



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES

YMCA PRESCHOOL

Parent Guide 2024-2025

YMCA OF THE FOOTHILLS



YMCA of the Foothills

Crescenta-Cañada Family YMCA

Crescenta Valley Family YMCA

Verdugo Hills Family YMCA

Phone: 818 790 0123

Website:

www.ymcafoothills.org/preschool



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Dear Families and Students,

Welcome to the Verdugo Hills Family YMCA. We are proud to have you join the Y family!

Over the years, we have been privileged to care for thousands of children in our community. You have joined a program that has a history of over 150 years that strives to focus on youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. We hope that your relationship with the Y is a lasting and enriching experience from which your whole family will benefit.

When you enroll in our program you are not just enrolling in preschool or daycare, you are joining the Y. The Y makes accessible the support and opportunities that empower people and communities to learn, grow and thrive. The Y nurtures the potential of every youth and teen, improves the nation's health and Wellbeing, and provides opportunities to give back and support neighbors.

Our goals are to:

- Build independence, self-esteem, and confidence in social situations.
- Teach the process of problem solving and decision making.
- Provide an unbiased multi-cultural curriculum that allows children to respect themselves, their peers, adults, and others.
- Create a bond between children, parents, and staff, which enables the preschool to enrich the lives of all involved.
- Teach the skills needed to be prepared for kindergarten.

For us to accomplish these goals there must be certain guidelines and procedures in place to assure that the programs that we provide are appropriate and possible. This handbook is provided as a tool for you to use to help understand those guidelines and procedures. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference. There is valuable information provided in this handbook that will answer questions you may have.

We look forward to seeing you during the school year and are excited to join with you during these exciting years. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Ninellie
Ratavossian
Preschool Director
(818) 273-8830

ABOUT THE YMCA

Mission

The mission of the YMCA is to organize, develop, finance and conduct programs for an association of persons of all ages that will by putting Christian principles into practice enrich the quality of their lives spiritually, mentally, physically and socially.

Philosophy

We at the Learning Tree Preschool, know that preschool children need high-interest experiences along with well-timed guidance and instruction. A combination of both approaches is essential to building an effective preschool curriculum. The foundation of the Y's preschool curriculum planning is the observation and assessment of the individual needs of each child. We design our activities based on children's interests and what they need to learn.

Self-esteem and awareness of others is an essential part of development for children. The YMCA supports in this development through the understanding and guidance of a YMCA professional; caring staff who assist them in individual and group experiences. Each child is given the opportunity to participate through books, music, free play, creative activities and exposure to science and nature.

Goals

Our goals include building each student's:

- Competence - abilities in language, numbers, and interests in books
- Cooperation - enhanced self-concept and other-concepts developed through group activity and sharing experience
- Autonomy - the ability to initiate, ask questions and make appropriate choices
- Creativity - the ability to construct new products, explore new ideas and find alternative solutions

Values

The YMCA believes in putting into practice Christian values each day. We do not teach or preach any specific religion; we do emphasize the following character values:

Honesty, Caring, Responsibility, Respect.

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

Registration forms are required as part of the enrollment process. Registration forms include:

- Health history, emergency contact information and medical releases
- All forms required by the State Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, including a signed physician's report

No child will be admitted to the Learning Tree Preschool without these forms on file.

Change in Enrollment

In the event you need to change your child's enrollment, we ask that you speak with the Director first to confirm we are able to accommodate the change. Requests should be made in writing.

Registration Fee

When joining the preschool there will be a fee of \$50.00. Once a child leaves the program, if they wish to re-join, they will need to pay the registration fee.

PAYMENTS, CREDITS AND REFUND POLICY

Tuition for our child-care program pays for all the direct operating costs. Staff, snack, and program supplies must be available for your child whether or not he/she attends. Therefore, days missed cannot be deducted from your fee.

Preschool balance is due on Friday of each week. If a payment balance is Not received by Monday, your child will not be able to attend for the week.

Weekly Fees:

Blue-Red Birds Ages 2-5	Members:	Non-Members
5 days M-F	\$242	\$289
3 days M,W,F	\$194	\$231
Purple Birds 18m-2years	Members:	Non-Members
5 days M-F	\$299	\$341
3 days M,W,F	\$257	\$288

Signature:

Date:

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available to those in need based on household income, number of household members, and availability of funds. Assistance is provided through donations made to the YMCA of the Foothills. Proof of financial need is required, and all information is held in the strictest confidence.

If you would like assistance, please contact the Director for additional information.

Reasons for Termination

The YMCA Learning Tree Preschool accepts all students, however reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a student. The termination of a student's enrollment in our preschool is a rare and serious decision that is taken when exceptional circumstances arise.

This section outlines the reasons that may warrant the termination of a student from our preschool program. The well-being, safety, and overall learning environment for all students and staff members are our utmost priority in making such decisions. It is essential to approach the termination process with fairness, consistency, and consideration for the individual circumstances of each situation. We strive to maintain open communication with parents or guardians throughout the process, ensuring transparency and providing support to parents and guardians to find solutions to avoid expulsion as much as possible.

However, the following reasons result in the expulsion of your child:

- Failure to pay fees on time
- Discipline problems that cannot be resolved
- Unethical behavior
- Repeated Late Pickups and drop-off

Illness Policy for Preschool Child

If your child has a fever at or above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or if they are experiencing symptoms listed below; your child will be unable to attend.

- Fever or Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or Running Nose
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Hands, Foot and Mouth

Preschoolers showing any symptoms of this disease are required to keep them home for at **least 24 hours** after being symptom free. If already on site, preschoolers will be sent home immediately if symptoms as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are observed, and a doctor release will be needed to return to the preschool.

Lice

Parents are asked to screen their child for head lice before entering preschool.

Preschoolers found to have live head lice will have their parents/legal guardian informed to be picked up, the preschooler can only return after appropriate treatment has taken and until there is no evidence of live head lice.

Health and Hygiene Practices

Our regular health and hygiene practices provide some of the best defenses against the spread of most contagious illnesses. In addition to regular and thorough cleaning of classrooms, surfaces and toys, we teach children good hand-washing practices and ensure that children and staff take important precautions against the spread of germs.

You can work with your children to practice some of these same steps at home:

- Wash hands often with soap and water – use this step-by-step guide to help.
- Sneeze or cough into your elbow; or cover mouth and nose with a tissue before sneezing or coughing, then immediately discard the tissue.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are ill.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, especially if someone is sick.

*If your child is sent home due to Covid-19 symptoms. We will follow the current LA County Department of Public Health recommendations.

** All classrooms are cleaned and sanitized nightly through a contracted company.

The Learning Tree Preschool outlines the expectations of staff, roles responsibilities; direction and control systems; internal and external communications plans; training and sustainability plans; authority and references as defined by local, State, and Federal government mandates; common and specialized procedures; and specific hazard vulnerabilities and responses/recovery.

SIGNING IN & OUT PROCEDURES

All students must be signed in/out daily with a code on brightwheel. No one under the age of 18 years old may sign in or out a student, even with permission from the parent.

- Sign-in and out will take place in Learning Tree Preschools main entrance.

Late Pick-up

Picking your child up on time from the YMCA is very important. We understand that many parents commute and are at the mercy of the Southern California freeway system. Please consider someone else who can pick-up your child up from the program if you will be unable to arrive on time.

After 6:00 pm, if your child has not been picked up, we will:

- **Require a late pick-up fee of \$10 per 15 minutes**
- **Arrive between 6:01pm and 6:15pm, \$10 late fee will be assessed.**
- **Arrive between 6:16pm and 6:30pm, an additional \$10 late fee will be assessed, for a total of \$20.**
- **Arrive between 6:31pm and 6:45pm, an extra \$10 late fee will be assessed, for \$30.**
- **After 6:30 pm, if we have not heard from you, we will call the Los Angeles Police Department and follow their direction.**
- **Discontinue enrollment if repetitive late pick-ups occur. This will be at the YMCA's discretion**

OUR STAFF

Our Preschool has a director who has a degree in education or a related field and experience working with children. He/she is responsible for the overall site operation including staff supervision and program development. Most of our staff have had previous experience working with children. All staff have a current TB test, maintain current certifications in CPR and First Aid and Child Abuse Prevention. In addition, staff and volunteers are thoroughly screened prior to employment.

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

The Preschool Director is the administrative leader of our preschool program. They oversee the overall operations, policies, and curriculum implementation. They are responsible for ensuring a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for our students. The Director works closely with the teaching staff, parents, and community to provide high-quality early childhood education. They possess strong organizational and leadership skills, as well as a deep understanding of early childhood development and education practices.

PRESCHOOL TEACHER

Our dedicated team of Preschool Teachers are passionate about early childhood education and fostering a love of learning in young children. They create a warm, engaging, and inclusive classroom environment that promotes social, emotional, and cognitive development. Our teachers design and implement developmentally appropriate lesson plans and activities that stimulate curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills. They foster positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues, and maintain open lines of communication to support the holistic development of each child. Our teachers have formal training in early childhood education and stay updated on the latest research and best practices in the field. They are compassionate, patient, and dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for all our preschoolers. As educators, our teachers are mandated reporters, as outlined by state law. This means that if they suspect any instance of child abuse or neglect, they are required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP POLICIES

We value the importance of providing a valuable learning environment for all children at our preschool. To ensure that every child receives the full benefit of our educational programs, we have established specific drop-off and pick up guidelines. Please note that only parents and authorized pick-ups listed on Brightwheel are permitted to pick up your child. Additionally pick-ups must be 18 years of age or older.

DROP-OFF CUT OFF TIME:

We kindly request that you adhere to our **9:30 am drop-off cut-off time**. This rule is very important because it allows our teachers to begin the day's activities promptly, ensuring that all children receive comprehensive and uninterrupted educational experiences. Punctuality at drop -off contributes significantly to maintaining an organized and effective learning environment. **Please be advised that attempting to drop off your child after 9:30 am will result in being turned away, and your child will not be able to attend school for the day.** If your child will not be attending school, we ask that you notify us through Brightwheel or email.

If we observe a consistent pattern of late drop-offs beyond the cut-off time, we will schedule a meeting with parents to discuss the situation. We believe open communication is essential to address any challenges and find a suitable solution.

NO RETURN FOR THE DAY AFTER PICK-UP

Once you have picked up your child, we kindly request that they do not return for the remainder of the day. The policy ensures consistency in the learning process and minimizes disruptions for both teachers and students.

NO PICK UP FROM 1-3PM (NAP TIME)

Please be aware that pick-up between 1:00-3:00 pm is not permitted. During this time, children are napping, and it is essential to support your child's well-being during this resting period. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in maintaining a peaceful environment during these crucial rest hours.

***CHILDREN CONSISTENTLY ABSENT, TARDY, OR PICKED UP LATE MAY BE SUBJECT TO DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM. YOUR COOPERATION IN ADHEREING TO THESE POLICIES IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.**

Training

In addition to the education requirements of the State, each staff person receives a basic pre-employment training module and regular in-service training events, which cover the following topics:

- Curriculum planning
- Administrative procedures
- Emergency procedures
- Behavior management
- CPR/BLS/First Aid certified

FACILITY

The Learning Tree Preschool operates the preschool on site at:

YMCA of the Foothills
6840 Foothill Blvd.
Tujunga, CA 91042

The Preschool has approximately 5,600 square feet of outdoor play space and 2,600 square feet of interior space and is licensed by the state for a maximum of 68 students.

** Our preschool contracts with a pest control company for monthly maintenance.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Each learning experience in our program develops one more skills or concepts from these general content areas:

- Science and Mathematics
- Fine and Gross Motor Skills
- Cognitive Development
- Language and Cultural Arts
- Nutrition and Food Experience
- Computer Awareness

Science and Mathematics

Preschool-age children learn through direct experience and in their own creative ways, using real, natural objects.

Activities include:

- Matching objects and use of manipulatives
- Cooking projects that involve measuring and mixing
- Introducing shapes
- Discovering animals, plants, and their habitats

Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Development of the fine and gross motor skills are very important to the young child as they have a direct connection to the child's ability to read and write. Ways in which we stimulate this development include:

- Supervising play on equipment specifically designed for gross motor skill development
- Including activities that involve manipulative toys and tools like blocks, stamps, scissors, etc. the children can manipulate with their hands

Cognitive Development

Activities that allow the child to learn about their senses and finger plays about the body and the world around us.

- Art activities about the self
- Thinking games

Language and Cultural Arts

Learning to express yourself to others is a very important component of a preschool. Through guidance and understanding, the children are taught to express themselves and appreciate the differences of others. We accomplish this in the following ways:

- Provide a dramatic play area
- Encourage interaction and socialization among the children
- Provide an unbiased curriculum that encourages children to recognize different cultures
- Introduce creative movement and music

Nutrition and Food Experience

Lunch is to be brought from home each day. Snacks are provided both in the morning and afternoon. We also have an opportunity to:

- Study the four basic food groups in our diet
- Introduce foods that are nutritious
- Allow children to participate in preparing healthy snacks
- Involve each child in cleaning up before and after each meal or snack (this includes washing their hands and cleaning eating surfaces)

Computer Awareness

Pre-kindergarten students use computers in their classrooms on a daily basis. Opportunities include:

- Working with computer programs in reading, math and science
- Accessing different levels that allow students to learn one concept at a time at their own pace
- Allowing students to use skills they learn and master new ones
- Being in control of their own learning experiences

OPERATING DAYS AND TIMES

Hours of Operation

Our program hours have been established to be as convenient as possible within the limits of our resources. Please review these hours of operation to ensure that our program is right for you before you enroll your child:

Full Day: 7:00 am to 6:00 pm

Holiday Closures

New Year's Day	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Presidents Day	Memorial Day
Juneteenth	Independence Day
Labor Day	Thanksgiving
Day after Thanksgiving	Christmas Eve
Christmas	New Year's Eve

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Daily Schedule

7:00am- Preschool Opens/Indoor Interest Center
8:30am- Outside Activities
9:15am- Indoor Interest Centers
9:30am- Class Day Begins/Circle Time
9:45am- Outside Activities
10:30am- Morning Snack
10:45am- Inside Group Activities
12:00pm- Lunch
1:00pm-NapTime
3:15pm- Afternoon Snack
3:30pm- Outside Activities
4:30pm- Indoor Group Activities
5:00pm- Outside Activities
6:00pm- Preschool Closes

Nap Time

Students will have naptime daily at school from 1 to 3pm. All children are required to rest/sleep on a cot provided by the school. You will need to provide a small sheet, small blanket, and a small pillow. Children need to take their sleep items home to launder on a weekly basis. **Please write your child's name on these items. Please remember no full-size pillows or sleeping bags are allowed due to limited space.**

Meals

A mid-morning and afternoon snack are provided each day, consisting of the four food groups. Parents are responsible for providing a simple and nutritious lunch. Example: ½ sandwich, a piece of fruit and milk or juice. Please, no glass bottles, candy, soda pop or gum. In our program we do heat lunches and serve cold milk for those needing it.

We recognize that food allergies can cause serious, life-threatening conditions for some children. To keep all our children safe, our preschool is a NUT FREE environment. Please do not bring any nuts into preschool in your child's lunchbox. We will ensure that the snacks we provide the children will not have nuts in them.

Behavior Management

The Verdugo Hills Learning Tree Preschool will not discipline any child by the use of corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature.

The YMCA has adopted a policy of discipline that allows children to make choices rather than punishing them. By using this method of discipline, we encourage:

- Mutual respect between the teacher and the child
- Cooperative effort to resolve conflicts
- Development of a responsible child
- Development of a child's self-confidence and self-worth

Repeated discipline problems will be discussed with the child's parents

Clothing

How you dress your child can have a big impact on how his or her day might go. Here are some suggestions on appropriate clothing:

- A complete change of clothing must remain at school. Please include underpants, socks, shirt and a pair of shorts, pants or jeans. Be sure to label all clothing. Use a 1-gallon labeled Ziploc bag to store your child's extra clothes.
- Students should wear comfortable clothing and shoes (no open toed shoes or shoes with slippery soles such as cowboy boots or dress shoes)
- Pants with elasticized waistbands rather than overalls or pants that zip or button are preferred. Elasticized clothes are much easier for the children to remove by themselves.
- Please label all clothing.
- Keep in mind that children's play and learning involve materials such as paint, glue, sand, water, crayon, and many other messy items. Please do not dress your child in clothing that will restrict them from the ability to learn and play freely.
- During potty training children must keep several changes of clothes at school at all times.

Separation

Preschool should be a positive experience for both the child and the parent. Allowing time for adjustment to a new situation builds a bond between the school, child, and home.

Very often children need mom or dad to stay for a few extra minutes on the first couple of days of preschool. Try to allow for extra time in the morning just in case your child needs a little extra support. We also ask that you make sure to say "goodbye" to your child and do not sneak out.

Parent Involvement

Parent participation is encouraged in our preschool no matter how large or small. If you have a special talent, please share it with us.

Other opportunities to become involved include attending parent nights, joining in our fundraisers and volunteering in the classroom.

BITING POLICY

Name of Child _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

For toddlers, biting is a normal developmental behavior. However, because biting is a health issue, we will take the following steps to ensure the prevention and reduction of biting cases:

If a child bites another child more than twice in one week, or forms a pattern of biting over a course of 3 weeks, the following steps will be taken:

1. A daily record of who/when/where/ and why the biting occurred, will be kept for a two week period. An "Ouch" report will be filed in the child's file and a copy given to the parents of the "bitee."
2. The classroom team will set age appropriate goals with the child. Parents of the "biter" and "bitee" will be notified of what is being done to rectify the problem.
3. If biting persists during the documentation period, the parents of the biter and the Director of Preschool will meet for a conference to discuss possible solutions and establish a written action plan.
4. If after steps have been taken and biting behavior continues despite previous interventions and support, the administration and classroom team may conclude that the child is not ready for group care. The administration reserves the right to suspend or terminate the child from the program on a case-by-case basis, to ensure the health and safety of all children involved.

I have read the foregoing Biting Policy. I hereby certify that I understand and agree to it.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/guardian signature is mandatory on this form for the child's enrollment in the Center.

Assessments

Kindergarten readiness assessments will be conducted in the Winter & Spring for all children entering kindergarten in the fall.

A written assessment will be followed by a parent/teacher conference. Attendance at the conference is very important, so we can review the written assessment and keep you informed on your child's developmental process.

Share Day

Our preschool is equipped with a variety of age-appropriate materials designed for the preschool child. We ask that your child keep all toys at home. On Fridays, each child may bring one toy from home to share with the class (no play weapons.)

Birthdays

We would like to make each child's birthday a particularly special day for him/her, so we would like to share with you some details about birthday celebrations at our school.

Staff will help the birthday child by:

- Announcing his/her birthday during circle time
- Assist the birthday child with making a special crown

Parents are welcome to provide:

- Treats or food for class (pizza, cupcakes)
- Candles and other party favors such as hats, napkins, balloons, or other treats or decorations (no candy please)
- A favorite book that you and your child selected together to donate to the class
- Goody bags for friends in class (crayons, coloring book, party favors)

We appreciate your cooperation in following these guidelines and if you have any questions feel free to contact the Director.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Injuries

We work very hard to anticipate and prevent injuries at the Y. Still sometimes children do get hurt. If your child is injured, we will:

- Administer Band-Aids and comfort in large doses for minor cuts, scrapes and bumps.
- Contact you or your emergency contact if an injury may require medical attention including bee stings, moderate cuts, head injuries, and sprains or possible fractures. You may then decide what you want done.
- Secure medical treatment immediately in the event you cannot be reached, or the nature of the injury warrants fast action.

Illnesses

If your child becomes ill while at the YMCA, we will call you or your emergency contact if you cannot be reached. We cannot allow your child to remain in the program while ill, so please arrange to pick-up your child within an hour of notification of illness. Please do not send a child to school that has had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea within 48 hours. We cannot accept children displaying these symptoms. Child must have a doctor's note indicating they are free of infection before they are permitted to return to school when they have any type of communicable disease.

Medication

If your child needs to take medication while he/she is in our care, please do the following:

- Please give the medication directly to a staff member
- Prescribed medication must be in the original container with the label attached
- Fill out a medicine slip with directions for administering the medicine, the time or times it should be administered, and your signature to administer
- Over the counter medication such as Tylenol must have instructions from a doctor indicating the dosage

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Learning Tree Preschool is prepared to respond in the event of an emergency or major disaster while children are in attendance at school. The preschool practices both Earthquake and Fire Drills on a monthly basis and is monitored by the Fire Department.

If an evacuation of the preschool occurs, the YMCA will transport children and staff to the nearest emergency shelter or to either:

Crescenta Valley Family YMCA
3931 Lowell Ave.
La Crescenta, CA 91214

Crescenta-Cañada Family YMCA
1930 Foothill Blvd.
La Cañada Flintridge, CA 910411

CONTACT INFORMATION

Preschool Director
(818) 273-8830
Ninellie Ratakovossian
nratakovossian@ymcafoothills.org

Branch Director
Annie Azizian
(818) 583-4740

Please sign below acknowledging that you have read and agree to the procedures and policies outlined in the Parent Manual:

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date (month/date/ year)