

WATERTOWN FAMILY YMCA CHARACTER COUNTS PRESCHOOL



**Find Your
Community.
Find Your Y.**



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.

We encourage you to share with us any suggestions, questions or concerns you may have.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

WATERTOWN FAMILY 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 encourage 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 PROTOCOLS

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 to the list 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 directly.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Toilet Training Policy: Children should wear cloth underwear or pull-ups, not diapers. We have two scheduled bathroom breaks each day, but children can request to use the bathroom at any time. Assistance with hand washing and clothing fastening will be provided as needed.

Accident and Illness Policies and Procedures: If a child is injured or becomes ill after arriving at school, we will contact the parent immediately. The child's registration form must include home, office, and emergency phone numbers, and it is the parent's responsibility to keep these updated. If we are unable to reach a parent, we will call the emergency contact listed. In case of a medical emergency, 911 will be called first, followed by a call to the parent. The teacher who witnessed the emergency will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing all relevant forms.

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

Discipline strategies include the following:

- 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.

If 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.

Photography: Your child's photo will be taken by the staff and used for crafts that will be sent home. These photos 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 each 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

Preschool Hours of Operation: 8:45 -11:30 AM

Ages of Children: Three (3) and Four (4) year olds.
Children must be three (3) by December first.

Teacher to Child Ratio:

Our teacher to child Ratio is 1:6. Eighteen children, one teacher and two assistants.

Preschool Staff:

Cindy Moore - Teacher
Shannon Foltz - Assistant
Crystal Parson - Assistant

FAIRGROUNDS YMCA

585 Rand Drive
Watertown, NY 13601

For program questions contact:

Cindy Moore, Director, Character Counts Preschool

Email: cmoore@nnyymca.org

Phone: 315.755.2005

WATERTOWN FAMILY YMCA

CHARACTER COUNTS

PRESCHOOL DAILY SCHEDULE

Arrival-Choice Time/Indoor Explorations: Children will 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, and encourage children to help keep Choice Time areas organized and neat.

Group Time: The day begins with a large group activity that introduces the theme of the week, songs, the day's events, weather, and the calendar. Staff will participate in singing, focus attention on the activity, and encourage all children to participate.

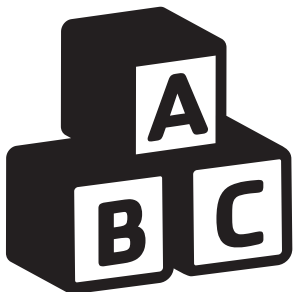
Physical Activity: Each child will have a chance to develop their large motor skills as well as social interaction with the other children while playing various games during gym time. Staff will interact, teach, and assist when necessary, while supervising all activities.

Academic: Each week, a letter of the alphabet will be introduced. The children will learn to write the letter, learn its sound, and identify words that begin with it. Each child will also learn to write their name and maintain a monthly writing journal. Staff will teach letter recognition, phonics, and assist with writing, including proper pencil handling.

Snack: Nutritious snacks are offered to the children, and water is available in a small pitcher, allowing them to practice pouring their own drinks. Staff members oversee bathroom visits, hand-washing, and support the development of self-help skills, while also assisting with clean-up after snack time.

Project/Craft: Children will utilize their fine motor and listening skills while creating a craft that aligns with the weekly theme. Staff will offer assistance and guidance, encouraging each child to express their creativity and complete their own unique project.

Circle/Reading: Staff will sing songs and read books aloud to the children, encouraging their participation in singing and discussion. They will help maintain focus on the story, gently redirecting any distractions, and sing along or teach finger plays to enhance engagement.



A little about the Watertown Family YMCA Character Counts Staff

Cindy Moore, Director, Character Counts Preschool

Hi, my name is Cindy Moore, and I am the Character Counts Preschool director/teacher. I have worked for the YMCA for 27 years. I live in Henderson, N.Y. with my husband. I love spending time and traveling with my grandchildren. I cherish working with young children and watching their eyes light up when they discover something new.

Shannon Foltz

Hello, my name is Ms. Shannon. I have been at Character Counts preschool for 18 years. I grew up in Henderson NY and graduated in the year 2000 from Belleville Henderson Central School. I am a mother of 2. I enjoy reading, writing, collecting unique coffee mugs and attending music festivals in my off time. My favorite color is purple and my favorite food is pickles. I love the Star Wars franchise as well.

Crytsal

Hello, my name is Crystal Parson. I was born and raised here in Watertown, NY. I have 3 daughters Alyssa, Cassidy, and Jacey. I have a grandson, Grayson, who is almost two. I enjoy camping, reading, traveling, and spending time with my family. This is my 3rd year teaching pre-k at character counts and I can say I absolutely love it. You form some amazing bonds with the children everyday.

CLOSING STATEMENT

A strong partnership between home and school is crucial for building a solid foundation for young children. Our staff is committed to keeping you well-informed and actively involved in our preschool program. Effective communication and mutual support from both families and staff are key to creating a successful connection between home and school. Please keep us informed about any changes that might affect your child's mood or behavior.

Rest assured, any information you share with us will be kept confidential. We aim to foster mutual trust and respect at all times. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.