



Full Day Pre-K @ Wiley Intermediate



Family Handbook

Watertown YMCA Daycare
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The Y: We're for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

YMCA Core Values

- ◇ **Caring** – To love others, to be sensitive to the well-being of others, to help others.
- ◇ **Honesty** – To tell the truth, to act in such a way that you are worthy of trust, to have integrity; making sure your choices match your values.
- ◇ **Respect** – To treat others as you would have them treat you, to value the worth of every person, including yourself.
- ◇ **Responsibility** – To do what is right, what you ought to do; to be accountable for your behavior and obligations.



YMCA Daycare/Pre-K History

The YMCA Daycare opened in January of 2011. Building on over 25 years of experience of providing school age childcare to working families and responding to community need, the Watertown Family YMCA felt it was important to meet the needs of the community in the area of early childcare and education. In 2015, we became a part of Watertown City School District's Universal Pre-K expansion program to help provide more children an opportunity to achieve their fullest potential.

YMCA Philosophy

Through our child care programs, we are responding to the complex needs of today's families and acting upon our commitment to kids, families and communities. We believe that daily practice and interaction with children must reflect the YMCA goals for child care:

- ◇ To offer a safe, caring and fun environment for all children,
- ◇ To support and strengthen the family unit,
- ◇ To develop new skills
- ◇ To have fun.

YMCA programs provide opportunities for children to develop and grow as they learn through socialization, exploration, choice and creative play. The YMCA believes that children learn best when exposed to high-quality, child centered, positive learning environments. We support the needs of children and their development by assessing where children are currently at in their development and then using purposeful planning to enrich their environment with learning materials and activities to support their growth.

Hours

Pre-K Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Curriculum

We are committed to the Creative Curriculum which includes creative play, math, science, discovery, art, physical development, self-help skills and social development. Critical thinking is encouraged by providing choices, problem-solving opportunities for success, and encourages positive interaction.

In the Pre-K program, teachers will provide an investigation based curriculum. Each child will have the opportunity to grow cognitively, socially and physically through a wide array of experiences. Activities may vary depending upon the needs and developmental levels of the children in program. Lessons in these classrooms are based on the NYS Common Core and the Creative Curriculum and Handwriting Without Tears to help prepare children for Kindergarten.

Staff Qualifications

Staff information and qualifications will be provided to families at Meet the Teachers Night. All staff must produce documentation of education at hire. Experience is verified through the use of reference checks. All staff must complete a background check and are fingerprinted at time of hire.

Enrollment Procedures

- Parents are required to submit a medical examination report and a current immunization history with their registration packet. A child may not attend without the examination report.
- In addition, if your child requires medication due to illness, allergy or a medical condition you will need to fill out medication paperwork with your child's doctor. This paperwork is available as needed at your request.
- Notification of any changes in address, phone numbers, authorized pick-up etc., is pertinent for your child's welfare. You must immediately notify the staff of any changes.
- All enrollment forms are kept strictly confidential. They will only be shown to YMCA staff, Department of Health, OCFS, Emergency Personnel or Custodial Parents.
- The YMCA reserves the right to require an official court ordered subpoena for release of records.
- In the case of a legal court order or document the YMCA will follow and enforce the court order as written. No exceptions will be given.

Arrival and Departure Policy

- A teacher will be waiting at the door at 7:55 a.m. for you to sign your child into the program. Pick-up will be the same procedure as drop-off. A teacher will meet you at the door at 12:55 p.m. and you will sign your child out of the program.
- If you need to drop your child off late or pick your child up early you will need to call the classroom phone and a teacher will meet you at the door.
- No child will be released to anyone not listed on the enrollment form without prior written permission from the parent or guardian.
- **Photo identification will be required by anyone** (including parents) picking up the child. Once the pick-up person is known, photo identification may not be needed. Always have identification. Staff may change or not recognize you. Make sure you sign your child in and out of their program on a daily basis.
- Your child will be sent home with a take-home folder each day containing important papers and their artwork. Please check this folder nightly and return to school.

Children with Special Needs

At the beginning of each calendar year and periodically throughout the year parents are offered a free developmental screening provided by a local agency. If a full evaluation is required parents will be notified in writing by the agency conducting the screening. The YMCA will implement any modifications and accommodations as prescribed in a child's IEP to the best of our ability. The staff will work closely with therapists and families to provide the educational supports necessary for children to thrive.

Sick/Injured Child Policy

The program cannot care for sick children except for brief periods when the child becomes ill at the program. If a child becomes sick while at the program, parents or next of kin will be contacted by phone and expected to come for the child within an hour of being notified. The ill child will be isolated from the group and closely monitored by the staff until a parent or person authorized for pick-up arrives. All families will receive a copy of the sick child policy at registration. Please refer to this policy for exclusion signs and symptoms and readmission criteria.

If an injury occurs during the day, the parent or next of kin will be contacted immediately. If there is a serious injury and/or medical problem, the parent and/or 911 may be contacted for assistance.

Administering Medication

In order for the staff to administer medication it must be prescribed by a doctor. Please help us by:

- Signing and dating a medical consent form. This form can be picked up at the front desk.
- Only one medication per consent form is allowed.
- Making sure all medication is in the original container with the date, child's name, doctor's name and the dosage present on prescribed medications.
- We are only allowed to administer topical ointments without a medical consent form. All other medication **must be accompanied** by a medical consent form completed by a physician.
- **If no form is filled out, no medication will be able to be given.**

Immunization and Physical

A current immunization record is required prior attendance. Please update this record whenever there is an addition or change. You must also have a current physical on file at all times with a copy of the lead testing reports (if available).

Lunch

You will be responsible for sending your child with a lunch daily. Please remember that we cannot heat anything up in the classroom so all food will be served room temperature. We do follow Healthy Eating Standards through the YMCA so we ask that you pack your child water only to have with his/her lunch. Please do not pack any candy or sweets in your child's lunch. If you forget your child's lunch you will have to bring back a lunch or your child can not stay in program that day.

Outdoor Play

Daily supervised play is required for all children in care, except during inclement or extreme weather. Both outdoor and indoor active play opportunities are provided for all children at various times throughout the day. Please be sure your child is dressed weather appropriately. We follow the Child Care Weather Watch chart. If you would like a copy of this chart one will be provided.

Inclement or Extreme Weather:

- temperature below 20 degrees and taking into account wind chills
- severe thunderstorms
- freezing rain, hail
- extreme heat or humidity
- blizzard

Behavior Management Policy

Developing self-regulation, the ability to control one's own feelings and behavior is a primary task of early childhood. Our philosophy at the YMCA is that children need to be taught how to self-regulate through positive guidance strategies used by teachers within the classroom.

Self-regulation is taught to our preschoolers through a variety of positive guidance strategies such as:

- Teachers being good role models
- Giving the children responsibilities within the classroom
- Giving only one or two simple directions at a time
- Setting limits within the classroom
- Using positive language

- Giving choices when appropriate
- Allowing children to do their own problem solving when issues arise and talking it through with the teacher
- Having a clear and consistent daily routine and giving children time warnings when transitions are approaching
- Praising appropriate behaviors!

When self-regulation is **not** achieved through positive guidance strategies teachers will proceed through the following steps:

- Teacher will provide substitute activities – redirect the child.
- Teacher will help the child use problem solving skills by talking through the problem.
- Teacher will enforce a temporary loss of choice for the child (ex. child will choose a different activity or center).
- Director or Assistant Director will discuss the behavior with the child in the classroom.
- If unable to redirect the child and behavior escalates the Director or Assistant Director will remove the child from the classroom.
- A behavior report will be filled out by the teacher and discussed with parent/guardian and signed at pick-up.
- If the behavior continues or worsens, the child’s parent/guardian will be called.
- For cases of continuous disruptive behavior a family conference will be requested with the Lead Teacher, Director and Assistant Director to come up with a plan of action.

In extreme cases, a 1-2 day suspension or removal from the program may occur. **An extreme case is any case that the child is in danger of hurting themselves or others or is putting the licensed and regulated program in jeopardy.*

- Once a child has a Behavior Action Plan parents will receive a written daily report about their child’s behavior. Copies will be kept in the child’s file as documentation.
- After two weeks, or at the discretion of the Director, a follow-up meeting will be made with parent/guardian to discuss progress or changes to the plan.
- Removal from the program **will** occur if the child’s Behavior Action Plan is not successful and we are unable to safely continue caring for your child.

**The YMCA Daycare can terminate care without notice at the discretion of the Executive Director and Daycare Director.*

Mandated Reporters/Child Care Complaint Line

In order to ensure the well-being of the children in our care, our staff are trained and mandated under NYS state law to report incidents of possible neglect or abuse; including physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse to the Child Abuse Hotline. We do not have discretion in this matter, but make such referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe a child may have been harmed by someone.

If you believe your child is being abused call the Statewide Toll Free Telephone Number:
1-800-342-3720

If you believe at any time that a child is in **immediate danger**, call **911** or your local police department.

The State Office of Children and Family Services maintains a toll-free complaint line for complaints about day care programs. Call this number during normal working hours and a staff person will take the information. The Office is empowered to investigate any possible violation of child care regulations. If you think a person or program is operating without the proper license or registration certificate, this is also a basis for making a complaint. Your complaint will be investigated, and if it is substantiated, staff will work with the provider to correct any violations.

A copy of NYS OCFS regulations is available in the lobby for parent reference at any time. We ask that if you have a complaint you please discuss the issue with the Director before calling the complaint line so we can work to rectify the situation.

If you wish to make a complaint, call:
(800) 732-5207

A Parent's Role

Parents play the most significant role in their child's growth and development. The YMCA encourages parent participation. Volunteer opportunities are always available and encouraged. If you would like to volunteer in your child's classroom, please see the teacher for a list of volunteer opportunities. Open and friendly communication is essential. Parent concerns should be immediately directed to the teacher. Details surrounding the concern will be reviewed, solutions will be discussed and a plan of action will be implemented. Communication is the best tool to guarantee your child's happiness.

Field/Walking Trips

Pre-K children may go on local walking trips around the neighborhood. Parents will be notified when the classroom is leaving the building for a field trip.

Dress Code

Children in our program have lots of energy and we provide both active inside and outside play. The children need to be dressed appropriately for active play and the weather. Sneakers or closed toe shoes work best for climbing and playing on the playground. We do

a lot of water and sensory play so please make sure your child always has a change of clothes in case they get wet or dirty and need to be changed.

Religious and Celebration Policies

Holiday celebrations are very important for all children. The YMCA will recognize all holidays and include them in our curriculum. We respect all of our families and their traditions, therefore, if you have any input regarding your own family holidays and traditions please let us know. We do welcome birthday celebrations but please make sure to speak with your child’s teacher regarding allergies in the classroom.

Holidays, Snow Days and Emergencies

Pre-K follows the Watertown City School District calendar. Reference your closings handout for the complete list.

Fire Drills/Shelter-in-Place

Fire drills are conducted at least once per month and are posted inside the classroom. Children and staff practice exiting the building in a quick and safe manner following both primary evacuation routes and secondary evacuation routes. All emergency exits have an evacuation diagram posted outlining the evacuation routes.

Contact Information

Executive DirectorRebecca Reed
Daycare Director.....Elizabeth Harries