



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# CHILD CARE PARENT HANDBOOK

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GEORGIA MOUNTAINS YMCA



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## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

In YMCA child care, children participate in a balanced program of open play and structured activities. Every activity is carefully designed to spark your child's imagination and encourage lifelong positive values.

Our staff members ensure children participate in a unique mix of activities that focus on developmental assets and the building blocks that teach children how to make positive decisions. Many YMCA After School programs are located in your child's school cafeteria, gym or classroom. Our Summer Camp or Holiday Camp, Teens and Afternoons at JA Walters sites are located at the J.A. Walters YMCA or other off site locations.

Focusing on leadership development, service learning, college and career exploration, arts education, global learning, parent and caregiver engagement, academics, health and wellness, and interactive learning centers gives participants exposure to a breadth of knowledge and skills.

Our daily schedule includes 30-60 minutes for children to participate in a mix of moderate to vigorous physical activity sessions. Weather permitting, these activities will take place outdoors. Television and movies will only be used as it ties into the educational curriculum and use of any digital device will be limited to homework or programs that actively engage children in physical activity.

## **HOURS, DAYS AND MONTHS OF OPERATION**

After School programs operate from school dismissal until 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The program will follow the Hall County, Dawson County or Gainesville City public school's calendar (depending on the program you are enrolled in). The primary calendar follows Hall County.

Camp programs (including summer and holiday camps) operate from 7:00 am to 6:00pm, Monday – Friday. Other camp days that may be included would be teacher workdays or other school holidays.

## **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

The Y's responsibility for your child begins when your child enters the YMCA program space. After school site staff will sign in the children at their after school site locations each day. Parents must sign their children in and out each day, for camp programs.

## **DEPARTURE AND RELEASE PROCEDURES**

Parents or Authorized Persons must enter the building and sign their children out of our program. This assures child-safety and compliance with state licensing.

A photo ID will be required for the release of your child. The child will only be released to his/her parent and/or those adults that the parent(s) specifically designate on the enrollment form. Only those designated on the enrollment form will be allowed to modify your information, and all changes must be made in writing.

If a parent is not allowed to pick up a child, the center must have a copy of the court order signed by a judge. Without this documentation, we are obligated to release a child to either parent, if both are listed on the enrollment paperwork. The Y will only follow what the court order states.

## **Transportation**

Transportation will be provided for Field Trips during our some of our Programs. A transportation agreement will be signed in the enrollment packet during the registration process. For Middle School programs transportation will be provided.

## **Aquatics**

Swim time is enjoyed by the children in our programs during holiday camps, Sunshine Pre-K, Teens and Afternoons at JA Walters and summer camps programs. Each child is tested for swim ability and their abilities noted by the counselor. Children who cannot pass the swim safety test will be designated with a red band; a child who has moderate proficiency will be designated with a yellow band and a child who can swim proficiently enough to pass a swim test will be designated with a green band. All children designated as “non-swimmers” or with red bands will be required to wear a personal flotation device. This will not be air inflated devices.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY (ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA)**

The Georgia Mountains YMCA does not require child care staff to receive any additional immunizations in order to work with children. In order to ensure the health and safety of all, employees who work directly with children will follow required procedures to prevent the spread of exposure to disease:

- Wear gloves when handling or cleaning body fluids, such as after wiping noses, mouths, or tending sores
- Specify that an employee with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits hand-washing, such as casts, bandages, or braces, must not prepare food or have close contact with children in care
- Remove gloves and wash hands immediately after each task to prevent cross-contamination to other children
- Exclude the employee from direct care when the employee has signs of illness

In order to protect the health of all children in our care, please keep your child at home if you notice that he/she begins to show signs of an illness or contagious disease or if he/she feels too ill to participate in a group care setting or attend school.

Please let us know as soon as possible if your child has a communicable illness or infection. This will allow us to notify the parents of children attending our program. Children with communicable conditions may not return to care without a note from their physician. Weather permitting, children go outside every day. We cannot keep one child inside due to illness.

Children with head lice will not be allowed to attend the childcare program. In relation to head lice, the Y will follow the same guidelines as your child’s school.

If your child becomes ill during the program day, we will contact you to pick him/her up. In case of injury, parents will be notified immediately.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

Regular and ongoing medication may be administered on-site, during camp or holiday care. During after school care only emergency medications will be administered. Parents must complete an “Authorization to Administer Medication” form. This form requires the listing of the specific dosage your child is to be given, and it must accompany all medications. Medications must also be in the original container with your child’s name and all labels intact.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

In the case of a medical emergency, we will call 911 and contact the child’s parents/guardians. Responding emergency medical personnel will determine if the child should be transported to a hospital. We will provide them with the information from your child’s records as to your choice of hospital and physician. In the event that this information is not specified, the child will be transported to the nearest available hospital.

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS**

Parent notifications may be made in writing via letters, emails, fliers and/or signage at the parent table at each site. Notifications may also be made by phone calls or directly in person by site staff. Open communication is very important to the success of your child's Y experience. Conferences may be requested at any time. Activity schedules, menus and other pertinent information will be available for you to view at the parent table.

## **SNACKS (FOOD SERVICE PRACTICES)**

During After School Programs an afternoon snack is provided each day by the Hall County school system and will comply with the USDA program guidelines. During Camp Programs children need to bring a snack each day.

If you send an additional snack with your child, please ensure that these foods do not include any form of peanut products, fried foods, or foods that are high in sugar and saturated fats (such as chips, cookies, candy, etc.). Please also refrain from bringing sugar-sweetened beverages and food from local restaurants into the program. Please also utilize these guidelines for snacks for parties and events. Ideas for healthy snacks can be provided upon request.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

In order to participate in the program, children are required to have been examined within the past year by a licensed physician. Children must be mentally and emotionally able to participate in the program activities. Immunization records must be current and on file at the After School site.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND NOTIFICATION OF POLICY CHANGES**

The YMCA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. We operate on a first come first serve basis for all of our classes when children meet the following requirements:

Enrollment may be completed online at [www.GAMountainsYMCA.org](http://www.GAMountainsYMCA.org). A non-refundable registration fee must be paid at the time of enrollment. Enrollment is not complete until payments have been received or scheduled and paperwork signed. Please allow 48 hours time to complete registration and send the information to each site.

The following items are needed to enroll:

- Identifying information about the child to include: name, date of birth, sex, address, living arrangement if not with both parents, and name of school
- Identifying information about the parent(s) to include: name of both parents, if applicable, home and work addresses and home and work numbers
- Emergency contact information for someone other than yourself (not parent or guardian)
- Name, address, and phone number
- Contact Name and information for others authorized to pick up your child
- To include name, address, phone number, relationship to child and to parent(s) and other identifying information
- Current Immunization record
- Payment information
- Registration fee
- Insurance information
- Doctor and hospital information
- Statement regarding know allergies or other physical problems, mental health disorders, mental retardation or developmental disabilities which would limit the child's participation in the center's program and activities
- Description of any special procedures to be followed in caring for the child, including any special services which the center agrees to provide to a child with special needs

- Parental authorizations

To begin the enrollment process, you should have an online account

You need to create an online account or log into your existing YMCA account to register for After School care. Please note that it may take up to 48 hours for paperwork to be processed. Paperwork must be processed entirely before your child may begin the program. Any policy changes will be provided to participant's parent or guardian in writing.

### **Notification of Policy Changes:**

Should there be policy changes either by the YMCA or Bright From the Start parents will be notified by poster and/or in writing with a new handbook and sign off page. The parent handbook will be updated and can be located on the website.

### **Inclusion**

YMCA Child Care Classes make every effort to accommodate children with special needs and welcome them into our classrooms. The YMCA will do everything possible to make our center accommodating to all children.

Determining our ability to provide services will be done on a case by case basis. The YMCA reserves the right to request IEP's and other documentation for review to determine our ability to provide required services.

While our teachers have extensive training, we currently do not employ anyone who is certified in Special Education.

### **PROCEDURES FOR PARENT INTERACTION – VISITING, COMMUNICATION**

Parents are welcome visitors to our program. Please check daily for posted notices, fliers or other information about program activities. We appreciate input regarding program expectations, suggestions, ideas and comments on ways to improve our service to you and your family.

You may direct suggestions, concerns, compliments and complaints to the immediate caregiver or the Child Care Director.

If you wish to visit your child's location please be sure to sign in on the visitor's log sheet.

### **GEORGIA BRIGHT FROM THE START CHILD CARE LICENSING**

**The Georgia Mountains YMCA After School Program is licensed by Bright From the Start. Camp, Teen (Middle School); Sunshine Pre-K & Afternoons at JA Walters Programs are NOT licensed by Bright From the Start.** By choosing licensed child care, you and your family join your child in new experiences and relationships. You, the Child Care Director, and the child care staff have a responsibility to protect the health, safety and well-being of your child. Bright from the Start (BFTS) Licensing Division is also a part of this partnership.

A copy of minimum standards required for licensing school-age After School programs is available for your review at the school site. You may also request a copy of these standards from your local child care office. A list of these offices may be found on the BFTS website: [dcal.ga.gov](http://dcal.ga.gov) or by calling the Child Care Information Line at 1-404-656-5957.

Sites, Programs that are not licensed still follow Health & Safety Standards for Exempt Programs.

YMCA staff members are trained to recognize child abuse and neglect, and are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. The child abuse hotline is 1-855-GA-CHILD.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Staff members are trained in basic emergency procedures. Necessary responses to issues regarding natural disasters (floods, tornados, hurricanes, etc.), hostile situations and fire escape routes are addressed in staff training. Monthly fire drills and periodic tornado drills are conducted at sites. In the event of a gas leak, your child will be relocated and you will be notified immediately to come pick them up.

If evacuation is necessary, staff members will first move children to a designated safe area or alternate shelter known to all employees, caregivers and volunteers. Evacuation procedures also address the care of children with limited mobility or who otherwise may need assistance in an emergency, such as children who have mental, visual or hearing impairments. Head counts and roll sheets will be utilized to account for children, and will be conducted by two or more caregivers. At all times, our emphasis will be on keeping children safe.

In cases of inclement weather, the Y program will follow specific school district recommendations. If the school is closed or all after school extracurricular activities are cancelled due to weather, the Y After School program will also be closed. If the weather begins to worsen during the day, we will ask you to pick up your child as soon as possible so our staff members may get home safely.

## ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The YMCA has balanced billing. Monthly and weekly fees are based on Hall County's public school calendar year. All early dismissal days and in-service days are included in the monthly fee. Holiday camps and school holidays may require an additional fee.

A registration fee is due at the time of enrollment and is non-refundable. When withdrawing from the program, written notice must be turned in to the Y, and must be provided at least **10 days prior to your draft date**. Refunds may be issued with a processing fee.

Payment options:

- Weekly Automatic Draft -

Your payment will be drafted from your account on each Friday which is payment for the following week. (Check routing and account number or credit card number must be provided.) **For Summer Camp participants this draft is run on the Wednesday prior the week of attendance.**

- Advanced Monthly Automatic Draft -

Your payment will be drafted from your account on the last Friday of each month for the upcoming month. (Check routing and account number or credit card number must be provided.)

Late payments

Payments are late after the first business day of each month for monthly drafts or on Mondays for weekly drafts and your account will be charged a **\$30 late fee**. If payment has not been received within **10 days** your child will no longer be accepted into the Y program. Payments cannot be accepted at the program sites.

Removal from Program for Non-Payment of Fees

In order to be fair to all program members, those who do not pay program fees in a timely manner may be suspended or terminated from the program. If services are suspended, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure alternative care is provided. The YMCA program site will not accept your child into the program.

Late pick-up

Please call the site lead if an unexpected emergency will cause you to be late picking up your child. There is a **\$1 per minute** charge for children not picked up by the program's closing time. In the event that a child has not been picked up within one hour of the stated closing time, Y staff members have been instructed to call Child Protective Services. In the event that a child is repeatedly left past the closing hour, the Y reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment in

the program.

### **Withdrawal**

A Two week notice (10 working days) is required when withdrawing a child from the program. Attendance is not required; however, full payment must be made for two weeks after the Withdrawal Form is signed by the Child Care Director.

### **Receipt request**

You are able to request a receipt when making payments. Retain all receipts and cancelled checks for your records. The Y Tax ID number is 58-2203268.

### **Financial assistance**

The Y is a community-based organization and believes that its programs and services should be available to everyone regardless of age, background, ability or income. The Y offers financial assistance to its participants which are designed to fit your individual financial situation. Limited financial assistance is available to individuals and families who substantiate a need.

Due to the limited availability of funds for after school, families needing assistance should contact the Y and complete paperwork to determine if qualified for financial assistance.

### **Y STAFF**

The Y believes that staff training is essential to providing quality programs. Y staff members at each site will, receive within 90 days, maintain current First Aid and CPR certifications. Each staff member also completes pre-service orientation training and up to an additional 30 hours of training each year. All potential employees are required to pass criminal background screening and FBI background check, which includes fingerprinting.

Y staff members are not permitted to have outside contact with children enrolled in our Child Care programs. Please do not ask staff to babysit or pick up your child.

### **STAFF/CHILDREN RATIOS**

Bright From the Start requires a minimum of one staff member per 18 to 25 children. The Y strives for a ratio of one staff member per 18 children. Each Y site will strive to have at least two staff members present at all times.

### **CHILD'S BELONGINGS**

Children should be dressed for active indoor and outdoor play. Items brought to the program by your child must be labeled and we expect children to be responsible for their personal belongings. Please leave personal toys, money, video games and players, CDs, CD players, iPods or other MP3 players, cell phones and anything not allowed by Hall County schools at home. The Y cannot credit or compensate for lost, damaged or stolen items.

### **Assistive Devices**

The YMCA is not responsible for any lost, stolen, damaged, or broken assistive devices such as hearing aids, contact lenses, or glasses. Please have adequate replacement insurance for such items should they become damaged, misplaced, or broken.

### **Electronic Devices/Toys from Home**

The YMCA is not responsible for toys brought from home including electronic devices, games, and cell phones. These items should not be brought to school or camp and will not be replaced by the YMCA.

## **Educational Components**

The YMCA recognizes that academic success is important for the children who are enrolled in our After School program. YMCA staff members support the parents of program participants by encouraging students to take responsibility for completing their homework. Our schedule will include 30 minutes of designated homework time. During homework time, staff members will monitor and assist the students at request, but will not provide one-on-one tutoring. Our program cannot accommodate additional homework time beyond the daily scheduled thirty minutes.

Homework guidance from the Y staff will include:

- Explaining directions
- Reading instructions and giving examples (this does not include grading or corrections to work)

Please note that Y staff are not responsible for checking the children's belongings for homework or assignments.

We also encourage students and parents to review and complete homework together.

At the Y we understand the need for continued learning during the summer to prevent summer learning loss. We will work to provide reading programs and other fun educational activities that will encourage learning the entire summer.

## **DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE PROCEDURES**

Self-management skills and positive social interactions among children and adults are encouraged and maximize everyone's enjoyment of the program. Our programs use positive guidance methods including reminders, natural consequences and redirection. Self-management skills are taught according to the following guidelines:

- Consistent rules are clearly stated. Children are expected to work and play within known limits.
- Behavior expected of children is age-appropriate and based on development level.
- An atmosphere of trust is established in order for children to know that they will not be hurt nor allowed to hurt others.
- Staff members strive to help children become acquainted with themselves and their feelings. This will help them learn to cope with their feelings and control them responsibly.

Child safety is our most important concern; therefore, children whose behavior is dangerous or repeatedly disruptive must be immediately picked up from the program by someone designated through the departure and release procedures. Repeatedly disruptive or dangerous behavior will be discussed with the child's parent and will result in loss of privileges or activities, suspension or termination from the program.

All children are entitled to a pleasant and safe environment while participating in this program. The five Y core values of respect, responsibility, honesty, caring and faith will be used in the Childcare Program.

**We expect children to behave as follows:**

- Be responsible for personal belongings
- Participate in all activities
- Possess positive and caring attitudes
- Follow proper safety procedures at all times, including:
  - Never opening outside doors
  - Not fighting or using foul language
  - Not running in school

- Not playing in the restrooms
- Not playing on or under the tables
- Respect for fellow students and staff
- Stay with your group and listen to your counselor at all times

The Y cannot serve children who display unacceptable behavior. Children who exhibit any type of behavior which is thought to be unacceptable or unsafe by a counselor and the site lead will be warned to correct their behavior and a telephone call will be made to the child’s parent or guardian. There are no refunds for suspension or termination due to unacceptable behavior.

**Unacceptable behavior (includes but is not limited to):**

- Using foul language
- Disrespecting another child or counselor
- Fighting
- Refusing to take part in activities
- Ignoring or disobeying rules of safety
- Public or inappropriate displays of affection
- Defacing property or vandalism
- Stealing
- Assault (physical or verbal)
- Possession of or use of weapons or dangerous instruments that can be used as weapons
- Possession of or use of illegal substances

**Disciplinary procedure:**

**First Incident:** Parent will be notified verbally and/or in writing.

**Second Incident:** Child will receive a written warning and one day suspension.

**Third Incident:** The action taken is at the discretion of the Site Lead and Program Director after appropriate consultation with the parent. This may result in suspension or termination of care.

The YMCA reserves the right to remove a child from the program at any time should the offense be deemed a serious disciplinary problem.

**Outdoor Play**

All children will be taken outside daily. Teacher-directed activities will be provided as well as time for individual free play. Outside time will be shortened on days with extreme weather conditions. When these days occur, as well as rainy days, teachers will plan indoor activities. Swimming activities will be incorporated for select classes during the summer months, with parent permission.

**Parent Code of Conduct**

The YMCA requires that all parents of children enrolled in the After School Care and Summer Camp and Holiday Camp programs behave in a manner consistent with the values and mission of our organization. One goal should be shared between the parents of enrolled children, teachers, and administrators of the child care program: To educate our young people in a protected environment that promotes decency, courtesy, and respect to others. Parents are required to uphold the guidelines listed below:

## **Swearing/Cursing**

No inappropriate language from parents or any other adult within the walls of the YMCA Program site or any part of the facility where children populate. Inappropriate language is offensive and will not be tolerated. At no time shall inappropriate language be directed toward staff members or children.

## **Threatening of Employees, Children, or Parents**

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats towards employees, children, or parents will be reported to the appropriate authorities and the adult making the threat may be prohibited from entering the facility in the future. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.

## **Physical/Verbal Punishment of Children on YMCA Property**

The YMCA does not condemn or condone corporal punishment; such acts are not allowable on YMCA property. Behavior concerns can and should be addressed with your child's teacher, but teachers cannot suggest forms of punishment or behavior modification strategies with parents informally. Parent Meetings can be scheduled at the convenience of the parent and administrators to discuss behavior plans and corrective action steps for negative behaviors.

Parents are prohibited from discussing behavior concerns about other children with administrators or classroom teachers. This is a breach of confidentiality. In addition, it is inappropriate for a parent to seek out another parent to discuss behavioral concerns or incidents involving their child.

## **Confrontations**

Parents are welcome to have informal meetings with teachers when it is convenient for both parties. The YMCA maintains strict classroom ratios and teachers cannot be pulled away at certain times. Parents who wish to have a formal conference with a teacher should request them through the Child Care Director or Site Director. Inappropriate confrontations between parents and staff will not be tolerated. It is expected that all disagreements or differences in opinion be handled in a calm and respectful manner, out of the presence of children.

## **Chain of Command**

Each of the YMCA Child Care programs have a Child Care Director or Site Director who is responsible for the day to day operations of the center. Parents who have concerns about the day-to-day operation of the center should contact the Administrator to discuss potential ways to alleviate the situation.

## **Violations to the Conduct Policy**

Should a parent behave in a manner that is inconsistent with the agreed upon code of conduct, they will be asked to leave the premises immediately and the situation and events will be investigated. Once the investigation is complete, the parents and adults involved will meet to discuss further action. Inappropriate behavior among adults on child care property will not be tolerated.



## Camp Sunshine

This is a half day program designed for children 3-4 years of age. Children must be potty trained to participate in this program. While this program is only half day the same rules and expectations of regular child care programs govern this program. This program is a non-licensed, exempt program.

Each day children should bring:

- Change of clothes
- Snack
- Water or juice in a labeled container
- Swim suit (on designated swim days)

Each week children will participate in activities that include:

- Swimming (swim lessons are part of the swim time)
- Educational activities
- STEM activities
- Art & Music activities
- Physical Activities (through games and movement)