



YMCA® TOMORROW ACADEMY™
GREATER AUSTIN

2025 PARENT HANDBOOK

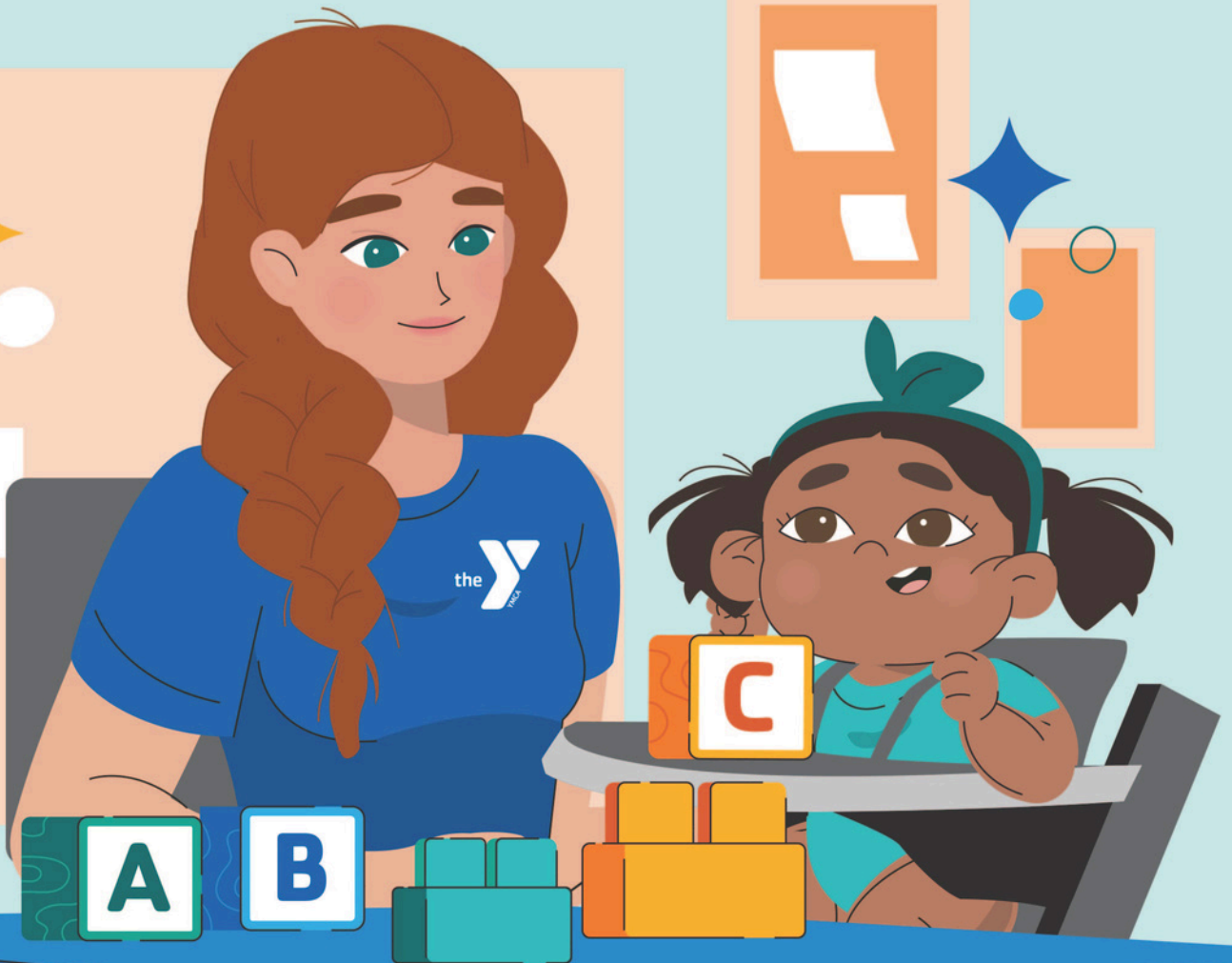


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For All.

PURPOSE: We are elevating the quality of life in Greater Austin by boldly expanding access for all children, adults, families and seniors in our dynamically growing community.

We believe everyone deserves access to quality programs that are keeping our community strong, from babies learning to seniors thriving.

We are a proud 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, providing financial assistance & expanding access to the Y FOR ALL in our community.



Thoughtfully
Inclusive.



Uniquely Designed For
Every Phase Of Life.



Places You Can Be,
Belong & Become.



ABOUT US

YMCA[®] Tomorrow Academy[™] provides a nurturing learning environment designed to help each child thrive from infant (6 weeks) to prekindergarten (5 years old).

We believe every child deserves access to high-quality childcare that's close to home. As a top provider of early childhood education, we are committed to youth development across Greater Austin.



Program Philosophy and Goals

Our View of the Child at YMCA Tomorrow Academy

At the YMCA Tomorrow Academy, we hold a deep respect for every child's individuality, potential, and inherent curiosity. We believe that each child is a unique, capable, and curious individual with an innate desire to learn, explore, and connect with the world around them. Our educational philosophy reflects these beliefs, and our approach is centered on fostering an environment where children can grow, thrive, and develop to their fullest potential.

Children Are Active Participants in Their Own Learning

We view children as active participants in their own education, not passive recipients of knowledge. Each child is a co-creator of their learning journey, engaging with their environment, peers, and teachers to create meaningful and personalized experiences. This approach empowers children to take ownership of their learning and develop critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

Children Are Natural Explorers

With an innate sense of curiosity, children are natural explorers who continuously ask questions, investigate, and experiment with the world around them. At YMCA Tomorrow Academy, we encourage this natural curiosity by providing a rich environment full of possibilities. Children are given the freedom to explore at their own pace, allowing them to discover new concepts, develop their ideas, and deepen their understanding of the world.

Children Are Capable and Competent

We believe that every child is capable and competent. We trust in each child's ability to solve problems, express their thoughts, and communicate their feelings. Children possess valuable insights and ideas that shape our learning community, and we are here to guide, support, and provide the tools necessary for them to engage in deeper thinking and discovery. Our role is not to direct but to offer opportunities for children to make choices, solve challenges, and express themselves.

Children Are Collaborators

Learning is most effective when it occurs in relationships. We foster a culture of collaboration, where children work together to solve problems, build understanding, and share their perspectives. This collaborative approach promotes not only cognitive growth but also social-emotional development, as children learn to navigate relationships, communicate, and understand different viewpoints.

Children Have the Right to Play and Be Outside

We recognize that play is not just a fun activity; it is essential for healthy development. Every child has a fundamental right to play, and we believe that outdoor play and nature exploration are crucial for fostering creativity, confidence, and resilience. Time spent outdoors allows children to take healthy risks, experiment with physical activity, and connect to the natural world, all of which contribute to their well-being and growth. Whether engaging in free play, physical activity, or simply observing their environment, outdoor experiences encourage imagination, independence, and a sense of wonder.

Children Thrive in an Environment of Secure Attachment

We understand the importance of secure attachments in children's development. Strong, trusting relationships between children and caregivers provide the emotional security needed for children to explore their surroundings, engage with peers, and build self-confidence. Our approach is nurturing, responsive, and intentional, ensuring that each child feels safe, valued, and understood. These secure attachments serve as the foundation for healthy social and emotional development, allowing children to thrive in all areas of their lives.

Children Have Rights

Children have the right to be heard, to express their individuality, and to make decisions that influence their learning experiences. We honor their voices, interests, and needs, creating a space where they feel empowered and respected. At YMCA Tomorrow Academy, children's opinions and choices are valued, and we provide opportunities for them to shape their own learning journey in a way that reflects their unique strengths and preferences.

OUR CONSTELLATION OF CARE™

Our Constellation of Care™ model is supported by decades of research-based practices in child development, neuroscience, healthcare and educational theory.



◆ YMCA® PLAYING TO LEARN™

Our Curriculum

The YMCA Playing to Learn® curriculum has been helping kids thrive for more than 20 years in YMCA® Canada. Our curriculum continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of learners, society, and new knowledge.

Research shows play is essential to the healthy social, emotional and cognitive development of all children.

- Supports Social and Emotional Growth
- Help children understand and manage emotions
- Create positive relationships with teachers and peers
- Build skills for coping, empathy and resilience
- Fosters Curiosity
- Children explore topics that interest them
- Encourages motivation and joy in learning
- Builds Critical Thinking and Creativity
- Play nurtures problem-solving, innovation & imagination
- Develops flexible, adaptive thinking skills



Key Curriculum Areas

At The YMCA Tomorrow Academy, we have four key curriculum areas.



Early Literacy

- Building language and communication skills
- Fostering a love for reading and storytelling



STEM

- Science, Technology, Engineering, Math
- Encouraging curiosity and problem-solving
- Hands-on activities with science and building materials



Creative Arts

- Exploring self-expression through painting, drawing, and music
- Developing fine motor skills and creativity



Nature Play

- 10 or More Play and Learning Settings
- Designed Vegetable Garden
- Shady Settings (other than trees)



How Our Curriculum is Unique

We believe that play is the foundation of early childhood development. Through play, children explore the world, engage their imagination, and express their thoughts and feelings in ways that are meaningful to them. Play allows children to make sense of their surroundings, develop problem-solving skills, and build social-emotional connections with peers and adults.

We support various types of play, including sensory play, dramatic play, and cooperative play, each offering unique opportunities for children to develop language, cognitive skills, and physical coordination. By giving children time and space to play, we honor their individual learning styles and encourage a deep sense of engagement and joy in learning.

Building Secure and Trusting Relationships

We believe that secure, trusting relationships between educators and children are the foundation of a successful learning experience. Our educators work diligently to create a safe and supportive environment where children feel comfortable to explore, learn, and grow. By developing strong connections with each child, our educators are able to tailor their interactions and teaching strategies to meet individual needs and help children thrive.

Low Student-Teacher Ratios

To ensure that each child receives the individual attention and support they deserve, we maintain a low student-teacher ratio. This approach is in line with both state regulations and the standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Smaller class sizes allow for more meaningful interactions, a greater ability to respond to children's needs, and more opportunities for personalized learning.

Dynamic Indoor and Outdoor Learning Environments

Our indoor and outdoor learning environments are thoughtfully designed to foster exploration, creativity, and development. We offer a variety of activity areas and age-appropriate materials, each selected to engage children's imaginations, stimulate learning, and support their developmental milestones. These learning spaces are carefully curated to encourage active and focused learning and are flexible enough to adapt to the children's needs and interests.

- **Indoor Spaces:** Our classrooms are designed with a variety of activity areas that cater to different aspects of development, from quiet spaces for reading or puzzles to interactive stations for building, creative play, and problem-solving.
- **Outdoor Spaces:** Our outdoor environment provides a rich, dynamic setting for children to explore, engage in active play, and develop important skills in physical coordination, social interaction, and environmental awareness.

The combination of these thoughtfully planned environments allows children to move between focused learning activities (such as reading, problem-solving, or small group work) and active, hands-on play that nurtures creativity, physical growth, and social development.

Outdoor Learning

Our Outdoor Learning Philosophy is rooted in the belief that nature has the power to foster curiosity, resilience, and a lifelong sense of environmental responsibility. We are inspired by frameworks such as the Children in Nature Network, the Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE), and the Austin Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights, all of which guide our commitment to creating an immersive, nature-based educational experience for children.

Daily Outdoor Exploration

Our outdoor spaces are designed to offer abundant opportunities for children to explore, observe wildlife, and engage in sensory-rich experiences. Whether through unstructured play or guided activities, children have the chance to connect with the natural world in a meaningful way.



Building Confidence Through Risky Play

Part of our outdoor philosophy involves promoting age-appropriate risky play. Activities such as climbing, balancing, and navigating uneven terrain help children develop confidence, problem-solving skills, and an understanding of their physical capabilities. These activities are carefully supervised to ensure safety, while still encouraging children to challenge themselves and learn through experience.

Fostering Environmental Stewardship

By spending time in nature, children naturally become more attuned to the environment around them. Our goal is to nurture this connection, fostering environmental stewardship and a deeper understanding of the importance of conservation and sustainability. We believe that by engaging with nature regularly, children develop a respect for the environment that will shape them into resilient, environmentally conscious individuals who are empowered to care for the planet as they grow.

Sensory-Rich Experiences

Outdoor learning at YMCA Tomorrow Academy offers sensory-rich experiences that stimulate children's senses and promote holistic development. Whether it's feeling the texture of leaves, listening to the sounds of birds, or observing the growth of plants and animals, children are encouraged to use all their senses to engage deeply with the world around them.

By immersing children in these natural settings and providing opportunities for exploration, play, and learning, we aim to instill a sense of wonder and connection to the environment, empowering them to grow into thoughtful, resilient, and environmentally conscious citizens of the future.



◆ SAFETY & HYGIENE

Safe, squeaky clean environment

Health checks will be conducted in the morning before children are dropped off into the classroom. This will include looking for signs and symptoms showing that the child may not be able to participate fully in class that day. If there are signs and symptoms, the teacher will notify one of the Directors to obtain approval before that child will be allowed to attend the program for the day.

While we understand the need for consistent childcare to allow families to work and provide for their family, the health and safety of our children and staff is our number one priority. The health policy ensures that each student is healthy enough to participate in activities and to protect other students and staff from illnesses.

Our program is not licensed to provide get well care, an ill child is not able to attend the child-care center if one or more of the following exists:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities including outdoor play.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.
- The child has one of the following (unless a medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child-care center's activities):
 - An oral temperature above 100.4 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
 - A tympanic (ear) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. Tympanic thermometers are not recommended for children under six months old.
 - An axillary (armpit) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
 - An infrared temporal (forehead) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; or

- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill; or
- A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

It is necessary to exclude students with the following:

- Fever of 100°F and above. May return 24 hours after fever subsides without fever reducing medication.
- Diarrhea and vomiting. May return 24 hours after symptoms subside without medication.
- Strep throat. May return 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins.
- Head lice. May return after medicated treatment begins and nits have been removed. Whenever a case of lice is reported, our staff may perform periodic head checks.
- Pink eye. May return with written permission from physician.
- Chicken pox. May return when blisters have crusted; and with a written permission from physician; or

Other contagious or communicable diseases. For other contagious or communicable diseases, we will follow the Texas Department of Health guidelines for exclusion per licensing standards. Please find those policies here: [Communicable Disease Chart \(texas.gov\)](#).

If your child has a medical condition of which we should be aware, include the information on your enrollment application. The YMCA Tomorrow Academy staff will notify you immediately, in case of serious injuries or illness. Parents must pick up their child within 30 minutes of requests from staff members. If a parent is unable to be contacted, then staff will contact the next emergency contacts and pickups provided on the application.

For less serious injuries, parents will be notified during pick up. Less serious injuries include, but are not limited to, minor cuts, scratches, and contusions requiring first-aid treatment by employees.

Medical emergencies

If an accident occurs which requires medical attention, YMCA Tomorrow Academy staff will notify the parent immediately to find out whether to take the child to a medical facility or wait for the parent to pick-up the child. If the injury is critical and the child should not be moved or the situation is life threatening, the YMCA Tomorrow Academy staff will call EMS for transportation and accompany the child to the hospital until the parent arrives.

Medication

Staff may administer medication if your child is on a strict medication schedule. Prescription medication must be in the original container with a prescription label stating the child's name, dosage and time to be given. A consent form must be completed by the family. Non-prescription medications require a consent form signed by the family and need to be medically necessary.

All staff are required to obtain medication training before they are allowed to give a child medication.

All medications are to be kept out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet in the classroom or refrigerator. If emergency medication is needed this will be stored in the emergency backpack up out of reach of children and be taken to all locations that child will go. All medications will be kept with a copy of their authorizations.

Handwashing

Employees must wash their hands:

- Before eating or handling food or medication
- Before feeding a child
- After arriving at the child-care center
- After diapering a child
- After assisting a child with toileting
- After personal toileting
- After handling or cleaning bodily fluids, such as after wiping noses, mouths, or bottoms, and tending sores



- After handling or feeding animals
- After outdoor activities
- After handling raw food products
- After eating, drinking, or smoking
- After using any cleaners or toxic chemicals
- After removing gloves.

Children must wash their hands:

- Before eating
- Before playing in a water play table
- After toileting or having a diaper changed
- After outdoor activities
- After playing in sand
- After feeding or touching animals and
- Any other time that the caregiver has reason to believe the child has come in contact with substances that could be harmful to the child.

Children 18 months of age and older and employees must wash their hands with soap and running water.

Immunization Records

All parents must provide a copy of the child's completed immunization record by the date of admission. Records must be validated by a physician or other health-care professional with a signature or rubber stamp including the child's name and birthdate, number of doses, vaccine type, month, day, and year the child received each vaccination. Each child enrolled or admitted to childcare centers must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of Health Immunization Requirements. If your child is 4 years of age, by September 1st, a copy of your child's most recent vision and hearing screening must be provided by the date of admission. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, documentation of a TB screening is not required to be on file.

Employees are not required to obtain and maintain immunizations unless required by State Law. The YMCA Tomorrow Academy does recommend immunizations and will keep a record on file of those provided to the school by employees.

For those children and staff (if require) who are not able to obtain immunizations due to health or religious reasons will need to get a notarized affidavit from the state.

During times of any communicable diseases' crises, those that are under immunized or are not immunized will be excluded from the childcare program until the crisis has passed. This not only protects the students and staff at the program, but those without immunizations as well.

All records for staff and children are maintained in a locked file cabinet in the Director's office or at the main YMCA office location. These files will be kept confidential, but immediately available upon request to Administrators and teaching staff who have consent from the family to access the records, The child's family, and regulatory authorities.





◆ PARENT-TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

Parental involvement is a crucial part of a child's success and overall experience in our program. To foster a strong sense of community and partnership, we have an open-door policy that encourages parents and guardians to participate actively in their child's learning journey.

Communication and Messaging

The YMCA strives for quick and accurate communication at all times and uses the following ways to communicate to families:

- Email
- Phone
- Lillio App for Daily Notes, text, and email messages. Families can edit and change contact information within the app.
- Monthly Newsletters
- Greater Austin YMCA website at [AustinYMCA.org](https://www.austinyymca.org)

Updates to Information

Updates to family information should be done immediately through the Lillio app or by contacting the YMCA. Families are always our first choice to contact in an emergency, but if you cannot be reached, we will reach out to your emergency contacts. If any of the addresses and phone numbers change at any time, it is important that we have the right information.

Our family handbook and policies will be reviewed annually, and all changes will be communicated to families as soon as possible.

Ways to Get Involved

We welcome and value the unique contributions of each family. There are many ways for parents and guardians to be involved, including:

- **Providing Feedback:** You can share your thoughts and insights about your child's development, either verbally or in writing. Your feedback helps us tailor our approach to meet your child's needs.
- **Attending Meetings & Workshops:** Participate in parent-teacher meetings or workshops to stay informed and engaged in your child's educational progress.
- **Fundraising Events:** Support the YMCA Tomorrow Academy through fundraising initiatives that benefit our programs and help us provide the best resources for the children.
- **Volunteering:** Get involved by volunteering on field trips, at special events, or even helping out helping within the center. Your presence helps enrich the learning experience for all children.
- **Sharing Your Talents & Interests:** Whether you have a special skill or interest to share, there are endless opportunities to contribute to our community. From art projects to storytelling or leading a fun activity, your participation can make a big impact



Assessments

The YMCA Tomorrow Academy uses research-based assessments to track and support each child's developmental progress. These assessments play a critical role in guiding our educational approach and ensuring that each child receives the individualized attention they need to thrive.

Assessment Process

Our teachers undergo extensive training to properly complete and interpret developmental assessments. This training ensures that they can accurately evaluate where each child is in their developmental journey and use that information to craft personalized educational plans.

Teachers assess children within the first month of enrollment and then continue with quarterly assessments throughout the year. During each assessment period, they use a combination of documentation, observations, and developmental milestones to evaluate each child's growth. This process not only helps teachers identify areas that may need more attention but also allows them to adjust lesson plans and curriculum to meet each child's specific needs.

Personalized Learning Paths

The data gathered through these assessments informs the creation of individualized education plans (IEPs) for each child. These plans highlight strengths, areas for improvement, and goals tailored to the child's unique developmental stage. Teachers also use assessment data to set broader classroom goals, ensuring that every child's educational needs are addressed in a group setting, while still receiving the support they need on an individual level.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

To keep parents informed and involved in their child's development, parent-teacher conferences are held in November and May. During these conferences, teachers review each child's progress, share assessment results, and discuss any goals or strategies moving forward. Parents are asked to complete an informational questionnaire before each conference window to ensure that their questions and concerns are addressed, creating a productive and collaborative discussion.

◆ FAMILY WELLNESS

Keeping Greater Austin Families Strong for nearly 75 years



FREE Greater Austin YMCA membership for your family

- Up to 2 hours of free childcare while you work out (6 weeks to 12 years old)
- Dynamic, high-energy group fitness classes
- Strength & cardio
- Lap swim & family swim time
- Weekly open gym time
- Great discounts on:
 - Youth Sports Leagues
 - Swim Lessons
 - Youth and Family Programs
 - Counseling Sessions
- And so much more!



Parent Involvement Opportunities

- YMCA family events, workshops, and volunteer days
- Tools and advice on child development, parenting and home learning strategies
- Access to workshops and informational sessions on topics like emotional well-being and social skills
- Recognizing children's milestones and accomplishments with family wellness

◆ Health & Nutrition

Meals and Dietary Policies

At the YMCA Tomorrow Academy, we provide healthy, balanced meals that support the growth and development of all children. We serve breakfast, lunch, and a snack (after rest time) every day, with meals that meet the nutritional requirements set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Meal Service

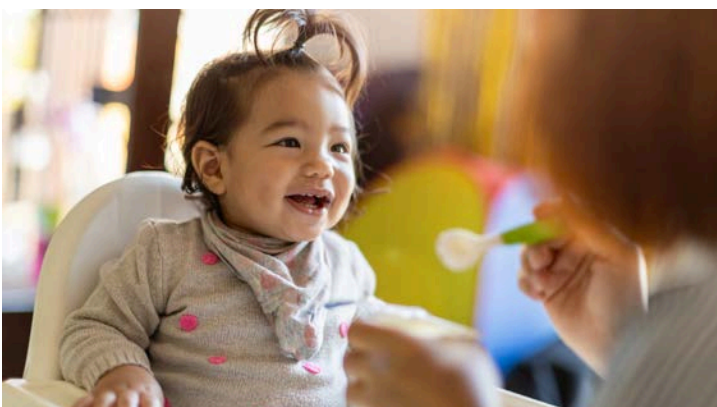
- Nutritional Standards: All meals meet the nutritional guidelines regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure children are receiving a balanced and healthy diet.
- Menus: Menus are posted on the parents' bulletin board for each class and are distributed at the beginning of each month, so parents can stay informed about what their child is eating.

Parent Involvement

Parents are always welcome to join their child for lunch! We encourage parental participation, and parents can eat with their child's class whenever their schedule permits. Please give us a one-day notice if you would like to have lunch with your child, so we can ensure that we have enough food available.

Food from Home

In an effort to maintain consistency and inclusivity during our family-style dining, we kindly ask that parents do not send food from home for breakfast, lunch, or snack once their child leaves the infant room. It is challenging during mealtime for one child to have different food from their peers, and we want to create a positive, inclusive dining experience for everyone.



Accommodating Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

We understand that some children may have food allergies, environmental allergies, or dietary restrictions. We strive to accommodate these needs whenever possible, but please note the following:

- **Peanut Policy:** We are not a peanut-free facility, and we cannot guarantee that peanuts or peanut products will not be present in the center. We take precautions, but please be aware of this limitation.
- **Organic Food:** We do not serve only organic food. Our meals are designed to meet USDA nutritional standards, but organic options are not always guaranteed.

Requirements for Dietary Restrictions

If your child has any dietary restrictions (whether due to allergies or specific needs), please ensure that:

1. Restrictions are noted in your child's file.
2. You provide a statement from a physician or a registered or licensed dietitian, as required by Child Care Licensing.
3. A special procedure and form for dietary restrictions will be implemented to ensure we properly accommodate your child's needs.

We take food allergies and dietary restrictions seriously and will work with families to ensure that any special dietary needs are met to the best of our ability.

Milk Substitutes Policy

We aim to meet each child's nutritional needs while adhering to established guidelines for healthy growth and development. For children who are intolerant to or allergic to cow's milk, we are committed to providing an appropriate milk substitute to support their well-being.

Cow's Milk

We typically serve cow's milk to children who have graduated from formula, as it meets the nutritional guidelines for young children, including the required amount of protein and calcium.

Milk Substitution for Allergies or Intolerances

If a child is intolerant to or allergic to cow's milk, parents are required to provide a note from a physician or a registered or licensed dietitian that confirms the need for a milk substitute for medical reasons.

- **Approved Substitute:** Upon receiving the required documentation, we will provide soy milk as a substitute for cow's milk. Soy milk meets the necessary nutritional guidelines and is an appropriate alternative for children who cannot consume dairy.

Milk Alternatives Not Provided

Please note that we cannot serve Rice Milk or Almond Milk as substitutes. These alternatives do not meet the protein requirements set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and are therefore not compliant with the nutritional standards required for our program.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR NUTRITION

Infant Food and Feeding:
<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/healthy-active-living-for-families/infant-food-and-feeding/>

Healthy Active Living for Families:
<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/healthy-active-living-for-families/>

U.S Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services. Child and Adult Food Care Program:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>
[NEW! Kid's Healthy Eating Plate](#) | [The Nutrition Source](#) | [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#)

Nursing Mothers

We support breastfeeding mothers by providing a comfortable and welcoming environment for breastfeeding and the feeding of expressed breast milk. We understand the importance of breastfeeding in supporting a child's health and development and are committed to accommodating the needs of nursing mothers and their babies.

Breastfeeding Support

- **Comfortable Space for Nursing:** We provide a comfortable space within the center for mothers to breastfeed their child. This area is private and designed to make the nursing process as comfortable and convenient as possible for both mother and child.
- **Bottle Feeding Expressed Breast Milk:** If a mother chooses to express breast milk for bottle feeding, YMCA Tomorrow Academy staff are trained and available to bottle-feed the expressed milk to the child during scheduled feeding times.

Handling Expressed Breast Milk

For families who prefer to provide expressed breast milk for their child, we adhere to strict guidelines to ensure the milk is stored and served safely:

- **Storage Guidelines**
 - We accept expressed breast milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers that are labeled with the infant's name and date.
 - Expressed breast milk will be stored in the refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or 24 hours if the milk was previously frozen).
 - If necessary, the milk may be stored in the freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for no longer than three months.
- **Handling Expressed Milk:**
 - Our staff will ensure that breast milk is gently mixed (not shaken) before feeding to preserve the infection-fighting and nutritional components of the milk.

Coordinating Feedings

We will coordinate feeding times with the mother to ensure that the infant receives breast milk in a way that aligns with the family's preferences and the child's needs. This flexibility ensures that nursing mothers and their babies are fully supported in a caring and accommodating environment.



Toothbrushing

We are committed to fostering healthy habits from an early age, and regular toothbrushing plays a crucial role in promoting good oral hygiene. To support your child's dental health, we incorporate toothbrushing into our daily routine.

Toothbrushing Routine

- When: All children will participate in toothbrushing after the PM snack each day.
- Why: Regular toothbrushing helps to remove bacteria and plaque that can cause tooth decay and gum disease. By building this habit early, we are laying the foundation for a lifetime of good oral health.

What We Provide

- We will provide a toothbrush and toothpaste for each child.
- Our teachers will model proper toothbrushing techniques with the class to ensure that children understand the correct way to care for their teeth.

Our Staff

At the Tomorrow Academy we view the role of the educator as multi-faceted. First and foremost, our educators are caregivers who build relationships with their students that support a healthy engagement in learning. Our educators are also joyful play partners, observers, health and safety champions, learning environment designers, collaborators, reflective practitioners, and co-researchers as they learn alongside the children about interesting and engaging topics.

All of our staff are responsible for providing:

- Ongoing personal contact with children, building meaningful relationships.
- Meaningful learning activities that support each child's developmental needs.
- Supervision to always ensure safety.
- Immediate care, responding promptly to meet children's needs and ensure their well-being.

Our staff are committed to always protecting children's well-being and creating a supportive atmosphere where every child feels valued and cared for.





Role of the Educator

Our educators are more than just instructors—they are:

- Caregivers who form deep, trusting relationships with each child, fostering a sense of security and well-being that is essential for learning.
- Joyful Play Partners, engaging with children in play-based activities that spark curiosity and creativity.
- Observers, who closely monitor each child’s progress and needs to tailor their approach for optimal development.
- Health and Safety Champions, ensuring that children are safe, well cared for, and in an environment conducive to healthy growth.
- Learning Environment Designers, creating spaces that encourage exploration, creativity, and age-appropriate learning.
- Collaborators, working with fellow educators, families, and the community to ensure the child’s overall success.
- Reflective Practitioners, continually assessing and adjusting their teaching methods based on what works best for each child.

Co-Researchers, learning alongside children as they explore new topics, fostering a shared excitement for discovery.

Educational Qualifications

We set high standards for the qualifications of our teaching staff:

- Lead Teachers are required to have an Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education, human development, or a related field, along with 3 years of experience in early childhood settings.
- Assistant Teachers are required to obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) certification within two years of employment to ensure they meet the professional standards necessary for quality early childhood education.

Orientation and Training

All new staff participate in a comprehensive orientation and training program that includes:

- Familiarization with YMCA policies and procedures.
- Understanding childcare licensing regulations.
- Training on the curriculum and how it aligns with best practices for early childhood education.

Continued Professional Learning

We have developed an extensive series of learning modules to support our educators in gaining a deeper understanding of crucial topics such as:

- Secure Attachment: Understanding the importance of building strong, trusting relationships with children.
- Child Development: Knowledge of the cognitive, emotional, and physical development of children.
- Importance of Play: Learning the critical role that play-based learning has in a child's growth and development.
- Play Partnership: Developing strategies for educators to actively participate in and guide children's play.
- Curriculum Planning: Designing activities and lesson plans that support developmental milestones and interests.
- Assessment: Using observation and documentation to track children's learning and adjust teaching practices accordingly.
- Extension of Play and Scaffolding Learning: Supporting and enhancing children's learning through intentional interactions and questioning.
- Effective Communication: Developing communication skills that foster positive interactions with children and families.
- Positive Learning Environments: Creating an inclusive and welcoming environment that promotes growth, exploration, and safety.
- Early Math and Literacy Development: Incorporating foundational concepts of math and literacy in everyday activities.

By continuously investing in the professional growth of our educators, the YMCA Tomorrow Academy ensures that our children receive the highest quality of early education and care. Our commitment to learning, safety, and child-centered development is at the heart of everything we do, preparing children for future success in school and life.



YMCA Commitment to Families and Children: Child Guidance

At the YMCA Tomorrow Academy, we are deeply committed to supporting the growth and development of children in a safe, caring, and nurturing environment. Our goal is to help children reach their fullest potential, and part of this process involves guiding them in a way that promotes respect, responsibility, and empathy.

Setting Limits and Standards of Behavior

While we foster a positive and supportive environment, we recognize that children sometimes need guidance on appropriate behavior. Setting clear limits and expectations is a key part of helping children develop social and emotional skills. Our staff members help children understand appropriate behavior through positive reinforcement, consistent expectations, and clear communication.

YMCA Child Guidance Policy

The YMCA Child Guidance Policy provides a framework for addressing behavioral concerns constructively and respectfully. All YMCA Tomorrow Academy staff are required to adhere to this policy when engaging with children, ensuring that behavior management strategies are consistent, fair, and respectful of each child's dignity.

The policy emphasizes:

- Positive Guidance: Encouraging positive behaviors and reinforcing good choices.
- Clear Expectations: Setting age-appropriate expectations for behavior that are consistent throughout the program.
- Redirection and Problem-Solving: Helping children learn to manage their own behaviors through redirection and problem-solving strategies.
- Safe, Nurturing Environment: Ensuring that the environment remains safe and supportive for all children, where they can thrive emotionally and socially.

Annual Review

To ensure that our approach to child guidance remains effective, all staff are required to review the YMCA Child Guidance Policy annually. This ensures that we are always aligned with the best practices in child development and are up to date on the most effective strategies for supporting children's behavior and emotional growth.

By consistently applying the YMCA Child Guidance Policy, we ensure that every child feels safe, supported, and respected while learning important life skills that help them grow into responsible and compassionate individuals.

Partnership with Families

We also recognize that families play a vital role in supporting children's growth and behavior. Open communication between families and educators helps us work together to provide the best possible experience for each child. We encourage families to share insights or concerns, as this partnership enhances our ability to guide children in a consistent way at home and at the Academy.

Our commitment to child guidance ensures that every child is given the tools, support, and encouragement needed to thrive in a safe and positive environment. We understand that children are still learning to manage their emotions and actions, and we use strategies that focus on positive reinforcement, collaboration with families, and ongoing support to guide behavior.

Staff Training and Policy Adherence

Upon hire, all staff members receive a copy of our Discipline and Guidance Policy, which they are required to review and sign. This ensures that every staff member is aligned with our program's approach to discipline and guidance. This signed policy is kept in their personnel file for accountability and reference.

Ongoing Communication with Families

Open and ongoing communication with families is key to our approach. Teachers and Directors regularly engage with families during scheduled meeting times to discuss a child's behavior and share strategies. These conversations are focused on:

- Expressing concerns about a child's behavior in a constructive way.
- Sharing strategies that can be implemented at home and in the classroom.
- Keeping families informed of their child's progress.

Our primary goal is to limit or eliminate the need for a pause of services, or other exclusionary measures. We believe that working in partnership with families is essential for creating effective solutions that address the child's needs.

Behavior Intervention Plan

When behavioral challenges arise, we work together with the family to assess the cause of the behavior and create an action plan to address those causes. This plan will incorporate positive support strategies to help the child grow and develop socially and emotionally. The following steps are part of our process:

1. Behavior Documentation: Teachers document the behavior concerns, and any strategies used to address the behavior. These records are shared with the family and the Director.
2. Follow-Up: We follow up biweekly to ensure that the action plan is being implemented effectively and to assess the child's progress.
3. Collaborative Plan of Action: The child's progress and the effectiveness of the intervention plan will be reviewed with the family and the Director. If necessary, further adjustments or strategies will be implemented.

Rare Cases of Disruptive Behavior

In rare instances, if a child's behavior becomes consistently disruptive or poses a safety risk to themselves, other children, or staff, we may need to explore alternative interventions. If the interventions mentioned above do not lead to improvement, the Director will call a meeting with the family to discuss whether the program can continue to meet the child's needs. These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, always in consultation with the family.

If needed, we will assist the family in finding alternative placements or additional support services. Our goal is always to ensure that every child has the support they need to succeed.

Compliance with Civil Rights Laws

This policy is fully compliant with federal and state civil rights laws, ensuring that all children, regardless of their individual needs or circumstances, are treated with respect and dignity.

The following is the discipline and guidance policy that you will sign upon enrollment.

Discipline must be:

1. Individualized and consistent for each child
2. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding
3. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control:

A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:

1. Some of the techniques used are:
 - o Redirection
 - o Offering positive, appropriate alternative activities
 - o Natural or logical consequences
 - o Conferencing with parents or guardians to build positive strategies and reinforcement

Staff may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. Examples of prohibited punishment include;

- corporal punishment
- hitting
- kicking
- verbal abuse
- depriving them of their basic needs, etc.

Inclusion at YMCA Tomorrow Academy

At the YMCA Tomorrow Academy, we are committed to creating an inclusive environment where every child can thrive. We understand that each child is unique, and we take a thoughtful, individualized approach to support their development.

Support in the Group Setting

While the YMCA Tomorrow Academy does not offer a 1:1 staff-to-child ratio, we strive to ensure that all children can participate in the classroom with their peers. We provide spaces where a personal therapist can work with the child in the school setting. This allows children to receive the individualized support they need.

Collaboration and Communication

We maintain open communication with families to ensure that we are meeting the unique needs of each child.

Fostering Healthy, Confident Children

We are committed to helping each child grow into a healthy, confident, and capable individual. By providing a safe and nurturing learning environment where every child is treated with respect and dignity, we empower children to realize their full potential.



Program Details

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, unless otherwise noted on our school calendar.

Arrival Time and Attendance

To ensure a smooth and productive start to the day, we recommend that children arrive by 9:30 AM. Early arrival is important for several reasons:

- Educational Opportunities: Children who arrive by 9:30 AM will not miss critical learning activities that are scheduled during the morning.
- Classroom Consistency: A late arrival can disrupt the flow of the daily routine, which can affect both the child and the classroom environment.

If your child needs to arrive later than 9:30 AM due to an appointment or other reasons, we ask that you communicate with us in advance so we can ensure your child’s smooth integration into the day’s activities.

Breakfast Policy

We serve breakfast until 8:30 AM. Children who arrive after 8:30 AM will miss breakfast and should arrive fed and ready to learn. We want all children to start the day with a full stomach, ready to participate in all activities, so please plan accordingly.

Thank you for supporting the structure and routine of our program, and for helping us create the best possible learning environment for all children.

Classrooms and Ages

Dreamers 6 weeks – 12 months	Builders 12 months to 23 months	Creators 24 months to 35 months	Trailblazers & Changemakers PreK, 3 to 5
Educator/Child ratio is 1:4.	Educator/Child ratio is 1:4	Educator/Child ratio is 1:5	Educator/Child ratio is 1:10



Transition Plans

When your child is ready to move to a new classroom, we do all we can to make this transition a smooth and successful one. Transitions will usually occur in August and January, unless we feel a child is ready sooner or there is more space in an older classroom. We recognize that transitions can be a challenge, so we will consider each child's temperament and adjust our transitions accordingly.

One month prior to Transition period:

- EED works with Associate Director to schedule time to set meeting with parents to discuss classroom transition.
- EED director informs CSR when the child(ren) will transition to new classroom.

Two Weeks Prior to Transitional period:

- Associate Director and EDD will meet with parents to talk through the transition of classrooms.
- Transitional period dates will be solidified, and plans will be communicated to EE teachers.

Transitional period:

- Associate Director/EE Teachers will start a slow two-week transition for the child(ren) from their current classroom to their new classroom.
 - Day 1-3 the child(ren) will spend a maximum of two hours in the new classroom a day. These times can fluctuate to different parts of the day based on EE teachers' discretion.
 - Day 4-5 the child(ren) will spend a maximum of four hours in the new classroom a day. One day will be in the morning and one day will be in the afternoon.

- AD will check in with EE teachers on how transition is going and discuss if they may need to lengthen the transition period.
 - Day 6-8 the child(ren) will spend a maximum of four hours in the new classroom a day. Two days will be starting at drop off and one day will be in the afternoon for pickup.
 - Day 9- the child(ren) will spend the whole day in the new classroom. Child(ren) may transition back to original class throughout the day if needed.
- AD will check in with EE teachers on how the day went with the child(ren) and discuss the final day (day 10) of the transitional period or if they need to extend it.
 - Day 10- Final day of transitional period. Child(ren) will spend the whole day in the new classroom.
- AD and EE teachers will check in with family about the progress of the transition.
 - If additional time for the transition is needed the EED director will need to be notified.

Our goal is to try to keep infants and toddlers with their teaching staff for nine months or longer, depending on space, and the needs of the child based on ability.



Program Policies

Fee Information

Our YMCA Programs are designed to benefit persons of all backgrounds. While participants are expected to pay their fair share, if funds are available, the YMCA will assist any individual who wants to participate but cannot afford the fee. Awards are based on several factors including household income and number of dependents.

You can apply for fee assistance when completing your online application and answering the prescreen questions. There is a longer processing time for customers who have requested fee assistance but your prompt attention to our document request will help speed up the process. Application and prior participation are not a guarantee of award. For more information, contact our Customer Service team by email at EACY@AustinYMCA.org or phone at 512-236-9622.

Fees and registration

Our Early Education program has a one-time registration fee of \$200 per child, required at the time of enrollment or re-registration. Registration fees are non-refundable, and non-transferable.

Once registration is completed and a spot is offered, parents must submit a deposit of half of the 1st month's tuition to hold their spot in the program. This deposit will be applied to the first month of tuition. The remainder of the tuition will be due on or before the 1st day of attendance.

Payments are due on the 1st of the month. Payments cannot be accepted by YMCA Tomorrow Academy staff at the school. Payment deadlines continue to be in effect when the business office is closed and/or during the weekends. All payments received through the after the 2nd of the month will be charged a \$30 late fee. If payment is not received by the 5th of the month, your child's enrollment in the program will be cancelled. If cancelled due to non-payment and you wish to pay the account balance to re-enroll, the account balance must be paid in full.

Tuition may be paid monthly by bank draft, credit card charge/debit, or check. You can choose two automatic bank draft options:

- 15th* (of previous month) or
- 1st (of the current month)

If choosing the 15th as the draft date, your first payment for August will be July 15th.

A \$25 service charge will be charged for returned checks and/or returned e-checks. If two consecutive drafts come back as an NSF, we will require that the parent responsible for the program fees submit a new form of payment for all future drafts.

Credits are not given if a child is absent for any reason, including a pause in services from a school closure announced by the district.

Termination of Services for Non-Payment

Parents will receive an email notifying them of their past due balance and the final date on which payment will be accepted. If payment is not received by 6:00 p.m. on the final deadline date provided in the letter, then the childcare services will be discontinued.

Parents who wish to re-enroll their children after they have been withdrawn for nonpayment must pay their past due balance which will include a \$30 late fee. For each day children continue to attend the YMCA Tomorrow Academy after termination for nonpayment, parents will be charged an additional \$10 penalty per day per child.

Payment Receipts/Taxes

For tax return purposes, please log into your Lillio account and select the "View Statements" option in the Payments & Statements area of your account home page. Each year the "Tax Statement Summary" will be available January 31 on your account and an email will be generated with the summary attached. Greater Austin YMCA Tax ID# is 74-1193464.

Discounts

Passport Unlimited discounts are available. Parents must request discount information during the enrollment process. Parents can also receive a referral credit for referring friends to register for YMCA Tomorrow Academy programs. The registrant must list the referrer on their application.

Late Fees

While we understand there may be a case that prevents a parent from being on time, we strongly encourage parents to contact the school if there is a chance of arriving late. Students not picked up within 30 minutes after closing time may result in contacting CPS for assistance. Childcare services may be terminated for excessive late pickups and/or for non-payment of late pickup fees.

Student Holidays

Four Points Closing Dates	Dove Springs Closing Dates
New Years Day	New Years Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Presidents' Day	Presidents' Day
Memorial Day	Memorial Day
Juneteenth	Juneteenth
Independence Day	Independence Day
Labor Day	Labor Day
Veteran's Day	Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day (Thursday and Friday)	Thanksgiving Day (Thursday and Friday)
Christmas Break (24-26)	Christmas Break (24-26)

Note: Payment Schedule and Holiday Calendar will be provided to you with your confirmation email.

Cancellation Policy

To cancel childcare services and avoid additional charges, a written cancellation must be received via our online cancellation request form which can be found at EACYMCA.org or under the forms section in your Lillio account. Cancellations must be given 30 days in advance of the last day of enrollment. If for any reason we are no longer able to provide care for your child, we will also give families at least 30 days advance notice.

Parent Responsibilities

At the YMCA Tomorrow Academy, we strive to create a collaborative and supportive environment for both children and their families. Clear communication and mutual respect are key to making the program successful. Below are the program expectations for parents to ensure that we can provide the best possible care and education for your child.

Communication

- **Update Contact Information:** Parents are expected to promptly notify us of any changes to contact information, including phone numbers and emergency contacts. In case of an emergency, it is crucial that we can reach you immediately to share important information about your child.

Timeliness

- **Drop-off and Pick-up:** Parents are expected to drop off and pick up their child on time. Respecting these times helps us maintain a structured and productive day for your child and ensures that our staff can finish their important activities and leave on time for personal responsibilities.

Payments

- **Timely Payments:** Payments are expected to be made on time in order for us to continue providing high-quality programs and services for your child. Timely payments ensure that we can maintain and improve the resources available to your child's education and care.

Open Communication

- **We're Here to Listen:** We value open, honest, and ongoing communication. If you have any comments, concerns, or questions, please feel free to reach out. We operate under an open-door policy, meaning that we are always available to discuss any matters related to your child's well-being and development.

Illness Policy

- **Sick Children:** For the health and safety of all children and staff, if your child is sick or showing signs of illness, they should be kept at home. We cannot accept a child showing symptoms of illness unless a doctor's note confirms that the child is not contagious and can fully participate in all program activities.

Changes in Daily Schedule

- **Updated Pick-Up Information:** If there are any changes to who will be picking up your child, especially if someone not on the approved pick-up list will be coming, please inform us in advance. This helps ensure your child's safety and ensures that we have accurate records for all pick-up arrangements.

What Your Child Will Need

By packing a few essential items for your child and providing any specific details about your child's health, rest, feeding, and activity, you help our YMCA Tomorrow Academy educators provide individualized care for your child. Please ensure all your child's belongings are clearly labeled with their first and last name.

- Complete change of clothing.
- Seasonal outdoor clothing.
- Blanket for rest time.
- Diapers, and any sunscreens or bug spray.
- Bottles/sip cups labeled. (if you are using a glass bottle it needs to have a silicone sleeve)
- Formula or breast milk if your child has not transitioned to regular milk.
- Extra clothes, underwear, and pullups (that have the Velcro on the sides not the pull on and off one)
- Water bottle.

Babysitting

YMCA staff are not permitted to provide services to families that are beyond their roles and responsibilities as a YMCA Tomorrow Academy Educator, such as babysitting or house-sitting. Furthermore, staff cannot engage in any social media activity/interaction with childcare families and/or children at any time. Should you have any concerns, please contact your center director.

Volunteers/Students

We may accept work experience students from local high schools, early childhood practicum students and volunteers to help in our programs. All students and volunteers provide a clear criminal background check, professional references and undergo child abuse and neglect training, prior to volunteering in our programs.

Inclement Weather

Severe weather conditions often result in hazardous traveling and road conditions. In these cases, The YMCA Tomorrow Academy will follow our local school district and/or city closures. The YMCA Tomorrow Academy will also communicate these closures to families through Lillio and will make every effort to inform them as early in the morning as possible.

*Refunds will not be offered for closures due to inclement weather

Weapon Play

We recognize that children have a need to pretend superhero games. Although we allow superhero games, we do not allow the children to use pretend weapons. Weapons stay at home.

Field Trips

Field trips can be an important part of our childcare program. We often take children for walks or to visit local parks, which allow them to get to know their community and have valuable outdoor time. This is considered a part of our regular routine and is often done spontaneously. For major field trips, parents will be notified ahead of time including if the children will be using public transportation or the van.

Screen Time

Extended durations of screen time, such as watching movies, are not part of the YMCA Tomorrow Academy program activities. Short educational videos may be shown as part of the program curriculum and only in support of the completion of activities. Screen Time is not approved for any children under the age of 2. We follow all minimum standards and NAEYC guidelines when using any screens in the classrooms. [NAEYC position statements on technology](#).

Water Activities

During the summer months we will be having a weekly water day for each classroom. During water days we will utilize sprinklers, flat splash pads with holes for draining water, and water tables. This is a fun day that all children and teachers alike enjoy because it helps us fight off the Texas heat just a bit.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

Parents must supply sunscreen and insect repellent. Parent packets will contain a permission slip for parents to disclose the type of sunscreen and insect repellent which will be provided to YMCA Tomorrow Academy and a release allowing Tomorrow Academy staff permission to apply sunscreen and insect repellent on the child. Everything must be clearly labeled with the child's name.

State Licensing

YMCA Tomorrow Academy is licensed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Child-Care Regulation (CCR) Division.

A CCR representative inspects the center at least once per year and the most recent inspection report is posted on the bulletin board in the entryway. You can also review a copy of the "Texas Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child-Care Centers" in the administrative office. Families may access a copy of the childcare minimum standards at

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>

To contact the local Licensing office, call 512-834-3195.

Families may access the Texas Health and Human Services website at

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov>.

Duty to Report

We are required by law to report any suspected cases or disclosures of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

Our responsibility is to report suspicions or disclosures, not determine if abuse has occurred.

Investigations are the responsibility of Texas Health and Human Services and/or the local police. They are responsible for contacting the families as well.

All staff will be trained annually in the awareness and prevention techniques of child abuse and neglect. This training will also include the risks of child abuse and neglect.

Classes will also be available during family training on prevention and risk factors.

Families may also report any suspected cases of disclosures by calling the DFPS Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or if there is an emergency, calling 911. Reports may also be completed online at https://www.dfps.texas.gov/contact_us/report_abuse.asp.

The YMCA Tomorrow Academy will work with families needing extra support, to locate community assistance and interventions.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up

The safety and well-being of all children in our care is our top priority; therefore, we expect parents/guardians to follow our procedures. Parents/guardians must sign children in and ensure that a staff member is aware that you are dropping off your child.

Parents/guardians must sign children out upon pick up and ensure that a staff member is aware that you are taking your child home.

Authorized Pick-Up List

You are required to notify center staff, in writing, if someone other than those listed on the authorized pick-up list will be picking up your child. If this person is unknown to the staff, they will be required to show photo identification.

Failure to Pick-Up

While we understand there may be a case that prevents a parent from being on time, we strongly encourage parents to contact the center campus phone if there is a chance of arriving late. Students not picked up within 30 minutes after closing time may result in contacting CPS for assistance. Childcare services may be terminated for excessive late pickups and/or for non-payment of late pickup fees.

Custody

If a custody agreement or court order is in place for your child, a copy must be on file. Staff will act in accordance with this legal document.

Late Pick-Up Fees

There will be a fee of \$1.00 for each minute after closing time that the caregiver is late.

If a child is not picked up by closing time, staff will contact parents/guardians and/or emergency contacts. If after 30 minutes staff are unable to contact parents/guardians or emergency contacts, staff are required to call 911 and the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, who will take your child into care until you can be located.

Safe Sleep

Safe sleep guidelines are followed for infants 12 months old or younger that relate to sleep requirements and restrictions, including sleep positioning, and crib requirements and restrictions, including mattresses, bedding, blankets, toys, and restrictive devices. Infants not yet able to turn over on their own must be placed in a face-up sleeping position in the infant's own crib, unless you have a completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health-care professional stating that a different sleeping position for the child is medically necessary. Please keep in mind infants cannot sleep swaddled or with any blankets or toys.

Naptime

Children are required to have a scheduled naptime each day. This must not exceed three hours a day. Children are not required to sleep but must have one hour of quiet rest. Activities will be provided for children that are still awake after the first hour. Children are never forced to sleep.

Idling Vehicles

Vehicles should not be left idling in the parking lot at any time. This includes buses, vans, and family vehicles. This is a safety precaution for all entering and leaving our building. Children are not to be left alone in vehicles, running or not. We are required by state law to report this to the Texas Health and Human Services licensing department.

Personal Effects

The YMCA Tomorrow Academy is not responsible for any personal items/articles brought, used or left at any programs or facilities.

Pets

Classroom pets are required by DFPS to be certified in good health by a qualified veterinarian. The same criteria apply to family pets who may be brought to visit the school.



Emergency Procedures and Closures

Emergency Closures

The YMCA Tomorrow Academy will not provide care when schools are closed/close early due to weather or emergencies. No credits will be applied for early closures or cancellations issued by the school district.

Emergency Procedures

For all emergencies, the center supervisor will stay calm, lead the center, and follow all procedures. During an evacuation emergency staff will secure and maintain keys, clipboards with sign out sheets, record print outs for each child, and purses/adult belongings for the duration of the emergency, if possible. Staff will account for each child and maintain a written record of the children released from the program, including the person(s) to which they are released. Infant programs are equipped with evacuation cribs and strollers to assist in relocating.

We follow the Standard Response Protocol or SRP for emergency situations. Please find the SRP information below. Center staff will communicate with parents through our communication app Lillio should we enter an emergency situation.

Hold is followed by the Directive: "In Your Room or Area" and is the protocol used when hallways need to be kept clear of occupants.

Secure is followed by the Directive: "Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors" and is the protocol used to safeguard people within the building.

Lockdown is followed by "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight" and is the protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep occupants quiet and in place. If it is determined that the safety and the health of children and staff are in jeopardy, they will proceed to a classroom, restroom, or any other room with doors that lock. Children will not be released until the area is deemed safe by local law enforcement.

Evacuation may be followed by a location and is used to move people from one location to a different location in or out of the building. The center supervisor will direct building evacuation according to the fire evacuation map (posted on the blue boards); Formal communications will be initiated with the center director, and/or program director for the location of the nearest off-campus relocation center.

Bomb Threats - The center supervisor will keep the person making the call on the line for as long as possible, and to record every word spoken by the caller.

Shelter State the Hazard and Safety Strategy for group and self-protection. The center supervisor will direct staff and children to take cover in predetermined interior areas. Children will sit or curl up along the interior walls away from any windows and exterior walls.



Feedback or Grievances

Parents are encouraged to reach out to the Director at any time to schedule an appointment to discuss comments or concerns. The YMCA Tomorrow Academy maintains an open-door policy of communication but recommends scheduling time if there needs to be a private and personal conversation.

We also recommend that you reach out at any time to schedule a teacher meeting if you are in need so that we can staff the classroom for coverage.

Keep in mind that all staff are only available during their scheduled hours, between 7am to 6pm unless otherwise approved by the Director.

Parents/guardians will be surveyed for feedback about the program during the summer, fall and spring semesters through our Listen360 survey to improve the quality of care for your child and enhance program activities. Suggestions and feedback are integrated into the program operation where applicable.

Customers are encouraged to have conferences with staff members as needed and to bring complaints or grievances first to the staff member closest to the concern and then to work up the chain of command. If the staff member closest to your concern does not address your concern to your satisfaction, ask for that person's supervisor. If there is still not a satisfactory resolution, ask for a manager to investigate the matter. If you are still not satisfied, you may make a final appeal to the Associate Vice President of Early Learning. All parties are encouraged to discuss concerns in private and in a courteous manner.

Parental Notification

Parents/guardians are notified:

- if their child is injured and the injury requires medical attention by a healthcare professional
- if their child has signs or symptoms requiring exclusion from the program
- if their child is involved in any situation that placed the child at risk
- if their child is involved in any situation that renders the childcare center unsafe
- if an employee or child in the program has contracted a communicable disease (notified in writing within 48 hours); and

- if a child in their group has an outbreak of lice or other infestations (a notice will be posted or individually given to parents of all children in that group).

Parents/guardians will be notified at pick-up time if the staff is aware of any less serious injuries that include minor cuts and scratches.

In case of any policy changes, staff will email a notification to parents, specifying the section or policy that was changed. Parents may request a copy to be emailed or request a printed copy to be mailed. Policies are also uploaded to our website. The YMCA Tomorrow Academy reserves the right to amend, modify or change the policies at any time. Policies are reviewed annually.





Eco-Friendly and Sustainability Practices

The YMCA Tomorrow Academy is committed to promoting eco-friendly and sustainable practices in a variety of ways, ensuring the well-being of our staff, children, families, and the environment.

Recycling and Waste Reduction:

We actively encourage recycling through designated bins placed throughout the center, fostering a culture of sustainability and helping reduce the environmental impact of waste.

Educational Gardens:

Our garden serves as a hands-on learning space where children engage in growing their own healthy foods and spices. This not only provides nutritious options for snacks and cooking projects but also teaches children the importance of environmental stewardship and healthy eating habits.

Eco-Friendly Sanitation:

We use advanced sanitation machines to disinfect all toys and play items after they have been washed. These machines are environmentally friendly and eliminate the need for harsh chemicals like bleach, ensuring a safer environment for both children and staff while minimizing the center's ecological footprint.

By integrating these practices, the YMCA Tomorrow Academy not only provides a safe and healthy space for children but also demonstrates its ongoing commitment to sustainability and eco-consciousness.

Gang-Free Zone Policy

At the YMCA Tomorrow Academy, we are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, staff, and families. This includes maintaining a Gang-Free Zone around our facility to ensure that our center remains a place of safety, learning, and growth.

What is a Gang-Free Zone?

A Gang-Free Zone refers to any area within 1,000 feet of a childcare center where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty under the Texas Penal Code.

Purpose: The designation of a gang-free zone is to protect children and families from the influence of gangs and to reduce the risk of criminal activity near child-care facilities.

Legal Implications: Any criminal activity related to organized crime or gang activity that occurs within this 1,000-foot radius is subject to stricter penalties, as outlined by state law. This provides an added layer of protection for the children and families in our care.

Our Commitment to Safety

The YMCA Tomorrow Academy is dedicated to maintaining a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for all children. We take steps to ensure that our facility remains free from any form of criminal activity, including gang-related offenses. This commitment is part of our broader focus on child safety, well-being, and development.

