

## **Play Days Overview**

At the Fairfield YMCA Play Days program, we...

- ❖ Make sure staff members are qualified.
- ❖ Emphasizes low child-staff ratios, small group size and frequent interactions between caregivers and children.
- ❖ Create a staff salary and development plan that cuts turnover, rewards education and emphasizes professionalism.
- ❖ Involve and serve parents and families in significant ways that build upon their strengths.
- ❖ Make sure materials, equipment and facilities are age appropriate and developmentally stimulating.
- ❖ Use a curriculum that supports child-centered and child-directed activities.
- ❖ Stress positive reinforcement of children – no name calling or putdowns.
- ❖ Value diversity of children and families.
- ❖ Provide for a safe, clean and attractive environment.

# **Play Days**

## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

The objective of the Play Days program is to produce a loving environment that encourages children to self-directing, to learn through their experiences at their own pace and to develop respect for themselves and others. Play Days is child-oriented and play is the center of our curriculum. It is through play that children begin to learn to develop skills, solve problems and to express their ideas.

### **CURRICULUM**

Our curriculum is designed to develop children socially, emotionally, physically and creatively. The activities for Play Days are planned in a non-competitive atmosphere which fosters mutual respect for each child's individual differences.

### **PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

The Play Days program will begin on a shortened orientation schedule the first month of Play Days so that parents and children can meet with staff and get familiar with the classroom and the daily routine. (See front page for schedule.)

### **STAFF**

The staff consists of the Director (who is also a head teacher), Head Teachers and Assistant Teachers. All of whom are qualified to work with young children.

#### **Background Checks**

A thorough background check by Choice point is run on all employees and volunteers who worked of the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA. Choice point is a national background checking service. It checks criminal records, motor vehicle violations and the National Sex Offender List. In addition all child care staff is fingerprinted and their fingerprints are kept on file by the State.

#### **Emergency Training Certification**

All full time employees in Child Care and the Head Teacher at each site are trained in Connecticut Child Care, a combination course developed by the American Red Cross for the Connecticut Department of Public Health w which certified the a participant in Infant and Child CPR and Pediatric First Aid. All staff members who are not required are strongly encouraged to take this course.

#### **Child Abuse Prevention Education**

The Child Abuse Prevention course developed by the YMCA of the USA is mandatory for all staff and volunteers of the Fairfield YMCA regardless of the department in which they work. All child care staff re mandated by the State of Connecticut to report signs of child abuse. Making intentional false reports is a punishable offense.

Play Days begins at 9:00am. Please do not enter the classroom until then. The teachers need time to set up for the day.

The school year starts in September AFTER LABOR DAY and ends in early June. The rest of the year the Fairfield Public Schools calendar is followed for all holidays and vacations, except Christmas vacation. Nursery school breaks a week before the public schools.

**PAYMENT POLICY:**

Payments for the Play Days program are made in 9 monthly installments and are due on the 20<sup>th</sup> DAY OF EACH MONTH BEGINNING August 20<sup>th</sup> and ending on April 20<sup>th</sup>. A late payment of \$20.00 will be charged for payments not received by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the next month.

Payment contracts are enclosed and must be signed and returned with the first payment by August 20<sup>th</sup>. **Participants will not be billed for monthly payments. Only overdue payments will receive a bill.** Therefore, automatic payments from either a credit card or checking account draft are strongly encouraged.

**YMCA POLICY:**

Each parent of a child who attends our school must “swipe” in his/her membership card daily per YMCA policy.

**FIRST DAYS SCHEDULE:**

A child’s first days in school are very important ones. Our first days are shortened to facilitate each child’s adjustment. The child’s first days schedule is in the Parent Packet. The parent should assure his/her child that he/she will have a great day and then say “goodbye” quickly and cheerfully. Parents should plan to stay and get to know the parents of your child’s future friends. If a child becomes upset, the teacher will come and find the parent. Sometimes a hug is all that is needed, other times the parent may need to stay in the classroom a while.

**LATE PICK-UP POLICY:**

If a parent/guardian is running late picking up his/her child, he/she should contact the YMCA. If a child has not been picked up 15 minutes after Play Days has ended, an attempt to contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact will be made. At this time, the LATE FEE policy will go into effect.

A late fee of \$15.00 for each 15-minute period after dismissal time will be added to the parent’s account. In the event that late pick-ups frequently occur, a meeting will be set up to discuss alternate arrangements.

**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:**

Since the child will be engaged in age appropriate activities and the atmosphere in the room will be happy and relaxed, discipline problems should be minimal. The children will be praised for their positive behavior. Misbehavior will be redirected to more appropriate activities.

Children will be treated with respect at all times. Use of positive and encouraging language is stressed. If a child is misbehaving he/she will take a “time out” to discuss more appropriate behavior. A child may be restrained as gently as possible if he/she may be at risk of harming himself/herself or others.

**DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM:**

Dismissal from the program is a rare event. The staff will make every effort to work with the parents to provide a successful preschool experience for their child. Should dismissal be necessary the child may be dismissed for any of the following reasons?

- Non payment of program fees.
- Continued behavioral problems with a child
- Parent is consistently late picking up child
- Program is unable to meet the child's and/or parents needs
- Excessive verbal or physical abuse from a parent or child. The YMCA will not allow excessive verbal or physical abuse of any YMCA member or staff.

### **SNACKS:**

Children should bring a small nutritional snack and beverage each day in a labeled bag or lunchbox. Please do not send snacks or beverages high in sugar content. Our snack suggestions include a piece of fruit, cheese and crackers, half a sandwich, yogurt, dry cereal, or muffins. For items that require refrigeration, an ice pack should be included in the lunch box. Small juice boxes or a partially filled thermos are best for beverages.

**Please remember, the YMCA is a nut free environment. Snacks containing nuts are not allowed.**

### **END OF DAY DISMISSAL:**

If a child is in a car pool or will be picked up by someone other than a parent/guardian a written note from the parent is required to release the child. If no advanced written notice is given, the child will be kept at the YMCA until a parent/guardian is contacted.

Child pick-up cards are done with the safety of the children in mind.

### **BIRTHDAYS:**

A child's birthday is an important occasion. Many children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at school. A parent should give teachers advance notice if the parent wishes to celebrate the child's birthday at school. Please remember that some children have allergies and is best to stay away from foods that contain chocolate, nuts, and peanut butter.

Children with summer birthdays may celebrate a "half-birthday" so they can celebrate with their friends also.

### **CLOTHING:**

Children should wear comfortable clothes. Children should not wear "dressy" clothes (except on special days) which can not be cleaned easily. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are best for outdoor play. During inclement weather, the children should be sent in with appropriate clothing, such as boots, mittens, hats, etc.

**Please label all clothing.** An attempt will be made to connect lost items with their owners. Any unclaimed items will be placed in our Lost & Found box located near the snack machines.

### **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION:**

Teachers keep in touch with parents/guardians as much as possible during the school year, recording the child's progress. Telephone calls are welcomed at any time for any questions or concerns.

### **ITEMS FROM HOME:**

For many children, bringing in a toy or a blanket from home represents a tie with home. The child will be encouraged to keep the blanket in his/her cubbie and to share his/her toy. Please do not send tiny, valuable or fragile items to school.

**SNOW/WEATHER POLICY:**

When the FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS have a delayed opening, ALL PRESCHOOL CLASSES WILL BE CANCELLED.

When the Fairfield Public Schools are closed, the preschool classes will also be cancelled.

Missed days due to snow days will not be made up nor will tuition be refunded.

Cancellations or delayed openings can be determined by calling the Fairfield Public Schools cancellation hotline at 255-TALK (8255) or by listening to your local radio or TV stations.

**STAFF/STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS:**

Staff is not permitted to have contact with children or their families on any personal business while employed by the YMCA. This is done to keep the relationship of the staff and students as professional as possible and with the child's best interests in mind.

**WITHDRAWAL AND REFUND POLICY:**

A 30 day written notice is required to withdraw from Play Days. These forms are available at the front desk.

If withdrawal takes place between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the parent will be responsible for a half month's tuition. After the 15<sup>th</sup>, the parent will be responsible for the full month's tuition.

**ABSENCES:**

Parents should call the school to report a child's absence (255-2834 ext. 2322.) The message should include your child's name, their teachers, and the reason for the absence.

**ILLNESS IN SCHOOL:**

If a child should become ill in school, he/she will be isolated from the other students and supervised by a staff person. A parent will be notified immediately. If direct parent contact has not been made after attempts over a 20-minute time span, the staff will begin contacting the names designated by the parent to act on his/her behalf. On going attempts will be made to notify a parent if an alternate has been contacted and arrangements for pick up have been made with the alternate.

The following are the most common answers to questions about the wellness policy at school:

All children and staff must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Conjunctivitis: Child may return to school after being seen by his/her physician and all symptoms are gone. There is no discharge.

Impetigo: Child may return to school after 24 hours of medication. All sores must be covered. He/she may not go into the pool until all sores are gone.

Fifth disease: Child may attend school unless he/she has a fever.

Ringworm: Child must be seen by a physician. The parent must present a physician's note stating the child may return to school. Sores must be covered to prevent spreading. The child may not go into the pool until all sores are gone.

Strep Throat: Child may return to school after 24 hours of doctor prescribed medication.

Scarlet Fever, scarlatina: Child may return to school after 24 hours of doctor prescribed medication.

Colds: Child should be keep home the first few days of a cold. When the child returns, he/she should be able to care for nasal discharges (with reasonable help from the teachers.) Any nose discharge must be clear. If clear discharge is due to allergies, parents should advise teachers.

Vomiting: No child should be in school if he/she has vomited the day or evening before the next school day. He/she may return to school after a 24 hour period.

#### **INJURIES:**

Injuries that occur during school will be treated according to the Parent permission Agreement. Parents will receive a telephone call in regard to any injuries to the face or head. An accident report is filled out on the injured child, reviewed and signed by the Executive Director and placed in the child's file.