



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

May 2019

Dear Parents and Children,

Welcome to the Verdugo Hills Family YMCA. We are proud to be given the opportunity to have you as a part of our family. Over the years, we have been privileged to care for thousands of children in our community. You have joined a program that has a history of over 150 years that strives to focus on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. We hope that your relationship with the Y is a lasting and enriching experience from which your whole family will benefit.

When you enroll in our program you are not just enrolling in preschool or daycare, you are joining the Y. The Y makes accessible the support and opportunities that empower people and communities to learn, grow and thrive. The Y nurtures the potential of every youth and teen, improves the nation's health and Wellbeing, and provides opportunities to give back and support neighbors.

Our goals are to:

- Build independence, self-esteem and confidence in social situations
- Teach the process of problem solving and decision making
- Provide an unbiased multi-cultural curriculum that allows children to respect themselves, their peers, adults and others
- Create a bond between children, parents and staff, which enables the preschool to enrich the lives of all involved
- Teach the skills needed to be prepared for Kindergarten

In order for us to accomplish these goals there must be certain guidelines and procedures in place to assure that the programs that we provide are appropriate and possible. This handbook is provided as a tool for you to use to help understand those guidelines and procedures. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference. There is valuable information provided in this handbook that will answer questions you may have.

We hope to see all of you throughout the year. We look forward to working with your family and being a part of your child's growing years. We are available to speak with if you need any assistance. Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Suzanne McMillen  
Leader of Preschool, Childcare & Community Programs  
(818) 273-8812

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## **ABOUT THE Y**

### Mission

The mission of the YMCA is to organize, develop, finance and conduct programs for an association of persons of all ages that will by putting Christian principles into practice enrich the quality of their lives spiritually, mentally, physically and socially.

### Philosophy

We at the Learning Tree Preschool, know that preschool children need direct concrete and high-interest experiences along with well-timed guidance and instruction. A combination of both approaches are essential to building an effective preschool curriculum. The foundation of the Y's preschool curriculum planning is the observation and assessment of the individual needs of each child. We design our activities based on children's interests and what they need to learn.

Self-esteem and awareness of others is an essential part of development for children and we at the Learning Tree Preschool develop this through the understanding and guidance of a professional, caring staff who assist them in individual and group experiences. Each child is given the opportunity to participate through books, music, free play, creative activities and exposure to science and nature.

### Goals

Our goals include building each student's:

- Competence - abilities in language, numbers and interests in books
- Cooperation - enhanced self-concept and other-concepts developed through group activity and sharing experience
- Autonomy - the ability to initiate, ask questions and make appropriate choices
- Creativity - the ability to construct new products, think of new ideas and find alternative solutions

### Values

The YMCA believes in putting into practice Christian values each day. We do not teach or preach any specific religion, but we do emphasize the following values:

Everyone is worthy of respect

We should treat everyone as we would like to be treated ourselves

## **STAFF**

Our Preschool has a Director who has a degree in education or a related field and experience working with children. He/she is responsible for the overall site operation including staff supervision and program development. Most of our staff have had previous experience working with children. All staff have a current TB test, maintain current certifications in CPR and First Aid and Child Abuse Prevention. In addition, staff and volunteers are thoroughly screened prior to employment.

### Staff Training

In addition to the education requirements of the State, each staff person receives a basic pre-employment training module and regular in-service training events, which cover the following topics:

- Curriculum planning
- Administrative procedures
- Emergency procedures
- Behavior management

### **FACILITY**

The Learning Tree Preschool operates the preschool on site at:  
YMCA of the Foothills  
6840 Foothill Blvd.  
Tujunga, CA 91042

The Preschool has approximately 5,600 square feet of outdoor play space and 2,600 square feet of interior space and is licensed by the state for a maximum of 68 students.

### **PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

Each learning experience in our program develops one more skills or concepts from these general content areas:

- Science and Mathematics
- Fine and Gross Motor Skills
- Cognitive Development
- Language and Cultural Arts
- Nutrition and Food Experience
- Computer Awareness

#### Science and Mathematics

Preschool-age children learn through direct experience and in their own creative ways, using real, natural objects.

Activities include:

- Matching objects and use of manipulatives
- Cooking projects that involve measuring and mixing
- Introducing shapes
- Discovering animals, plants and their habitats

#### Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Development of the fine and gross motor skills are very important to the young child as they have a direct connection to the child's ability to read and write. Ways in which we stimulate this development include:

- Supervising play on equipment specifically designed for gross motor skill development
- Including activities that involve manipulative toys and tools like

blocks, stamps, scissors, etc. the children can manipulate with their hands

### Cognitive Development

Activities that allow the child to learn about their senses and finger plays about the body and the world around us.

- Art activities about the self
- Thinking games

### Language and Cultural Arts

Learning to express yourself to others is a very important component of a preschool. Through guidance and understanding, the children are taught to express themselves and appreciate the differences of others. We accomplish this in the following ways:

- Provide a dramatic play area
- Encourage interaction and socialization among the children
- Provide an unbiased curriculum that encourages children to recognize different cultures
- Introduce creative movement and music

### Nutrition and Food Experience

Lunch is to be brought from home each day. Snacks are provided both in the morning and afternoon. We also have an opportunity to:

- Study the four basic food groups in our diet
- Introduce foods that are nutritious
- Allow children to participate in preparing healthy snacks
- Involve each child in cleaning up before and after each meal or snack (this includes washing their hands and cleaning eating surfaces)

### Computer Awareness

Pre-kindergarten students use computers in their classrooms on a daily basis.

Opportunities include:

- Working with computer programs in reading, math and science
- Accessing different levels that allow students to learn one concept at a time at their own pace
- Allowing students to use skills they learn and master new ones
- Being in control of their own learning experiences

## **PROGRAM INFORMATION**

### Typical Schedule

7:00am – Preschool Opens/Indoor Interest Centers

8:30am – Outside Activities

9:00am – Class Day Begins/Circle Time

9:15am – Indoor Interest Centers

9:45am – Outside Activities

10:30am – Morning Snack

10:45am – Inside Group Activities

12:00pm - Lunch  
1:00pm – Nap Time  
3:15pm – Afternoon Snack  
3:30pm – Outside Activities  
4:30pm – Indoor Group Activities  
5:00pm – Outside Activities  
6:30pm – Preschool Closes

### Nap Time

Students will have naptime daily at school from 1 to 3pm. All children are required to rest/sleep on a cot provided by the school. You will need to provide a small sheet, small blanket and a small pillow. Children need to take their sleep items home to launder on a weekly basis. Please write your child's name on these items. Please remember no full-size pillows or sleeping bags are allowed due to limited space.

### Meals

A mid-morning and afternoon snack are provided each day, consisting of the four food groups. Parents are responsible for providing a simple and nutritious lunch. Example:  $\frac{1}{2}$  sandwich, a piece of fruit and milk or juice. Please, no glass bottles, candy, soda pop or gum. In our program we do heat lunches and serve cold milk for those needing it.

We recognize that food allergies can cause serious, life threatening conditions for some children. To keep all our children safe, our preschool is a NUT FREE environment. Please do not bring any nuts into preschool in your child's lunchbox. We will ensure that the snacks we provide the children will not have nuts in them.

### Behavior Management

The Verdugo Hills Learning Tree Preschool will not discipline any child by the use of corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature.

The YMCA has adopted a policy of discipline that allows children to make choices rather than punishing them. By using this method of discipline, we encourage:

- Mutual respect between the teacher and the child
- Cooperative effort to resolve conflicts
- Development of a responsible child
- Development of a child's self-confidence and self-worth

Repeated discipline problems will be discussed with the child's parents.

### Clothing

How you dress your child can have a big impact on how his or her day might go. Here are some suggestions on appropriate clothing:

- A complete change of clothing must remain at school. Please include underpants, socks, shirt and a pair of shorts, pants or jeans. Be sure to label all clothing. Use a 1-gallon labeled Ziploc bag to store your child's extra clothes.
- Students should wear comfortable clothing and shoes (no open toed shoes or shoes with slippery soles such as cowboy boots or dress shoes)

- Pants with elasticized waistbands rather than overalls or pants that zip or button are preferred. Elasticized clothes are much easier for the children to remove by themselves.
- Please label all clothing.
- Keep in mind that children's play and learning involve materials such as paint, glue, sand, water, crayon and many other messy items. Please do not dress your child in clothing that will restrict them from the ability to learn and play freely.
- During potty training children must keep several changes of clothes at school at all times.

### Separation

Preschool should be a positive experience for both the child and the parent. Allowing time for adjustment to a new situation builds a bond between the school, child, and home.

Very often children need mom or dad to stay for a few extra minutes on the first couple of days of preschool. Try to allow for extra time in the morning just in case your child needs a little extra support. We also ask that you make sure to say "goodbye" to your child and do not sneak out.

### Parent Involvement

Parent participation is encouraged in our preschool no matter how large or small. If you have a special talent, please share it with us.

Other opportunities to become involved include attending parent nights, joining in our fundraisers and helping out in the classroom.

### Assessments

Kindergarten readiness assessments will be conducted in the Winter & Spring for all children entering kindergarten in the fall.

A written assessment will be followed by a parent/teacher conference. Attendance at the conference is very important, so we can review the written assessment and keep you informed on your child's developmental process.

### Share Day

Our school is equipped with a variety of age appropriate materials designed for the preschool child. We ask that your child keep all toys at home. On Fridays, each child may bring one toy from home to share with the class (no play weapons.)

### Birthdays

We would like to make each child's birthday a particularly special day for him/her, so we would like to share with you some details about birthday celebrations at our school.

Staff will help the birthday child by:

- Announcing his/her birthday during circle time
- Assist the birthday child with making a special crown

Parents are welcome to provide:

- A birthday cake either for the classroom or entire school

- Candles and other party favors such as hats, napkins, balloons, or other treats or decorations (no candy please)
- Pizza and juice for lunch for the classroom or entire school
- Special Character
- A favorite book that you and your child selected together to donate to the class

We appreciate your cooperation in following these guidelines and if you have any questions feel free to contact the Director.

## **OPERATING DAYS AND TIMES**

### Hours of Operation

Our program hours have been established to be as convenient as possible within the limits of our resources. Please review these hours of operation to ensure that our program is right for you before you enroll your child:

Full Day: 7:00 am to 6:30 pm

### Holiday Closures

New Year's Eve	New Year's Day
Day after New Year's Day	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
President's Day	Memorial Day
Independence Day	Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve	Christmas Day
Day after Christmas	

### Late Pick-up

Picking your child up on time from the YMCA is very important. We understand that many parents commute and are at the mercy of the Southern California freeway system. Please consider someone else who can pick-up your child up from the program if you will be unable to arrive on time.

After 6:30 pm, if your child has not been picked up, we will:

- Charge you a late pick-up fee of \$15 for the first 15 minutes or fraction thereof and a \$1 for every minute thereafter.
- After 7:30 pm, if we have not heard from you, we will ask the Los Angeles Police Department to watch your child.
- Discontinue enrollment if repetitive late pick-ups occur.

### Annual Closure

Every year we will be shutting down the preschool for an annual closure for a deep cleaning and minor upgrades. Check Parent Newsletters for dates and time.

## **DAILY SIGN-IN/OUT PROCEDURES**

- The parent or authorized person dropping off or picking up a child signs their full name on an attendance roster every day the child is in attendance.
  - The person signing a child into or out of a licensed preschool be at least 18 years of age and if not the parent or legal guardian of the child, be authorized

by the parent or guardian in writing to pick up the child. Siblings under the age of 18 are not permitted to pick-up the child even with parent's authorization.

- The correct time of drop-off or pick-up must be entered by the person signing a child into or out of the preschool.

## **ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION**

Registration forms are required as part of the enrollment process. Registration forms include:

- Health history, emergency contact information and medical releases
- All forms required by the State Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, including a signed physician's report

No child will be admitted to the Learning Tree Preschool without these forms on file.

### Change in Enrollment

In the event you need to change your child's enrollment, we ask that you speak with the Director first to confirm we are able to accommodate the change. Requests should be made in writing before the 15<sup>th</sup> to be adjusted for the following month.

### Registration Fee

When joining the preschool there will be a fee of \$50.00. Once a child leaves the program, if they wish to re-join, they will need to pay the registration fee. Effective September 1, 2019.

## **PAYMENTS, CREDITS AND REFUND POLICY**

Tuition payments must be received at the YMCA on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month for the following month of care. Automatic draft is mandatory for monthly payments. Your child will not be allowed to attend and taken off the roster if payment is not made on or before the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Tuition for our child care program pays for all the direct operating costs. Staff, snack, and program supplies must be available for your child whether or not he/she attends. Therefore, days missed cannot be deducted from your fee.

### Monthly Fees

The schedule of monthly fees is based on the number of days the school is open divided into 12 equal payments.

Full Day	5 days	\$800.00
Full Day (M/W/F)	3 days	\$630.00
Full Day (T/TH)	2 days	\$515.00

### Membership for All

(Financial assistance) is available to those in need based on household income, number of household members, and availability of funds. Assistance is provided through donations made to the YMCA of the Foothills. Proof of financial need is required and all information is held in the strictest confidence.

If you would like assistance, please contact the Director for more information.

### Withdrawals

A 2 week written notice is required when a child is withdrawing from the Preschool program. No refunds will be given without a 2 week written notice of intent to withdraw.

### Reasons for Termination

- Failure to pay fees on time
- Discipline problems that cannot be resolved
- Unethical behavior

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

### Injuries

We work very hard to anticipate and prevent injuries at the Y. Still sometimes children do get hurt. If your child is injured we will:

- Administer Band-Aids and comfort in large doses for minor cuts, scrapes and bumps.
- Contact you or your emergency contact if an injury may require medical attention including bee stings, moderate cuts, head injuries, and sprains or possible fractures. You may then decide what you want done.
- Secure medical treatment immediately in the event you cannot be reached or the nature of the injury warrants fast action.

### Illnesses

If your child becomes ill while at the YMCA we will call you or your emergency contact if you cannot be reached. We cannot allow your child to remain in the program while ill, so please arrange to pick-up your child within an hour of notification of illness. Please do not send a child to school that has had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea within 48 hours. We cannot accept children displaying these symptoms. Child must have a doctor's note indicating they are free of infection before they are allowed to return to school when they have any type of communicable disease.

### Medication

If your child needs to take medication while he/she is in our care, please do the following:

- Please give the medication directly to a staff member
- Prescribed medication must be in the original container with the label attached
- Fill out a medicine slip with directions for administering the medicine, the time or times it should be administered, and your signature to administer
- Over the counter medication such as Tylenol must have instructions from a Doctor indicating the dosage

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

The Learning Tree Preschool is prepared to respond in the event of an emergency or major disaster while children are in attendance at school. The preschool practices both Earthquake and Fire Drills on a monthly basis and is monitored by the Fire Department.

If an evacuation of the preschool occurs, the YMCA will transport children and staff to the nearest emergency shelter or to either:

Crescenta Valley YMCA	Crescenta Canada YMCA
3931 Lowell Ave.	1930 Foothill Blvd.,
La Crescenta, CA 91214	La Canada, CA 91011
(818) 790-0123	(818) 790-0123

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Leader, Preschool  
Suzanne McMillen  
(818) 273-8812  
[smcmillen@ymcafoothills.org](mailto:smcmillen@ymcafoothills.org)

Branch Director, Verdugo Hills Family YMCA  
Tina Vincent  
(818) 273-8822  
[tvincent@ymcafoothills.org](mailto:tvincent@ymcafoothills.org)

Membership and Other Programs  
Front Desk  
(818) 790-0123

Please sign below acknowledging that you have read and agree to the procedures and policies outlined in the Parent Manual:

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Parent or Guardian Signature

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Date (Month/ Date/ Year)