



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CREATING A NURTURING ATMOSPHERE

School Age Child Care-Parent Handbook
The Gateway Family YMCA
Elizabeth Branch





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Welcome to the School Age Child Care Program

The Gateway Family YMCA, Elizabeth Branch welcomes you and your family to the program. Our program allows children a fun place to go before and after school, and is designed to meet the needs of today's working parents. Children will be involved in age appropriate activities, and let by dedicated staff. We believe all children deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve.

Staff

Our staff members selected based on their previous experience, education, and desire to work with children. Each site has a Site Supervisor who is at least 21 years of age, has at least two years of child care experience and is certified in CPR and First Aid. All staff, as a condition of employment, must successfully complete a state criminal background check, pre-employment drug screening, and reference checks prior to being hired. Staff must also attend extensive training that includes child abuse prevention, CPR/First Aid, safety procedures and activity planning.

Hours

After Care: School Dismissal- 6:30pm

DROP OFF AND PICK – UP OF CHILDREN

When dropping off a child, never leave him/her unattended. The State of New Jersey requires parents to bring a child into school or YMCA and sign the parent "Sign-in Book." Children cannot be released to siblings unless the sibling is at least 18 years of age. Children are not allowed to walk home and the YMCA staff may not transport children in their cars.

Written notice must be given if a child is to leave with someone other than the parents or those listed on the authorization section of the Registration Form. In the event of an emergency, parents may fax signed permission for someone else other than themselves or authorized adult to pick up a child to the School Age Child Care Director. Please tell the person picking up your child that they must provide photo identification to the staff before the child will be released.

If the parent or person authorized to pick up the child appears to be physically, mentally, or emotionally impaired to the extent that the welfare of the child is in danger;



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- The child will not be released.
- Staff members will try to contact alternate persons authorized for pick-up.
- If staff is unable to make alternate arrangements, a staff member will call –the Division of Youth and Family Services’ 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline to seek assistance in caring for the child.

Tuition

All payments are due by the 5th of each month. Payments can be made by monthly bank draft, cash, check, Visa, Master Card, Discover or American Express. Payments received after the 5th of the month are subject to a \$25 late fee. Any returned check or bank draft is subject to a \$25 fee. For your convenience, payments can be made online.

Checks should be made payable to The Gateway Family YMCA and should include the child’s name and/or Member ID #.

Important: Before and After Care tuition fees are based on the number of school days, broken down to ten equal monthly (September-June) payments. The fee is not based on the number of calendar days per month, and no pro-rating of fees due to holidays, half days, and personal days is allowed. The only exception is if you enroll after the 15th of the month, tuition will be prorated for half the monthly fee.

Deposits

One month deposit is required at time of registration and will be applied towards the month of June (or last month of care). **Deposits are non-refundable.** If you choose to sign up for automatic monthly bank draft, deposit is waived.

Registration

There is a one-time registration fee per family for processing new children into the program of \$25.00.

Membership

All full time participants on bank draft will receive a Full Family Membership to The Gateway Family YMCA.

A full/part time participant who does not wish to be a part of bank draft will be required to get a basic membership for each child enrolled in the program. The basic membership for each child is \$41.00.



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Changes and Withdrawals

All changes and withdrawals in care, must be submitted to the Director in writing. For parents wishing to decrease their current days of care, please be advised, change (including pricing and days of care) will not go into effect until the 1st of the following month.

To withdraw your child from the program, 30 days written notice is required and must be submitted to the Director. You will be charged tuition each month unless 30 days written notice is submitted to the Director prior to leaving the program. If you are enrolled in automatic bank draft, 30 days written notice is still required prior to leaving the program and you will be drafted accordingly.

School Closings

(Includes, but not limited to Inclement Weather, Emergency Closings, etc.)

- If a school is closed for the day due to weather, there will be NO Before Care or After Care.
- If a school has a delayed opening, there will be NO Before Care at that site.
- If a school closes early due to inclement weather, there will be NO After Care at that site.
- **There are no refunds or credits for inclement weather or other emergency closings.**

Vacation Club

The Elizabeth Branch will offer "Vacation Club" on most days that school is closed due to holidays and/or teacher workshops. There is an additional fee for Vacation Club. Days are schedule in accordance with the City of Elizabeth. This program is held at the Elizabeth Branch, children must be dropped off and picked up at this location. Children will participate in games, arts and crafts, CATCH, and a "special activity" depending on the holiday. *Hours: 7:30am-6:30pm*

**Please register early, a minimum enrollment of 8 children is required.*

Half Days

There will be no After Care at the school sites when there is an early dismissal. The Elizabeth Branch will offer Vacation Club at the Y, however children must be dropped off at Elizabeth Branch. No transportation is provided. *Half Day Vacation Club Hours: School Dismissal-6:30pm*



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**Please register early, a minimum enrollment of 8 children is required.*

Health

The State Department of Licensing requires that each child have a medical form completed by a physician yearly and submitted prior to admission.

A child cannot be sent to the After Care Program if they have any of the illnesses, symptoms of illness or diseases specified below. Such illnesses or symptoms of illness shall include, but not be limited to any of the following:

- Severe pain or discomfort.
- Acute diarrhea, characterized as twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a change to a looser consistency within a period of 24 hours, or bloody diarrhea.
- Two or more episodes of acute vomiting within a period of 24 hours.
- Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees or over in conjunction with behavior changes.
- Sore throat or severe coughing.
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin.
- Skin rashes lasting more than one day.
- All communicable diseases.

No medicine is to be administered by YMCA Staff Members.

Included on the registration form is a section titled "Permission for Emergency Medical Treatment." It is imperative that this area be signed so that in the event of an emergency situation we can obtain medical treatment for your child.

Program Format

The following is a sample of our daily program schedule. Please note, each site will participate in these activities, but there may be a variance of times and special events.



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After Care

- 3:00pm Arrival. Attendance. Bathroom break.
(Actual arrival time is based on school dismissal time).
- 3:15pm Healthy Snack
- 3:45pm Homework or Quiet Activity
- 4:45pm Healthy U/ CATCH
- 5:30pm Afternoon Activities
(Organized sports, games, recreational activities, arts & crafts, etc.)

Attendance

Site staff will verify that all the children who are scheduled to attend are present. Parents are required to notify the School Age Child Care Department if their child will be absent.

Snack (After Care)

A light healthy snack will be provided daily. All daily snacks will include one half-cup serving of **a fruit and vegetable** as selected by the Y. You are welcome to send your child with an extra snack in case they do not want what is served. **Water** will be served and accessible at all times and will be the main choice of beverage. If milk is served it will be either as 1% or fat free. If a juice is served it will only be 100% fruit juice and limited to one eight-ounce serving per child. Snacks will be served Family Style as youth will serve themselves from common bowls and determine their own portion size(s). **Fried food(s)** and **sugar sweetened beverages** will not be an option or served and not allowed by both staff and youth participants. This includes at any/all special events (birthday celebrations, holidays, etc.).

Homework/Quiet Time

Time is set aside each day to allow children to work on homework. During this time, children need to be working on homework or some other quiet activity such as reading. If you do not want your child to do homework during the program, please let the staff know and send a book or quiet activity for them to work on. **Staff will not check backpacks or homework folders if children say they do not have homework. Staff will offer assistance as needed, but they cannot provide constant one-on-one help or supervision.**



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Healthy U/CATCH

The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey's Healthy U initiative is a program aimed at preventing childhood obesity through improved nutrition, increased physical activity and parental involvement.

Healthy U uses the award winning and evidence-based curriculum called "CATCH" (Coordinated Approach to Child Health). Our goal is to have all children participate a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity each day. These activities will incorporate both moderate and vigorous activities which will strength both the heart and muscles of the body. Play will occur outdoors whenever possible and weather permitting.



Group Activities

Each day there are staff directed group activities. Active games, quiet games, craft projects, and special events are all possibilities. All children are strongly encouraged to participate in group activities. Children also have time set aside to participate in activities of their choice. This includes indoor, outdoor or gym play, socializing with friends, board games, etc. Staff will not use television or movies within group activities. Other digital devices (cell phones, lap tops, etc.) may be used during homework and/or CATCH activities only as needed and for no longer than one hour daily.

Monthly Calendars

Each site will post a monthly calendar of events on the parent board. This calendar will include: arts and crafts projects, Healthy U/CATCH activities, special events, school closings, etc.

Lost and Found/ Personal Items

Each site will have a lost and found area in their cabinet. Please check with the staff if your child is missing something. Toys, electronic devices, or other non-school, personal items are not allowed at the program.

*The Gateway Family YMCA, Elizabeth Branch,
is not responsible for lost or stolen items.*



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Note: The contents of the lost and found will be discarded or donated to charity at the end of each month

Child Release Policy

Each child may be released only to the child's custodial parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the custodial parent(s) to pick-up and sign-out. Authorized person(s) must be written on registration forms, and must have photo ID at pick-up. Staff Members will ask to see photo ID from any person(s) picking that they do not know.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access to a child by a court order, documentation must be provided to the YMCA to maintain on file.

If the parent or person authorized to pick-up the child appears to be physically, mentally, or emotionally impaired to the extent that the welfare of the child is in danger:

- The child will not be released.
- Staff members will try to contact alternate persons authorized for pick-up.
- If staff is unable to make alternate arrangements, a staff member will call the Division of Youth and Family Services' 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline to seek assistance in caring for the child.

Late Pick-Ups

There will be a charge for late pick-ups. The office will be notified each time a child is picked up after 6:30pm closing time. Parents are required to sign a "late pick-up" form for each occurrence.

You will be billed \$1 per minute, and this fee will be added to your child's account.

If a child is not picked up by the site's closing time, the following procedures will be followed.

- Child will be supervised at all times by at least 2 staff members.
- Staff members will attempt to contact parent or persons authorized to pick-up child.
- If after 7pm the staff cannot contact anyone, the YMCA office will be contacted and DYFS, as well as the police to help supervise the child and locate an appropriate family member.



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Children’s Code of Conduct

The Gateway Family YMCA, Elizabeth Branch, works hard to create a positive atmosphere with emphasis on the YMCA Four Core Values of Character Development: Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. Proper participation and conduct by each child is expected.

Caring	Honesty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be considerate of each other’s feelings. ➤ Treat others as you would want to be treated. ➤ No bullying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tell the truth to your parents, YMCA staff, and other children. ➤ Tell a staff member immediately if someone is making you feel uncomfortable; example: upsetting or bothering you. ➤ Ask a staff member if you need help.
Respect	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Listen and follow directions. ➤ Use calm and appropriate language and tone of voice. ➤ Keep your hands and feet to yourself (No hitting, kicking, or fighting). ➤ Use equipment correctly. ➤ No touching other children’s belongings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be responsible for your actions. ➤ Clean up after yourself. ➤ Tell a counselor if you feel sick. ➤ Tell a counselor if you are hurt. ➤ Do not bring toys, games, video games, trading cards or any other personal items that could get lost or damaged.

The School Age Child Care staff will notify parents at pick up if their child does not follow the code of conduct. The Gateway Family YMCA, Elizabeth Branch, will use the following procedure:

1. Participant receives a verbal warning. Staff and child discuss the incident together, to ensure the child understands acceptable behavior. Staff will notify parents at pick-up in reference to the incident.
2. Participant receives another verbal warning, as well as a written follow up letter sent home. Parents are notified at pick-up. Letters will become part of the child’s file.
3. If another incident occurs, child may be suspended for one to three days. Before or within three days of returning to the program, parents, child, staff, and Director must meet regarding the incident and a behavior plan.
4. If behavior continues, child will be suspended for up to one week.
5. Continuance of the behavior will result in termination of the program for the remainder of the school year.

Note: Any action endangering one’s self or other participants will result in immediate parent pick-up and an automatic one day suspension. For the safety of the children and staff, School Age Child Care practices Zero Tolerance for any incident involving a weapon. Any Zero Tolerance violation will result in immediate expulsion from the program and the school principal will be alerted. All suspensions will be determined by the School Age Child Care Director, based on the severity of the incident.

Parent Responsibilities



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- Parents are required to sign their child in each morning and out each evening. Any notes or information from the staff will be available at this time.
- It is very important that you notify the YMCA if your child will be absent.
- Before Care begins at 7:30am. Children are not permitted to be dropped off early.
- After Care ends promptly at 6:30pm. Children present after this time will be charged a late fee of \$1 per minute. Please arrive on time.
- Ensure that all addresses, phone numbers, and emergency care numbers are up to date.
- Provide any information to the Director regarding concerns that your child may be experiencing.
- Homework: please notify staff if you would like your child to complete their homework at After Care or not. Staff will help children with homework, but it is the parent's responsibility to review and check all work.

Parent Behavior

In the event that a situation develops where a family is considered difficult to deal with, the YMCA reserves the right to require the family to withdraw their child(ren) immediately without notice. Examples of "difficult to deal with" include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Arriving to a site impaired and attempting to remove their children from the program.
- ✓ Being abusive to staff members and/or other program participants.
- ✓ Failing to adhere to YMCA policies listed in this parent handbook.

DYFS Investigations

Our center is legally required to cooperate with all Division of Youth and Family Services inspections and/or investigations. DYFS staff may interview staff members and children.

Anyone who has a reasonable cause to believe an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect or exploitation by an adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by state law to report the concern immediately



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to the Division of Youth and Family Services Office of Child Abuse Control, toll-free at (800) 792-8561, or to any District Office. Such reports may be made anonymously.

Parent may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting Community Education Office, Division of Youth and Family Services, CN 717, Trenton, NJ 08625.

Information to be reported to the Division of Youth and Family Services

Verbally within 24 hours:

- Injury or illness that results in the admittance to a hospital or death of a child.
- Occurrence of a reportable disease.
- Change in use by other occupants of a multi-use building in which center is located.
- Permanent closing of the center.
- Damage to premises of the center caused by fire, accident or the elements.
- Proposed use of emergency space including use of rooms not approved by local municipal officials or the Bureau.
- Any criminal conviction(s) or guilty plea(s) of the sponsors, director, or any staff member.

Verbally within 3 working days:

- Any change in information previously submitted to the Bureau on the application. The center must then complete an amended license application form and submit it within 30 calendar days of the change.

Licensing Requirements

There are documents we are required to have on file for each child *prior to their beginning the program*. Children cannot start the program if required documents are missing. These documents include: registration form, persons authorized to pick-up, emergency information, permission for emergency treatment, permission for field trips, current medical report completed by a doctor and record of immunizations. Due to state regulations, the required documents must be submitted yearly including the medical form completed by a physician.



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Information to Parents

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 10:122), every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may secure a copy of the Manual of Requirements by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mail it to: NJ Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing standard, you are entitled to report them to the Bureau of Licensing toll-free at 1-877-667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate you bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by the parent(s) to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about dispensing medicine and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the Bureau of Licensing's Inspection/Violation reports of the center, which are issued after every State Licensing inspection of our center. If this is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the Bureau's Complaint



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Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review.

Our center must cooperate with all DHS inspections/investigations. DHS staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Bureau for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on such a trip.

Our center is required to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c.169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes that center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect or exploitation by an adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry and Child Abuse Hotline, toll-free at 1-(877) NJ ABUSE (652-2873). Such reports may be made anonymously.

Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: Community Education Office, Division of Youth and Family Services, PO Box 717, Trenton, NJ 08625-0717.