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YMCA  
Character  
Counts  
Preschool

YMCA Fairgrounds  
585 Rand Drive  
Watertown New York, 13601  
315.755.2005

## USING THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the program's policies and procedures. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transitions between home and school. Daily communications and a sense of trust between parents and teachers are vital.

Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that parents are valued and respected. We expect parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined, provide us with all the necessary information, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns and suggestions about your child's experience and the program. We understand that nothing is more important than your child's early education experiences.

Please come and talk with us should you have any suggestions, questions or concerns.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

YMCA Character Counts Preschool believes that a child's early years of development are of utmost importance. Children develop and learn through play in a safe, secure and nurturing environment. We know each child has an individual style of learning and we will foster their individuality by building their knowledge of learning through implementing age appropriate activities that are fun filled and educational.

Self esteem and self reliance skills are an important aspect in early childhood as well, and we will emphasize those throughout our program. Since children learn through play and discovery, we will provide materials that will promote creativity and stimulate the child's imagination and learning. The Staff will ask students open ended questions and promote age appropriate conversations to foster the children's growth and language development.

Finally, we do believe that it does take a village to raise a child; therefore family participation is very important.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

### ARRIVAL

During arrival it is very important to set up a routine that your family can follow every day. This provides your child with a sense of security. Please keep teachers informed about your child's health, mood, eating habits, family situation or anything you think might affect your child's behavior at school. If your child is having difficulty separating, signal a teacher for assistance. We will call you later if your child is still upset after 15 minutes.

### DEPARTURE

If someone we do not know is scheduled to pick up your child, please inform the teacher. This person must be listed as authorized to pick-up your child on the enrollment paperwork. Remind the authorized person that we will ask for picture identification to ensure your child's safety.

If there are any changes in emergency contact information or individuals who are authorized to pick up your child, please ask to change this on the enrollment form. We strongly encourage families to have at least two (2) authorized people listed.

During departure, we ask that all persons picking up stand in the hallway outside the classroom. A staff member will stand in the door way and dismiss children to the parents directly.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

### Arrival:

Choice Time/Indoor Explorations – Children select from a variety of activity areas including: art, house/dramatic play, reading, building and games and puzzles.

Staff will supervise all areas, assist children with choices when necessary, discuss and motivate cooperation, creativity and peer interactions. They will also encourage children to help keep choice time areas organized and neat.

Group Time – Large group activity which begins the day with introductory of the theme of the week, songs, events of the day, weather and the calendar.

Staff will participate in singing, focus attention on the activity and encourage participation of all children.

Physical Activity – Each child will have a chance to develop their large motor skills as well as social interaction with the other children when playing in the foam pit, yoga and or a varied of coordination skills.

Staff will interact, teach and assist when necessary, while supervising all activities.

Academic – A letter of the alphabet will be introduced weekly. The children will learn to write the letter, learn the sound and words beginning with the letter. Each child will learn to write their name and keep a monthly writing journal.

Staff will teach letter recognition, phonics and assist with writing. Staff will assist with the proper handling of pencils.

Snack – Nutritious snacks are provided for the children. Water, in a small pitcher is placed on each table, as the children learn to pour their own drink.

Staff supervise bathroom, hand-washing and encourage self-help skills while assisting with clean up after snack. Family style snack encourages children to engage in conversation.

Project/Craft – Children will use their fine motor skills as well as listening skills while making a craft to go along with the theme of the week.

Staff will provide assistance and guidance while allowing the children to create their own project.

Circle/Reading – Sing songs, read a book aloud to the children.

Staff will encourage children to participate in singing and discussion. Help focus children on the story. Quietly redirect children. Sing along or teach a finger play.

### **POTTY/TOILET TRAINING POLICY**

The child should be in cloth underwear or pull-ups and not in diapers. We take two scheduled bathroom breaks throughout the day. However if a child asks to go to the bathroom, we will take them. Assistance with hand washing reminders and clothing fastening will be given if necessary.

### **ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

If a child is injured or becomes ill after arriving at school, the parent will be called. The child's registration form requires home, office and emergency phone numbers. It is the parent's responsibility to update the family's emergency contact numbers. If we cannot reach a parent, the emergency contact will be phoned.

If a child needs immediate medical attention, the teacher will call 911, then the parent will be called. If we cannot reach the parent, the emergency contact will be phoned. The teacher who witnessed the emergency situation will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing all the child's forms.

### **GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

Children are re-directed and given choices to encourage appropriate behaviors.

#### Discipline Strategies Used:

Maintaining realistic expectations of children based on knowledge of child development.

- Providing clear and simple limits.
- Planning an environment that facilitates a caring atmosphere.
- Providing appropriate activities that keep children engaged.
- Modeling appropriate and respectful behaviors.
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors toward desired outcomes.
- Giving children choices between two appropriate alternatives.
- Encouraging children to work together to solve problems.
- Encouraging children to use their words to solve problems or to elicit peer cooperation.
- Providing logical and natural consequences for children's actions.
- Guiding children away from the situation until they are able to calm down and address the problem.

When there is an ongoing behavior concern, teachers will contact the child's parents. Communication may be in the form of informal or formal parent-teacher conferences. If a conference is scheduled, the parent and teacher will discuss strategies to promote appropriate behavior and develop a plan for change.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

If you would like your child's birthday to be celebrated, you are welcome to bring a snack to share. Please check with your child's teacher for any food allergies.

## PICTURES

Your child's picture will be taken by the staff and used for crafts that will be sent home. These pictures will not be posted anywhere in the classroom or at the YMCA. This is for craft purposes only. If you have any concerns regarding this procedure, please speak with the teacher.

## EMERGENCY CLOSING

In case of bad weather, please watch for school closings. If Watertown City School District is closed we will also be closed. If Watertown Schools are on a delay we will run as normal.

## SCHEDULED DAYS OFF

At the beginning of the school year you will receive a list of scheduled days off and vacations.

## PROGRAM OPTIONS

5 days: Monday - Friday

3 days: Monday, Wednesday, Friday

2 days: Tuesday & Thursday

## HOURS OF OPERATION

9:00 – 11:30 AM

## AGE OF CHILDREN

Three (3) and Four (4) year olds.

Children must be three (3) by December first.

## RATIO

Our class ratio is 1:6.

Twenty-four children, one teacher and three assistants.

## OUR STAFF

Cindy Moore – Teacher

Jessica Rogers – Assistant

Alessa Gill – Assistant

Shannon Foltz - Assistant

#### CLOSING STATEMENT

Strong home and school environments are essential when building a good foundation for young children. All of our staff will try to do our very best to keep you informed and involved in our preschool program. Clearly, ongoing communication and support from both families and staff make the connection between home and school a two-way street. Please share with us information about your child and report any changes that may affect their mood or behavior.

Anything you share with us will be held in confidence. We hope to nurture mutual trust and respect at every opportunity.

We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing Address:

Cindy Moore

Fairgrounds YMCA

585 Rand Drive

Watertown, New York 13601

Phone Number:

315-755-2005

E-mail Address:

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## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Cynthia Moore

As a young child in school I can remember saying to myself, "If I were a teacher I would never do that to my students!"

My personal philosophy is: to instill good morals and values in all children; respect all children and their families' cultures, ethnicities, race, beliefs and structure; treat each child fairly to ensure that all children feel equally special; remain a lifelong advocator for children; and to maintain a constant fun, loving, safe, and positive environment for each child. I hope the philosophy I have will encourage all families to feel welcome, all children to feel loved and everyone to want to work together as one in order to aid in a child's development.

It all began in kindergarten while attending Henderson Central School in my hometown. The root of my morals and values developed from this period in my life. I remember in school and at home being taught the fundamental values of sharing, caring, listening, trusting and being honest. I learned that lying, stealing, cheating, hitting and disrespecting others were not acceptable behaviors. My elementary school years were a critical time for me to grow and learn much of what I experienced in the classroom and at home influenced how I would develop later and then as the person I am today.

I bring with me the strong moral and ethical values I possess as a person; my patience, love, caring for children, my passion for academics, and my past and personal experiences as a student in a classroom.

I have many fond memories of my elementary school years. On the other hand negative experiences in the classroom have helped shape my beliefs today. At the time I remember experiencing feelings of helplessness, sadness and sometime even shame, today I never want another child to experience that feeling again.

I will strive to have a trusting and open-minded relationship with parents. I will also keep an open mind when dealing with exceptional circumstances, such as a child with a special need or a child that misbehaves frequently. Each family unit varies, so I must be sensitive to an array of circumstances, such as the various formations of a family and structure, a parent's style and beliefs of parenting, a child and families' living situation, and a family's ethnicity and culture. So when views may seem opposite, it's accepting the differences, respecting each other's differences, and working through the differences that will make any school a positive and safe place for the children to learn.