



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

NURTURING EVERY CHILD'S POTENTIAL

Parent Handbook for the Center for Children



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WELCOME TO THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN

We look forward to working with you and your family. This handbook is part of the admission agreement, designed to help inform you of our policies and procedures and help you learn more about our program. Please review, ask questions, and print for future reference. Our program policies and procedures are designed to meet the Kentucky Division of Regulated Child Care licensing requirements. The Center participates in the Kentucky All STARS program and provides a high-quality experience for the children and families we serve.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The program is designed to meet the developmental needs of infants, toddlers, twos, and preschoolers. The curriculum provides experiences that enrich and enhance each child's cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. Within the Center's daily schedule, each child has opportunities to create and learn problem-solving and personal interaction skills. Children develop a positive self-concept through a balance of self- and teacher-directed activities. Opportunities for solitary play as well as group activities are provided. Through play, children learn the vital lessons of managing feelings, emotions, and relationships and cooperating, sharing, and listening to others.

Program Objectives

- Provide a safe, well-supervised childcare program for families.
- Offer quality enrichment activities for children.
- Provide a community not only for the child but the family as well.
- Offer a place where there is a sense of belonging and everyone can succeed.
- Employ staff with a passion for children and learning.

OUR STAFF

We carefully select our staff to provide your child with the best care and education. We employ warm and nurturing people who understand child development, can apply their knowledge in the classroom, and respect each child as an individual. We seek employees who value working as a team with parents and colleagues. Each staff person has a state-required background check and TB screening, and MMR immunizations. Each staff person is required to complete a state-approved orientation program, First Aid and CPR certification, Child Abuse Prevention and Recognition, and Pediatric Abusive Head Trauma training. Continuing education is important for all YMCA employees. Staff attend at least 15 hours of training per year in areas such as age-specific curriculum development, child development, communicable disease, teaching methods, physical activities, social emotional learning, special needs, and child nutrition. The Center provides two professional development days each year, and staff gain additional hours in online classes, face-to-face training, and community early childhood events. Many staff are also continuing their education by working toward their next college degree.

Goals for Staff:

Serve as positive role models and provide supportive, nurturing, warm, and responsive care to each child's needs

Respect parents as the primary and most important provider of care. We believe parents and teachers are partners in each child's care and education.

Seek to expand each child's potential by providing a creative environment for young children to develop individual capacities socially, intellectually, physically, and emotionally.

ADMISSIONS

Children are admitted to the program according to partnership priority and in the order in which their registration form and fee are received. Children and grandchildren of Lexmark employees and retirees receive priority enrollment. A waiting list is maintained when the Center/age group is full. A futures list is maintained for infants when parents are expecting or on leave. The Center does not discriminate in the enrollment of children based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, special needs, or economic status.

When a space is available, families are invited to attend an intake visit in which they will:

- Meet the teachers, visit the classroom, and learn about our program, policies, and procedures.
- Review the necessary enrollment paperwork.
- Schedule the child's beginning date and discuss a developmentally appropriate transition plan.

Required paperwork includes:

- Enrollment Form
- Pet Consent
- Developmental History
- Current Immunization or Medical Declination form (EPID-230A)
- Additional paperwork deemed necessary

All paperwork and immunization certificates must be kept up to date.

ENROLLMENT AND TUITION

Hours of Operation/Holidays

The Center is open Monday – Friday from 7:15 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. The Center is closed on major holidays such as:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the following day
- Christmas Eve, Christmas Day plus additional days around the Christmas holiday

The holiday closing schedule and two professional development days for the following year will be posted before the end of the current year. Around holidays, you may be asked for your child's schedule so that we can plan for the appropriate amount of food and allow staff the opportunity for additional time off with their families.

Immunizations

All children must have a current immunization certificate on file, updated as needed from the examination date. A provisional certificate is required if the immunization certificate expires before the child's next immunization appointment. If a parent declines immunization for their child, they must provide a medical declination form from the child's physician or local health department.

Staff Ratio

The staff-to-child ratio is an important factor in quality care for children. The Center meets or exceeds the adult-to-child ratio guidelines set by the Kentucky Division of Regulated Child Care.

Age Group	Age Range	Ratio	Class Size
Infants	Six weeks – 12 months	1:4	8
Toddlers	12 – 24 months	1:6	12
Twos	24 – 36 months	1:7	14
Preschool	3 – 4 ½ years	1:11	22
Kindergarten Prep	4 years by August 1	1:12	24

Tuition

Tuition is due on the 25th of the month before the month of care through a pre-authorized electronic funds transfer. For example, February tuition is due on January 25th.

It is important to notify the Center leadership team if there is a change in payment method or account at least 7 days before the tuition draft date. A Change of Information Form must be completed authorizing the change. A \$25 fee will be assessed if tuition fees are returned due to insufficient funds. Failure to keep the account current may result in dismissal.

Tuition amount is set according to age group and is not reduced due to illness, absences, holidays, professional development days, or Center closings due to inclement weather or emergency closings. Tuition is required to hold a child's space in the program. The tax ID number and tax statements will be furnished upon request.

A non-refundable re-enrollment fee is due each year in August.

Arrival, Departure, and Emergency Contacts

Procedure ensuring that staff are aware of who is present: All children are to be escorted to and from their classroom or outdoor area and left in or taken from the care of one of the teachers. Families must sign their child in and out of the center each day on the iPads in the lobby. Children should always be in sight of the adult dropping off or picking up the child.

Procedure for releasing a child to persons other than the parent or guardian:

Children will be allowed to leave the Center only with custodial parents and guardians or adults designated on the Enrollment Form. Please inform nonparents/guardians that they will be asked for photo identification until they are recognizable to the staff. Families must provide written notification to the Center Leadership if their child is going to be picked up by someone other than those listed on the Emergency Contact form. We will not release your child to any person unless that person's name is on the pick-up list or with written authorization to add someone to the pick-up list. In case of emergency, when prior written authorization is not provided, the parent must speak directly to a leadership team member.

Adults Under the Influence

Children will not be released to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol and unable to supervise the child safely. The other parent/guardian or emergency contact will be contacted to pick up the child. Law enforcement may be contacted if the adult is aggressive, threatening, or refuses alternative pickup.

Closing and Late Fee

The Center closes at 5:45 p.m. If you arrive after 5:45 p.m., you will be charged a late fee of \$20 per occurrence for each child. Staff members are scheduled to work until 5:45 p.m. and often have commitments outside their working hours. Families should allow enough time to pick up their child from the classroom or playground, gather personal belongings and exit the building by 5:45 p.m. We will sympathize with any explanations, such as flat tires or traffic jams, but unfortunately, we must charge you the late fee regardless of the reason. Late pick-up should be a rare occurrence; repeated violations may result in the termination of the family from our program. If a child has not been picked up by 6:45 p.m., with no response from the parents or guardian or designated emergency contacts, then staff will notify the local Child Protective Services agency.

Withdrawal Notice

A 30-day written notice is required before withdrawal. Tuition is due for the 30 days following this notice, regardless of your child's attendance during this time. If you withdraw your child from the Center and reenroll at a later date, a new registration fee will be due.

OPERATIONS

Attendance

Please call the Center if your child will be absent. Teachers and the kitchen will be notified so they do not expect your child on that day. You may also use the family communication app to mark your child absent.

Transportation

The Center does not provide transportation to or from the Center. All families are required to drop off and pick up their children within the hours of operation.

Parking

Parking in front of the building is intended for families for easy drop-off and pick-up. Watch for children in the parking lot when pulling in or leaving. Vehicles should enter on the right side of the building and exit on the left. Parking is prohibited in front of the dumpsters or the service delivery area. Visitors may use the front parking spaces or the lot across the street. For the health and safety of our children and property protection, please turn your car off when coming into the building. Please do not allow your car to idle in the parking lot.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Safety Guidelines

- No child will ever be left alone or unsupervised. All children are always within sight and sound of a staff member.
- Upon arrival and departure, a staff member greets or acknowledges each child as he/she comes and goes.
- Parents are responsible for accompanying their children to the classroom.
- Please ensure the teacher has acknowledged you and your child and takes note of your child's arrival and departure before leaving.

- Staff always have immediate access to a phone. Telephones are in the offices of each of the leadership team members, the kitchen, and the classrooms. Communication to and from the playgrounds is also in place in the form of intercoms and iPads.
- An Ouch Report will be completed by the childcare staff member in charge of the child in case of an accident or Injury requiring first aid.

Open Door Policy

Families are welcome to visit their child at the Center anytime between 7:15 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. Some children have trouble separating from family members following visits. You can plan your visit with your child's teacher to help create a smoother departure. Conversations with family members are valuable to us and informal times to connect can be very helpful to both teachers and families. However, the teachers' first priority must be the supervision and safety of children in their care. If you would like more time to speak with a teacher you are encouraged to request a conference or phone call so we can schedule the teacher out of the classroom.

Visitors/Volunteers

All non-custodial parents/guardians are required to sign in with the office staff before visiting/observing a classroom. Occasionally, the Center may invite volunteers in the community to enhance the program's curriculum. In this situation, all families will be informed of the visit and asked to sign a permission form before the visitor's arrival. Ratios will be maintained, and Center staff will always be present with the children throughout the visit.

Service Providers (DI, OT, PT, SLP)

Service providers are welcome and often encouraged to observe or work with a child in the classroom or other spaces in the center. Before the first visit, families must complete a *Therapist/Medical Profession/Tutor Release Form* with the name of the person visiting. Service providers often interact with a child for evaluation, assessment, or therapy. A *Sharing Your Child's Information Release* is required before a staff member can discuss your child with the service provider.

Child Abuse

As Mandated Reporters, YMCA staff members must legally report any suspected abuse or neglect. Staff are trained to recognize and report signs of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect and have a legal obligation to question bruises, marks, etc. Please understand that our concern is for the child and we do not determine whether abuse has or has not occurred; it is simply our role to report any suspicions based on training as we are required to do by law. Reports are made directly to the appropriate services and the rights and confidentiality of both the reporter and the child will be maintained throughout any investigation. Details will only be shared with law enforcement, child protective services, or the child's family as appropriate.

Child Custody

All parents and guardians are welcome in our Center and leadership and staff, will remain neutral in all custody disputes. The Center staff will only deny a parent or guardian access to his or her child with a legally binding custody order, restraining order, or court-ordered visitation order. Because the Center must remain a safe place for all children and staff, the Center cannot be used as a place for scheduled visitation, nor can staff be responsible for supervising parent or guardian visitations. Please ensure we are fully informed of any issues of child custody that may affect us. Parents must agree on who can pick the child up and what days and times.

All custody issues and legal documents should be discussed with the Center Director and a copy placed in the child's file. The YMCA will only allow one person to be financially responsible for the tuition account.

Illness and Communicable Diseases

While we understand and respect a family's need for care, occasions arise when children become ill at the Center and must be sent home. We will make every effort not to send children home who are mildly ill, but for the comfort of the child who is sick and for the health and safety of his or her classmates, it is possible that we will have to exclude your child for illness. In these cases, the Center's leadership will use their best judgment to determine when a child needs to be sent home. While many factors can influence this decision, the common reasons a child might need to be excluded from care are below. These include if the child:

- Cannot participate comfortably in the activities of the day or requires a greater need for care than staff can provide without compromising the care of other children.
- Runs a fever of 100.4°F (by any method) with a behavioral change (or 100.4°F in infants with or without a behavior change).
- Vomits more than two times in 24 hours
- Experiences diarrhea, which is not caused by a change in diet or medication, or the stool cannot be contained in the diaper or is causing the child to have accidents.
- Poses a risk of contagion to other children.

If Center leadership determines your child must be sent home, we ask that you pick up your child for the day within 1.5 hours of the notice or sooner, depending on the child's symptoms and health. Upon pick up, you can expect a written notification of your child's symptoms and the criteria for returning to the center. To return to the Center, a child must:

- Be able to participate fully in the day's activities, including going outdoors.
- Be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Be free of other symptoms, such as vomiting and diarrhea, for 24 hours.
- Or have a note stating that he or she is not contagious provided by a physician (who is not a family member).

Please know that this is not an exhaustive list and criteria for returning may depend on the child's illness and recommendations by the health department. See Center leadership if you have questions about a specific illness or symptom. If your child has a diagnosed illness, we ask that you notify Center leadership so that precautions can be taken in the classroom, if needed and information (while maintaining your and your child's confidentiality) can be shared with other families in your child's classroom about the illness, symptoms to look for, and any possible control measures.

The Center is required to report specific diagnosed communicable diseases to the local health department and Division of Regulated Child Care.

During increased illness or outbreaks, the Center may require a minimum of 48-hour exclusion for illness to help slow the transmission and ensure children are well enough to return and are less likely to spread the illness upon their return. The Center may need to close classrooms with increased illnesses in both children and staff to help slow the transmission and provide time for additional classroom cleaning and disinfecting.

Medical Procedures and Emergency Room Visits

After a medical procedure, surgery, orthopedic injury, emergency room visit, or other serious illness, the parent must provide a statement by the child's health care provider stating the child can return to childcare and is fully able to participate in daily activities. If the child has medical restrictions, please speak with Center leadership to determine if the restriction can be accommodated during the recovery period.

Medication

When medication is needed, it is always best to speak with your child's physician to determine a dosing schedule that can be administered at home. If it is impossible to provide dosages at home, the Center will work with you to administer medications as needed.

Parents are always welcome to administer medication to their child at the center if the medication is not meant to mask a symptom that would exclude the child from the center and the parent keeps the medication with him or her. If the child's physician states that a medication is needed during childcare hours and the parent cannot come to the center to administer the medication, the center Director or designee can be authorized to administer the medication. Prescription medications must be in the original container with the label from the pharmacy and include the child's full name, name of medication, precise dose, dosing instructions and must be current. The dosing cup, syringe, and implement must be labeled with the child's full name. Medication can't be administered in a bottle, cup or in food without specific orders from the child's physician. All medications shall be handed directly to the Center Director or designee in the office and never taken into the classroom. The first dosage of any new medicine must always be given at home.

Please remember that we give medication as a special service to the parents and children. Parents are expected to complete the appropriate forms and drop off and pick up medicine daily. If documentation is on file requiring a life-saving medication, such as an Epi-Pen or inhaler, the medication must be at the center for us to care for the child. These types of medications can be left at the center with proper documentation. The Center does not allow children to self-medicate, including inhalers. We reserve the right to ask your child's doctor the purpose for which the medication is being used. We cannot accept medication delivery if there are any items uncompleted on the form, even if we don't give the medication if we have it on the premises, it violates licensing regulations.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

Parents should apply sunscreen on their children before coming to the center. The staff will reapply lotion or stick sunscreen, at the parent's request, throughout the day if the parent has completed a *Sunscreen Permission Form*. Each child's sunscreen must be labeled with the child's full name and not be expired. A new form will be needed for each new container of sunscreen. Aerosol or spray sunscreen is not allowed. Each child must have their own bottle of sunscreen that is kept in their classroom so that teachers have easy access. Siblings may not share sunscreen unless they are in the same classroom.

If you would like for insect repellent to be applied it must be in the original container, labeled with the child's first and last name, not be expired, and be accompanied by an *Authorization to Apply Insect Repellent Form*. Please be aware of any warnings on the label. Staff cannot wash the insect repellent product off of children when they come inside. No aerosol products can be applied.

Handwashing

Frequent handwashing with soap and warm water for at least 30 seconds is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illness. Children should be assisted in and taught proper handwashing. At the center, children wash their hands when entering the classroom in the morning, after diapering or using the toilet, before and after meals, and when coming inside from the playground, and at other times during the day. Families can help children stay healthy by following a similar routine at home. Staff are also trained on handwashing and are expected to wash hands at appropriate times during the day. Parents are encouraged to assist their children with handwashing when entering the classroom each morning.

Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting Procedures

Cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting are important steps to removing dirt and reducing the spread of germs in child care settings. Routine cleaning with soap and water removes dirt and grime from surfaces. Sanitizing and disinfecting remove germs. Bathrooms, kitchen counters, dishes, and eating utensils are cleaned and sanitized. Some childcare surfaces require the added step of cleaning and disinfecting to kill additional germs. Diaper changing tables, hand washing sinks, table tops, and some toys should be cleaned and then disinfected. Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures are posted in each classroom. Many cloth toys can be safely laundered in the washing machines.

A commercial cleaning company cleans the building each evening.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency Contact Information

We must always be able to contact at least one parent or emergency contact when your child is at the center. Someone should be available to pick up your child in case of an emergency. Please notify us in writing when there is a change of address, telephone number, or place of employment or training. Notify the center in advance of any temporary changes to the child's emergency contact person (i.e., parents traveling, relatives staying with the child, change in custody).

Emergency Transportation

In the case of a life-threatening illness, such as difficulty breathing, seizure, or the unlikely event of a severe injury, the Center will call 911 and then the parents or emergency contacts. If emergency medical personnel determine the child should be transported to the hospital, and the parents or emergency contact have not arrived, a staff member will go to the designated emergency facility with the child and will take the child's records. The parents will be called to meet the child and the staff person at the hospital, and the staff person will remain at the hospital until the parent arrives.

General Emergencies

Families will be notified to pick up their children if an emergency requires the building to be closed or evacuated. In situations such as fire, flood, natural disaster, loss of electricity, heat, or water a determination will be made to evacuate the children to another location or remain onsite until children can be picked up. Parents will be notified to pick up their children as indicated in the Emergency Disaster Preparedness Plan (located at the end of the handbook). The center will follow guidance from the local health department, emergency management, Division of Regulated Child Care and law enforcement.

Emergency Closings Due to Weather

We will make every effort to keep the center open. In inclement weather and/or hazardous driving conditions, the center may have a delayed opening, close early, or close for the day. The decision will be made by 6:00 a.m. regarding closing or delaying the opening. If the decision is made to close the center early, families will be given as much notice as possible. Closures and delays will be communicated through the family communication app.

Although we make every effort to open on time, we want our staff to be able to arrive safely and this may make their usual commute longer. The center cannot accept children if staff-child ratios cannot be maintained. If parents arrive before there is adequate staffing, they can stay at the center and play with their child until staff arrive or the decision is made to close the center. If possible, delay your own arrival on severe weather/driving days to allow staff time to get to the center. Many of our staff drive in from other counties to work at the center and traffic conditions can be much worse outside of Lexington.

On-site Evacuation

In case of fire, smoke, or natural disaster, children and staff will move out of the building to designated areas on the property. Staff and children will exit their classrooms using the closest exterior doors. Infants will be placed in evacuation cribs or carried out of the building. Administrative staff will be assigned to help evacuate toddlers and children with special needs.

Infants, toddlers, and Kindergarten Prep classes will walk on the sidewalk to the far side of the parking lot, nearest the FCPS building. Twos and Preschool classes walk to the back of the property, through the emergency gate, and down the walkway next to the Twos playground. If children are on the Twos or Preschool playgrounds, they will go to the walkway next to the Twos playground. A classroom in a movement area or interior playground will be evacuated through the closest exterior door. The staff will wait with the children for further instructions. In most cases, the fire department will be dispatched and will make the determination when/if it is safe to reenter the building.

Off-site Evacuation Locations and Procedures

Scenarios for moving children to off-site locations, including the FCPS building and YMCA locations, are unlikely but could include a gas or water main break, train derailment, or chemical spill requiring evacuation. The Center administrators will work with Fayette County Emergency Management, the Lexington police department, and the Lexington fire department to determine the need to relocate and for assistance in transporting children and staff.

The Director or other administrative staff will notify families about the need to relocate via emergency alert, phone, or email. Families close by will be asked to pick up immediately to reduce the number of children needing to be relocated. Staff and remaining children will be transported as safely as possible. Infants will be placed in their car seat if available. Families will be notified of the location for reunification and asked to pick up as quickly as possible, and within 60 minutes. As families arrive to pick up children, staff will check them out in the app or on paper if the app is not functioning.

Reunification locations:

John D. Price Fayette County School Administration Building, 450 Park Place, Lexington (next door to the Center)

Children and staff will walk to the FCPS building. This scenario could be due to fire, damage to the building, or incoming extreme weather.

North Family YMCA, 381 West Loudon Ave, Lexington (walk 1.1 mile, drive 1.6 miles)

If the area around the Center needs to be evacuated, staff and children will be transported or will walk to the YMCA via the Lexmark Property. Evacuation cribs and 4-passenger buggies will be used if walking.

Whitaker Family YMCA 2681 Old Rosebud Road, Lexington, Hamburg Area (6 miles)

If the area around the Center and North Family YMCA is unsafe, children and staff will be transported to the Whitaker Family YMCA for reunification with their families. The best route will be determined based on the traffic situation.

Shelter-in-Place

If an emergency, such as a tornado warning or chemical spill, requires shelter-in-place, children and staff will remain inside the building. Children will be brought inside and moved to areas without windows or away from windows and doors. The exterior front doors may be locked if the shelter-in-place situation requires it. Families will be notified that the center is in a shelter-in-place status and when it is safe to enter the building.

Lockdown

The Center will go into a lockdown status in response to situations in the immediate area of the facility. This may include armed or dangerous individuals in the area, a large police presence, or a hostile individual in or near the center. All

children will be brought into the building from the playgrounds, and the front doors will be locked. Children will be moved to different areas of the building as needed. Depending on the situation, we may only allow law enforcement to enter the building during a lockdown to ensure the building remains secure. Law enforcement may require parents to wait off-site until the area is secure.

Communication and Reunification

Families will be notified of emergencies as quickly as possible. Our primary form of communication with families is the family communication app via text alerts and messaging. If Internet and/or cell service are down, we will contact families by phone or other means. Phone calls will come from unknown numbers. Please answer all calls during an emergency.

During the emergency, the safety of the children is the first priority. Staff may not be available to answer the phone, respond to messages, or allow entry into the building. Please refrain from contacting staff to ask for updates. Information will be sent to all families as it becomes available and when safe to do so. If the situation requires children to be picked up from the center or an off-site location, please do so as quickly as possible and within 60 minutes of the notification. Children will be released to authorized individuals listed on the enrollment paperwork. Parents/guardians may verbally add an authorized pick-up person by speaking with an administrator and following up with an email or message. Photo Identification will be checked for the newly authorized person.

Community Partners

In all emergencies, the Center will work with law enforcement, fire and rescue, and emergency management to determine the safest response. Every situation is unique and will require a different type of response. If transportation is needed, Fayette County Emergency Management will make the arrangements.

For contact information and off-site evacuation addresses, see the Family Information for Reunification document in the parent handbook addendum. This document is also posted on the Center's Information Board next to the front desk.

Drills

The Center holds monthly and quarterly drills to allow staff and children to practice emergency procedures in a safe and calm environment. Fire drills are held monthly, and children are escorted to designated spaces outdoors. The fire alarm sounds during drills to help children get used to the loud noise and know what to do. If you arrive during a fire drill, please remain with your car until the drill ends and children return to their classroom or playground. Lockdown, Shelter-In-Place, Earthquake, and Tornado drills are practiced quarterly. If you arrive during one of these drills, please wait in the lobby or outside of the classroom until the group finishes the drill and the children return to play.

A plan is posted in each classroom indicating staff responsibilities in case of fire emergencies and severe weather.

Security

All exterior doors to the Center are locked, except for the front outer doors during operating hours. These doors automatically unlock and lock at opening and closing. Only parents and staff have access to enter the second set of doors. All visitors, including people who are authorized to pick up children, must be given access by a staff member. Please do not allow anyone unfamiliar to follow you through the door. If you see someone waiting to enter or you have a safety concern, please notify a member of the leadership team. While Center leadership always tries to have someone at the front desk, they often need to leave the area to take care of other situations in the building. Parents without their key fob and visitors will need to wait in the vestibule until a staff member is available to open the doors.

All families, staff, and visitors must enter and exit through the front doors. The back-service entrance is intended for deliveries and should not be used as an entrance or exit. The gates to the playground are alarmed and are to be used only in emergencies.

FOOD PROGRAM

Meals

Every child will be provided a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. Meals are carefully planned to provide children with the necessary nutritional components following the state licensing regulations. Menus are posted weekly and emailed to families via the family communication app. Children and teachers eat in the classroom and meals are served family style. Outside food is not permitted in the classrooms except for infants. This important rule protects children who may have food allergies and helps the center promote healthy food choices. If your child arrives at the center after mealtime, ensure they have eaten before arriving. Each classroom's meal schedule is posted on the Family Board inside the classroom. If unsure of the mealtime, please call the Center.

Milk will be served with breakfast and lunch and water is served for snacks. Children 12 months to 24 months are served pasteurized whole milk and children 24 months and older are served pasteurized skim milk or 1% milk. Safe drinking water will always be available and accessible to the children. Parents may request and provide an approved milk substitute with proper documentation. Children can only be provided water in place of milk or milk alternatives with documentation from a healthcare provider.

Food Allergies

If your child has allergies to food (such as peanut, dairy or wheat) or special dietary restrictions due to a medical condition, please let us know and fully disclose this information on the registration forms. A written physician statement and a description of the expected allergic reaction and treatment procedures to follow (i.e., use of Epi-pen, etc.) will be required. If the physician's statement lists an Epi-pen or other life-saving medication, the medication must be at the Center for the child to attend on any given day. Suspected allergies or food intolerances do not require a physician's statement, but families will be asked to complete a *Suspected Allergy/Food Intolerance Form*. A system is in place to ensure that children always receive the correct food. This system includes colored bowls and plates, color-coded placemats and a chart with your child's name, picture, and allergy information. These charts are posted visibly in the classrooms and kitchen, and a copy is kept in the office. To eliminate the food restriction, the Center must have a signature from a parent/guardian and/or physician. The Center leadership and Chef will work with you to determine if your child's allergy/diet needs can be accommodated.

The Center is a nut-safe facility. Nuts are not used in any meals or snacks. Please do not bring, or allow your child to bring in, any items that contain nuts into the Center. For the safety of the children in our center, we do not allow outside food inside the classrooms.

Food Preferences

Special meal requests for cultural, religious, or dietary reasons will be considered. Families should discuss these requests with the Center Director and complete a *Food Preference Form*. The Center Chef will provide vegetarian options or substitutes for meat, fish, eggs, and cheese. Milk alternatives (that are nut-safe) are permitted and will be provided by the family. Families may need to discuss alternatives with the Center Chef for additional substitutions. All outside food must be approved by the kitchen staff and stored in the kitchen.

Special Occasions such as Birthdays and Holidays

We are committed to providing children with healthy food options at the center. For this reason, and due to allergies, we do not allow sugary treats or other food items into the classroom. While one cupcake does not seem like a big deal, it becomes an issue when the child is not hungry for dinner and misses an opportunity for healthy, nutritious food later in the day. We always want parents to know that their child was served nutritious food at the center so they can decide on what to offer their child in the evening. Please speak to your child's teacher about ways to celebrate your child's birthday or a family custom without food. Allowing children to bring in special napkins to use with the afternoon snack, donating a special book to the classroom, or providing an approved activity can be a way to celebrate your child's birthday.

Programing

Daily Routine

A consistent daily routine is important for all children. Developing a daily routine with your child can make drop-offs and departures go more smoothly. Reading a book together in the lobby or visiting a hallway activity can help some children transition from home and family members to friends and the classroom. When arriving at the classroom children will place personal items away in their cubby, wash their hands, and find an activity or join a group of children. You may want to speak with your child's teacher and help your child engage in an activity or join the breakfast table before leaving.

If your child has difficulty saying goodbye, the teachers are happy to help and can give ideas to make parting easier. Let the teachers know you are ready to leave or when you need help. Please don't leave without saying goodbye to your child, even if there are tears. Teachers will help your child calm down and engage in an activity. Don't hesitate to call us at any time to reassure yourself of how your child is doing. You must have a good day, too!

Please do not drop off your child in an empty classroom. If a teacher is not present, bring your child to the front desk, and we will help you locate your child's group.

Outdoor Play

Children go outside to play each day, weather permitting. Staff will use the Child Care Weather Watch chart to determine safe outdoor temperatures, including wind chill and heat advisory information. During inclement weather, play will be redirected to vigorous activities in the gross motor areas or classrooms. We will provide opportunities for light, moderate, and vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes daily while children are in our care.

Please provide clothing appropriate for outdoor play. This may include a hat, mittens or gloves, a coat with a working zipper (no drawstrings), and boots or extra shoes. We strongly encourage children to wear tennis shoes or other closed-toe and closed-back shoes to protect their feet and help prevent tripping in the classroom and on the playground. Sandals, crocs and slides do not protect the feet and can be a safety hazard when running and climbing.

All children should have the opportunity to go outside daily, and unfortunately, there is no option for a teacher to remain inside with an unwell child. Therefore, it is expected that if a child is at the Center, they are well enough to go outdoors.

Nap Time

Toddlers, Twos, and Preschoolers will have a rest/nap time each afternoon after lunch. Each child has an assigned cot, and we ask that you bring a small blanket. You may also bring a soft toy or pillow to help your child nap. We encourage children to rest and lie quietly. After an appropriate length of time, children who have rested but not fallen asleep will be offered quiet activities to do on their cot. It is important that all children learn to be quiet during this time to allow their

classmates to sleep. Blankets and pillows will be laundered at the center or may be taken home each week. Infants will transition to a cot once they have turned twelve months to help their transition to the Toddler classroom.

Personal Items

Dress your child for school in comfortable, washable play clothes that he/she can manage in the bathroom. Children will get messy and dirty as they learn about their world, and they have a variety of materials that they experiment with. Spoiled clothing will be put in your child's cubby to be picked up at the end of the day. Please bring a fresh set of clothing for the next day.

Toys from Home

In older age groups, children often want to bring items from home. Unless it is a comfort or nap time item, we strongly discourage additional toys from being brought into the Center. In Preschool and Kindergarten Prep, teachers do allow children to bring in items for educational purposes on specific days such as Share Day. With the number of children in the room and other available materials, additional personal items become hard to keep track of and can cause issues between children. Children are used to sharing items in their classroom and don't understand when they cannot see or play with a new toy. Children who bring the toy often want to play with it but do not want other children to touch it or play with it, causing many issues. Toys from home can also become lost or broken, put in the wrong child's cubbie, or mistakenly taken home by another child. Technology and toys representing weapons are never allowed. Please keep jewelry, makeup, money, candy and chewing gum at home or in the car.

Diapering Procedure

In general, you can count on your child's diaper being checked at least every two hours to see if a change is appropriate. In addition, diapers are checked before or after meals, sleeping, and before or after moving to another area. When the aroma in the classroom indicates that a child needs diapering attention, immediate attention is provided. If you desire any special attention or instructions to be followed, please provide those to us. Diapers and wipes should have the child's name on the container/package when brought to the Center.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is an ongoing process; children will learn this skill at different rates. While this process may be different for all families, it is a goal for our Center that children transitioning from Twos to Preschool are mostly, if not fully potty-trained. Therefore, the conversations about potty-training between parents and teachers must occur in the Twos classroom so they can develop a plan that provides the child with consistency between home and the Center. Some factors that may play a role in your child's readiness to begin potty training are how long they can stay dry, their ability to remove clothing, their interest, and their ability to communicate the need to go to the bathroom. It is common for a child to be more successful at home than at the Center as there are many children and activities, so be prepared for occasional accidents. Our teachers are invested in helping you and your child through this process, but it takes joint effort. We will never force a child who is protesting to sit on the toilet.

Screen Time

Children learn by being active, for this reason, we limit screen time for children two years and up to the classroom computers and occasional Smart Board, laptop, or tablets for educational purposes. Children under two years do not participate in any screen time.

Positive Guidance and Discipline

The goal of discipline in our Center is to help children learn how to control their feelings and behaviors in ways that are appropriate for the child's age and development. As much as possible, children will be supported in problem-solving with their peers and in situations that may arise in the classroom. Teachers will use several strategies, including but not limited to redirection, natural or logical consequences, and helping children to express their feelings. Teachers will support

children in treating one another kindly by teaching them appropriate and constructive language to use, appropriate touch, sharing, and safety practices.

In case of physical aggression, a child may have to be removed from the classroom for the safety of other children. In this instance, the child's family will be called, and they may be asked to visit the center or take their child home for the day. If physical aggression (such as biting, hitting, kicking, or other unacceptable behaviors) persists, families will be asked to participate in a meeting with the child's teacher and the Center's leadership team to develop a plan for improvement. If the plan is implemented and an appropriate length of time passes with no improvement, the family may be asked to find other childcare arrangements.

Children need to remain with their group and teacher during the day. Children transition throughout the day to different spaces and are taught and reminded that they cannot leave their classroom, gross motor areas, or playgrounds without a teacher. They also cannot run from their teacher during emergency drills or walks. If a child repeatedly tries to leave the group, runs from their teacher, or refuses to move with the group a meeting will be scheduled with the family to put a plan in place to change the behavior. If improvement is not seen the child may be dismissed from the program. The same rule applies when children are with their family members. They should always be with an adult in the hallways when entering and exiting the building.

Communication

The Center utilizes a family communication app for daily communication with families. With this app, you can expect information and photographs regarding your child's care and learning experiences throughout the day as appropriate for the age group. Teachers also use the Teaching Strategies GOLD program in which observations of children and their work are linked with developmental objectives. These observations are shared with families throughout the year and are used to create a comprehensive overview of the child's development in bi-annual parent-teacher conferences.

Weekly Center updates are sent to families each Friday or Monday, listing upcoming events, reminders, new and departing staff members, vacation schedules, center closings, and the menu. Additional communication specific to one or more age groups will be sent to families as needed.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to get to know each other better and to promote a closer working relationship between home and the Center. Individual conferences will be scheduled twice a year and at transitions. Additional conferences may be scheduled at any time by either the parents or the teacher. If you have any questions concerning your child, you are invited to set up an appointment for a conference. By scheduling a time when the teacher is not responsible for the children in the classroom, she can give you her full attention. Please be sensitive and do not talk about concerns in front of children.

Assessment

The Center uses the Brigance Early Childhood Screener and Teaching Strategies GOLD to assess each child's development and progress. Newly enrolled children will receive an initial Brigance screening within 90 days of enrollment and as needed. Parents will be notified within 30 days if a formal evaluation is recommended. Teachers use Teaching Strategies GOLD to assess children and their developmental milestones continuously. Teachers will share this information with families during conferences.

Service and Education Plans

If your child has an Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP) from First Steps or the school district, please provide a copy to the Center. Teachers will use the plans to provide consistency between home and Center and make classroom accommodations as appropriate.

Transitioning to a New Age Group

Because we believe that a smooth transition can be a key factor to a child's success, we have a detailed policy in place for all transitions, including entering into the program, changing classrooms within the program, and leaving the program.

When enrolling in the Center, families are encouraged to visit with their child in the classroom in which the child will be enrolled. While this is not required, we have seen that it helps the child's transition into a new classroom go more smoothly.

If children are leaving our program for any reason (i.e. starting kindergarten, moving away, etc.), we encourage families to talk about it with their child ahead of time so that he or she has time to prepare for their transition and say goodbye to their friends and teachers.

When it is time for a child to move up to the next age group, families will be given a tentative date and the option to schedule a transition conference. The conference will include the child's current and new teachers. This is a great time to share information about your child's development and goals and learn about the new classroom routine, schedule, and curriculum goals. Depending on the child, a transition schedule will be developed to support the child in the classroom change.

CURRICULUM

The Center uses the Creative Curriculum program for creating and implementing engaging and developmentally appropriate lesson plans every week. In all age groups, lesson plans are developed based on observations of the children's interests and skills. While teachers ensure that children are learning skills in science, math, language, literacy, as well as social-emotional skills, they do so in a way that seeks to engage the whole child through play-based learning. Check out the documentation boards throughout the Center to see how learning objectives are supported through play.

AGE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Infant Program

Infants will receive individual attention throughout the day and are cared for according to their individual schedules. Our goal is to partner with parents to provide consistency for schedules and routines between home and the Center. Infants eat, sleep, and play according to their own needs. Parents will provide information about the child's night and morning and the teachers will provide information to the parents each day on the child's day and routines.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy

Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Infants are moved to their cribs if they fall asleep anywhere other than their crib. The classroom is kept at a comfortable temperature throughout the day and the only items allowed in the crib while an infant is sleeping are a firm mattress, a fitted sheet, and a pacifier. Infants who arrive at their classroom asleep in a car seat carrier will immediately be placed in their crib so parents can take the car seat to the storage area. If a child has a medical condition and the child's physician recommends a different sleep position, the parents should speak with the Director to complete paperwork for a Special Care Plan. The Director will determine if the accommodation can be made.

Swaddlers and Sleep Sacks

A physician's statement is required for infants to be swaddled during naps. The statement must include that the infant should sleep in a Swaddler and a time frame noting when the Swaddler should be used. For example, Charlie Smith should sleep in a Swaddler until 4 months of age. Arm-free sleep sacks are acceptable if used according to the manufacturer's guidelines. Weighted sleep sacks, sleepers and blankets are not allowed.

Infant Feeding

Infants will be fed according to the schedule provided by the parents and by the infant's individual needs. Bottles containing breastmilk or formula will be provided by parents each day and must be fully prepared, capped, labeled with the child's first and last name, dated with the current date and placed in the refrigerator each morning. Breastmilk bottles will be labeled with a red band. Mothers are welcome to breastfeed in the Center and will be provided with a comfortable place to sit. The Nursing Mother's Room is also available to family members to feed or spend time with their infant. Teachers are trained on the proper procedures for storing and handling breastmilk. Bottles must be consumed within one hour from the beginning of the feeding and the contents must be discarded after this time. Disposal exceptions may be made for breastmilk bottles with a *Bottle Exceptions Release*. These bottles may be taken home at the end of the day, but teachers may not feed them to your child in the Center. It is often better to provide several bottles with fewer ounces as an infant adjusts to childcare and the teacher learns to read their hunger cues. Unused bottles must be taken home at the end of the day.

Once an infant is ready to begin baby food the family will speak with their child's teacher, who will support them through the process. Families should provide infant cereal, jarred baby food, and food from home as needed until the baby is ready to eat from the Center menu. As foods are introduced, families can select items from the menu that their child can eat. New foods should always be introduced one at a time at home before being selected for a child to consume at the Center. All foods from home must be labeled with the child's full name and (if fresh) date. Sealed food items and infant cereal may be stored in the infant room.

Our goal in introducing foods to Infants is that they are eating from the Center Menu fully before transitioning to toddlers, drinking out of a sippy cup, and not dependent on bottles while at the Center.

Supplies to Bring to Infants

- Pacifier (if used) labeled with child's name
- Diapers and diaper cream (if needed) with an *Authorization to Administer Topical Applications Form*
- Diaper Wipes
- Extra sets of clothes
- Weather-appropriate clothing such as hats, jackets, etc. for outside play and walks
- Swaddler or sleep sack, if used and proper documentation is on file.

Toddler Program

In our Toddler program, the children are generally much more active. They are on a group schedule rather than an individual one. While teachers will be flexible as much as possible to accommodate each child's needs, it is important for all the children that they can participate in the activities of the day. Meals and naps are conducted as a group and nap time follows lunch. Toddlers sleep on cots and may have a blanket and small special soft toy to use during nap times. Toddlers go outside daily and need appropriate clothing and footwear. Some children may still be using a pacifier in Toddlers. It is a goal of this age group to transition away from a pacifier as the child gets older so you may see their use reduced to only during nap time. When not in use, their pacifier will be kept in their cubby. Play is very important for their

development and learning, and sensory experiences are essential. For this reason, please bring your child extra sets of clothing (including footwear) in case of messes. This age group is also being introduced to Family Style meals in which they are learning to feed themselves and this can also be a messy experience.

Twos Program

As the children get older, they can do more for themselves so many of the skills worked on in Toddlers will expand in the Twos Program. Family style meals will continue, and the children will begin learning to work as a group to set the table, pass bowls, and clean up after themselves. Potty training becomes a large focus in this age group, and teachers must be able to work in partnership with families to make these efforts successful. Potty training usually means more accidents, so keep extra clothing stocked in your child's cubby and take soiled clothing home daily. The teachers will help develop a plan for the classroom and home to help your child become toilet trained by the time they transition to Preschool. Children's language skills at this age are flourishing so dramatic play, small group experiences, and the opportunities to communicate their needs are encouraged and supported by the teachers throughout each day.

Preschool Program

The number of children in our preschool program does go up, and while this helps with a child's social development in being able to communicate and play with other children effectively, the level of communication you receive from your child's teacher will begin to change. In Infants, Toddlers, and Twos, families receive a daily report detailing toileting and meal experiences throughout the day, Preschool teachers cannot do this due to the number of children in their room. If families need this information during their child's initial transition, teachers will work to provide it but it will be a goal to reduce the amount of information needed so they can instead focus on the learning experiences and care of the children in their classrooms. You will also see a change in lesson plans in this older age group as teachers begin working on skills to get children ready for school in the coming years. Play is still an important component of their day and will always be included, but you will also see more project work as well as experiences targeting science, math, language, and literacy. Children are supported in social problem-solving and self-sufficiency. Children will transition to the next age group of Kindergarten Prep the year before they are eligible for Kindergarten. This transition typically occurs in August of each year.

Kindergarten Prep

The Kindergarten Prep program focuses on helping children be ready for the following year of elementary school while still allowing them the time and freedom to play and learn in developmentally appropriate ways. Project work continues and the Kindergarten Prep children become more involved in their own learning through a KWHL chart and research. As the children get older, they are given more opportunities to work with groups of other children to solve problems and collaborate. They also use supplemental materials to enhance their school readiness skills such as Handwriting Without Tears, Learning Without Tears, and WiggleWorks. As the year progresses, the classroom schedule will become more structured and naptime will be gradually shortened. Rest time will still be provided for children who need it, but our goal in reducing naps is to prepare children for a full day of Kindergarten. All age-eligible children transition to Kindergarten Prep at the same time, so the program mirrors a typical academic school year as closely as possible. Children must be four years old on or before August 1st to transition to this program.

Supplies to Bring for Toddlers, Twos, Preschool, and Kindergarten Prep

- Diapers and diaper cream (if needed) with Authorization to Administer Topical Applications Form
- Diaper wipes, as needed
- Extra sets of clothes, including shoes
- Weather-appropriate clothing such as hats, jackets, etc. for outside play and walks
- Small nap time blanket, small pillow and/or small soft toy
- Water bottle filled with plain drinking water.

All items should be labeled with the child's name.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Licensing Regulations

The Center for Children is operated by the YMCA of Central Kentucky and is licensed to operate by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Division of Regulated Child Care. The license is posted, as well as current compliance information. Our compliance with licensing requirements is monitored, and licenses are renewed regularly.

Center Policy on Adult Conduct

The YMCA Child Development programs have a clear responsibility to protect and promote the YMCA's goals, which include teaching children to resolve conflicts in nonviolent and nonaggressive ways. This policy identifies unacceptable behaviors by parents, staff, and visitors while at the YMCA. We expect that staff, parents, and visitors will treat each other kindly and respectfully, keeping in mind that we are role models for our children. The unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Profanity
- Threats, intimidation or harassment delivered In person, through electronic communication or social media.
- Inappropriate comments toward staff, volunteers, families, or children.
- Mental or bodily harm
- Disruption and obstruction
- Destruction of property
- Disturbing the peace
- Dishonesty or misrepresentation
- Violation of criminal law
- Smoking or vaping on the property

Anyone found in violation of this policy is subject to immediate termination of services.

Staff Babysitting Policy

The YMCA strongly discourages its staff from meeting with children outside of the Center setting. Please do not put our staff in a difficult situation by soliciting them for babysitting services or inviting them into your home. The exceptions to this may be if the staff and the child's family have a relationship that predates the staff member's employment, the child's enrollment in the program, or if the Staff and child's family are related.

If you and a staff member agree to a babysitting arrangement, you and the staff member must complete a *Babysitting Release form* and file it with the Director or Leadership Team. All arrangements must be discussed outside of the staff member's working hours.

Grievances

Complaints and problems should be discussed with the Teachers and/or the Director as appropriate. If you have a concern, we encourage you to speak with someone at the Center so that we can do our best to resolve any issues. If you have discussed a problem with the Teachers and Director and feel it still has not been resolved, you may file a written grievance within 10 days to:

Angela Brant
Director of Early Childhood

381 W. Loudon Avenue
Lexington, KY 40508
abrant@ymcacky.org

Termination of Services

The Center reserves the right to deny enrollment or discontinue service to any child at its discretion.

In Closing

We appreciate that your family has selected the YMCA to care for and educate your child. Just like you, we care deeply about your child. Your suggestions and comments will be carefully considered as we continue to design a program responsive to your family's needs.

ADDENDUM

Children and Parent Rights

Pursuant to KRS 199.898 Rights for children in child-care programs and their parents, custodians, or guardians -- Posting and distribution requirements.

(1) All children receiving child-care services in a day-care center licensed pursuant to KRS 199.896, a family child-care home certified pursuant to KRS 199.8982, or from a provider or program receiving public funds shall have the following rights:

- (a) The right to be free from physical or mental abuse;
- (b) The right not to be subjected to abusive language or abusive punishment; and
- (c) The right to be in the care of adults who shall meet their health, safety, and developmental needs.

(2) Parents, custodians, or guardians of children specified in subsection (1) of this section shall have the following rights:

- (a) The right to have access to their children at all times the child is in care and access to the provider caring for their children during normal hours of provider operation and whenever the children are in the care of the provider;
- (b) The right to be provided with information about child-care regulatory standards, if applicable; where to direct questions about regulatory standards; and how to file a complaint;
- (c) The right to file a complaint against a child-care provider without any retribution against the parent, custodian, guardian, or child;
- (d) The right to obtain information from the cabinet regarding any type of licensure denial, suspension, or revocation of an operator, and cabinet reports that have found abuse or neglect by any child-care provider or any employee of a child care provider. Identifying information regarding children and their families shall remain confidential;
- (e) The right to obtain information from the cabinet regarding the inspections and plans of correction of the day-care center, the family child-care home, or the provider or program receiving public funds within the past year; and
- (f) The right to review and discuss with the provider any state reports and deficiencies revealed by such reports.

(3) The child-care provider who is licensed pursuant to KRS 199.896 or certified pursuant to KRS 199.8982 shall post these rights in a prominent place and shall provide a copy of these rights to the parent, custodian, or guardian of the child at the time of the child's enrollment in the program.

Effective: July 15, 1998

History: Amended 1998 Ky. Acts ch. 524, sec. 3, effective July 15, 1998. -- Created

EMERGENCY/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Family Information for Reunification

Center for Children
500 Park Place
Lexington, KY 40511
859-495-2831

Emergency/Disaster Contact at the Center:

Alicion Slone
Center Director
Office Phone: 859-785-2509
Cell Phone: 859-312-0417

Jessica Groves
Assistant Director
Office Phone: 859-785-2510

Cell Phone of Emergency/Disaster Contact (to be used only during emergencies): 859-397-7627

In the event the facility must be evacuated because of an emergency/disaster, the staff and children will leave the building and gather in front of the Fayette County Public Schools Building (next door to the Center).

In the event the Center must be evacuated because of an emergency/disaster in the immediate area, the children and staff will walk to or be transported to:

North Lexington Family YMCA (1.1 walking, 1.4 driving miles)
381 West Loudon Ave., Lexington, KY 40508
Branch phone: 859-258-9622
Contact: Corey Donohoo, cell 270-556-6301

Alternate Location

If the Center must be evacuated outside of the area, the children and staff will be transported to:

Whitaker Family YMCA (5.7 miles)
2681 Old Rosebud Road, Lexington, KY 40509
Branch phone: 859-543-9622

If necessary, children needing medical care will be transported to:

Kentucky Children's Hospital (4 miles)
800 Rose St. Fourth Floor
Lexington, KY 40536
Phone: 859-323-5000

Families will be contacted through the family communication app, texts, emails, and/or by phone, depending on the situation. During an emergency, the priority is the safety of the children. Phone calls may not be answered or messages responded to until it is safe to do so. Information will be provided as quickly as possible.

The complete emergency/disaster preparedness plan is located in the Director's Office.

YMCA OF CENTRAL KENTUCKY

Center for Children

500 Park Place

Lexington, KY 40511

(859) 232-6400 ymcacky.org/centerforchildren