



# FIND MY GENIUS

## HANDBOOK

### 2024



Dear Families,

Welcome to YMCA Find My Genius! This program is offered through the Southeast Ventura County YMCA in partnership with our local school districts. By enrolling your child in a YMCA program, you have joined a movement whose legacy is more than 175 years old. Today, the YMCA is the largest provider of licensed Child Care in North America. We hope that your affiliation with our YMCA is a lasting one and that you and your entire family come to appreciate the proud heritage we share.

The Southeast Ventura County YMCA builds relationships, impacts lives and strengthens our community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. This purpose should guide all of us in everything we do. Remember, when you signed up you didn't simply purchase a service; rather, you became a part of the YMCA family. Please take advantage of the many opportunities you will have to participate in the YMCA and contribute to your community.

We know that by enrolling your child with us, you have entrusted us with the most precious person in your life. You have high hopes and dreams for your child and so do we.

The goals for your children are to:

- Build self-esteem and an appreciation of his or her self-worth.
- Grow as a responsible member of your family and our community.
- Promote a desire for a healthy spirit, mind, and body.
- Develop an appreciation for the importance and beauty of living in a culturally diverse society.
- Develop life-long leadership skills.

As the year goes on, we hope to have the opportunity to meet you personally.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Sonia Garcia  
Program Director, Find My Genius  
Moorpark Unified School District  
and Simi Valley Unified School  
District Sites  
805-583-5338 ext. 4004  
[sgarcia@sevymca.org](mailto:sgarcia@sevymca.org)

Nina Ruiz  
Program Director, Find My Genius  
Simi Valley Unified School District Sites  
805-583-5338 ext. 4007  
[nruiz@sevymca.org](mailto:nruiz@sevymca.org)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## WELCOME TO THE YMCA

### FIND MY GENIUS

Y Mission.....	4
Values.....	4
Purpose and Goals.....	5
Locations.....	5
Hours of Operations.....	5

### PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Curriculum/Academics/Homework.....	6
Nutrition/HEPA.....	6
Healthy Eating.....	6
Physical Activities.....	7
Cultural Awareness.....	7
Enrichments and Steam.....	7
Toys, Electronics and Phones from Home.....	7

### GENERAL POLICIES

Discipline .....	8
Parents Code of Conduct.....	9
Late Pick-up.....	9
Absence.....	10
Unreported Absence.....	10
Health and Safety Procedures.....	10

### STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS

Sign In and Out Procedures.....	11
Who May Pick Up Your Child.....	11

### INJURIES, ILLNESS, EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Injuries.....	12
Illness.....	12
Medication.....	12
Bathroom Accidents.....	13
Lice Policy.....	13
Child Abuse Procedure.....	14
Disaster Plans.....	15

### FIND MY GENIUS STAFF

Qualification.....	15
Staff to Child Ratios.....	16
Staff Training.....	16



# WELCOME TO THE YMCA FIND MY GENIUS

## Y MISSION

The Southeast Ventura County YMCA builds relationships, impacts lives and strengthens our community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

To achieve this purpose, the program staff and volunteers have adopted the following goals:

- Develop facilities and staff that ensure a safe, supportive and caring environment.
- Create an organized curriculum that addresses the physical, mental and social development of each child in a balanced, age-appropriate format.
- Involve families in program activities, planning and evaluation as much as possible.

## VALUES

The YMCA is deeply rooted in its core values of:

- Caring
- Respect
- Honesty
- Responsibility

We emphasize the following values:

- Treat others as you would like to be treated with honesty and caring.
- Be responsible for your actions.
- Be respectful of yourself and others -- always.
- Be respectful and conscientious of the environment and community in which we live.
- Be thankful and grateful; there are many less fortunate people in the world.

Just as you frequently teach values at home, especially during times of discipline or conflict resolution, we often find unique opportunities to individually discuss values with each child. We also plan value development activities throughout the week such as stories, games and small group discussions.



## PURPOSE AND GOALS

The YMCA Find My Genius program’s purpose is to increase the reading, writing, math and social-emotional skills of scholars, while exposing them to STEAM-based enrichment activities during the afterschool and summer months.

## LOCATIONS

The Find My Genius program is available at the following school sites:

Site Location	Phone Number	Address
Arroyo Elementary	805-527-7121	225 Ulysses St, Simi Valley, CA
Arroyo West	805-660-9126	4117 Country Hill Rd, Moorpark, CA
Atherwood Elementary	805-660-0718	2350 E. Greensward St., Simi Valley
Big Springs Elementary	805-231-0582	3401 Big Springs Ave., Simi Valley
Hollow Hills Elementary	805-750-9946	828 Gibson Ave., Simi Valley
Katherine Elementary	805-660-5718	5455 Katherine St., Simi Valley
Mountain Meadows	805-660-9128	4200 Mountain Meadow Dr, Moorpark
Peach Hill Academy	805-660-8629	13400 Christian Barrett Dr, Moorpark
Sycamore Elementary	805-660-8460	2100 Ravenna St., Simi Valley
White Oak Elementary	805-660-5344	2201 Alscot Ave., Simi Valley

## HOURS OF OPERATION

- Regular School Days – School Dismissal to 5:45pm
- Minimum School Days – School Dismissal to 5:45pm
- Camp Days – 8:00am – 5:45pm
- NO FMG WINTER CAMP during 2-weeks break December/January

Our Find My Genius program operates daily during the 2024-25 school year with the following exceptions:

Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day & Day after, Christmas Eve & Christmas Day, New Year’s Eve & Day, Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day, Memorial Day.

# PROGRAM COMPONENTS

## CURRICULUM/ACADEMICS/HOMEWORK

Each Site Director is responsible for creating daily lesson plans and agendas, which will vary slightly from site to site. Find My Genius is an academic program focused on developing the following skill sets:

- Social-emotional learning
- Improving English language arts, writing, and mathematic skills
- Providing homework support
- STEAM-based enrichment activities

## NUTRITION/HEPA

As part of our focus on developing healthy habits in children, families and our communities, we have committed to adopting standards for healthy eating and physical activity (HEPA) in our afterschool programs.

## HEALTHY EATING

Each day, a snack is provided for your child. Allow us the opportunity to:

- Show foods that are more nutritious for snacking.
- Discuss the basic food groups and their place in our diet.
- Teach children the importance of washing their hands, dishes and utensils.
- Involve children in cleaning their eating or dining area.

If your child has special needs or allergies, please be sure to note this on your registration and let your Site Director know. We will do our best to accommodate these needs. In some circumstances, you may be asked to provide alternate food items for your child. Please be sure to send food with your child that does not need to be reheated. A snack calendar will be posted at each site.

Our staff team is committed to helping our children become more active and to make good food choices. Please join us in our effort and do not send unhealthy food or drinks with your children.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Our culture is increasingly aware of the importance of physical activity in our lives as well as those of our children. Not only does physical activity make us feel better, it also improves our overall health. Weather permitting, we will provide participants with at least 30 minutes of moderate, vigorous activity, bone and muscle strengthening activities or group games and activities that turn healthy physical activity into fun.

We monitor the use of digital devices, with the exception of computers, to be used only for homework purposes, special occasions or instructional group exercise videos.

## CULTURAL AWARENESS

We believe that every child should develop avenues to express his/her own culture, while at the same time learn to appreciate the customs and traditions of others. This component can cover a wide range of activities such as arts and craft projects, skits, discussions and group activities on cuisine and traditions from different cultures.

## ENRICHMENTS AND STEAM

At our afterschool sites, we offer enrichment activities throughout the year that focus on different creative topics and areas for the children to learn more about. The staff utilizes their knowledge and abilities, as well as the community connections, to provide activities to further the children skills in areas such as art, sports, multi-culture, music and more! Each site has a full day of STEAM activities at least once per week where the kids explore, create and build while learning about science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics!

## TOYS, ELECTRONICS AND PHONES FROM HOME

The YMCA provides games and toys and plans a variety of activities as part of our curriculum. Therefore, with the exception of special events, toys from home, cell phones and electronics are not permitted at the YMCA as they disrupt our scheduled program. The YMCA is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal belongings. If your child needs to make an emergency phone call, he/she may request the use of the site phone.



# GENERAL POLICIES

## DISCIPLINE

The YMCA board of Directors, staff, volunteers and members are all committed to basic shared values of honesty, caring, respect and responsibility. We believe that these values are essential to the guidance of your child's behavior. From the first day of the program, teachers and directors work with the children to set their own site rules.

We do not believe that punishment is the best way to help children learn good behavior in a group setting. Instead, we use the following approach when a child's behavior is outside the group's rules or otherwise inappropriate:

1. Reason with the child in a teachable moment.
2. Ask the child to sit a small distance away from the group and take time to calm down, then talk about his or her behavior choices with a teacher. This time can last as long as it takes for the child to calm down.
3. Have the Site Director talk with the child and agree on a positive behavior modification plan.
4. Include the parents, child and Site Director in a conference to identify additional strategies to correct problem behavior and clarify consequences of continued misbehaviors.
5. In extreme or reoccurring cases, have a Program Director or administrator review the situation and past responses and determine an appropriate resolution, which can involve temporary or permanent removal from the program. Children who demonstrate that they are a threat to themselves or others at a site must be temporarily removed from the program, even if steps 1 – 4 haven't yet been implemented, until we determine the threat no longer exists.

If your child's behavior results in him/her being sent home or suspended the next day, he/she must be picked up within an hour. Children found with weapons or dangerous objects are immediately terminated from the program.



## **PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

The YMCA expects that all participating parents will act as positive role models while at a YMCA site. Participants, parents and guests are expected to behave in a civilized manner toward one another and toward YMCA employees and volunteer staff at all times. Parents who exhibit inappropriate behavior will be asked to leave the site immediately.

While it is rare that extreme incidents occur with adults relating to our Child Care program, the YMCA reserves the right to immediately terminate program enrollment due to extreme hostility or misconduct demonstrated by adults/parents. Parents may not discipline their own or other children at the YMCA.

Conversely, if you observe a problem with our program or with a staff member, please contact a YMCA Director and/or put your complaint in writing. By doing this, we avoid any unnecessary confrontations that might be uncomfortable for the children, other parents, and the staff.

## **LATE PICK UP**

We suggest arriving at 5:45 p.m. to pick up your child. If you are more than 5 minutes picking up your child late on a consistent basis (1-2 times per week), they may be dropped from the program. The electronic signature of an authorized adult is required for dismissal.

We realize that parents are often at the mercy of the Southern California freeway system and may, on occasion, be late picking up their children. We encourage you to make contingency plans so that a relative, friend or other program parent on your authorized list can pick up your child in those situations.

Please call if you are going to be more than 10 minutes late. If we have not heard from you by 6:30 p.m., we have no legal alternative other than to request the Police Department maintain custody of your child. Please be sure to keep us informed so we can avoid this situation.



## **ABSENCES**

Our goal is to help your child reach their full potential academically. In order to do this, we and the school district, ask that students attend at least 80% of the program. This means missing no more than one day per week or not leaving earlier than 4:30 p.m. daily. We understand that emergencies/illnesses arise and will be excused. Attendance will be tracked and provided to the school district.

We take our responsibility for your child very seriously. If your child will be absent, please call your YMCA Child Care site between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. on or before the day your child will be absent.

## **UNREPORTED ABSENCES**

If your child fails to arrive at the YMCA site, we will do the following:

- A. The Site Director or YMCA office staff will check with the school office to determine whether or not the child was at school that day.
- B. If the child is in school, the school office will be notified that the child is unaccounted for and the staff will check the classroom and play areas.
- C. If you cannot be reached and we determine that your child should have been at the YMCA, the Site Director, school principal or available site staff will begin to search. If all else fails, we will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES**

The Southeast Ventura County YMCA is committed to providing a safe, clean and fun environment for our Child Care programs. For this reason, we must reserve the right to make reasonable and necessary procedural or program changes based on recommendations and/or mandates from various Public Health Agencies and/or agencies with jurisdiction. Some of these changes are menial and can be implemented without disruption to the program, while some are not. We appreciate your understanding and willingness to be flexible during these uncertain times. To that end we sincerely hope that we will be able to provide our programs with as few of these disruptive changes as possible however we must be prepared to make these changes and possibly even cancel the program.

# STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS

## SIGN IN AND OUT PROCEDURES

The YMCA operates licensed Child Care programs in accordance with Title 22, California Health and Welfare Regulations and Title 5, California Education Code. Both codes require that accurate records be kept of children attending the program each day. The State further requires that:

- The parent or authorized person dropping off or picking up a child signs his or her full name on an attendance tablet.
- The person signing the child into or out of a licensed Child Care center must be a custodial parent or person authorized in writing and at least 18 years of age.
- If a child is coming or going directly between school and the Child Care center, a person employed by the center must sign the child in.
- Children may not be dropped off before the hours of operation.
- Children must be signed in each time they are brought to the site and signed out each time they are picked up.

## WHO MAY PICK UP YOUR CHILD

Persons authorized to pick up your child must be identified in the online program registration. Initially, anyone picking up your child should be prepared to show picture identification until the staff becomes familiar with him/her. It is the policy of the YMCA not to release your child to anyone not authorized on record to do so. Please make sure that anyone you send to pick up your child is on the authorization form. Additions to your authorized list must be added by you, in writing or email, to the YMCA Child Care office.

Siblings under the age of 18 may not sign your child out, even with your authorization.



# INJURIES, ILLNESS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

## INJURIES

If your child is injured, we are only legally allowed to:

1. Rinse and administer Band-Aids and comfort for minor cuts, scrapes and bumps.
2. Contact you or your emergency contact if any injury may require medical attention.
3. Secure medical treatment immediately in the event that you cannot be reached or if the nature of the injury warrants immediate action.



## ILLNESS

- If your child becomes ill while at the YMCA, we will call you or your emergency contact in the event that you cannot be reached. We cannot allow your child to remain in the program while ill. Please arrange to pick up your child within an hour of notification of illness.
- If your child becomes ill while at school, do not request that he or she be sent to the YMCA. We will not accept children who are ill into our program as this creates a danger of infecting other children and staff.
- If your child is absent from school for illness or any other reason, he/she may not attend the Y that afternoon.

## MEDICATIONS

If your child needs to take medication during the time that he or she is attending the YMCA, please do the following:

1. Bring any required medication in its original prescription container to the site and give it directly to the Site Director.
2. Please do not send medication with your child.

3. Provide the staff person exact written directions on our Authorization to Administer Medication forms. Please indicate the schedule, dosage, permission to administer and the doctor's prescription. YMCA staff are not authorized to give injections of any kind (except epi-pens). Please sign and date the written instructions.
4. We are not authorized to, and we cannot, under any circumstances, give over the counter or non-prescription medication, including vitamins and natural remedies to your child without a doctor's note.

## **BATHROOM ACCIDENTS**

All children in our program must be toilet trained. However, we understand that there may be an occasional accident. If this occurs with your child, we will do the following:

- You will be asked to bring a change of clothing.
- You or your child may change their clothes and return to the site.
- If your child already has a change of clothing, he/she may clean him/herself up, change clothes and return to the program.

## **LICE POLICY**

The children in our program are in close contact with one another during activities and throughout our program day. This close proximity can result in lice being quickly and easily spread from child to child. In order to ensure that lice are not spread during an outbreak, we separate any child who has lice from the rest of the children. Parents are required to pick up their child within an hour of being notified. The child may not return to the site until all nits and lice have been removed from the hair and head. The YMCA will notify the school if a child has lice and the school nurse must clear the child before he/she may return to school. In addition, the YMCA will continue to check the child's hair to ensure that the hair is nit and louse free. Please contact the YMCA immediately if your child contracts lice in order to decrease the chance of spreading.

To avoid the spread of lice, we ask that children do refrain from sharing hats, combs or brushes and clothes. The YMCA ensures health and safety regulations are being met at all times. The YMCA decreases the spread of lice by periodically checking all children's heads for lice and cleaning daily, including vacuuming all carpets and rugs.

## CHILD ABUSE

The YMCA and other organizations that serve children have to be especially careful about who we hire, how we work with children and how our staff conducts itself with children away from the job.

Here's how we prevent child abuse in the YMCA:

- We require every volunteer and paid employee to submit fingerprints and we send those fingerprints to the California Department of Justice and FBI for a criminal background check.
- We require every volunteer or paid employee who works with children to complete the YMCA Child Abuse Prevention Training.
- We prohibit any staff member from allowing any child to be alone and unsupervised.
- We prohibit any staff member from placing him/herself in a position where he/she is alone with a child and out of sight of other adults.
- We prohibit employees and volunteers from arranging to have contact away from the YMCA with children they have met or worked with at the YMCA.
- We prohibit adult staff persons from dating employees or volunteers who are under 18 years of age.

We and the State legally require any employee who suspects that a child has been abused to report that suspicion to the proper authorities. If you observe or hear about a YMCA staff member or participant behaving inappropriately toward any child, please report the incident to the YMCA Find My Genius Program Directors,

- Sonia Garcia (805) 583-5338 ext. 4004
- Nina Ruiz (805) 583-5338 ext. 4007

Your report will be treated with utmost confidentiality.



## DISASTER PLAN

The YMCA participates in the City Operations Plan. In the event of a major emergency, such as an earthquake, chemical spill or fire, the following procedures apply:

- Children will remain at the sites until directed to move or evacuate.
- During, immediately before and immediately after school hours, the principal of each school, under the direction of the Emergency Operations Coordinator, is in charge.
- After school hours and on holidays, the YMCA comes under the direction of the Child Care Director, who is aware of the location and enrollment of our sites at all times.
- If an evacuation of any site occurs, the school district will provide bus transportation, the Red Cross will set up a shelter, and the YMCA staff on duty will assist at the shelter.

## YMCA FIND MY GENIUS STAFF

### QUALIFICATIONS

Our program is licensed by the State Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. The program positions and requirements are:

- **Site Director**            15 units post-secondary education in early childhood development or related courses including 3 units of Child Care administration and a minimum of 2 years of experience in licensed Child Care.
- **Assistant Director**            12 units post-secondary education in early childhood development and 18 months of experience in licensed Child Care.
- **Teacher 2**                    12 units of post-secondary education in early childhood development.

- **Teacher 1**            6 units of post–secondary education in early childhood education or a related course and at least 3 units in progress until 12 units are completed.
- **Teacher’s Aide**    16 years old, a high school graduate or enrolled in an accredited vocational program and completion of YMCA Child Care Training Module or post–secondary education in early childhood education.

## **STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS**

Per ELOP staffing guidelines, the student to teacher ratio for 1<sup>st</sup> grade and above is no more than 20:1. For TK/K grade levels, the student to teacher ratio is no more than 10:1.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

In addition to the educational requirements of the state, each staff person attends a basic pre–employment training module and regular in–service training events that cover the following topics:

- Curriculum Planning
- Administrative Procedures
- First Aid and Emergency Procedures
- Behavior Management
- Child Abuse Prevention

Third party training that includes: Blood Borne Pathogens, Child Abuse Prevention, Sexual Harassment Prevention, Safe Lifting, Slips Trips and Falls and Appropriate Touch.

**If you have any questions related to these policies, please do not hesitate to reach out!**