



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CAPITAL AREA YMCA PRESCHOOL CENTER

2024 - 2025

PARENT HANDBOOK

431 Pennington Avenue / 110 Prospect Village

Trenton, NJ 08618

609.599.9622

Administration ext. 210 & 213

Family Worker ext. 209

Effective date: 9/1/2024-6/30/2025



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Preschool Staff Administration

Preschool Director (ext. 210)	Leanne Alexandrini
Director's Assistant (ext. 213)	Sabrina McKnight
Family Worker (ext. 209)	Janice Wilkins

CAPITAL AREA YMCA MISSION STATEMENT

The Capital Area YMCA is a charitable, not-for-profit community organization dedicated to enriching the spirit, mind and body and improving the quality of life. We create and deliver values-based programs that draw their inspiration from our Judeo-Christian heritage. We serve people of all ages, races and creeds, with an emphasis on families and youth.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM GOALS

The Capital Area YMCA Preschool Program is designed to allow your child the chance to become an integral part of a group of children as they learn new skills, develop lasting friendships, and pursue the YMCA mission of healthy spirit, mind, and body. Our YMCA preschool strives:

- To provide an emotionally and physically safe environment.
- To help children build and develop feelings of self-worth and appreciation of other people, through Christian values.
- To allow children to experience activities in nature, contributing to constructive and enjoyable use of leisure time throughout life.
- To establish behavior guidelines and discipline acceptable to all preschoolers and staff.
- To help children learn and develop physical fitness and team cooperation through exposure to various sports and games.
- To provide a forum for the exploration of creativity and imagination through participation in arts, crafts, and cultural activities.

Our philosophy and pedagogy are based upon best practices in early childhood development. Classrooms are active environments that allow children to make new discoveries and to mature at their own pace. Highly qualified teachers use the Creative Curriculum to guide children in their learning. Teachers support parents' deepening understanding of their child's social/emotional, behavioral, physical and cognitive development. Our children and families benefit from the many partnerships and special programs offered to members of the Capital Area YMCA community. Parent education and family support is an important part of our programs. Monthly parent workshops, semi-annual parent-teacher conferences, hearing, dental, vision and developmental



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screenings for children all offer parents insight into the developmental stages of preschool aged children. Our Family Workers are available to provide information regarding employment, health insurance, housing, positive redirection and other topics of interest that support children and families. You are welcome to schedule an appointment with a Family Worker ANYTIME.

PRESCHOOL HOURS OF OPERATION (Monday – Friday)

In-Person School Hours / 8:45 am – 3:15 pm

Student Arrival: 8:45-9:00 AM Dismissal: by 3:15 PM

Holiday Closings: In general, our preschool will follow the Trenton Public School District calendar.

Emergency Closings: Notice of changes in operating hours will be determined by the CEO or designated person. Please make use of the Capital Area YMCA Facebook, local news networks and the Trenton Public School website www.trenton.k12.nj.us.

WRAP-AROUND HOURS & SERVICES

Students who are enrolled in the Capital Area YMCA Preschool Center may also be enrolled in before and/or after care services also known as "Wrap-Around". This service provides early morning care (am-wrap) with breakfast from 7:30 am – 9:00 am and afternoon care (pm-wrap) from 3:15pm – 5:30pm. A Wrap enrollment packet, separate from the TBOE Preschool Application, must be completed, submitted, and approved before starting.

***Before and After Care are only available at the 431 Pennington Site.**

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

You are required to complete Trenton Board of Education and Capital Area Y registration paperwork. Proof of Trenton residency is required to attend the preschool. Once the district's paperwork is complete, you will receive a notification from ePact (the Capital Area Y's online registration system).

ATTENDANCE

Excessive absenteeism will jeopardize your child's enrollment. We realize children become ill, family emergencies may occur, and families schedule vacations. It's important for parents/guardians to notify the preschool center in advance and if available, provide a physician's note.



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BUILDING ACCESS

Families, Staff and Volunteers may enter the facility during normal preschool hours 8:45am – 3:15pm by appointment only. Student morning arrival is 8:45-9:00 AM and afternoon dismissal is 3:00-3:15 PM. If you are visiting 431 Pennington Ave, you must enter through the Welcome Center and may be asked to provide proof of identification. If you are visiting 110 Prospect Village, you must enter through the Main Door before heading to the classroom. You may be asked to provide proof of identification.

MORNING DROP-OFF & AFTERNOON PICK-UP

Parents & Guardians must sign in and out daily. The sign in/out sheet will be in the classroom or hallway depending on the child's preschool site. Please walk your child(ren) into his/her classroom and **no** child should be left alone at the lobby or gym. Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone under 18 years of age. Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone not on the Release Authorization form. Proper identification is required at the time of pick up, a copy will be made and kept on file.

***Any changes in phone number or address must be updated at the preschool office. Please call the preschool center (609) 599-9622, if you experience an emergency that will prevent you from picking up your child on time. (3A:52-6.5 Policy on the Release of Children)**

LATE PICK UP

Late pick-up fees will be charged for each child picked up after their scheduled pick-up time. Payment must be received upon pick up or will be charged to their account that afternoon. Late fees are charged at a rate of \$1 a minute. Chronic late pick-ups will be grounds for dismissal.

CLASSROOM CUBBIES

Children will have their own cubbies to store their belongings. Please be sure to check your child's cubbies during drop-off and pick-up hours. There can be important documents/information from the office regarding our preschool, announcements, events etc. You'll also need to make sure there's a labeled change of clothes in your child's cubby with a labeled blanket and toddler-sized crib sheet cover for their cot. Fridays you will take home the blanket and bed cover to wash then returned by the following school day. The clothes should fit and be weather appropriate.



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CLOTHING

Water activities, sand play, painting and the occasional bathroom accidents occur. Please bring in a pair of underwear, long pants, shorts, shirts and socks to place in your child's cubby in case of any accidents. Remember to label the clothing with your child's name. Clothing should be based off seasonal conditions.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Though we do encourage a healthy snack option. Parents/Guardians can bring in cupcakes, cookies, chips/popcorn or pretzels. Celebrations are usually after nap (please speak with your child's teacher for the appropriate time to bring in the birthday snacks). Please let the teacher or office staff know in advanced if you plan to celebrate and ask for any class allergies so we can make accommodations.

Field Trips

Trips are planned throughout the school year either off-site or inside the preschool building. Bus transportation and lunches will be provided for students. Please note, parents may be asked to accompany their children for various reasons and a fee will be requested. The cost for adults will vary depending on the destination. Students are always free.

SCHOOL MEALS

The Capital Area YMCA Preschool Center follows a strict nutritional guideline of all major food groups and abide by the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) non-discrimination regulation (7 CFR 15b). We provide breakfast, lunch and snack during school hours. Please inform a teacher and office staff regarding your child's meal restrictions. **Any food not served by the Capital Area YMCA is prohibited inside the classroom.**

FAMILY WORKERS RESPONSIBILITIES

There are many roles of the Family Worker however, the overall goal is to serve as a resource for the parents/guardians of our students. They collaborate with outside agencies to provide resources and workshops with health and safety, preventive health care, behavior health, dental health practices, nutrition and many other topics. It is necessary for the assigned Family Worker to conduct a minimum of three (3) home visits throughout the school year. It is very important that the information you provide to the preschool center and the Trenton Board of Education is accurate and current.



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HEALTH SCREENINGS

As required by the State of New Jersey, the preschool participates in health and dental screenings provided by the Trenton Board of Education (TBOE) Early Childhood nursing contractors. This screening includes height, weight, vision and hearing also dental hygiene which is presented annually. You will be notified by a referral from the school nurse, if your child needs to have a follow up examination with your family doctor/licensed health physician.

PHYSICALS & VACCINATIONS

Children who do not have records of receiving the flu vaccine or a valid medical or religious exemption letter by December 31st, will be excluded from school until the end of flu season, which is until March 31st in New Jersey. Please note that it is mandated by the State of New Jersey for all children ages 6 months to 59 months and attending any licensed childcare center or preschool, to have updated records of the influenza vaccination. **(3A:52-7.3 Health and Immunization requirements for Children)**

ILLNESS & POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

For the protection of all children and staff, your child should be kept home if they're showing any of the following signs:

- Diarrhea or Vomiting
- Temperature of 100.4 or higher
- Skin rashes
- Sore throat
- Severe pain, coughing and/or discomfort
- Stiff neck
- Lethargy
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Difficult, rapid breathing
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions
- Diseases of the mouth
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye); red eyes with discharge
- -Other Covid-like symptoms (ie—loss of taste/smell)

If the staff feels that your child is too ill to remain in school, you will receive a call asking to please pick up your child. Upon waiting for pick-up, he/she will be kept comfortable until a parent/guardian arrives. Before your child can return to school, he/she must remain free of ill symptoms, fever, nausea, etc. for 24 hours and diarrhea free for 2 days. An official medical readmittance slip (doctors note) from the family doctor/licensed physician must also be provided for your child to return



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to school. If your child was sent home with covid-like symptoms, a negative test and/or quarantine time may be required. **(3A:52-7.1 Illness and Communicable Diseases)**

COVID19 POLICIES

The NJ Department of Children and Families is continuing to monitor the spread of the COVID-19 Coronavirus and its impact on children, families, our staff and our partner providers, throughout the state. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and NJ Department of Health are providing ongoing guidance and direction regarding necessary precautions and action plans. The experts agree that Coronavirus prevention strategies are similar to what we do to prevent the flu:

- Wash your hands in soap and water, regularly
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow
- Avoid touching your face, mouth and eyes
- If you are feeling unwell, stay home and rest

MEDICAL & ALLERGY INFORMATION

Parents must provide notice of **all** allergies. If your child requires special medications, medical documentation from a licensed physician is required to administer any medications. Medicines must stay in the original package. We do not supply medical machinery like a nebulizer. If your child requires special medical equipment, you must bring the prescribed machinery including a physician's note with instructions.

MEDICATIONS

The Capital Area YMCA Preschool Center staff and/or administrators will administer medications to children under the following conditions:

- Must be in its original container and have a childproof cap
- A physician's note allowing us to administer the medicine

Medications must have the following information on the bottle, box and/or case:

- Child's name
- Name of medications
- Physician's name
- Current date with expiration date
- Amount of dosage to give
- Times per day to give

We will dispense medications after you sign and date the 'Permission to Administer Medication' form. Otherwise, medicines will not be given.



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***Storage of medications will be kept in a designated cupboard of your child's classroom. (3A:52-7.5 Administration of prescription medicines and health care procedures)**

INJURIES & ACCIDENTS

Safety is our primary concern. We strongly enforce safety rules for all preschoolers. We believe in the positive reinforcement approach and work very hard with preschoolers to teach safety always. Designated staff are CPR, AED, and First-Aid Certified and asked to only give care within the scope of their training. The staff who was at the scene will complete an incident/accident report, will notify a family worker or preschool administration and that person will then call the parent/guardian. If your child is injured or ill at school, we will take whatever steps are necessary to provide appropriate care.

These steps may include but are not limited to:

- A. Sent to the Preschool Administrators for care
- B. Attempting to contact parents and/or persons named as emergency contacts. The Preschool Director has the authority to call the designated physician and/or paramedics.
- C. Summoning 911/emergency care for medical emergencies requiring hospital intervention
- D. Assigning a staff member or a designated person to go with the child to the hospital or medical facilities, if a child is sent.

Please remember that children will never be transported by any YMCA Preschool employee. Special needs, allergies, or behavioral concerns should be reported to the preschool director prior to the start date of preschool so that adequate and appropriate preparation and care can be provided for each preschooler.

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is the goal of our YMCA to provide a healthy, safe and secure environment for all Preschool participants. Children attending Preschool are expected to exhibit Character Counts values, follow basic behavior guidelines and to interact appropriately in a group setting. Please remember that you are your child's biggest role model. Discipline is viewed by our staff as a teaching opportunity. Our goal is to teach children the kind of self-control that results in appropriate, cooperative behavior. Redirection is the first logical step to behavior management. Should a problem persist, natural consequences and removal from an activity will be used as a form of discipline. If chronic behavior problems develop, incidents will be documented and communicated to the parent.

At no time, will swearing, abusive language or physical violence be allowed by children, staff, volunteers or parents. In addition, the YMCA strictly enforces all



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rules and regulations set by the local school or host sites.

BULLYING POLICY

As defined by the New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention, "Bullying is an act or threat that is unprovoked, repeated, aggressive, intended to cause fear, distress, harm, may be physical, verbal, or psychological in nature or combination, and may be bias/prejudice. Acts of bullying may include name calling, slurs, epithets, put-downs, taunts, teasing, bodily harm, hitting, kicking, tripping, shoving, taking or damaging personal property, saying/writing inappropriate things, starting rumors, public humiliation, deliberate exclusion and coerced actions." (New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness & Prevention)

Any child observed bullying another child will have their parents notified along with the child being bullied. If the problem persists an action plan will be created to address the acts of bullying.

EMERGENCY/NATURAL DISASTER PLAN

During the school year, fire and lockdown drills are performed. Students and staff will proceed in an appropriate manner vacating the preschool center and/or locating the classroom and building safe areas.

In the event a natural disaster occurs; our goal is to keep children safe and calm. The Preschool Director will determine the safest plan of action. The Classroom Staff will always keep the student's emergency information with them. Our designated area of safety for students and staff in the event we need to evacuate a facility is the grass fields (all YMCA locations). Our designated area of safety for preschool in the event we need to take cover indoors is the appropriate gymnasiums.

You may want to consider planning for a friend or relative who works or lives close to the YMCA to pick up your child in case of a disaster. Their names must be included on the emergency contact list on your Emergency/Health Information Form. Remember, they must have a Photo ID and they must be at least 18 years old. Remember, making plans prior to emergencies can expedite the safe release of your child. School closure due to a natural disaster is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Operating Officer. If questionable situations arrive, please call the Capital Area YMCA at 609-599-9622. If an immediate closure of School is deemed appropriate, the Capital Area YMCA will contact parents immediately via phone, email, as well as post further information on our website at capitalymca.org.



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LOST AND FOUND

The Capital Area YMCA Preschool assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items. Please label all belongings with permanent marker. If something is misplaced, check the Preschool lost and found area. Please leave all toys and games at home. Unclaimed and found articles will be discarded at the end of the school year.

PHOTO RELEASE

The Capital Area YMCA Preschool may take photos, videos or sound recordings of your children in our childcare programs. We often use them for crafts, projects, or posted online. The Capital Area YMCA Preschool reserves the right, and if granted permission by the parent as indicated in the registration packet, to photograph or film any child while they are participating in any preschool activity. The Capital Area YMCA Preschool and its affiliates and community partners may also use said pictures and video files for any form of advertising or promotion, at no compensation to the family, as deemed appropriate as well as publish them on the YMCA / Preschool website for publicity purposes.

BABYSITTING

YMCA staff shall not socialize with children enrolled in YMCA programs outside of approved YMCA activities, including babysitting or transporting children. Immediate disciplinary action will be taken by the YMCA toward YMCA staff if a violation is discovered. PLEASE DO NOT ASK STAFF TO BABYSIT!

PROGRAM CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS

The Capital Area YMCA encourages constant communication between parents, staff and children to assure everyone's needs are being met. If you should ever have a problem, concern or question, we encourage you to speak to the Classroom Teachers Preschool Director. Should he or she not be able to meet your needs, please contact the Family Worker and Preschool Director. The CEO, Louise McCants (ext. 203), is available to speak with you if you need further assistance with concerns or questions. It is through your input that we are better able to meet the needs of the community and enhance the quality of our programs.

THANK YOU!

We are happy that you have selected the Capital Area YMCA Preschool Program for your child. We offer days filled with happiness, wonderful activities, and educational fun. We thank you for sharing your child with us.