

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO YCHILD CARE™



METRO **Y**MCAs OF THE ORANGES

We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

Dear Parents,

Thank you for enrolling your child in our YMCA Child Care Center. We appreciate the important trust you have placed in us. The YMCA's goal is to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities.

Our YMCA Child Care programs are an excellent example of how we make a positive difference in the lives of children, their families and in the community.



Our professional, caring Staff is committed to building a strong relationship with you, your child and your family. Our goal is to partner with families to help every child fulfill his or her maximum potential. In doing so, we will communicate with you on a consistent basis regarding your child's experiences and achievements.

Once again, we welcome you to our growing Y family. We look forward to serving you and your family through our many programs and activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Gorab'.

*Richard K. Gorab, President/CEO
Metropolitan YMCAs of the Oranges*

Mission Statement

The Metro YMCAs of the Oranges enriches the lives of the children, families and communities we serve, through programs that build spirit, mind and body, welcoming all people, in an environment nurturing positive values.

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What Makes a High Quality Child Care Center?

- Frequent, positive, and warm interactions among Teachers and children;
- Planned learning activities appropriate to children's age and development, such as block building, painting, reading stories, dress-up and active outdoor play;
- Specially trained Teachers and Site Directors;
- Ongoing professional development;
- Adult/Child ratios that allow individual attention for children;
- Varied age-appropriate materials;
- Respect for cultural diversity;
- A healthy and safe environment for adults and children;
- Inclusive environments;
- Consistent communication with parents who are welcome visitors at all times;
- Effective administration; and
- Ongoing, systematic evaluation.

Our Philosophy

At the YMCA, we believe that each child is a special and unique individual. We base our curriculum on our knowledge of the ways in which young children learn best. Our classrooms and activities are designed to meet the needs of the whole child. Our hands-on, experience based approach promotes comprehensive child development and also fosters a love of learning.

The YMCA Child Care philosophy and curriculum are based on sound principles of child development. Before a child enrolls, these matters will be fully discussed so that the family can make the right

choice for the child. In rare instances, a family may discover that the YMCA philosophy and curriculum are not compatible with their own expectations or beliefs regarding early childhood education. In that case, the Site Director and the Staff will speak with the parents to see if a satisfactory compromise can be achieved. In the event that this is not possible, the family will be assisted in identifying programs that more closely fit their personal needs.

Diversity

The YMCA welcomes families of every race, religion and ethnic group. We encourage parents to visit their child's class to share information about their culture, language, and country of origin. In every classroom graphic displays show a variety of children from different racial and ethnic groups, as well as persons with disabilities and men and women performing non-traditional work roles.

Literacy Development

Whether it is a caregiver softly singing a lullaby to a sleepy baby, a classroom of two-year-olds excitedly looking at family photos, or a Teacher reading a popular book at story time, language and literacy are interwoven into learning and routine activities at every age, everyday.

Enrichment Programs

At some locations, enrichment classes such as music or computers are available for a small fee. Swim and gym classes are offered to preschoolers at the West Essex YMCA (Peanut Shell) Branch. Our Weekday Nursery & Child Care Center offers movement and sports programs. The South Mountain YMCA Child Care Center offers art, music, ballet, gymnastics, karate, story time and kidsports.

Discipline Policy

At the YMCA, discipline is viewed as a learning experience. Through interaction with caring adults, children acquire interpersonal skills such as the ability to work cooperatively with others. We encourage positive behavior and redirect children to other activities before a problem occurs. When an incident has already occurred, we will encourage the child to help come up with ideas or other ways to resolve the conflict.

If there is an ongoing behavioral issue with a child, both the Teacher and the Site Director will meet with the parent(s) to discuss the problem. Every effort will be made to help the child. Parents are always encouraged to discuss behavioral issues and questions with the child's Teacher and/or the Site Director.

Persistent problematic behavior may signal that the program is not the right match for this individual. In such circumstances, the family will be assisted in identifying a new program for their child.

Under no circumstances shall discipline of a child at a YMCA Child Care Center involve hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, frightening or humiliating treatment, unsupervised isolation, withholding of emotional responses or stimulation, enforced silence for long periods, or any form of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Child Abuse Policy

The YMCA follows clear guidelines towards the discipline of children. We have a zero tolerance towards child abuse. All Staff are trained in the area of child abuse prevention and know the proper procedures to take if there is any suspicion of abuse by an adult.

Guidelines have been set which follow the DYFS (Division of Youth and Family Services) Manual of Guidelines for Child Care Centers which are:

- (a) Adults shall not use hitting, shaking or any other form of corporal punishment of children.
- (b) Adults shall not use abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment of children.
- (c) Adults shall not engage in or inflict any form of child abuse and/or neglect.
- (d) Adults shall not withhold food, emotional responses, stimulation, or the opportunities for rest or sleep from children.
- (e) Adults shall not require a child to remain silent or inactive for an inappropriately long period of time for the child's age.

Child Age Grouping

Infants

Our experienced caregivers understand the importance of the first year and our low Teacher/child ratio allows us to address the needs of each infant in our care. Teachers use written communication to ensure that parents have a clear sense of their child's day at our Center. A typical day will include activities such as water play, finger plays, songs, and the encouragement of gross motor development.

Toddlers

Our experienced caregivers understand that this age presents new challenges for Staff and children alike. The toddler age is a time of independence and emerging self-image. Here again, our low Teacher/child ratio enables the Teachers to spend time with children working on self help skills such as feeding themselves. Throughout the year toilet training is introduced, but never forced. This age group will have many special moments that the Teachers will share with you.

Preschool

Our qualified caregivers guide our preschoolers through a structured program. The preschool classrooms are set up in learning centers that aid in preparation for Kindergarten. These centers include a wide variety of experiences and materials e.g., science, language arts, blocks, water and sand tables and dramatic play. There is time for children to circulate among the learning centers, as well as time to participate in special small group activities that are planned by the Staff. A weekly letter from the Teacher will describe all activities in detail.

Kindergarten (South Mountain only)

Our State Certified Teachers follow the NJ Core Curriculum. Each child has a different experience entering Kindergarten, with different exposure to the world and different levels of maturity and academics. The full day program that follows the South Orange/Maplewood calendar will provide each child with the opportunity to grow and learn at their own pace. Through language development, reading/writing, math, motor skills, social studies, science and social development, the children will learn about the world around them.

Ratios

Our Teacher to child ratios are lower than State mandated in all Child Age Groups, allowing us to provide the best possible supervision and observation of each child.

Teacher/Child Ratios:

Category	State Mandated	YMCA Child Care
Infants	1:4	1:3
Toddlers	1:7	1:5
Preschool	1:10	1:9
Full Day K	1:15	1:8

How Can I Help My Child Get Ready for the First Day?

The first day of school is very exciting. Visiting the Center several times before your child officially begins will foster a smooth transition from home to school. Pleasant, positive conversations about beginning school also help.

On the first day, try to leave plenty of time to get ready and to eat breakfast. When your child arrives at school, he or she may cry. We have found from experience that it is best for you to leave quickly. Tell your child that you will be back to pick him/her up. Our Staff will gently help your child get involved in an activity, and the tears will soon disappear.

Arrival at the Center

- For safety's sake, do not let your child out of the car unattended.
- Please bring children to their classroom, sign in and make sure the Teachers are aware of your child's arrival.
- During arrival, please refrain from holding lengthy conversations with the Teacher, since his/her responsibility is to the whole class at this time. Let the Teacher know you would like to speak to him/her, and a time for the two of you to talk will be scheduled.

- If your child will be absent, or will arrive after 9:00am, please notify the Teacher. Children arriving late miss out on some of our key learning components. While everyone needs flexibility, please make the effort to help your child take full advantage of the day.

Policy on the Release of Children

- Children are never permitted to leave the Center with unauthorized persons. Please fill out an alternate pick up form to indicate who has permission to pick up your child.
- Please verify that these individuals will be available to come for your child when you cannot.
- Parents must update telephone numbers and alternate pick up information whenever a change occurs.
- Please remember to sign your child out. We recommend you keep your child by your side as you leave the classroom and the building.
- The parking lot is often quite crowded. Please take your child by the hand until you reach your car.

Important Note: If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the Site Director and/or Staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm, the Center shall ensure that the child may not be released.

Center Hours

The Metropolitan YMCAs of the Oranges Child Care Centers have slightly different schedules:

Peanut Shell:	7am-6pm (extended hours 6-6:45pm)
South Mountain:	7am-6pm (extended hours 6-7pm)
Weekday:	7:30am-6pm

When the regular program ends, extended hours are available to parents who require a later pick-up time at Peanut Shell and South Mountain. Since extended hours are available, parents not registered for the additional time will be charged in 15-minute increments

for lateness. For example, if a parent arrives at 6:25pm, he or she will be charged \$30 for lateness. The objective of this rule is not punitive; Staff also have families who need them. It is also upsetting for children to wait for a late parent. Your cooperation in respecting this rule is greatly appreciated.

Enrollment and Payment Procedures

Once enrolled, your child is registered year-round. A one-month deposit equal to one month's tuition is required at the time of enrollment, and serves as a security deposit (refundable with 30 days written notice).

Leave of Absence

Any leave of absence is treated as a termination of enrollment. If you plan to return, you must re-register. If we have full enrollment, your child will be placed on the waiting list.

* Late Pick Up Procedures *

Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS)

If a parent or person authorized by the parent fails to pick up a child at the time of the Center's closing, the following procedure will be followed:

- The child will be supervised at all times.
- Staff members will try to contact parents and persons authorized by parent for pick up.
- If Staff is unable to arrange for the release of the child an hour or more past the Center's extended closing time, the Staff member will call the DYFS 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline number (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

Center Closings

Closing Policy

The YMCA Child Care Centers close only during extreme weather conditions. Teachers and parents will create phone lists of class families, and recorded messages will be left on the Child Care Center telephone. In the event that the Y must close for an emergency, delay opening, or close early, an announcement will be made on WOR Radio (710 AM).

Holiday Closings

The YMCA strives to meet the needs of working parents by limiting the number of school closings. Below is a list of our holiday closings.

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Child Health

This important information from DYFS should clarify any questions regarding our illness policy.

A thorough physical examination must be completed before a child is allowed to participate in our program. We must have an up-to-date immunization record on file for your child. Any additional immunizations must be added to your child's file. Each child must have a health examination by a licensed physician within:

- Six months prior to admission for children up to 2 ½ years
- One year prior to admission for children 2 ½ + years

Please inform the Site Director of any special considerations or needs in regard to health and/or behavior to ensure that proper arrangements are made for your child.

Illness

In the event that your child is ill and will be absent, please notify the center by 9am.

If your child develops any of the following symptoms during the school day, we will contact you, request that you pick your child up immediately and follow the guidelines related to your child's condition.

May return after 24 hours symptom free

- Fever of 100.5 or higher
- Vomiting
- Two occurrences of diarrhea
- Lice

May return with doctor's note

- Sore Throat
- Whooping Cough
- 3 days of persistent cough
- German Measles
- Meningitis
- Influenza
- Shingles
- Hepatitis A
- Tuberculosis
- Salmonella

May return after 24 hours of treatment/rest and doctor's note

- Red/inflamed eyes with discharge
- Too ill to take part in activities inside or outside
- Conjunctivitis (drops)
- Green, yellow or brown mucus from nose or mouth for more than three days
- Fifth disease
- Impetigo (cream)
- Ringworm (cream)

May return when there are no open sores present and doctor's note

- Undiagnosed skin rashes

May return after 2 days with medication and doctor's note

- Strep Throat

May return after 3 days and doctor's note

- RSV
- Coxsackie

May return after 4 days and doctor's note

- Rubella
- Measles

May return after 6 days

- Chicken Pox

May return after 9 days

- Mumps

A child who is taking antibiotics under the care of a physician is able to return to school after 24 hours of being on the medication and with doctor's permission.

Administration of Medicine

Medication will be administered to your child only under the following circumstances:

- If the physician prescribed dosage schedule does not allow the parent to administer the medication to the child before or after child care.
- Medication is in its original container.
- The parent has signed the medication log book specifying the proper dosage for each medication.
- One Staff person will administer the medication while another observes; then both Staff persons will sign the medication log book.

The following is a list of communicable diseases. A child or Staff member will not be allowed to return to the Center without a note from their physician:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| • Chicken Pox | • Measles |
| • Conjunctivitis | • Meningitis |
| • Coxsackie | • Mumps |
| • German Measles | • Ringworm |
| • Giardia Lamblia | • Salmonella |
| • Influenza | • Shingles |
| • Hepatitis A | • Strep Throat |
| • Impetigo | • Tuberculosis |
| • Lice or Scabies | • Whooping Cough |

Please notify us if your child contracts a communicable disease so we can inform other parents. Sick days are not discounted or credited from the monthly tuition.

Potty Training

- It is important that Staff and parents work together to help the child achieve independent toileting.
- Potty training is a process. Children are individuals and will experience this process in many different ways.
- Staff and parents should adopt the same simple and consistent routine with the child.
- Bring lots of clothes including underwear and socks. There will be accidents.
- Allow time and be patient.

Injuries

If a minor injury occurs during the day, an "ouch" report will be filled out and given to the parent. If a more serious injury occurs, the parent will be notified by telephone. If the injury requires medical attention, the parent will be asked to come to the Center immediately to pick up the child. Staff members cannot take a child to the hospital or doctor in their own vehicles.

In a medical emergency, the proper authorities will be called to transfer the child to the local hospital. The parents will be called immediately. If Staff is unable to reach a parent, the next person on the family's emergency contact list will be called. A Staff person will accompany emergency personnel and will stay with the child until a parent arrives. The permission-to-treat form that all parents complete at the time of enrollment will be brought to the hospital by the Staff person.

Parent Involvement

Our programs are greatly strengthened by active family involvement. In addition to visiting the Center, there are a number of ways that parents can become involved. The YMCA maintains an "Open Door Policy," meaning that any parent or guardian can visit the Center and their child's class at any time.

Staff/Family Relationships

The YMCA encourages a positive, cooperative relationship between families and Staff. However, this relationship is always professional, and must not extend beyond the classroom or the Center. There have been numerous instances of conflicts and uncomfortable situations that have resulted from parents asking Staff to baby-sit after program hours.

Moreover, it is not possible for the YMCA to supervise Staff during non-working hours. It is natural that parents want to employ the caregivers that they most trust for their children. However, we must ask you and Staff to strictly respect this important policy.

Parent Advisory Councils (PAC)

The fundamental purpose of the PAC is to provide essential support to the Staff and Center. This support will result in stronger, more successful programs, and will also enhance communication between Staff and parents. Activities such as fund raising events and Teacher Appreciation Day are planned and carried out by the PAC leadership and other parents, in conjunction with the Site Director.

Involvement

A parent Chairperson, the Child Care Site Director, and a Secretary coordinate the PAC. The parent leader serves a one year term (September to August). In addition, two representatives from each class carry out the duties of the classroom parent representative.

PAC Chairperson

The parent Chairperson will assist the Site Director by providing support and assistance regarding PAC related events and projects. Together with the Site Director, he or she will establish the PAC meeting calendar and help prepare the agendas for the regularly scheduled PAC meetings.

PAC Secretary

The PAC Secretary is responsible for maintaining a record of all general PAC meetings in conjunction with the Site Director.

Classroom Parents

Classroom representatives will serve as committee leaders and parent recruiters in organizing family activities.

Parent Body

All parents are encouraged to attend our regularly scheduled PAC meetings. However, it is important to remember that PAC agenda items will focus on center-wide issues rather than personal ones. Any individual concerns should be brought to the attention of the Teacher of your child's class, or directly to the Child Care Site Director.

Fund Raising

Once a year, parents are called upon to assist us in raising funds for our Strong Kids' Annual Support Campaign. This campaign helps provide financial assistance for those families that are in need of some help with tuition or program fees. For inquiries, please call your Site Director who will assist you in the process.

Family Events

Several times a year, events are planned so that parents, children and Staff can gather together socially. These may include international nights, carnivals, picnics and Y family nights.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Twice yearly, in the late fall and in the spring, parents will have the opportunity to meet with their child's Teacher to discuss and review their child's progress in school. An integral part of the conference is a review of the child's portfolio, which includes samples of the child's work in a variety of learning areas. While Parent/Teacher conferences are more formal opportunities to discuss your child's experiences, parents are welcome to ask for a conference at any time.

*We welcome you to our
YMCA Family and look forward to
building a strong relationship with you!*



SOUTH MOUNTAIN YMCA

www.smountainymca.org

CHILD CARE CENTER

10 West Parker Avenue
Maplewood, NJ 07040
(973) 762-0860

WEST ESSEX YMCA

www.westessexymca.org

PEANUT SHELL CHILD CARE CENTER

706 Regent Street
Livingston, NJ 07039
(973) 533-1511

WEEKDAY NURSERY & CHILD CARE CENTER

294 West Hobart Gap Road
Livingston, NJ 07039
(973) 992-1203