



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**WE'RE HERE
FOR YOU
TO GUIDE
YOU
THROUGH
EVERY STEP
OF THE WAY!**

THE GATEWAY FAMILY YMCA



**Child Care
Parent Handbook**

www.tgfymca.org

Welcome to the Y. We are an inclusive organization of men, women and children joined together by a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

Anchored in more than 10,000 neighborhoods around the country with our Y servicing the Eastern Union and Northern Middlesex County communities; the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.

Though the world may be unpredictable, one thing remains certain – the Y is, and always will be, dedicated to building healthy, confident, connected and secure children, adults, families, thus strengthening the foundations of community.

The Gateway Family YMCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, health and community service organization of caring staff and volunteers who are dedicated to providing quality services to people of all ages, races, faiths or incomes.

The Gateway Family YMCA is the one of the largest YMCAs in the State and is comprised of six YMCA branches and an Association Office. The Association Office, Elizabeth Branch and Youth Development Branch are located in Elizabeth, while the Five Points Branch, Wellness Center Branch and WISE Center Branch are located in Union and the Rahway Branch is located in Rahway.

The Gateway Family YMCA serves Avenel, Carteret, Clark, Colonia, Elizabeth, Hillside, Kenilworth, Linden, Port Reading, Rahway, Roselle, Roselle Park, Sewaren, Union, Vauxhall, Winfield Park, and Woodbridge in NJ, and operates the Dudley House Veterans Transitional Housing Program in Plainfield, NJ. But everyone is welcome.

YMCA MISSION

The Gateway Family YMCA is a community-based organization rooted in Christian principles and committed to building healthy lives through programs that strengthen spirit, mind and body for people of all ages, religions and cultures.

PHILOSOPHY

The YMCA is committed to providing young children with a clean, safe, and nurturing environment. Each child is considered wonderful and unique. They are encouraged to cultivate their strengths and talents while developing skills necessary to succeed in a more formalized educational setting and throughout life.

The foundations of our Early Childhood Curriculum are based on Developmentally Appropriate Practices. This concept, endorsed by the National Association for the

Education of Young Children, has grown to become a valid reliable resource in the field of Early Childhood Education. A Developmentally Appropriate Practice model of service delivery focuses on the developmental stages of young children, aligning their abilities with learning activities to challenge and stimulate.

Our educational staff creates and implements activities appropriate for each child's developmental levels. This, in turn, engages children in developmentally appropriate activities that enhance their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth.

The YMCA program design includes health and well-being components designed to ensure all of the children receive the foundation for healthy living. Building strong relationships with both the children and families helps us to influence the lives of all the people we serve.

Our program includes:

- 60 minutes of physical activity every day
- Healthy snacks and nutritional education
- Engaging families in the education of healthy living

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Gateway Family YMCA Childcare Program focuses on two main goals:

1. To provide comprehensive, supervised childcare that will have an in-depth impact on children and families by allowing for:
 - ✓ Parent's Employment
 - ✓ The Economic Stability of the Family
 - ✓ A Positive Experience for Children in terms of Care,
 - ✓ Self-Development and Education

2. To create an environment that fosters opportunities for the development of the child in the areas of:
 - ✓ Character (with emphasis on Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility)
 - ✓ Physical Education
 - ✓ Cognitive Growth
 - ✓ Social/Emotional Growth

PROGRAM GOALS

- ✓ To provide a pleasant transition as the child moves between home and school.

- ✓ To encourage and assist parents/guardians in being partners in their child's education.
- ✓ To create a safe and healthy environment, where children feel secure and successful.
- ✓ To foster readiness skills through language, literacy, mathematics, science, music & movement, and art.
- ✓ To help children appreciate and respect individual differences.
- ✓ To promote play as a vital source for developing the whole child.
- ✓ To instill a love of learning.
- ✓ To inspire each child to reach their individual potential.

CHILD SAFETY GUIDELINES

The Gateway Family YMCA has zero tolerance for abuse and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of participants in its programs. Any mistreatment or abuse by an employee or volunteer will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service and cooperation with law enforcement.

These guidelines also pertain to participant interactions with each other. There is zero tolerance for abuse, mistreatment, or inappropriate activity among participants within the program. The Gateway Family YMCA is committed to providing all children with a safe environment and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one participant by another participant. Conduct by a participant that rises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity will result in intervention or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. In addition, there is no tolerance for any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, The Gateway Family YMCA will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior.

GETTING STARTED

Children who have not been separated from their family may be a bit nervous the first few days. We will do all that we can to make the child feel comfortable and loved while they are with us. It is a good idea to try to prepare your child a few days in advance by talking positively about what he/she will be doing in school.

HOME LANGUAGE POLICY

Children whose first language is not English are encouraged to use their home language, gestures, sign language and pictures to communicate when needed. Please speak to the classroom teacher to discuss a list of common words that your child may use to meet their basic needs (i.e. hungry, thirsty, toileting).

WHAT TO BRING:

- A complete change of clothing in a plastic bag
- A crib sheet and blanket for nap time
- wipes, diapers (if applicable)
- Breakfast, lunch and snack (if applicable)
- All items must be labeled with a permanent marker

REQUIRED FILES

There are documents we are required to have on file for each child prior to their beginning the program. **Note: A child cannot start the program if required documents are missing.** These documents include Registration Form, People Authorized to Pick-up Child, Emergency Information, Permission for Emergency Treatment, and Permission for Field Trips and/or Walking Trips, Current Medical Report Completed by a Doctor, Record of Immunizations and Food Program Contract. Due to state regulations, the required documents must be submitted yearly including the medical form completed by a physician.

DROP- OFF AND PICK- UP OF CHILDREN

In order to ensure the safest transition at pick-up and drop-off, parents are instructed to do the following:

- Parents should drop off children at the designated drop off area and maintain at least six feet of distance between persons, limiting adult entry into the facility.
- Children and staff must use hand sanitizer upon arrival.
- Once the daily screening (temperature check, symptom questionnaire) is complete, staff will escort children to their classroom.
- To prevent crowding at pick up, parents should call and indicate time of pick up to ensure that their child is prepared and staff can transfer the child to the designated pick up area.

Children cannot be released to siblings unless the sibling is at least 16 years of age. Children are not allowed to walk home and the YMCA Staff may not transport children in their cars.

Written notice must be given if a child is to leave with someone other than the parents or those listed on the authorization section of the Registration Form. In the event of an emergency, parents may fax signed permission for someone other than them or an authorized adult to pick up a child. Please tell the person picking up your child that they must provide photo identification to the staff before the child will be released.

If the parent or person authorized to pick up the child appears to be physically, mentally, or emotionally impaired to the extent that the welfare of the child is in danger:

- The child will not be released.
- Staff members will try to contact alternate persons authorized for pick-up.

- If staff is unable to make alternate arrangements, a staff member will call the Division of Youth and Family Services' 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline to seek assistance in caring for the child.

All parents, guardians and individuals authorized to pick up your child 18 years of age and older will be required to go through our Sex Offender screening process. All visiting individuals 18 and over must provide a government issued photo ID upon entry to any of our YMCA facilities, programs or services.

All parents, guardians and individuals 18 years of age and older are required to be Community Members and required to sign The Gateway Family YMCA's Guest Waiver.

Every individual is REQUIRED to present and scan a YMCA Membership Card, Mobile App or Barcode on EVERY visit. This card must be paired with a current photo in our system and includes all parents, guardians and individuals walking children into class or child care on every visit.

POLICY ON CHILDREN SUPERVISION

Two teachers will supervise all children at all times. It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that all the children under his/her care are supervised at all times.

No classroom will be left unsupervised for any reason when children are in the room. A teacher and teacher assistant will supervise children moving from one room to the other. Children using the bathrooms will be supervised. While outside on the playground, children will have the full attention of their teachers and aides. School walking trips will be supervised at all times.

CURRICULUM

All classes are designed to enhance each child's strengths and meet his/her needs. The YMCA provides a comfortable and educationally enriched environment that encourages a child's growth and development. Our program uses a research-based, validated curriculum that is aligned to the NJ Birth to Three Standards and the NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards.

Our curriculum is representative of **The Gateway Family YMCA's Four Core Values; Respect, Responsibility, Caring and Honesty**, demonstrated through daily activities and lessons offered to our young students. Children construct their own knowledge through interactions with the world and the people around them. Children take the first step in the learning process by making choices and following through on their plans and decisions. Teachers, caregivers, and parents offer physical, emotional, and intellectual support. In active learning settings, adults expand children's thinking with diverse materials and nurturing interactions.

Daily physical activity for infants six months of age or younger will include "tummy time" (time in the prone position). Daily, staff will engage with infants on the ground to optimize adult/infant interactions and provide opportunities for all infants to move freely to explore both indoor and outdoor environments.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Our early childhood classrooms are designed to promote group work and independence. The rooms are divided into accessible, labeled, well-organized areas. Children follow daily routines, which provide them with the comfort of predictability. Each classroom environment is individualized to meet each room's specific age group needs. Our intentional design in classroom environment, allows each child to explore, discover, and develop her/his potential.

ECERS/ITERS environmental rating scales are used periodically to assess the program quality and inform administration when adjusting the program. Environmental Rating Scales measure what researchers refer to as "global quality" in an early childhood education classroom. Trained observers use the tool – which consists of 43 items categorized into 7 sub-scales – to measure quality in a specific classroom or group of children. These observations typically take about 3 hours. Areas of focus for the ERS observation tool include: Space and furnishings – personal care routines – language and literacy – learning activities – interaction – program structure.

For children under the age of two years, television and/or any other digital device will not be used for entertainment. For children two years of age and older, all screen time (television, movies, computer, etc.) will be appropriately supervised and support developmental goals.

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

All classrooms are grouped by age and appropriate developmental skills based on the Universal Matrix of Stage Development. Appropriate teaching and learning modifications are made based on the findings from performance-based assessments as well as results from developmental screening tools. Our center uses the ASQ-3 (Ages and Stages Questionnaire) twice a year to support your child's development and plan individual learning goals.

Based on our observation and assessment, the teachers and the Center Director will provide information to services that match any identified interests and needs. This involves identification of additional supports, screening and further assessment as needed to understand your child's developmental status and identify potential delays, referral and follow-up to ensure linkages to needed services, and efforts to support families.

TRANSITIONS

As your child grows in our center, the curriculum allows us to assess the skill and growth process. Each classroom teacher has a portfolio for your child. Once your child is ready to move to the next group, the classroom teacher will provide the

new teacher information that would be helpful to assist with getting to know your child. If your child is going to preschool/kindergarten, the teacher will prepare a transition folder. This may include samples of your child's work, as well as any strategies that were used to assist your child during their time at the center.

MEALTIME AND NUTRITION

- At our Y, it is very important that we promote healthy eating habits to our children and families.
- Mealtimes are scheduled at the same time every day, and may be provided. All meals provided follow USDA guidelines. For more info about USDA guidelines, please visit www.usda.gov
- The Gateway Family YMCA prohibits serving snacks high in sugar or fat and all fried foods. This includes all parties and special events.
- Drinking water is available and accessible for children at any time of the day.
- If milk is provided, only 1% or fat free will be served
- If fruit juice is served, each child will be limited to one 4-6 oz serving of 100% fruit juice each day
- Parents should communicate any dietary needs to the office so that the appropriate adjustments can be made to the menu.
- The Y promotes and supports exclusive breastfeeding for the 1st six months of infancy and continuation of breastfeeding in conjunction with complementary foods for 1 year or more. A room is available upon request.

NAP/REST TIME

All children age 4 and younger are required to nap/rest every day. We will supply a cot/mat for your child. You must supply a labeled sheet, blanket, and/or pillow. These items must go home at the end of each week and a clean set of sheets returned the following week.

TOILET TRAINING

It is important to remember that each child is an individual and develops at his or her own pace. When a child shows definite signs of interest in toileting, it is the caregiver's responsibility to carefully introduce this process to the child.

Children will not be pressured to use the toilet until they show signs of being ready.

These signs are:

1. Asking or showing interest.
2. Being dry for several hours or overnight.
3. Having regular bowel movements.
4. Complaining when wet or soiled.

Toilet training must be consistent at the YMCA and at home. It takes cooperation between caregivers and parents in order not to frustrate or confuse the child. As toilet training is a collaborative method, the YMCA will notify the parent as to when and how they will begin the toileting process.

When a child is being toilet trained:

- Caregivers will give gentle reminders during the day to help children be successful
- Caregivers will be positive about the experience, giving praise to children's success
- Caregivers will speak with children about being dry throughout the day

DRESS CODE AND GROOMING

- The dress code at the YMCA Child Care Centers is comfortable clothing and closed-in, soft-sole shoes. Our curriculum calls for hands on learning where children are exploring, creating and involved in real life experiences. It is expected that your child's clothes may become soiled throughout these experiences. Please dress your child ready for play!
- Ensure that your child is dressed in clothing that is appropriate to the current weather conditions
- The YMCA supports oral health and recommends that all children over the age of two years visit the dentist regularly.
- Staff members are required to care for the sanitary and hygienic condition of all children at the center when they are in YMCA's care. If a child needs grooming beyond the normal care (i.e. washing hair, bathing the child, cutting of nails), parents will be notified of this need before any action is taken.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

The center is licensed and equipped to care for children in good health. Parents and staff, working together, promote the child's total well-being.

For COVID-19 and related PPE requirements, we will continue to follow the guidance and recommendations from the State and Local health departments, School District and the Office of Licensing. We will provide more detailed and up to date information closer to the start of the school year. **Guidance and recommendations are subject to change*

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Hospital grade EPA approved disinfecting solution or an equivalent such as bleach will be used to sanitize equipment and surfaces. Staff will be required to sanitize areas before and after use including classroom equipment and furniture, as well as outdoor playground equipment. Cleaning crews will clean and disinfect all indoor and outdoor areas daily after operating hours.

The frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of toys, equipment, and surfaces, especially doorknobs, light switches, countertops, and restrooms will be increased to minimize the potential for the spread of germs. Toys that are not easily cleanable (such as stuffed animals, play dough, and pillows) will be temporarily removed and toys that are out at any one time will be rotated so that they can be adequately cleaned and sanitized. If groups of children are moving from one area to another in shifts, cleaning measures must be completed prior to the new group entering the area.

HYGIENE PRACTICES/HAND WASHING

Practice frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and require handwashing, before meals or snacks, after going to the bathroom, and prior to leaving for home. Help young children to ensure they are doing it effectively. The requirement of hand sanitizing during entering the facility will be required by all staff, parents, and children.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

- Each child must have a complete health form on file signed by a physician, and all immunizations must be recorded and up to date prior to admission. Immunization records will need to be updated each time a child receives additional immunizations.
- As a precaution and in compliance to the State Law, prescription medication only will be administered. The medication must be stored in the original container, labeled with the child's name, the name of the medicine, date of prescription, and directions. Parents are required to complete a Medication Permission Form. *Over the counter* medications will not be administered.
- Included on the registration form is a section titled, "Permission for Emergency Medical Care." It is imperative that this area be signed so that in the event of an emergency situation we can obtain medical treatment for your child.

HEALTH EXCLUSION FROM THE CENTER

We care deeply about the health of all children in our center. Please help us prevent the spread of infection to other children and teachers by keeping ill children at home until symptoms are gone. Children are not to be sent to the center if they have any of the following symptoms: fever or headache, rashes or inflamed skin, nausea or vomiting, abdominal pains, diarrhea, sore throat, earache, inflammation of the eyes, enlarged glands, or persistent coughing.

If a child develops any of the above symptoms while in the YMCA's care, the parent will be notified to have the child picked up immediately. Doctor's permission may be required for the child to return to the program in some cases.

RETURN TO SCHOOL FOLLOWING ILLNESS

Children must be symptom-free for a minimum of 24 hours. The YMCA reserves the right to require a physician's note stating that the child poses no risk to others. In the event the child has diarrhea two times during one day of care, the child will be required to be picked up and not return for 24 hours from the last loose stool movement. It is especially important that the parents let the center know of any

contagious illness to which their child has been exposed or has contracted. The center will also keep parents informed of any contagious illnesses which might be "going around" that will need special attention by a physician. In this case, children who have any communicable diseases will not be allowed to remain or return to the YMCA without a physician's note stating that there is no risk to others.

GUIDELINES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group, and parents will be called to take the child home.

Severe pain or discomfort
Acute diarrhea
Episodes of acute vomiting
Elevated temperature of 100.4 Degrees
Lethargy
Severe coughing
Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
Red eyes with discharge
Infected, untreated skin patches
Difficult or rapid breathing
Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
Mouth sores with drooling
Stiff neck

Once the child is symptom-free, or has health care provider's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or others, the child may return to the center.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The following provisions relate to excludable communicable diseases. The center shall not permit a child or staff member with an excludable communicable disease, as specified in the table below, to be admitted to or remain at the child care center until a note from the child's or staff member's licensed physician states that the child or staff member, respectively, has been diagnosed and presents no risk to himself, herself or to others.

Respiratory Illnesses

Contact Illnesses

Chicken Pox**
Impetigo
German Measles*
Lice/Hemophilus Influenzae*
Scabies
Measles*
Shingles
Meningococcus*

Gastrointestinal Illnesses

Campylobacter*
Escherichia coli*
Giardia/Lambli*
Hepatitis A*
Salmonella*

Mumps*
Strep Throat
Tuberculosis*
Whooping Cough*
COVID-19

Shigella*

**Reportable diseases will be reported to the health department by the center.*

***Note: If a child contracts chicken pox, a health care provider's note is not required for re-admitting the child to the center.*

A note from the parent is required stating either that at least six days has elapsed since the onset of the rash, or that all sores have dried and crusted.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

If emergency medical care is necessary, any of the following steps might be taken:

- Attempt to contact parent or guardian.
- Attempt to contact person on the emergency form.
- An ambulance or paramedic may be summoned.

A trained staff member in CPR and First Aid is available at all times. Parents are always contacted by phone.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Disagreements and conflicts occur in every class at one time or another. Your child's teacher uses these opportunities to help children learn how to get along with others. When class rules are broken, for example if a child hits another child or misuses classroom property, the teacher utilizes problem-solving techniques. This includes talking with the children and helping them to decide how to solve the problem. If problems continue, the teacher may request the involvement of the parent/guardian and other staff members.

Teachers strive to develop an atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom. Positive reinforcement, encouragement and recognition of positive behavior are strategies used to accomplish this goal.

If a child is consistently a physical or verbal danger to other children, themselves or staff (biting, hitting, pinching, throwing objects, etc.), the following will occur:

- The teacher will notify the parents/guardians that a problem exists and ask for their help. This help may include being asked to come in and pick up their child.
- If the behavior continues, the Director or her/his designee will observe the child's behavior in the classroom; the staff will be instructed to shadow the child; and a conference will be scheduled between parents/guardians,

teacher and Director or her/his designee. The Director may suggest that the child be evaluated and a Behavioral Intervention Plan be developed and implemented before the child can return to the center.

- If the parents/guardians refuse to cooperate or work together as a team the child's behavior continues to be a danger to other children, themselves, or staff, the child may be permanently removed from our program.
- If a child's behavior results in causing purposeful physical harm to others, the center reserves the right to immediately terminate the child's enrollment.

We work to maintain a positive atmosphere with emphasis on our four core values of Character Development: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

The rules for the children are:

- I will respect each other's feelings and property by not fighting, hitting, biting or touching another person or their belongings.
- I will listen when someone is talking.
- I show care about my teachers and classmates.
- I will use "words" to tell another person how you feel.
- I will get the help of the teacher if someone is bothering or upsetting me.
- I will try my best to be kind, considerate and helpful.
- I will respect the classroom by helping to clean-up and by handling the supplies and equipment properly and carefully.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE

A positive approach is used to guide the children; each situation and child is handled individually. Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used for behavioral management. Methods used include:

- Redirection: Guiding a child into acceptable options when engaged in an unacceptable activity.
- Logical and Natural Consequences: Use discovered opportunities to make children aware of consequences.
- Limit Setting: Boundaries are developed by the teacher for the children as a group and for individual children according to each situation.
- Be Clear: Make sure children know what behavior is and is not acceptable.
- Modeling Behavior: Caregivers will demonstrate appropriate ways of interacting with others.
- Providing Choices: Appropriate choices are outlined and children are encouraged to make their own decisions.
- Be Ready: Plan and prepare the environment to limit negative behavior.
- Positive Reinforcement: Use of encouragement and support when addressing behaviors.

TECHNOLOGY GUIDELINES

Families entrust their children to the YMCA's care for childcare, camp and other youth programs. Our promise to these families is that we will provide a safe environment in which all participants are treated in a caring, honest, respectful and responsible way. Our mission commands us to "build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all."

The YMCA does not mean to interfere with anyone's private life, but publicly observable communications, actions or words are not private. Parents/Guardians need to use good judgment and discretion when posting pictures of participants. If you want something to be private, do not expose it to public access. If you or your words are in public, make sure they are not interfering with the privacy of other participants and families.

POLICY ON PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Parents, parent volunteers, and/or observations are always welcome at our center. There is an open-door policy and parents may call with any questions. Parent-Teacher conferences may be scheduled throughout the year. We also encourage parents to share their ideas and concerns with us at any time. Correspondence is generally in the form of verbal conversations in class or by phone. Daily reports are completed in all Infant/Toddler classrooms and shared via the Brightwheel app. Special events, school closings and other program notifications may also be shared via the app or email. Please remember: our doors are always open to you!

ATTENDANCE

Our preschools are open year-round, with the exception of some National Holidays. Consistent attendance is vitally important to the development of your child's program. The center must be notified in writing of vacations prior to leaving. Please refer to NJ quarantine guidelines for returning from out-of-state before returning to the program. (Please refer to center calendar for The Gateway Family YMCA celebrated Holidays).

If your child will be absent for a period of time, please notify the center as to the reason of the absences. A health check in will done after 3 days if we have not heard from parent. You may be required to submit proper documentation, *i.e. Physicians return to School slip*, before returning.

Participants receiving government subsidy or vouchers are required to maintain their eligibility through their child's daily attendance. If a child is over five days absence in a month the center has the discretion to terminate care.

There are no refunds or credits for absences. School holidays, school half days, personal illness and/or activities do not reduce monthly fees.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The YMCA *normally* follows the local School District closings. In the event of a school closing or delayed opening, parents can call the YMCA for information, since often times the building may still be open when the childcare classrooms are not. There are no refunds for closures due to inclement weather. www.tgfymca.org

LOST & FOUND/ PERSONAL ITEMS

We ask that any personal belongings be labeled with permanent marker. We also ask that toys such as guns, swords, action figures, or any electronic games be left at home. We do not wish to have toys that promote violence in our Child Care Center. Toys such as dolls, puzzles, books or games would be appropriate, however, bringing toys from home is discouraged as they can get lost, broken, or in some cases cause conflicts with the children.

Each classroom will have a lost & found area. Please check with the staff if your child is missing something. The contents of the lost and found will be discarded or donated to charity at the end of each season.

The Gateway Family YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENTS

Parents must register at the appropriate Branch or the YMCA Welcome Center Desk. The following is due upon registration:

- First month's tuition
- All required documents (i.e. shot records and universal health form)
- \$25.00 registration fee (for new members)

ALL FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE. THIS INCLUDES MEMBERSHIP, DEPOSITS AND LATE FEES.

You will be charged tuition each month unless 30 days written notice is submitted to the Child Care Director prior to leaving the program.

PAYMENT METHODS

The YMCA Child Care programs are pleased to offer childcare payments by bank draft. Payments can be automatically debited towards childcare payments by credit cards or by personal checking account. Bank draft forms can be picked up from the welcome center.

Payments may be made by check, cash, Visa, Master Card, Discover or American Express. Payments may be made online at: www.tgfymca.org, or at the Welcome Center.

Checks should be made payable to The Gateway Family YMCA.

LATE PAYMENT FEE

Tuition payments are due **prior to the 1st of the month of childcare**. There is a grace period for late payments. Payments made after the **5th** of the month will be assessed a late fee.

NON- PAYMENT OF TUITION FEES

All child-care tuition payments are due and payable the first (1st) of each month for which service will be provided. If payments are not received by the end of the grace period, it may result in the immediate discontinuation of services. **If childcare services have been discontinued because of non-payment, any late fees, current month tuition and past due balance will be due and payable before a child can return to the program.** A 48-hour waiting period will also be enforced before a child may return to the program so that the proper staff can be informed of the roster addition.

RETURN CHECK FEE/RETURN DRAFT FEE

There will be a fee for all checks returned by the bank for insufficient funds.

If a check is returned a second time, there will again be a late fee and all future payments must be made by cash, money order, or credit card. The same fee will apply for all returned monthly drafts from a checking account or credit card.

LATE PICK-UP FEES

If your child is present after closing hours, the family will be billed a \$25 late fee every 15 minute interval, or part thereof.

WITHDRAWAL

One calendar months' notice in writing is required when terminating enrollment. Then, and only then, will the tuition deposit will be applied towards your child's last month of service. **Tuition deposits are non-refundable.**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In cases of severe financial hardship, financial aid applications are available at the Welcome Center. Scholarships are based on financial need and are available on a limited basis. Any family applying for financial assistance for child care must first apply for assistance through the Community Coordinated Child Care Programs.

GOVERNMENT GRANT FUNDING

Government grant subsidy and scholarships are available to families who qualify. Income documentation and parent identification is collected annually in accordance with CDBG guidelines. Eligible families are determined by TGFYMCA staff and can receive subsidy or scholarship once all required paperwork is submitted. Our centers also accept voucher programs offer by the government through Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (*CCR&R's*) for example 4C's and Program for Parents.

PARENT RESOURCES

A community resource handbook is available to all parents and families. It is located at the front desk. Here you will find information on:

- Community and school-based resources
- Direct services to promote child/family safety, health and stability
- Community events
- YMCA services and events

Also provided below are a list of informative websites for parents.

www.tgfymca.org

www.EarlyChildhoodEducatorsandFamilyWebCorner.com

www.daycare.com

www.zerotothree.org

www.EarlyChildhoodResources.com

www.NAEYC.org

www.njeis.org/familylink

OFFICE OF CHILDCARE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

A Childcare Director, who has supervisory experience as well as experience working with children, leads our staff. A Group Teacher and Teacher's Assistants who ensure quality programming leads each classroom. All staff members are selected based on their previous experience, education, desire to work with children, and attitude. As a condition of employment, staff must successfully complete a state criminal background check, pre-employment drug screening and reference checks prior to being hired. Staff must also attend extensive training that includes child abuse prevention, CPR/First Aid, safety procedures, positive guidance and discipline, child growth and development, as well as other in-house trainings throughout the year.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We maintain confidentiality and respect each family's right to privacy refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, when we are concerned about a child's welfare, it is permissible to reveal confidential information to agencies and individuals who may be able to act in the child's interest, i.e. NJ Office of Child Care Licensing.

COURT ORDERS

In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a court order (i.e.: Custody Order, Restraining Order or Protection from Abuse Order) the YMCA must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) request a more liberal version of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the courts, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order. In absence of a court order on file with the YMCA, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The YMCA, without a court order, cannot limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, we suggest that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued. If conflicting court orders are present, the most recently dated court order will be followed. Once presented with a Protection from Abuse or a Restraining Order, the YMCA is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of the YMCA cannot at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow the orders of the court to be violated.

STANDARDS OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOR – CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Affectionate touch and the warm feeling it brings is an important factor in helping a child grow into a loving and peaceful adult. Gentle touch, hugging and holding are important and memorable parts of YMCA childcare experiences. However, YMCA staff and volunteers need to be sensitive to each person's need for personal space, i.e. not everyone wants to be hugged. Annual training will be sponsored for YMCA employed staff and program volunteers about appropriate touch, inappropriate touch, and child sexual abuse.

The Gateway Family YMCA encourages appropriate touch. However, at the same time we not only discourage inappropriate touch but will take prompt and immediate action as follows:

1. At the first report or probable cause to believe that child sexual abuse has occurred, the staff person, to whom the incident has been reported to, will notify the Childcare Director in the Center. The Childcare Director will report the incident to the Branch Director. The Branch Director, the Childcare Director, and the staff reporting the incident will gather all the facts and the Branch Director will notify the Chief Executive Office of The Gateway Family YMCA.
2. The Child Care Director will make a report in accordance with the New Jersey Child Abuse and Neglect Law (P.S. 1974, amended by P.L. 197).209).
3. In the event the reported incident or incidents involve a program volunteer or employed staff person, the Branch Director will, without exception, suspend the program volunteer or employed staff person from the YMCA.

4. The parent/guardian of the child, or children involved in the alleged incident, will be promptly notified by the Branch Director.
5. Whether the incident or alleged offense takes place on or off YMCA premises, because of the youth-involved nature of the YMCA, it will be considered as job related.
6. Reinstatement of the program volunteer or employed staff person will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the persons named in item #1 above or designated legal advisor.
7. All YMCA staff and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in handling this information and therefore should only discuss the incident with the persons named in item #1 or designated legal advisor.
8. All full and part-time childcare employees must read and sign this policy.
9. This policy statement will be reviewed and updated by the YMCA's Constituency Committee.

Child abuse can take many forms: "In general, abuse refers to acts of commission such as beating, excessive corporal punishment, or inappropriate sexual activity"- New Jersey Department of Education, Policy and Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse.

EXPULSION POLICY

The Center will make every effort to encourage appropriate and considerate behavior in individual children. Growing is difficult, and all children have setbacks, bad days and sometimes traumatic life experiences, which affect their behavior. Staff members are provided with training and guidance in positive supervision as outlined in the program discipline policy.

Occasionally, when an individual child's behavior proves to be consistently disruptive, and/or demands so much individual attention that supervision of the entire group is compromised, the following actions will be required:

1. Staff will document the child's behavior and the staff's actions to modify the behavior;
2. Parents will be provided with a written notification requesting a conference with the parent(s), the child and the staff to address the problem;
3. Staff will implement a plan mutually agreed upon with the parent(s) and the child to modify the child's behavior;
4. A second conference will be arranged to provide positive feedback for further planning, if necessary;
5. If all attempts, as outlined above, result in little or no change in the child's behavior, the Center reserves the right to suspend child care services to the family for a period of one week. At this time, parents will be required to pay tuition in order to reserve the child's space in the program;
6. If upon returning to the program, the child's behavior continues, the Center reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment with one week's notice to the parent(s);

If a child's behavior results in causing purposeful physical harm to others, the Center reserves the right to immediately terminate the child's enrollment. Parent(s) may grieve any action taken by the Center, in writing, to the Director. If the Director's written response proves unsatisfactory to the parent(s), a grievance may be submitted, in writing, to the Center Director.

In the event that a situation develops where a family is considered difficult to deal with, the YMCA reserves the right to require the family to withdraw their child (ren) immediately without notice. Examples of "difficult to deal with" include, but are not limited to:

- Arriving at the YMCA impaired and attempting to remove their children from the program.
- Being abusive to staff members and/or other program participants.
- Failing to adhere to YMCA policies listed in this parent handbook

INFORMATION TO BE REPORTED TO THE DIVISION OF YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Verbally within 24 hours:

- ✓ Injury or illness that results in the admittance to a hospital or death of a child.
- ✓ Occurrence of a reportable disease.
- ✓ Change in use by other occupants of a multi-use building in which center is located.
- ✓ Permanent closing of the center.
- ✓ Damage to premises of the center caused by fire, accident or the elements.
- ✓ Proposed use of emergency space including use of rooms not approved by local municipal officials or the Bureau.
- ✓ Any criminal conviction(s) or guilty plea(s) of the sponsors, Director, or any staff member.

Department of Children and Families
Office of Licensing
INFORMATION TO PARENTS

Under provisions of the **Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52)**, every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents and staff this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent and staff member's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at https://data.nj.gov/childcare_explorer.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for

information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the *State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873*. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to www.state.nj.us/dcf/.