the previous year, but cooperative learning, which emphasizes a classroom structure, are 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 the Wednesday 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

Whenever the Saratoga Springs City School District is closed for a snow day, the Saratoga Regional YMCA Preschool will also be closed. Be sure to follow the radio and TV reports. If schools are delayed one (1) hour, so are we. If schools are delayed two (2) hours, we will cancel morning classes only. If there is an early dismissal we will contact the afternoon class parents. There are no make-up classes. You can also confirm snow delays and closings by calling our Emergency Information line, (518) 583-9622 ext.295.

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 - Our parents are asked to provide a healthy snack for the entire class. Each child will be assigned snack on a rotating basis. In order to promote good eating habits, please bring in snacks such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, and whole grain crackers and water. We will be working with the students to eat snack "family style" serving themselves. Please do not bring snack that contains high fructose corn syrup. Snacks that are unacceptable may not be used. Some children may also have allergies or hypersensitivity to nuts, sugar, chocolate, wheat, dairy products or food dyes. We are a nut free program: therefore we will not serve any items containing nuts, nut products or products processed where there are nuts. Some allergies are life threatening, so please take our guidelines seriously. We provide cups and napkins but appreciate donations. Birthday snacks must also follow these guidelines. Please no chocolate, cupcakes or other sweet treats. A healthy snack that includes a fruit or vegetable each day will be provided for the Universal Pre-K students.

Physical Activity - We incorporate age appropriate physical activity each class day which helps strengthen gross and small motor skills. Through music and music, gym time, playground time, swim, tumbling, and kids' fit programs, our students are encouraged to participate in physical activity each day.

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. Children spill or fall into puddles, etc. 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. For those children taking swim lessons, a bathing suit and towel (labeled with name) should be kept in the backpack as well. Students that take tumbling lessons should bring secure fitting slippers to wear their tumbling class day. This would ensure the students would have something on their feet if they had to evacuate the building for an emergency.

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. Those children who take fitness classes should wear comfortable clothes (no belts). Toys from home are discouraged. Please check with your child's teacher for class rules. On show & tell days, the toys 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.

FEEES

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, 2018 and every month thereafter until April 1, 2017. 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 CEO.
- 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.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are available through the Saratoga Regional YMCA. The scholarships are obtained through the generosity of community support and sustaining members (a donation membership). Scholarships are available for "Y" membership and program fees for youth in need. Scholarship packets can be obtained through the front desk, and are reviewed by the Scholarship Program Director. A child who is applying for a scholarship may not start in the program until the Program Director has approval from the Scholarship Program Director.

SCHEDULING

Swim and fitness and tumbling classes will be scheduled on the same day once a week for the majority of the school year. These classes may be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, but we try to notify you whenever possible.

ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE AND EMERGENCY CONTACT

The childcare staff of the Saratoga Regional YMCA are mandated reporters of child abuse. It is considered abuse to leave a young child in the car without an adult. If a childcare staff member sees a young child in a car left unattended by an adult, that staff member is mandated to call the child abuse hotline. If a situation arises that you need help dropping off or picking up your child please call your child's classroom and a teacher will assist you.

If your child's site has an outside door code, please do not share the code with your child or strangers. This helps us keep your child safe.

Please wait outside the classroom at drop off and pick up until the teacher opens the door. When arriving, parents are asked to please walk their child into their classroom, sign in and be sure that the child is under the care of a teacher before leaving. At this time, it is a good idea to communicate any pertinent information about the child's well-being to the teacher as well as giving the teacher the opportunity to relay information to you when necessary. Please remember to say goodbye!

When waiting for class to end, please try to stay away out of sight from the children. Your child is so excited to see you and may have difficulty staying on task in class. Please remember to sign your child out every day. 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. Send in multiple changes of clothing from head to toe.

FIELD TRIPS

The 3-year-old and 4-year-old Preschool classes go on field trips throughout the school year. 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

All of the SRYMCA preschoolers must have up to date immunizations with the exception of a medical exemption. 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

- 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 over the counter medication under the following conditions: (this includes bug spray, sunscreen, skin creams, acetaminophen, non-aspirins, cough drops, etc.)

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.) Verbal permission from the parent may also be allowed as long as the staff member documents the conversation.

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 the child, as well as other children and staff at the center, the child may not be at the center as long as the following conditions exist:

- Has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period.
- Severe cold symptoms, with difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual respiratory signs present.
- Green mucus from the nose which may indicate an infection not just a simple cold
- Diarrhea (defined as an increase in stools, increased stool water and/or that which cannot be contained by a diaper).
- Vomiting.

THE CHILD MAY NOT RETURN TO THE PROGRAM UNTIL 24 HOURS AFTER VOMITING, DIARRHEA AND/OR A FEVER HAS ENDED.

- Children with communicable illnesses* must stay home until a physician gives permission for the child to return to the center. *such illnesses include chicken pox, impetigo, Coxsackie Virus, conjunctivitis, (pink eye), lice, parasites, etc. Please notify us at once if your child does have a communicable disease. A medical release from the child's physician may be required before re-entrance by a child after a lengthy or serious communicable disease or illness.
- If for any reason your child is sent home from class with any of the illnesses listed above, he/she is not allowed to attend the center for at least 24 hours.
- For safety, a fire drill will be conducted once a month and a "Safety Action Plan" will be followed.
- All staff has appropriate qualifications and/or 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 our swimming lessons.

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 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. The preschool program will do everything possible to make sure your child does not bite others and does not get bit, but you as parents must realize that biting happens amongst 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 its discretion.

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. (Power Rangers, Mortal Combat, etc.) 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 notes, newsletters, forms and reminders in your child's mailbox. Please remember to check your child's mailbox daily. Many teachers also use email to communicate with parents.
- If at any time a parent would like a meeting with the teachers or the directors, 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.
- The teacher needs to be notified by parent or guardian if another child or family member becomes ill with a serious illness such as hepatitis, meningitis or H. Influenza Disease (Hib), etc.
- If a child is injured during class, the parent may be notified and an accident report will be completed with each injury. This includes documentation of the accident.
- There are many opportunities to be a part of your child's preschool activities: classroom volunteer, field trip chaperone, secret reader and class celebrations.

CLASSROOM PHONE LINES

If your child will be absent, please call your child's classroom extension. If you are running late for a field trip or in the event of an emergency please call the front desk and they will attempt to reach the teacher.

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 September 13, 2019. Thank You.