



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Dear Parents and Children,

January 2019

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. With a focus on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the Y nurtures the potential of every youth and teen, improves the nation's health and well-being, 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,

Lindsey Cortes
Leader, Youth Development
(818) 273-8812

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YMCA of the Foothills, Preschool Program Parent Handbook

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.

Mission Statement 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.

Introduction, continued

Statement of Discipline	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.						
Location	The Learning Tree Preschool operates the preschool on site at: YMCA of the Foothills 6840 Foothill Blvd. Tujunga, CA 91042						
Facilities	<p>The program is housed in four classrooms on site at the Verdugo Hills Family YMCA. You may be interested in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The building is maintained to meet the requirements of the State Fire Marshall.• It has both central heating and air conditioning.• A fenced play yard adjacent to the preschool classrooms will be used for outdoor and programmed learning activities.• It 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.• It is a State Licensed Child Care Program governed by Title 22.						
Equipment	<p>Equipment for the program is provided from a variety of sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most is purchased using budgeted funds from the YMCA general fund. Some are purchased with funds raised through several fundraisers throughout the school year.• Some are donated by service clubs or other local organizations.• Many smaller used items are provided by Y members like you. They include things like- <table><tr><td>games</td><td>craft-worthy discards</td></tr><tr><td>toys</td><td>books</td></tr><tr><td>puzzles</td><td>old computer paper</td></tr></table>	games	craft-worthy discards	toys	books	puzzles	old computer paper
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puzzles	old computer paper						

Staffing

Qualifications The California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, licenses our program. The program positions and their requirements are listed below:

Center Director	64 units of post-secondary education including early Childhood development and 3 units of Childcare administration and 2 years' experience.
Teacher	12 units of post-secondary education in early childhood development and 1 year minimum experience.
Aide	An interest in early childhood development and 6 months experience.

Staff: Child ratio State Law requires a ratio of 1 Teacher to 12 children, or 1 Teacher and Aide to 15 children.

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

- Curriculum planning
- Administrative procedures
- New resources
- First aid/CPR and emergency procedures
- Behavior management

Curriculum Design

Program Components

Each learning experience in our program develops one or 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
- Values

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.

Curriculum Design, continued

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

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

Just as you frequently teach values at home spontaneously during times of discipline or conflict resolution, so we find unique opportunities to individually discuss values with each child. We also plan regular values education through stories, games and small group discussions.

Typical Schedule

A typical program plan might look like this:

7:00 Indoor Interest Centers
8:30 Outside Activities
9:00 Greeting/Group Circle Time
9:15 Inside Curriculum/Centers (computers)
9:45 Outside Activity Time
10:30 Hand Washing/Morning snack
10:45 Inside Small Group Activities
11:20 Outside Activity Time
11:50 Bathroom/Hand Washing Time
12:00 Lunch
12:45 Group Story Time
1:00 Nap Time
3:00 Bathroom/Hand Washing Time
3:15 Snack
3:30 Outside Activity Time
4:30 Inside Group Activities
5:00 Outside Activity Time
6:30 School Closes

Program Information, continued

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 **(absolutely 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.
- Labeling your child's clothes is very important
- 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.

Program Information, continued

Assessments	<p>Kindergarten readiness assessments will be conducted in the Winter & Spring for all children entering kindergarten in the fall.</p> <p>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.</p>
Share Day	<p>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)</p>
Nap Time	<p>Full day students will have naptime daily at school from 1 to 3 pm. 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.</p>
Discipline	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 <p>Repeated discipline problems will be discussed with the child's parents. Refer to Discipline Procedure in enrollment paperwork.</p>

Program Information, continued

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.

Meals

A mid-morning and afternoon snack is provided each day, consisting of the four food groups. Parents are responsible for providing a simple and nutritious lunch. Example: ½ 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, 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.

Operating Days and Times

Days of Operation

Our preschool operates as a year-round preschool with the following exceptions:

Holidays Closures

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

Hours of Operation

Our program hours have been established to be a 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

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 12:30 pm for Half Day, and after 6:30 pm for Full Day, 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.
- Discontinue enrollment if repetitive late pick-ups occur.
- After 7:30 pm, if we have not heard from you, we will ask the Los Angeles Police Department to watch your child.

Attendance and Enrollment Changes

Changing Enrollment

You may not bring your child on any days that he/she is not enrolled in. Sometimes when space allows we may be able to accommodate a special request, but this must be approved in advance from the Director.

In the event that you need to permanently change your child's preschool enrollment, we ask that you speak with the Director first to confirm that there is space available for your child on those days.

Payments

Automatic draft is mandatory for Preschool Payments. You will be able to choose what day your payment is debited from your account between the 1st and the 20th.

Several years ago we changed over to a monthly charge to simplify payments. The payment for the following month is due by the 20th of each month. Your child will not be allowed to attend and taken off the roster if payment is not made on or before the 20th. There are no exceptions.

Extra Days

Occasionally parents whose children are enrolled for less than 5 days a week find that a temporary change in schedule or emergency creates a need for an extra day or longer day of enrollment. You may add days of enrollment provided:

- You request the one time change from the YMCA office
- You receive confirmation that there is space available for your child on the days requested
- You have a sufficient balance on deposit to cover the additional day and have paid for any previously added days promptly when due
- You pay the additional fees with your next regular payment

Switching days is not permitted, but adding a day will be allowed with the Director's approval and provided there is space on that day.

Program Fees

Basis for Program Fees The YMCA is a private non-profit association made up of members who support our mission and goals. A volunteer Board of Managers determines those goals and the programs they generate. The Board establishes policies for each program which include the individual budgets for those programs and allocation of funds to pay program costs.

Sources of Funds The funds used to pay the bills incurred in the preschool program come from a variety of sources, including but not limited to your tuition.

Enrollment Categories Enrollment categories are determined by the amount of time per day that your child is enrolled to attend.

Days of the Week **A minimum of two days per week is required for enrollment.** Because holidays aren't distributed evenly across the various days of the week, our fees are based on the specific days of week a child is enrolled. The schedule of monthly fees is based on the number of days the school is open divided into 12 equal payments.

Payment of Fee

Full Day 5 days	\$800.00
Full Day 3 days	\$630.00
Full Day 2 days	\$515.00
Half Day 5 days	\$670.00

All program fees are due in the YMCA office by the 20th of each month prior to the month of service. Automatic draft is **mandatory** for Preschool payments.

Reasons for Termination
Failure to pay fees on time
Discipline problems that cannot be resolved
Unethical Behavior

Program Fees, continued

Late Payments

Late payments create serious problems in terms of our ability to meet the obligations we incur on your child's behalf. They also create additional costs in following up. If payment is not made on or before the 20th your child will not be allowed to attend and will be taken off the roster.

If tuition hasn't been paid by the end of the month, your child will be taken off the roster. If the roster isn't full, your child may re-enroll. There will be a fee of \$50.00 to re-enroll your child in the preschool. MFA will not be applicable to the fee. There are no exceptions.

For questions or concerns about payment you can contact Lindsey Cortes, Preschool Coordinator.

Withdrawals

A two-week written notice is required when a child withdraws from the Preschool program. No refunds will be given without a written two-week notice of intent to withdraw. All refunds are subject to the Child Care Directors approval.

Enrollment

How to Enroll

You can enroll your child in the program at the Preschool Office located at Verdugo Hills Family YMCA 6840 Foothill Blvd., Tujunga, between the hours of 9 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday. Enrollment is year round.

Enrollment Requirements

The following will be required to complete enrollment:

- You must complete the enrollment forms including health history, emergency information and medical releases.
- All forms required by the State Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, including a signed by the doctor physician's report, must be completed and submitted to us.

Financial Assistance

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 on a fair and open basis, first come, first served. Proof of financial need is required and all information is held in the strictest confidence.

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

Signing Children In and Out

State Law Requirements

The YMCA operates licensed child-care program in accordance with Title 22, and California Health and Welfare Regulations requires that:

- 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.
- The full signature must be signed at time of drop-off or pick-up.
- Our program serves children ages 2 to 5 years of age.

Who May Pick-Up Your Child

When you enroll your child in the preschool program, the enrollment form asks you to list those people who you authorize to pick-up your children. Initially you and anyone you have authorized to pick-up your child should be prepared to show picture identification to the staff before signing out your child. We will ask for I.D. until the staff becomes familiar with you.

Anyone who attempts to pick-up your child and is not on record as authorized to do so will be refused. Avoid embarrassing your relatives or friends by making sure that they are on the authorized list at the site before you ask them to pick up your child.

Insurance

Refer to the Release and Waiver of Liability and Indemnity Agreement.

Other Important Information

Assistance with Medication

If your child needs to take prescribed medication during a time when he or she is attending the YMCA please do the following:

- Bring the medication to the YMCA Preschool and give it to a staff person **DO NOT SEND MEDICATION TO THE YMCA WITH YOUR CHILD!**
- Make sure the prescribed medication is 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, your signature to administer.
- **Over the counter medication such as Tylenol must have instructions from a Doctor indicating the dosage.**

Injuries

We work very hard to anticipate and prevent injuries at the Y. Still sometimes children do get hurt. Usually the injuries are minor or the result of a child not following directions from his or her teacher. If your child is injured we will:

1. Administer Band-Aids and comfort in large doses for minor cuts, scrapes and bumps.
2. 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.
3. 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.

Other Important Information, continued

Disaster Plan

The YMCA Preschool practices both Earthquake and Fire Drills on a monthly basis and is monitored by the Fire Department. In the event of a major emergency such as an earthquake, chemical spill, or fire, the following will take place:

Earthquake:

- Children will be instructed to move away from windows and take cover under/near tables
- Children and staff will remain in the classrooms until it is deemed safe to evacuate the preschool
- Children and staff will exit in an orderly manner through the parking lot door and up the handicap walkway.

Fire

- The fire alarm will sound and children will immediately line up with their classes and exit through the emergency exit and line up on the handicap walkway when possible
- Children will remain at the Y until directed to move or evacuate
- During, immediately before and immediately after the emergency the Preschool is under the direction of the Child Care Director or Executive Director.

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
3931 Lowell Ave.
La Crescenta, CA 91214
(818) 790-0123

Crescenta Canada YMCA
1930 Foothill Blvd.,
La Canada, CA 91011
(818) 790-0123

For Your Taxes

When you file your Federal and State Income Taxes, you are required to provide the Taxpayer I.D. Number of the child-care provider to get the child care credit. Our Taxpayer I.D. Number is **#95-1976183**. The legal name of our YMCA is: YMCA of the Foothills, Verdugo Hills Family YMCA Branch.

Please maintain your own records of amounts paid to us by keeping check registers and receipts.

Printed records of child care payments will be available on a limited basis with advance notice of two weeks.

Other Important Information, continued

Private Employment of Preschool Staff The following statement regards the hiring of staff by parents who have children enrolled at the YMCA Child Care. It appears in the staff handbook and is understood by all YMCA employees.

Parents or staff may not solicit for private sitting and arrangements for babysitting outside of work hours.

YMCA of the Foothills strongly discourages parents with children enrolled in the YMCA from hiring Preschool staff as personal babysitters. If such arrangements are made, they are made solely between the parents and staff member and the staff member must have a release form on file.

YMCA Preschool assumes absolutely no responsibility (financial, legal or otherwise) for this arrangement. Should a parent retain a staff member, the staff member will not be considered an employee of the YMCA of the Foothills. Any parent who hires a staff member does so at his/her own risk.

Ready References

Leader, Youth Development Lindsey Cortes..... (818) 273-8812

Director, Youth Development Natalie Abou-Chakra..... (818) 583-4737

Inquire about other Programs, Front Desk..... (818) 790-0123
MFA, & Membership

**BUILDING
STRONGER
FUTURES**
LEARN.GROW.THRIVE