



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

M.A.S.H. OVERVIEW

At the Fairfield YMCA **M**y **A**fter **S**chool **H**ome, we...

- Make sure staff members are qualified and certified in all state licensing requirements.
- Emphasize 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, developmentally stimulating and safe.
- Use a relaxed curriculum that supports child-centered and child directed activities.
- Stress positive reinforcement of children – no name calling or putdowns.
- Involve children in planning activities and setting rules.
- Value diversity of children and families.
- Provide for a safe, clean and attractive environment.

Program Philosophy

The program is designed to meet the needs of the children and their parents. It is based on an understanding of the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of children who are at different stages of development. The YMCA School Age program strives to meet the needs of the children by:

- Offering them a base of warmth and security provided by caring adults so they can grow, respect and enjoy each other while fostering self-awareness, confidence, self-worth, initiative, independence, cooperation, self-control, choice, responsibility and creativity;
- Encouraging socialization;
- Providing activities reflecting and fulfilling these needs while respecting cultural diversity;
- Providing and offering activities which teach the YMCA four core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

The program strives to meet the needs of the parents by providing them with:

- A safe, accessible and affordable program;
- A competent, creative and compassionate staff that understands and meets the needs of their children.
- Respect for each child's needs, values and cultural diversity in the activities of the program.

Training, Credential and Experience of Staff

Terry McLaren, Child Care Director x 2315

Prior to assuming the Child Care Director position at the Fairfield YMCA, she was the Managing and Artistic Director of the Wonder Workshop at the Discovery Museum in Bridgeport. After receiving her Masters in Education and Teaching Certificate for K-6 from Sacred Heart University, she taught for several years in public and private schools. During this period she also performed as a professional clown under the name of Zoella. She is responsible for managing all child care programs at the Fairfield YMCA.

Vicki Nussas, Child Care Coordinator x 2313

Vicki began her Fairfield YMCA "career" at age 5 taking swimming lessons. In second grade, she began attending camp which she continued until she outgrew it. She then enrolled the next two years as a counselor in training. She graduated to a camp counselor position in 2001. After that she was an after school teacher during the school year and a counselor during the summer. In Fall 2006, she began as After School Coordinator overseeing the day to day functions of staff and programs for school age children.

Background Checks

A thorough background check by Choicepoint is run on all employees and volunteers who work for the Fairfield YMCA. Choicepoint 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 the fingerprints are kept on file by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Federal government.

Emergency Training Certification

The Head Teacher and at least one other staff member is certified in Connecticut Child Care, a combination course developed by the America Red Cross for the Connecticut Department of Public Health. This course certifies the participant in Infant and Child CPR and Pediatric First Aid.

Child Abuse Prevention and Other Trainings

Within the first 90 days of employment, every staff member must complete training in Child Abuse Prevention, Hazards Communication and Blood Borne Pathogens. In addition, staff attends workshops in age appropriate games and activities, effective group management and risk management.

Dismissal Procedures

Dismissal Safeguards – Sign out procedures

The first two days a child attends the program, the parent or adult authorized to pick up the child must present a picture ID. The parent or other adult must then sign the sign out sheet indicating pick up time.

Emergency contacts

Parents/guardians must provide two emergency contacts other than themselves who can conceivably be reached during the hours the program is in session should the parents/guardians be unavailable for any reason. In addition to the home number, the parents/guardians must provide a work or cell phone number as well as an email address where they can be reached during the hours the program is in session.

Parents/guardians must indicate on the emergency form adults who may pick up their child. Parents/guardians may also state on the form any adults who may not pick up their child. If for any reason one of the parents is not allowed to pick up the child, the After School program must have a court document stating such. Otherwise by law, the child must be released to the parent when requested. If an adult not listed on the emergency sheet will be picking up the child, the parents must send in a note authorizing that person to pick up. The person must present a picture ID which matches the name of the emergency form or note.

Communication with Parents

Teachers are trained to communicate daily in an informal and positive manner with parents regarding their children's activities and behavior. Should a behavior problem arise, the Head Teacher will communicate discreetly with the parent. Should the parents have concerns, they may speak directly with one of the teachers at the site. Often minor problems are merely misunderstandings in communication between teacher to child to parent. This can be easily resolved with a simple conversation. Staff is trained to handle parent concerns in a courteous and professional manner and may refer the parent to their supervisor or director if necessary. The parent is also welcomed to speak at any time with the Child Care Coordinator or Child Care Director if the parent prefers.

Staff/Family Relationships

Per YMCA policy, staff members are not permitted to transport children home from any program. Staff members are also not allowed to baby sit for parents they meet through the program.

Days and Hours of Operation

The Kindergarten program on short days begins at 1:10 pm dismissal with the exception of Holland Hill which dismisses at 12:25 pm. All other programs, except Holland Hill, begin at 3:30 pm and run until 6:00 pm. The Holland Hill program begins at 2:45 pm and runs until 6:00pm.

All students in M.A.S.H. will be picked up promptly at dismissal and transported to the YMCA by bus. Each bus has a teacher/bus monitor.

Half Day Policy

When the public schools have a scheduled half day children will be picked up at school and brought to the YMCA.

Vacation/Holiday Closures

The After School program follows the Fairfield Public School calendar.

Snow/Weather Policy

When the Fairfield Public Schools have an early dismissal due to weather, the after school programs will not be offering care under any circumstances. Students will be dismissed

directly from school per Snow Day instructions. Emergency arrangements are the responsibility of the parents and the schools for an early dismissal.

When the Fairfield Public Schools cancel the entire school day due to weather, the Fairfield YMCA will not be offering after school care under any circumstances.

For early dismissal or school cancellations call the Public School Hotline at 255-TALK (2588). The Public Schools also offer email and cell phone notification of early dismissals and cancellations. Contact your child's school to enroll. Dismissal decisions are made by 11:00 am at the latest. Parents may also call the YMCA at 255-2834.

If the schools have a delayed opening, the after school programs will run. Should conditions worsen during the afternoon, the Child Care Director may decide to close the After School programs. This is a rare occurrence and is only made with the safety of the after school students, parents and staff in mind. Parents will be notified directly from the YMCA should this happen

Missed days due to school cancellations or necessary YMCA closure due to emergency maintenance will not be financially compensated.

If the Fairfield Public Schools extend the school year due to snow days, the After School Program will also be extended up to four days at no additional cost.

Vacation Club

Vacation Club is offered at the YMCA for children in grades K-5 from 8:00 am – 6:00 pm during major school vacations and most holiday closings. Morning and afternoon half days are also available.

Vacation Club is a separate program from After School and is open to the public. For program dates, please refer to the branch brochure which is available at the front desk. Full and half day sessions are available. Registration is on a first come, first serve basis. Registration begins one month before the program date and sessions fill up quickly.

Daily Schedule

Each day's schedule will contain at least several of the following activity times: Creative Time, Nutrition Time, Play Time, Project Time and Homework Time.

Creative Time is calm, low energy and mostly self-directed. Some examples are reading, drawing, coloring, puzzles, blocks or other manipulatives. Typically, this is scheduled at the end of the day.

Nutrition Time is better known as snack time with added value. The Fairfield YMCA is participating in the YMCA's Activate America initiative. This national initiative is rallying YMCAs across the country to assist kids, adults, and families who want to lead a healthy lifestyle. The staff uses snack time to discuss healthy snack choices. Snacks will be low in sugar, no hydrogenated oil, low fat, low sodium and no nuts or nut byproducts. The Fairfield YMCA is a nut free environment. Each month snacks are posted in the side hall. Children may bring their own snacks if desired. Snacks from home are checked by staff to make sure they contain no nuts which could endanger other children's safety. Children may also make suggestions for group snack purchases.

Play Time consists of high energy, large motor skills activities. Some examples are Octopus tag, Kickball, Capture the Flag, Koob, Four Corners, Soccer, Basketball and Freeze Dance. The emphasis in all games is good sportsmanship and focus on the YMCA four core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Project Time is teacher-led activities which may include arts and crafts, music exploration, baking/cooking, community service projects or science and nature projects. Some recent

examples of crafts projects are colonial candy making, Chinese New Year Dragons and clay mini creatures.

Homework Time is generally scheduled for a half hour. The teachers gently encourage the students to apply themselves to their homework. After each student is finished, the teacher will check the homework and help the child correct any mistakes.

All staff members are trained to adapt all activities to the age and interest of the child.

Supervision

Adult to Student Ratio

Per state licensing requirements, the maximum ratio allowed in our after school programs is 1:10. Our actual ratio is less most of the time because we need additional staff to serve as bus monitors and to take children to enrichment activities.

Staff Group Management Skills

Groups may be broken down by age, interests, energy level or objective depending on the group and the activity. The staff attempts to tailor the program to the individual child's needs and disposition. At the same time, the staff encourages children to try new activities with different groups of people. There is always at least one teacher supervising no more than 10 children.

The YMCA has a strict "Three's Company" rule. For the child's protection, as well as the employee, at no time is an employee allowed to be alone with only one child. Children will always be supervised for bathroom or water breaks and to enrichment programs with at least one staff member and one other child. The staff generally takes all the children as a group to the bathroom at a fixed time. By state licensing requirements, this bathroom is designated specifically for child care participants and may not be used by other visitors to the YMCA.

Transitioning from one activity to another, the teacher makes sure she has the attention of all students before giving directions for the new activity. In moving from one activity location to another, the teacher has the children line up and she counts their heads. One teacher leads the students while the other takes up the rear to make sure there are no stragglers or wanderers. When the destination is reached, the lead teacher once again counts heads.

Outdoors, the teachers space themselves so that all children are observable at all times. This also allows the teachers to quickly spot an unauthorized person on the premises. Teachers must know where all children are at all times.

Ground Rules for Participants

All behavior of staff and children must be in accordance with the YMCA four core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. All coaching to eliminate inappropriate behavior is ground in these values.

Specifically, the child's accountability will include:

- No fighting (including hitting, biting, kicking and spitting). The nearest staff person will break up the fight. The children involved will take a time out away from the group. The staff member will take this opportunity to discuss the problem with the children involved. Repeated or serious violations will be discussed with the parent at pick up.
- No stealing or defacing property.
- No bringing or using illegal substances or items.
- Must follow basic safety rules.
- Children must be in view of staff at all times. If a child must leave a designated group, permission must be given by staff.
- Swearing and foul or disrespectful language is not allowed.

- Staff and children must support all building rules, which may vary from facility to facility.
- Snacks should be eaten sitting down quietly at tables.
- Hands must be washed before snack.
- Waste of food will be discouraged by staff.
- Children must clean up their snack and activity areas before moving to next activity.
- The room must be left clean before the children leave for home.
- Bringing toys or other possessions from home is discouraged with the exception of special activity days.

Discipline Policies/Consequences for Non-Compliance

The purpose of the YMCA's discipline policy is to protect the children and staff. However, an incident of misbehavior is looked upon as a learning opportunity for the child and staff.

The YMCA will first try to prevent the need for discipline through the following:

- Using preventive management techniques and encouraging self discipline.
- Stressing positive behaviors.
- Modeling positive behaviors.
- Providing an enriching environment to diminish disruptive (bored) behaviors.
- Offering a selection of interesting activities and giving choices.
- Facilitating the settlement of disputes versus intervening.
- Letting children take the consequences of their actions.
- Development of house rules with the children which are then posted.
- Trying to establish mutual respect among the children.

Should these preventative measures fail, the teacher shall:

1. Stop the behavior.
2. Try to find out the motivation from the children's perspective for the inappropriate behavior with an attitude of respect, not accusation, and on the child's eye level.
3. Describe why the behavior was inappropriate.
4. Ask the child to come up with a better response for next time. Staff will listen and guide the child.
5. If the behavior warrants disciplinary action the staff will make sure it fits the misbehavior and is administered promptly.
6. As part of routine parent/teacher communication, staff will tell parents and/or guardians about any problems during the session.
7. If misbehaviors warranting discipline are frequent and persistent, the teacher will notify the Child Care Coordinator. An incident form will be filled out and the parent will need to sign it. If a second incident report is needed, the Child Care Coordinator or Director will discuss with the parent strategies and a time frame for improving the behavior. If a third incident report is necessary, the child will be dismissed from the program.

Dress Code

Children should be appropriately dressed according to the weather. We will go outside in winter when appropriate so please send hats, gloves, mittens, boots and jackets. Please label all items.

Lost and Found

All clothing, backpacks and jackets should be labeled with your child's name. This prevents items which are similar from being taken by mistake. It also allows the owner and item to be reunited more quickly. The Lost and Found box is located about half way down the main hall of the YMCA. The YMCA is not responsible for any lost items. Please check daily at pick up to make sure your child has all of his/her items.

Enrichment Activities

If your child is involved in any YMCA activities which occur during the regularly scheduled After School program hours, you must notify staff in advance by submitting a note or calling

the Child Care Coordinator. Please include the following information: child's name, activity, location of activity, day and time of activity and start and end date. Staff will then be responsible for taking and picking up the child from that activity. If staff is not notified in writing of child's extracurricular activities, we are not responsible for any missed classes or make-ups.

Health/Wellness Policy

This policy reflects current advisory guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control regarding the outbreak of contagious diseases. We ask that all parents cooperate with these guidelines to keep any outbreak manageable.

Children will be taught and asked to use the following common sense precautions:

1. Wash hands frequently and thoroughly for a full 20 seconds. (The time it takes to sing *Happy Birthday* twice.)
2. If water is not available, alcohol-based hand cleaners containing at least 60% alcohol may also be used.
3. Use a tissue if he/she needs to sneeze. If a tissue is not available, the child will be asked to sneeze into his/her sleeve rather than his/her hand.
4. No sharing of food or drinks.
5. No putting of toys, crayons, pencils, etc., in his/her mouth.

The staff will continue to disinfect the toys frequently and wipe down the tables with a disinfecting spray at the end of the day and in between as needed as well as following the same precautions as the children.

If a staff member should become ill or feverish, she will be asked to go home immediately during the flu season. The After School Coordinator will substitute for him/her.

If a child should become ill with or without a fever, he/she will be isolated from the other children and supervised by a staff person wearing a protective mask. Parents will be notified immediately that the child must be removed from the program. If direct parent contact has not been made after a 15 minute time span, the staff will begin contacting the names designated by the parent to act on his/her behalf on the Emergency Information Form. Ongoing attempts will be made to notify parents if an alternate has been contacted and arrangements for pickup have been made.

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

- All children and staff must be fever free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Conjunctivitis or other highly contagious diseases: Child may return to school after being seen by his/her physician and all symptoms are gone and there is no discharge.
- Chicken pox: cannot return to the program for 5 days and all poxes must be scabbed.
- Strep Throat: Child may return to school after 24 hours after the doctor has confirmed the illness and is on doctor prescribed medication.
- 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. As this is also a common symptom of the H1N1 virus, the child must also be fever free without fever-reducing medications for 24 hours before returning.
- Head Lice: Must have undergone a head treatment for the condition and cannot return to the program for 24 hours.

Staff should be notified by the parent if his/her child has a contagious illness. A notice will then be posted for the other parents.

Absences

A parent should contact the front desk and ask to leave a message for the After School Program if the child will not be attending the After School program that day. Sometimes

only one child is scheduled to be picked up at a school and an unknown absence results in delay picking up other children and added expense. Program will not be prorated for absences unless a doctor's note is provided.

Injuries

Injuries that occur during After School will be treated according to the Parent Permission Agreement. A minimum of one staff member per classroom will be certified in Connecticut Child Care (CPR for Infant/Child and Pediatric First Aid). If a child is seriously injured, parents will be notified promptly. For more minor injuries, especially those involving the head or face or bleeding, the parent will receive a telephone call. An accident report is filled out on the injured child, reviewed and signed by the Executive Director and placed in the child's file.

Payment Policy

Payments for the After School Program are made in 10 monthly installments for your convenience. The parent may pay the entire year up front or arrange for quarterly payments with our business office. Payments are due on the 20th day of each preceding month beginning August 20th and ending on May 20th. A late payment of \$20.00 will be charged for payments not received by the 1st of the next month.

The 10 monthly installments are a payment plan not a monthly payment for services that month. Therefore, payment will not be prorated for vacation months or last month of the year.

Payment contracts must be signed and returned with the first payment **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.

Late Pick up Policy

The After School Program ends promptly at **6:00 pm**. All children must be picked up no later than closing time. If a parent/guardian is running late, please contact the YMCA to let us know. If a child has not been picked up 10 minutes after the program has ended, an attempt will be made to contact the parent/guardian as well as emergency contacts.

A late fee of \$5 for each 5 minute period after dismissal time will be charged to the parent's account and must be paid promptly. Failure to pay will prohibit the parent from registering for other programs. Chronic tardiness may result in the child being dismissed from the program.

Withdrawal and Refund Policy

Written notice is required to withdraw from the program. These forms are available in the sign out book or at the front desk.

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

Dismissal from the Program

The Director and Staff will work with the family and child to make every possible effort to correct any issues. At times, however, it may become necessary to dismiss a child from the program. Reasons for dismissal include, but are not limited to:

1. Non-payment of program tuition;
2. Parent/guardian is consistently late in picking up the child;
3. Program is unable to meet the child's and/or parent's needs;
4. Continued behavior problems with a child;
5. Child's continued attendance jeopardizes the safety and well being of other children or staff.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Fairfield YMCA My After School Home Parent Agreement Form

Having read the Parent Handbook, I understand and agree to the following policies as outlined in the Handbook on the indicated pages:

- Snow/Weather Policy, pg. 5
- Supervision Policy, pg. 7
- Discipline Policy, pg. 8
- Health and Wellness Policy, pg. 10
- Payment Policy, pg. 12
- Late Pickup Policy, pg. 12
- Withdrawal and Refund Policy, pg. 12

I also give permission for:

- My child to participate in all activities that are part of the Program. I understand the risk associated with these activities and hold the Fairfield YMCA, the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA, its employees, representatives, agents and assigns harmless for any and all claims whatsoever against said parties resulting from or caused by my child's participation.
- I grant permission for my child to be transported in YMCA authorized vehicles for the program, field trips, emergencies and for my child to walk to local areas offsite for program activities or field trips.
- I grant permission for any pictures taken of my child to be used for Fairfield YMCA publicity and promotional purposes.

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

03/11