



**Tuscaloosa YMCA Family Center**

**Child Development Program**

**Parent Handbook**

Welcome to the YMCA of Tuscaloosa’s Child Development Program.

As a service to our valued members, the YMCA of Tuscaloosa Child Development Program provides on-site child care for your family while enjoying our facility. Our goal is to provide a positive experience for children in a safe and secure environment during your visit to our YMCA. We offer interesting and inviting age-appropriate activities implemented by warm and fun staff members.

**Ages:**

* Children must be able to walk to attend the Child Development Center. Children through the age of 13 may take advantage of the activities provided by the Child Development Center as long as proper behavior is exhibited.

**Regular Hours**

* Child Development Center
  + 8:15 am – 1:00 pm Monday – Friday
  + 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm Monday – Thursday
  + 8:15 am – 12:00 pm Saturday

**Rules**

* Child Development is for member use while in the facility. Please do not leave the facility while your child is in our care. A parent must be on the premises at all times.
* You are required to fill out a registration form for each child being cared for in the Child Development Center. Be sure to list allergies, special instructions, and updated contact information.
* Due to size limitations of the Child Development Center, it may be necessary to make reservations to use our room. Reservations may be made at any time, but we do request that you cancel your reservations within 24 hours if you know that you will not be using the Child Development Center. Abuse of the reservation system will result in not being able to make reservations.
* Children may stay in the Child Development Center for no more than 2 consecutive hours. Once that time limit is met, you will be charged for additional time in the Child Development Center unless prior arrangements have been made.
* No strollers are allowed within the Child Development area. Car seats, baby carriers, etc., are not permitted.

**Security**

* For each visit, you must sign your child in and out of the Child Development Center. Please fill out the sheet fully and notify us of any special instructions or allergies.
* When you sign your child in, both you and your child(ren) will be stamped with the same letter. You must present that letter when picking your children to verify that you are their parent/guardian. Please be careful not to wash your letter off. If you do, be prepared to present a photo ID when you pick up your child. If another parent/guardian is picking up, be sure to notify the Child Development staff. They will be required to present a photo ID as well as must be on the approved list.
* Staff will observe your child for any symptoms of illness or communicable disease, and parents will be asked to verify that the child is healthy enough to be in care with other children.
* Whoever signs the child into the Child Development Center should also pick up the child unless you make alternative arrangements with lead staff on duty.
* Please label all of your child’s belongings. Give staff any information about your child that may be valuable while he or she is in our care, such as eating and sleeping needs, medication, temperament, and so on.
* At pick-up, staff will share information with you about your child’s stay, including diapering, food intake, demeanor, and play activities.
* Please remember that you must remain in the building while your child is in the Child Development Center. Inform the staff where you will be so that you are easily accessible if they need to contact you. We must be able to reach you while your child is in our care. Please keep your cell phone close by and listen for the YMCA intercom in case the Child Development staff should need you for any reason.

**Wellness**

* Do not bring a child who has a fever, rash, drainage from the eyes, vomiting, or diarrhea to the Child Development Center. If your child exhibits any of these symptoms while in our care, we will contact you immediately and ask you to remove the child from the Center. Please notify us if your child contracts a communicable disease after spending time in the Child Development Center.
* Child must be fever/rash/illness free for 24 hours before resuming attendance at the Child Development Center.
* Please remind us on any allergies your child might have upon each visit to the Child Development Center.

**Sanitation**

* Staff and children wash hands upon entering the Child Development Center, before and after diapering or toileting, and after wiping runny noses. We want the Child Development Center to be as sanitary and healthy, and hand washing is the #1 preventative measure of all illnesses.
* If your child is not potty trained, we ask that you bring them in a clean diaper. You must provide diapers and wipes for your child. You will be paged to change your child’s diaper unless other arrangements are made.
* We will do all that we can to assist your child in potty training. However, please keep in mind that with our large volume of children coming in and out, it is difficult to keep track of which child needs assistance. Please remind Child Development staff on each visit of your child’s individual pottying needs. If your child uses pull-ups, please provide extras as well as wipes in case of an accident. It is always a good idea to send a change of clothes.

**Medication**

* Staff will not administer medications in the Child Development Center. An exception would be the administering of a medication for life-threatening reactions, such as allergies to peanuts. In this case, parents must train staff on duty to administer the appropriate medication. Please see a YMCA supervisor for procedures.

**Eating**

* Please make sure your child is fed prior to entering the Child Development Center. Meals are not to be served in the Child Development Center.
* When sending drinks, please use a labeled bottle or spill proof cup. No glass containers are permitted.
* Snacks may be available from time to time in the Child Development Center depending upon classroom curriculum. You will be notified if snacks will be prepared at drop off. Please let the staff know of any food allergies so we can accommodate your child’s needs.

**Child Guidance**

* The YMCA of Tuscaloosa Child Development staff use redirection and positive reinforcement while working with your child. If these techniques are not successful and your child poses a danger to self or others, we will notify you immediately. We will share information concerning any behavioral issues upon request.
* Discipline is handled on a case by case basis according to the age and maturity of each child. Redirection and time out, as well as reiterating the 4 core values of the YMCA (caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility) will be our main methods of discipline. We may ask you to reinforce the discouragement of undesired behavior at home. Should a child have consistent behavior issues that affect the safety of other children or themselves, they will not be permitted in the Child Development Center until the issue is fully resolved. A parent conference may be requested.
* If your child cries, screams, or is clearly anxious or distraught for longer than 15 minutes, you will be paged. We want all of the children to enjoy their experience in Child Development. However, it can be traumatic for some to leave their parent. We will do all we can do to soothe your child and make them comfortable and we are willing to work with you and your child to make their experience an enjoyable one.

**Activities**

* During his or her stay with us, your child is encouraged to engage in fun activities that include a variety of age-appropriate toys, equipment, and materials of interest and challenge your child.
* Please do not bring toys from home. We provide fun, safe, and age appropriate toys for all ages. We are not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken belongings.
* Choices for your child may include the following:
  + Toddlers: books, puzzles, manipulative toys, building blocks, dramatic play
  + Preschoolers: books, puzzles, manipulative toys, blocks, dramatic play, and art
  + School-agers: books, board games, construction toys, arts and crafts
* While Child Development programs may make the use of TVs and DVD players, the YMCA of Tuscaloosa limits viewing time and offers only programming choices that are consistent with YMCA values. We offer only G-rated videos and screen music for appropriate content.
* Label any pacifiers and comfort items such as blankets and stuffed animals.
* We make accommodations for children with special needs. Please notify us of any accommodations needed for your child.

**Photo/Videograph Release**

* From time to time, the staff of the Child Development Center and other photographers as approved by the Tuscaloosa YMCA Family Center may take photos or videos in the Child Development Center. The intent of this is to promote the YMCA Family Development Center. We will do our best efforts to notify you if/when a photograph has been taken of your child and the method of release. If you do not wish to have your child photographed or have limitations for how you want those distributed, please include instructions on the Child Development Registration Form.

**Staff**

* The YMCA of Tuscaloosa screens and trains all of our Child Development staff. There is a staff person on duty at all times in the Child Development Center who has been trained in CPR, first aid, recognizing signs of child abuse, and recognizing symptoms of communicable diseases.

The YMCA of Tuscaloosa appreciates the opportunity to serve you and your child. Feedback forms are available with the Coordinator. Please let us know how we can serve you.