



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



# KIDS' ZONE

HANDBOOK



SIMI VALLEY FAMILY YMCA & YARROW FAMILY YMCA

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# WELCOME TO KIDS' ZONE

## Y MISSION

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

## HOURS OF OPERATION

### Simi Valley Family YMCA Kids' Zone

Monday – Saturday: 8:00am – 12:00pm

Monday – Thursday: 3:00pm – 7:00pm

### Yarrow Family YMCA Kids' Zone

Monday – Saturday: 8:00am – 12:00pm

Monday – Thursday: 2:45pm – 7:00pm



## HOLIDAY HOURS

On the days we have adjusted facility holiday hours, Kids' Zone will be open 8:00am – 12:00pm if the holiday falls on days when the space is typically open.

- Day after Thanksgiving
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Christmas Eve
- New Year's Eve

# GENERAL POLICIES

## TOYS AND OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS

We do not permit personal toys, electronics, games, books and mobile devices to be brought into and used in Kids' Zone. Please leave these items at home.

## FOOD AND DRINK

For the safety of all children, including infants and toddlers and children with mild to severe allergies, food snacks and/or meals are not permitted into Kids' Zone. Water bottles with lids and baby bottles.\* Sippy cups for infants/toddlers are okay.

\*Staff are not responsible for feeding infants during their time in Kids' Zone. We ask that infants and toddlers are fed prior to being checked into Kids' Zone.

## PROPER ATTIRE

To ensure a safe and fun experience for your child, please dress them for active play. This means comfortable clothing they can move around in freely. Closed-toe shoes are best for safety; avoid flip-flops or sandals with no back strap. Jewelry and small items that could be choking hazards should be left at home. Infants must always have socks on their feet. Children and toddlers must always wear shoes.

\*Yarrow Family YMCA Kids' Zone Infant Area\* is a shoe free area only. Our infant area is for ages 6 weeks-2 years old.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our Kids' Zone staff prioritizes a positive and supportive environment for all children. We use redirection and positive reinforcement to help children learn and adjust. Here's how it works:

- **Redirection:** If a child is struggling, for example, with sharing or following rules, our staff will offer alternative choices and activities.
- **Positive Guidance:** If redirection does not work, staff will gently guide the child towards a different activity.

- If neither of these approaches are successful staff will ask the parent/guardian to return to Kids' Zone check the child out. The child will be able to return to Kids' Zone the next day to try again.
- We maintain complete confidentiality regarding any behavioral issues and only share information directly with parent/guardian about their child only.

Our goal is to provide a fun and supportive environment where children can learn and grow.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

The YMCA has a zero-tolerance policy for serious behavior infractions. Since the goal of the YMCA is to provide a healthy, safe and fun environment, inappropriate behaviors have no place. The behaviors listed below may be grounds for immediate removal from Kids' Zone for any set amount of time (as determined by Program Director). Each incident will be considered case-by-case to determine if the child can function in a group setting while at the Y.

- Behavior that endangers the health and safety of children or staff members
- Inappropriate touching of other children or sexual misconduct
- Theft, defacing or destruction of property belonging to the YMCA or others
- Verbal abuse or treats, bullying or name-calling
- Any kind of physical assault such as hitting, kicking or biting
- Children found with weapons, drugs, live animals or dangerous objects may be subject to immediate termination from our program

Kids' Zone staff will contact the parent/guardian of children who are having trouble adjusting. In the case of uncontrollable crying or unruly behavior, we contact parent/guardian that check the child in and ask you to pick up your child. We want children to associate YMCA Kids' Zone as a safe space.

For the safety and well-being of all children using the program, inappropriate behavior (i.e. spitting, biting, inappropriate language, harm to self, harm to other or property or intentionally not listening to Kids' Zone staff) may lead to a loss of Kids' Zone privileges for your child and family.

## **PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

- Parent/Guardian that checked their child into Kids' Zone must always stay within the facility
  - Chairs located in Kids' Zone Lobby Area is only intended for quick drop off or check out usage.
- Kids' Zone is for infants, toddlers and children. For their safety, parent/guardian may not remain in Kids' Zone.
  - \*Exception: In the case of a child's first-time visit only, a parent/guardian may stay a maximum of 10-15 minutes. It is also requested that you check in on your child occasionally to ensure that they are adjusting well within the environment.\*
- Parent/Guardian are reminded that this is a child-centered program. Our children are easily influenced by our language and actions.
- Parent/Guardian please refrain from loud and aggressive behavior or language anywhere within our Kids' Zone area and facility. If you need to address an issue, please ask the Kids' Zone staff to speak to the coordinator. No disputes should be carried out in front of the children or other parent/guardian.
- Southeast Ventura County YMCA has a zero-tolerance policy regarding threats of any type toward staff, another parent/guardian, children or rude, aggressive behaviors.
- Inappropriate behavior or failure to follow the expectations of our member code of conduct may result in expulsion from Y programs or up to and including termination of membership.

## CHILDREN

- Children are encouraged to share materials and toys.
- Children are expected to clean up after themselves and we ask that parent/guardian encourage them before leaving the area.
- Children are to keep their hands to themselves and will not tolerate fighting, bullying, wrestling, gunplay or picking up other children.

## **LATE PICK-UP POLICY**

A timely pick-up is essential for a smooth-running Kids' Zone. If your child is not picked up within the designated time frame, you will be considered late. For the first late pick-up, we will provide a friendly reminder about the time frame policy. However, repeated late pick-up after the designated time may result in restricted access to Kids' Zone privileges.

## **CELL PHONE USE**

Transitioning into and out of the Kids' Zone areas can be both overwhelming and exciting for children. As such, we ask that you put your cell phone aside and provide your child with your full attention. The staff may have information to share with you and will need to know that you are available to talk without the distraction of a cell phone. Furthermore, for the safety and privacy of the other children in the program, please refrain from using your cell phone to take photos.

## **ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

The Southeast Ventura County YMCA welcomes all children. We believe all children and families with special needs deserve the opportunity to utilize our Kids' Zone.

- We aim to include children with special needs in activities to the greatest extent possible.
- We work to adapt activities and staffing based on a child's specific needs, within reasonable limits.
- We encourage families to discuss any special needs or accommodation with the Kids' Zone Coordinator or Director, if available.
- A tour of Kids' Zone with your child prior to your first visit is highly recommended. This allows your family to familiarize yourselves with the program and staff, while we learn how to best support your child's participation.
- We strive to provide an inclusive and supportive environment for every child. Although our team is not able to offer one-on-one support, we welcome children to participate alongside their ABA therapist or a qualified support professional. All outside providers must complete required documentation and a background check before attending. For the safety and structure of the program, parents/guardians may not act as one-on-one support providers. Please reach out to our team to learn more about our authorization process.

# SAFETY PROCEDURES

## SIGN IN & SIGN OUT PROCESS

### SIGN IN PROCESS

- Staff greets parent/guardian and asks for their phone number associated with their membership or membership barcode. (Note: Must be 18+ to check a child into Kids' Zone and be on the same membership.)
- Parents/Guardian's photo appears on screen for verification. A photo is required to check children into Kids' Zone. Our staff will take parent/guardians photo if there is no picture on file)
- All children can be signed in on the membership at once or at different times
- Parent/Guardian informs staff of their location within the facility and estimated duration of stay (2-hour max per child per day, can be split).
- Staff will help children get settled in the Kids' Zone.

### SIGN OUT PROCESS

- Parent/Guardian picks up child(ren) and provides their name(s).
- Staff locates the child's profile and verifies parent/guardian's photo.
- Staff announces the departing child(ren) to other staff.
- Staff will complete check-out and share any updates or concerns with the parent/guardian.



## **RATIOS, CAPACITY AND TIME LIMIT:**

### **RATIO AREAS FOLLOWS:**

- 1 staff to 4 (6 weeks – 2 years)
- 1 staff to 14 (2 years – 3 years)

### **KIDS' ZONE DESIGNATED AREAS:**

- Infant Area: Designed for children ages 6 weeks old to 18 months.
- Main Area: For children ages 18 months and older.
- Outdoor Area: All children must be 3 years old or older.

## **WAITLIST SPACE IS LIMITED**

We may not be able to accommodate your child if our room has reached its maximum capacity. This is for the safety of everyone. It is possible that Kids' Zone capacity may be reached on any given day. If this happens you may be put on a waiting list and called when a spot is available.

Families are welcome to bring their children to Kids' Zone for a maximum of two hours a day. These hours do not have to be consecutive; they just cannot exceed two hours per day.

## **BATHROOM AND DIAPER BREAKS**

YMCA staff are not permitted to accompany a child one-on-one for a bathroom break. This policy is to protect both children and staff alike from child abuse and/or false allegations. If a child is having difficulty using the bathroom the parent/guardian will be called upon to return to Kids' Zone to assist their child. YMCA staff members do not change diapers. Parent/Guardians will be called upon to change diapers.

## **CLEANING PROCEDURE**

The health and safety of your child is our top priority. To prevent the spread of germs, we maintain a clean and sanitized environment in the Kids' Zone areas. This includes following strict daily cleaning protocols and requiring our staff to practice frequent and thorough hand washing, both for themselves and the children checked-in Kids' Zone.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT PAPERWORK**

All children being checked into Kids' Zone need to have completed emergency contact paperwork on file in our emergency binder. Please complete the form before your child's/children's first visit. Each child needs to have their own emergency form. Children will not be allowed to check into the Kids' Zone without a completed form on file. Please see Kids' Zone team if you have any questions.

## **INJURIES/ EMERGENCY PROCEDURE**

### **INJURIES**

While we take precautions, minor bumps and bruises can sometimes happen.

- YMCA staff will assess the injuries and provide the necessary first aid.
- 911 will be called if medical attention is immediately needed.
- Parent/Guardian will be notified immediately for major injuries and any injury to the head or notified at sign out for small injuries.
- Parents/Guardian are responsible for all medical treatment costs associated with their child's well-being in the event of an emergency.
- YMCA staff will follow up with parent/guardian to see how the child is doing with any major injury.

## **BITING POLICY**

While biting can sometimes happen in your children's programs, our staff is trained to create a safe and supervised environment to minimize such incidents.

- Parent/Guardian of both children will be notified immediately. Staff will provide appropriate first aid for the bitten child.
- Per the YMCA policy the names of the other child will not be shared to avoid any unnecessary confrontations.

## **CRYING CHILD**

Our YMCA staff is trained to comfort and support children as they adjust to the Kids' Zone environment. However, some children may initially feel overwhelmed or having a bad day.

- YMCA staff will use calming techniques to help children adjust for up to 15 minutes.
- If a child continues to cry after the 15 minutes, staff will contact the parent/guardian to return to Kids' Zone to pick-up child.

## **5-MINUTE TRIAL PERIOD FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS:**

We know dropping off your child can be hard and that is why we have created a 5-minute trial period. This trial period allows your child to have a test run in Kid's Zone where you will drop off your child and staff will be dedicated to helping them have a good and memorable first experience. We will text you within 5 minutes to provide you with updates on your child and let you know how they are doing. Trial periods serve as an excellent introduction to Kid's Zone. Typically, children adapt well during these initial sessions, allowing you to gradually extend their time in Kids' Zone with each visit.

## CHILD HEALTH POLICY

Keeping all participants, members and staff healthy is important to the day-to-day operations of Kids' Zone. A child who is ill may not be checked into Kids' Zone. If a child becomes ill while in Kids' Zone, a staff member will contact the parent/guardian, and request that the child be taken home immediately. A child is considered ill when the following symptoms are present:

### SYMPTOMS:

- Fever (100.4 or higher)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell

### OTHER SYMPTOMS:

- Communicable disease
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Persistent runny nose
- Conjunctivitis
- Pink eye

A doctor's note may be requested to participate in Kids' Zone, in order to protect all members.

## MEDICATION

Only a parent/guardian can administer medications to their children. If your child requires medication, please administer prior to entering the Kids' Zone area and checking-in your child or children. YMCA staff are not permitted to administer any medication or store any medication within the Kids' Zone area. This includes Epi Pens and Inhalers.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

The Southeast Ventura County YMCA prioritizes the safety of all children in our care. All staff members are trained to handle emergencies and follow a comprehensive evacuation plan in the event of an incident requiring us to leave the facility or Kids' Zone.

## **EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

Trained staff will gather all children checked in to Kids' Zone and follow the established emergency action plan. Staff will escort children to the designated evacuation site. The YMCA will not release any children back to parents/guardians care until all staff and children are accounted for and senior leadership has authorized the release. Parent/Guardian are welcome to sit with their children during this time. Our goal is to reunite children with their families as quickly and safely as possible while maintaining a calm and reassuring environment.

## **KIDS' ZONE STAFF**

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

All Kids' Zone staff are required to have current CPR/AED/First Aid certification. They all have passed a criminal records clearance through fingerprinting and background check.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **SIMI VALLEY FAMILY YMCA**

Senior Program Director

Val Ross: [vross@sewymca.org](mailto:vross@sewymca.org) or 805-583-5338 ext. 4005

### **YARROW FAMILY YMCA**

Program Coordinator

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Senior Program Director

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Learn more about the  
Southeast Ventura  
County YMCA impact



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