



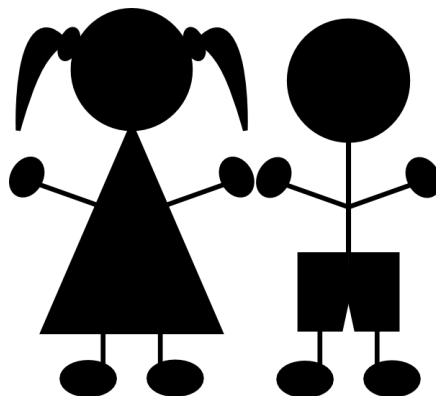
FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# Lebanon Valley Family YMCA Preschool Parent Handbook

Lebanon Valley Family YMCA  
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Lebanon, PA 17046  
(717) 273-2691 (Main YMCA)  
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Updated August 2018



## **WELCOME**

Welcome to the YMCA's Preschool Program! Early Childhood should be a time of fun, security, exploring, warmth and discovery. Preschool children are very creative, curious and receptive. We look forward to encouraging and nurturing all these qualities and sharing in your child's experiences as he/she grows in every way!

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The YMCA Preschool Program philosophy is to offer children a safe and nurturing environment, which promotes physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. This program provides children with the opportunity to socialize, to feel comfortable in group settings, and to experiment with interesting and challenging materials and equipment.

Learning is enhanced through child directed activities, while still recognizing that each child is in a different stage of development. Our preschool staff urges and supports but does not force children toward learning or participation in any activity. The theme-based curriculum will help to engage your child in a rich learning environment.

## **STAFF**

All programs are supervised or instructed by a state certified Early Childhood/Elementary Education Teacher. To ensure the protection and safety of the children in our care, preschool staff are required to have FBI Fingerprinting, a Child Abuse History Check verified by the Department of Human Services and a Criminal Background Check from the Pennsylvania State Police.

## **SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN**

Children will be supervised at all times. The staff will not single out any child for ridicule, nor threaten, harm or degrade any child, or his/her family in any way. The staff will not use harsh, demeaning or abusive language in the presence of children, other staff members or parents.

## **PARENTS**

Parents are always welcome in our classroom and volunteers are wonderful! At times, additional help may be needed and parents may be asked to participate. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's preschool experience. We have an open-door policy and are available to discuss concerns at any time. Please feel free to let us know if you would like to arrange a mutual meeting time.

Children will not be released to unauthorized persons. Please notify your child's teacher when someone other than the people on your child's pick-up list will be picking up your child. Children will not be released to anyone under the age of

16. Children will also not be released to someone under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If this should occur, action will be taken by the staff to ensure the safety of the child.

## **REGISTRATION**

The YMCA Preschool Program offers three classes. **Tiny Explorers** (2 year olds), **Discovering Me** (3 year olds) and **Ready, Set, Go...** (4 year olds). Your child must be of the required age by September 1<sup>st</sup> of that school year. **Children in Ready, Set, Go... must be potty-trained.** If you have any questions as to which class your child should attend, please talk to the Preschool Director. All children enrolled in our program must maintain an active membership at the Lebanon Valley Family YMCA. Registration is done at the front desk of the YMCA. At the time of registration, a one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$25.00 per family is due.

## **PAYMENTS**

All payments for Preschool are to be made in the Preschool Classroom. Once registered for the Preschool Program, your child will be enrolled for the entire school year. Payments are due on or before the first day of school and then every four weeks payments are due. **Late fees of \$10.00 per week will be added to your account if your payment is not received by the payment due date.** If you are unable to make a payment by the due date, please see the Preschool Director immediately to see if special arrangements can be made. **Our payment options include check, money order, automatic credit card, automatic bank draft or cash.** To sign up for automatic bank draft or automatic credit card, complete a bank draft or credit card authorization form and provide a cancelled check if using automatic bank draft. Your fee will automatically be deducted on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. If you decide to remove your child from the Preschool Program, you must give a two-week written notice to the Preschool Director complete with Parent/Guardian signatures. **If you do not inform the staff of your intention to withdraw, you will be held responsible for that session's payment.** We offer a 10% sibling discount for multiple children in the family. This discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other discounts.

## **CHECK POLICY**

**By using a check for payment, you agree to the following terms:** In the event your check is dishonored or returned for any reason, you authorize us (Re\$ubmit It) to electronically (or by paper draft) re-present the check to your bank account for collection of the amount of the check, plus any applicable fees as permitted by state law. Our contact number is 866-860-5906. Money orders or cash will be the only payment method accepted after two returned checks. All checks should be made payable to the "Lebanon YMCA".

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Through the YMCA's Annual Campaign and the United Way, our programs are able to offer limited financial assistance to families who qualify. The forms are available at the front desk of the YMCA.

## **DAYS & HOURS OF OPERATION**

All the preschool programs operate September through May and payments are made in 4-week increments. There will not be any preschool held on the following days: Labor Day (September 3<sup>rd</sup>), Columbus Day (October 8<sup>th</sup>), Thanksgiving (November 22<sup>nd</sup>), Black Friday (November 23<sup>rd</sup>), Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 21<sup>st</sup>), President's Day (February 18<sup>th</sup>), and Good Friday (April 19<sup>th</sup>). We will also be closed for a 2-week Winter Break beginning December 18<sup>th</sup> through January 1<sup>st</sup>. Please be sure to check your monthly calendar for any other closings.

\*\*\*Please remember that the preschool doors open on the hour. The fifteen minutes before and after class time is preparation and clean up time. Please do not bring your child into the classroom before the class starting time. Teachers will open the door at 9:00 AM and class will officially begin by 9:15 AM. **PLEASE BE PROMPT WHEN DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP YOUR CHILD. CONSISTENT LATENESS IS DISCOURAGED.** Doors will then be opened by 11:00 AM (TE) and 12:00 PM (DM and RSG) to indicate that the classes are over. If you need to pick your child up early, please let your child's teacher know in advance.

\*\*\*Late Pick-Up Fee – **Your child must be picked up at the class ending time for all preschool programs.** Late fees will begin to incur if your child is not picked up by 12:15. A \$10.00 late pick-up fee will be charged for every 15 minutes you are late (for example: 12:16 – 12:30 = \$10.00 late fee, 12:31 – 12:45 = \$20.00 late fee) and payment is due when you pick up your child. If a child is not picked up by 12:45, we will notify the proper authorities after every attempt has been made to contact a parent, guardian or authorized person on an emergency contact form. The clock in the Preschool classroom will be the official clock used. **Any unpaid late fees will be posted to your account.**

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER LATE STARTS/CLOSINGS POLICY:**

All classes will operate on the same schedule as the Cornwall/Lebanon School District on days of inclement weather.

**\*\*Discovering Me and Ready, Set, Go... will be held for 2 hours on late start days\*\***

One Hour Delay – Start at 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Two Hour Delay – Start at 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

**\*\*Tiny Explorers will be held for 2 hours on late start days\*\***

One Hour Delay – Start at 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM

Two Hour Delay – Start at 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Please listen to radio stations WLBR 1270 AM and WQIC 100.1 FM and Television Channel 8 (WGAL) for information on closings and late starts. You can also check our Facebook page, **Lebanon YMCA**, for closings and late starts.

**We will not have specials on late start days (swimming and library). Snack will still be provided.**

\*\*\* Occasionally, the Cornwall/Lebanon School District is closed for Act 80 days. We will then operate on the same schedule as the Lebanon School District for those days only due to inclement weather. Those dates will be given to all families along with another copy of the inclement weather policy as winter approaches.

**\*\* We do not reimburse for snow days.**

## **DRESS**

It is suggested that sneakers and comfortable clothes be worn. **No flip flops or shoes/sandals without a back strap. You will be asked to provide a change of shoes if your child wears flip flops or shoes/sandals without a back strap.** We will go outside daily, so please dress your child appropriately. During the winter months, please be sure to send along hats, gloves or mittens and a heavy coat. All children are encouraged to get themselves undressed and dressed before and after swimming. To make it easier for your child, shoes that are easy to slip on and off are wonderful on days that we swim! Many times children wear similar clothing and bring the same swim suit and towel, and it gets a little confusing, so please be sure your child can identify his/her belongings. You may also see your child come home with articles of clothing on backwards and/or inside out, please be patient while your child is learning self-help skills. They are very excited when they can dress themselves and we do not want to discourage them if things are not on the “correct way”.

**Change of Clothes-** Occasionally, accidents happen, whether it is at the art center, snack table, etc. **ALL** children must have a change of clothing (pants, shirt, underwear and socks). This change of clothing must remain in your child’s

backpack in a ziplock baggie with your child's name on it. The clothing should be appropriate for the season (example: shorts for summer). If your child should need to borrow something from our extra clothes box, please wash and return it ASAP.

**Diapers-** If your child is not potty trained, please be sure to pack extra diapers/pull-ups and wipes. We do prefer pull-ups over diapers because we do encourage toileting during Preschool. Wearing pull-ups will allow your child to try to use the toilet on his/her own.

**\*The YMCA and/or teachers are not responsible for any damage to your child's clothing due to activities or art projects.**

### **MAILBOXES**

Your child will have a mailbox for the teachers and Director to place important papers. The mailboxes will be labeled with your child's name. Please check mailboxes and backpacks daily for any announcements or other important information.

### **BACKPACKS**

**Every child is required to bring a backpack with them to school every day.** This is necessary because they all need to have an extra change of clothing and we will be sending things home daily. It is also extremely important on library days so the book that your child checks out of the library is protected. **Please choose backpacks carefully. If they are too small, your child may not be able to fit a library book inside. Also, children are responsible for carrying their own backpacks. Please consider the weight of the bag when purchasing. Backpacks with wheels are heavy and the children will not be allowed to roll them while in line with the other children.**

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT FORM**

All parents must complete an Emergency Contact Form for their child on his/her first day of school. If this form needs to be updated at any time, please let us know. It is **EXTREMELY** important to let us know if phone numbers have changed so we will be able to contact you in the event of an emergency.

### **ALLERGIES**

Please make staff aware of all allergies your child may have. If your child requires an Epi-pen or other medication to be given in case of an allergic

reaction, you must fill out a medication dosage form. This is the only way medications will be administered to your child.

## **ATTENDANCE**

If your child is scheduled to be in class and will not be able to attend, please notify us. This is especially important on field trip days when we may be waiting for your child to arrive. Please call the Preschool Director's direct line at 717-376-1386 and leave a message. This voice mail may also be used if you wish to speak to us about any preschool matters. Please leave a message and we will return your call. **Refunds or credits will not be given for illness or vacation days.** Extenuating circumstances may sometimes apply. Please talk to the Preschool Director with any concerns you may have.

## **ILLNESS**

Your child **MUST** be kept home if he/she is sick. It is the responsibility of the parents to pick up the child immediately if he/she becomes ill during the school day. **If your child was sent home by the preschool staff due to vomiting, diarrhea or fever, they may not return for 24 hours (example: Child was sent home at 10:30 on Monday for a fever, he/she may not return before Wednesday).** We will not accept a child into the Preschool classroom who has had a fever in the morning and has been administered a pain/temperature reducing medication.

To protect the health of all children, your child **may not** come to school if he/she has any of the following:

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Communicable disease                     | Severe sore throat         |
| Inflamed or Swollen eyes                 | Chills                     |
| Diarrhea                                 | Fever (over 100.4 degrees) |
| Skin rashes or sores                     | Earache                    |
| Nausea or vomiting                       |                            |
| Yellow mucous draining from nose or eyes |                            |

It is **IMPERATIVE** that the Preschool Program be informed of children diagnosed with an infectious/contagious illness. Rashes must be diagnosed by a physician as non-contagious before returning. The information should be forwarded to the Preschool Director as soon as possible to be posted in each class.

Please contact the Preschool Director immediately if your child contracts a communicable disease, i.e. chicken pox, so that the teachers may post a notice informing other parents who can then take preventive measures against the disease. The child's name will remain confidential.

\*No medications will be administered to the children by the preschool staff during school hours.

## **INJURY**

The staff will make every effort necessary to reduce the opportunity for injury. Routine bumps and bruises are a part of growing up. However, accidents do sometimes occur. Should an injury occur, the staff will treat it with the first aid supplies in the center (i.e. Band-Aid, ice pack, etc). All injuries will be shared with the parents verbally. More severe injuries as well as any injury to the head will require a phone call to the parent and an accident report, which must be signed by the parent and then kept in the child's file.

If an injury of a more serious nature should occur, staff will contact a parent to pick up the child. In an emergency, the child will be transported to the nearest emergency room facility and the parent will be contacted to meet the staff there.

## **CURRICULUM**

The formal curriculum is Theme Based and is child centered. Each month has a different theme and the children will participate in activities related to the theme. Teacher directed activities, such as crafts, games, stories and all other activities, such as free play, transitions, eating, dressing, etc., contribute to the development of the whole child.

**Library** - Wednesday is Library day for **Ready, Set, Go...** and **Discovering Me**. On these days, your child will have an opportunity to check out one book. Books are due back three weeks after the date they are checked out. In order for your child to check out a book, he/she must have a Library Card. If your child does not have a card, a library card application must be completed. Since we walk to and from the Library, your child will need his/her backpack. We usually visit the Library rain or shine, so please dress your child accordingly (hat, jacket, raincoat, mittens, etc. – **please no umbrellas**, hooded raincoats work best).

**You are responsible for any book your child checks out from the library. If fines are incurred from overdue books, you need to pay them in order for your child to be able to check out another book.** Please be mindful of school holidays and due dates to avoid any fines.

**Active Play**- We will be sure to have the children in the gymnasium or outdoors daily to provide and encourage gross motor development and active play.

**Swimming** –Friday is swim day for **Discovering Me** and **Ready, Set, Go....** The children will be wearing floatation backpacks. All children will use a “4 pack” floatation device unless informed otherwise by the parents. Staff will be providing water activities and swimming with your child.



**\*\* Please note for all special activities, swimming and library, the schedule may change. Please check the monthly calendar for all activity schedules.**

### **FIELD TRIPS**

To enrich your child's experience, class may be held someplace other than the YMCA. Field trips may be announced during the Preschool year. Reminders, announcements, cost of trip, etc. will be placed in your child's mailbox and on the sign in /sign out table. We will use D. B. Fisher Bus Co., the city buses or walk to our destination. On occasion, you will need to drop off and/or pick up your child at our field trip instead of the YMCA. The bus schedule and distance we can walk limits our destinations. The YMCA and its staff cannot transport children.

### **DISCIPLINE**

Children attending our programs are encouraged to resolve conflicts and minor disagreements by using their words. The staff assists the children with verbal communication if needed. Suggestions of sharing, trading and taking turns are made. Making good choices is stressed. Acceptable behavior is encouraged by positive verbal rewards. This sets a good example to the other children, as well as reinforcing a child's self esteem. We also encourage self-control by asking a child to stop and think about his/her unacceptable or unpleasant behavior.

When a child is not cooperating during a group listening time, the child may be seated near a teacher or removed from the group and reminded of the acceptable behavior.

Removal from the situation for a period of time may be used, as well. The child may be asked to play with another child/group of children, or in another area, or to go to a thinking chair. This chair is not a punishment, but only a place where they can quietly think about the situation. The child may need to calm down and talk about what happened with the teacher. Depending on the situation, the child may decide for him/herself when he/she is ready to join the group.

In a situation where a child is hurt or has the potential to be hurt by a behavior, the child will be removed immediately. Inappropriate language as well as hitting, punching, spitting, biting, pushing, kicking, etc. is not permitted and will be handled immediately by the staff.

If a behavior persists, the parent will be asked to meet with the Preschool Director to discuss what may be helpful in motivating the child to behave in an acceptable way. If no resolution or change can be made, a child may be asked to leave the program. All children and behaviors are unique. All situations will be dealt with individually.

## **MONTHLY NEWS**

At the beginning of each month, a monthly newsletter will be sent home. This will include a calendar, the activities of the month, along with announcements, reminders and a parent activity that you can do with your child. Hopefully, with this information, you will be able to share more of your child's preschool experience with him/her.

## **PARENT AREA**

The parent area is located at the sign-in table. Your child needs to be signed in/out daily by an ADULT, we will not release your child to anyone under the age of 16, so that we can keep an accurate count of the number of children in our programs. **An adult must sign the book, do not allow your child to sign his/her name.** Be sure to check your child's mail everyday, whether it is in his/her backpack or in a designated mailbox. This area will also be used to post important information that you may need to know.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

**Children should not bring personal belongings, such as toys, to school.** It is our experience that toys from home tend to get lost, broken and sometimes cause hurt feelings among the other children. The staff and the YMCA cannot be held responsible for items that are lost, broken or stolen. There will be an occasional "Sharing Time" when parents will be notified in advance.

## **SNACKS**

The Preschool staff will provide your child with a healthy snack such as crackers, cheese, cereal, granola bars, peanut butter, vegetables and dip, fruit, nilla wafers, pretzels, milk, 100% fruit juice or water. Snack donations are always appreciated, but please remember that the YMCA promotes healthy bodies, so healthier choices are recommended. On days such as holiday parties or birthdays, cupcakes and cookies may be served as well.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

If you would like to send in a birthday treat for your child's birthday, please notify the classroom teacher in advance so she can plan accordingly.

## **BOOK ORDERS**

Scholastic Book Club order forms will be sent home every month. All purchases from these orders help to earn free books and supplies for the preschool program. The due date will be attached or stamped on the back of the forms. Payment is due with the order. Checks are the only acceptable form of payment and should be made payable to Scholastic Book Clubs. You can also order online by using the code that is provided.

## **PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Communication between teachers and parents is highly encouraged. Parents are urged to keep the teachers informed of significant home events. This will allow the teachers to deal tactfully and sensitively with each child in all situations.

## **EVALUATIONS**

Evaluations will be done on children in Discovering Me and Ready, Set, Go... twice a year, in late Fall and in the Spring. Currently we are using a skills checklist. This evaluation helps to pinpoint extra help your child may need in certain areas, and also helps to alert us to any developmental delays your child may be experiencing. If you have any questions on this evaluation, please see your child's teacher or the Preschool Director.

## **REFERRAL TO COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Once the skills checklists are completed, any child who has been identified as needing further assessment because of developmental or behavioral concerns will be referred to the appropriate services. Parents will always be aware if a concern is identified and a referral needs to be made. Additionally, if your child has an IEP the Preschool Director will be asking for a copy of the IEP for your child's file. This information is needed for our records so all teachers will be able to make sure the goals are being met on your child's IEP.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parent conferences will be held twice a year to coincide with evaluations. Sign-up sheets will be provided for you to choose a time to meet with your child's teacher. At this time, your child's teacher will review the evaluation, answer any questions you may have and let you know of your child's progress. Goals for your child will be set in the Fall and then reviewed again in the Spring.

## **SURVEY FORMS**

Survey forms will be distributed. We are continually striving to provide a quality program that fills the needs of everyone. Feedback from you helps us tremendously. If you have any concerns, problems, or questions, please let us know. Feel free to speak to any of the staff at any time.

## **GRIEVANCES**

Questions concerning policy, overall program, or individual staff members, should be addressed with the Preschool Director.

I have received this parent handbook and I understand it is my responsibility to read and understand the contents.

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Parent Signature

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Date