



YMCA OF EASTERN UNION COUNTY-ELIZABETH BRANCH
135 MADISON AVENUE ELIZABETH, NJ 07201
908-355-9622

Visit us on the web @ www.ymcaeuc.org



September, 2007

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the YMCA of Eastern Union County-Elizabeth Branch for the 2007-2008 Year at Schools #1, #2, #3, #6, #14, #17, #18 and #19. This year we will be adding Schools #12 and #15 in mid to late September and we will continue to seek to expand our program into even more schools in the very near future. Please be aware that we no longer offer transportation for our after-school program. All programs will be based out of the schools for which we are able to secure permission for use by the Board of Education.

We welcome your family into our YMCA family. We truly would like for your child to experience a wonderful time in our program this year. In order for this to happen, we highly recommend that you go through this handbook frequently with your child, in order to familiarize yourself with what we are all about and what is expected from our participants and their families.

Please remember...We welcome your advice, input, comments, suggestions, complaints, etc. so that we can continue to IMPROVE upon our efforts.

Thank you for your continued support, dedication and cooperation.

By working TOGETHER, we can achieve our goals and expectations for the children so that they remember '07-'08 with a smile...

Yours truly,

Angelo Otero
Senior Program Director, Work Cell # (908) 764-1980

Sandra Arboleda
School-Age Child Care Coordinator, Work Cell # (908) 906-8422

Alma Velez
Administrative Assistant



BACK-TO-SCHOOL / AFTERSCHOOL AWARENESS

Recreation and Obesity

As kids across the country head back to school and to sitting at their desks for six or more hours a day, it is critically important that parents find additional ways for their children to stay active before, during and after-school.

Experts agree that school-age children need to be moderately to vigorously active for a minimum of 60 minutes a day (Journal of Pediatrics, CDC, HHS). Unfortunately, the problem is extensive since the majority, almost two-thirds of our nation's youth, is not reaching this goal.

With 60 million adults—30-percent of the U.S. population—and 9 million children obese or overweight, increased physical activity for our children and families is of critical importance to our community. According to the New England Journal of Medicine, the current generation of American children could be the first to lead shorter lives than their parents.

The latest data from the 1999-2002 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey published in the Journal of the American Medical Association show the percent of children who are overweight continues to increase. Among children and teens ages 6-19, 16 percent (over 9 million) are overweight, or triple what the proportion was in 1980.

Physical activity reduces the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease; helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles; and reduces feelings of depression and anxiety and promotes psychological well-being. (CDC, 1996 Surgeon Generals Report on Physical Activity)

Today, hectic work and family schedules allow little time for kids to participate in physical activity. Schools struggling to improve academic achievement are dropping physical education and physical activity and assigning more homework, which leaves less time for sports and other forms of physical activity.

After-school programs are feeling the pressure to also shift from physical activity programming to academic class time. Even recess – the only unstructured play time for kids – is being squeezed out of the school day. Television, computer games, the internet and text messaging are deactivating our kids. Diminished public funding for parks, playgrounds and sidewalks that encourage and facilitate active lifestyles along with concerns about neighborhood safety contribute to inactivity.



YMCA's History as a Provider of After-School Programming

As schools across the country prepare to open their doors, working parents once again find themselves searching for safe, quality after-school programs to complement and supplement their children's in-school learning. With more than 9,000 after-school programs across the country, the nation's YMCAs are a leading resource for parents looking to find meaningful and fun afternoon activities.

The nation's YMCAs have been engaging children in after-school programs for more than 50 years. Today, YMCAs serve nearly half a million youth in school-age care programs and millions more in after-school programs.

YMCAs have served youth and young adults for more than 155 years in a variety of programs including after-school enrichment, aquatics, arts, camping, health and wellness, sports, service learning, and teen leadership and club programs. Overall, Ys currently serve more than 9.5 million youth each year.

About YMCA After-School Programs

Non-academic does not mean non-educational. Activities that strengthen, expand and provide real life context to information learned in the classroom are important to children's learning. For example, soccer helps in developing an understanding of geometry, cooking projects help to teach fractions and journal writing helps to develop writing skills and stimulate creative thinking.

Most YMCA after-school programs include elements that promote artistry, social skill development, emotional development, nutrition and physical activity, character development, sports, service-learning, as well as literacy, math and science hands-on activities.

YMCA programs are grounded in group work, relationship building, a child/youth-centered approach, experiential learning, and hands-on activities—all of which have a positive impact on youth development and learning.

YMCAs aim to build self-esteem and provide the concrete tools youth need to be happy and productive in life. As such, our after-school programs are designed to focus on the abilities of youth rather than their shortcomings or deficits. YMCA programs also help youth to develop skills such as self-regulation, communication, problem solving, negotiation and critical thinking that make learning easier.

YMCA staff and volunteers also understand that each youth needs significant adults beyond family to relate to and rely upon for support and guidance. As such, YMCA staff are carefully selected and trained to be good role models.



YMCA's Holistic Approach to After-School Learning

YMCAs are committed to developing the whole child. YMCA staff and volunteers know that kids have different wants and needs from their after-school program than what they need or get during the school day.

YMCAs believe it is important to strike a balance between academic enrichment and playful, recreational activities for children. Our programs do not emphasize academics exclusively at the expense of time spent socializing with peers, in reflection, and engaging in games and activities in the gym or on the playground.

The YMCA's holistic approach to child learning includes the offering of programs that support children's learning across several areas including social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development.

Because YMCAs operate from a unique mission and use a different, holistic approach to children's learning than do schools, we are confident that our programs are differently—and in some cases better—designed to attract and engage youth who are disenchanted with school, harder to reach or who do not excel in the traditional ways schools teach and measure learning outcomes.

YMCAs as a Partner in Supporting Children's Learning

YMCAs are partners in supporting children's learning. Across the country, YMCAs collaborate with schools, community-based organizations and other youth development organizations like Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H, Junior Achievement and more.

Results of a 2005 YMCA School-Age Child Care Survey found that more YMCAs are collaborating with schools than ever before. More than 80 percent of school-age programs are located at schools, and 71 percent of YMCAs collaborate with elementary schools.

The No Child Left Behind Act, failing schools and the fact that too many kids are struggling with learning has prompted many YMCAs to expand their traditionally recreational offerings to include tutoring and mentoring programs, 21st Century Community Learning centers, supplemental education services, and additional family and youth support services.

As schools across the country have faced budget cuts resulting in the elimination of recreational programming such as sports and physical education, YMCAs have also stepped up to the plate to help provide these activities. In fact, hundreds of YMCAs provide PE instruction for schools and home-schooled children.

YMCAs are building strong communities by helping to prepare a future generation of workers with 21st century work skills, by reducing juvenile crime in the out-of-school hours and by ensuring students have the knowledge and skills to succeed in a knowledge-based economy.



YMCA Mission

The YMCA of Eastern Union County is a community based organization rooted in Christian principles and committed to building healthy lives through programs that strengthen spirits, minds and bodies for people of all ages, religions and cultures.

Program Goals

Promote YMCA Character Values: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility
Develop a sense of belonging in each child
Provide a safe, secure atmosphere
Help each child grow personally
Encourage parent input and participation
Develop specific skills in children
Have fun! ☺

Staff

Our staff is led by **Angelo Otero**, Senior Program Director; with over 22 years experience in YMCA Childcare & Teen programs.

Sandra Arboleda, is our School-Age Child Care & Day Camp Coordinator, and she has over six years YMCA Childcare experience.

All staff must successfully complete a background check, drug test and reference checks prior to being hired. Many of our staff are education/recreation majors at college and all staff have a background of working with children. Staff must also attend staff training which includes a Child Abuse Prevention course. As per required by licensing standards, at least one staff person at each after-school program site is CPR/First Aid certified.

The New Jersey Bureau of Licensing requires a minimum staff to child ratio of 1:15 for School-Age Child Care Programs.

PROGRAM RULES & DISCIPLINE POLICY

School-Age Child Care staff work to create a POSITIVE atmosphere emphasizing our four core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. Proper participation and conduct by each child is expected.

THE RULES FOR THE STAFF ARE:

Follow established *YMCA Code of Conduct, *YMCA Internet and Cell Phone Policy
*Copies of these policies are available for parents to review.

THE RULES FOR PARTICIPANTS ARE:

Respect each other's feelings, personal space and property.
Cooperate with each other.
Listen and follow instructions of the staff.
Stay with the assigned group at all times.
Use proper language and tone of voice.



Tell a counselor if someone is bothering or upsetting you.

Clean up after yourself.

We discourage participants from bringing excessive jewelry/other valuables, toys and electronics (e.g., video games, radios, I-pods, cell phones) to the program.

Please remember that the Elizabeth Branch YMCA is NOT responsible for lost or stolen personal items.

Weapons of any kind are prohibited. Bringing a weapon to camp will be cause for immediate termination from the program and the local authorities/DYFS will be notified.

DISCIPLINE POLICY VIOLATION: CONSEQUENCES

Fighting, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, spitting at, biting, pinching, swearing/cursing, bullying/teasing, stealing, disrespect for staff, flashing gang signs/flags or touching another participant inappropriately will not be tolerated in our program.

Misbehavior/Violation of any of the above will result in participants being suspended from the after-school program, for one or more days, depending on the severity of the offense and at the discretion of the Site Supervisor/School-Age Child Care Coordinator. If the misbehavior continues or if the offense is serious enough, it may lead to longer suspensions or expulsion from the after-school program. Please refer to our written Suspension/Expulsion Policy approved by the State Division of Children and Families for details.

Lost & Found / Personal Items

The YMCA of Eastern Union County-Elizabeth Branch is not responsible for lost or missing items.

Elizabeth Branch YMCA After-School Program Hours

First day of After-School Program: Wednesday, September 5, 2007

Last day of After-School Program: Tuesday, June 17, 2008

Hours of Operation: 3:00pm-6:30pm, Monday through Friday

Holiday/Vacation Care from 7:30am-3:00pm, available at an additional cost of \$25 per day per child, followed by regular after-school program hours of 3:00pm-6:30pm at no additional cost, will be held AT THE MAIN BRANCH on the following dates when schools are closed (Parent must bring/pick up child at main branch, 135 Madison Avenue on Holiday/Vacation Care program days):

September 13, 2007 Rosh Hashanah

September 14, 2007 Rosh Hashanah



October 1, 2007	Half day of School (In Service Day)
October 8, 2007	Columbus Day
November 8, 2007	NJEA Teachers Convention
November 9, 2007	NJEA Teachers Convention
November 12, 2007	Veteran's Day
November 21, 2007	Half Day of School (Thanksgiving Recess)
December 3, 2007	Half Day of School (In Service Day)
January 2, 2008	New Year's Recess
February 4, 2008	Half Day of School (In Service Day)
May 5, 2008	Half Day of School (In Service Day)
June 18, 2008	Summer Recess
June 19, 2008	Summer Recess
June 20, 2008	Summer Recess

NO PROGRAM will be held on:

November 22, 2007	Thanksgiving Recess
November 23, 2007	Thanksgiving Recess
December 24, 2007	Christmas Eve
December 25, 2007	Christmas Day
December 31, 2007	New Year's Eve
January 1, 2008	New Year's Day
January 21, 2008	Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
February 18, 2008	President's Day
March 21, 2008	Good Friday
May 26, 2008	Memorial Day

Directions to Main Branch:

The Elizabeth Branch YMCA is located at 135 Madison Avenue in Elizabeth, between East Grand Street and East Jersey Street, across from the Bank of America parking lot. Please call 908-355-9622 for detailed directions.

Health

The State Department of Licensing requires that:

Each child enrolled in the after-school program have a medical history form completed by the parent on a yearly basis and submitted prior to admission-Immunization records must also be included.

Included on the medical form is a section titled "Permission for Emergency Medical Care." 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.

Children should not be sent to the program if they have any of the following symptoms: fever or severe headaches, rashes or inflamed skin, nausea or vomiting, abdominal



pain, diarrhea, sore throat, earache, inflammation of the eyes, enlarged glands or persistent coughing, ringworm, chicken pox, strep-throat, pink eye (conjunctivitis), head or body lice

If a child develops any of the above symptoms while in the YMCA's care, the parent will be notified to have the child picked up immediately. Doctor's permission will be required for the child to return to the program in some cases, particularly in the cases of contagious diseases/conditions.

It is YMCA of Eastern Union County policy that NO medicine will be administered by staff to the children.

Any participant who needs to use an asthma pump on their own should bring it to the program every day. Any participant, who suffers from severe allergic reactions to stings, foods, etc., should have an additional prescribed Epi-Pen (epinephrine) stored at the program site in case of emergencies.

We have at least one staff certified in CPR for the Professional Rescuer, AED and First Aid on duty at all times at each of our after-school program locations.

If your child will not be attending the program please contact the YMCA at (908) 355-9622. You can also contact the Site Supervisor on their cell number which will be provided to you at your request.

Release of Child

Please indicate on the registration form, names of authorized people allowed to pick-up your child. Counselors will ask for identification until they know you and the other people listed. If you need to have someone who is not listed pick up your child, a signed notice by you must be presented to us at the time of pickup. The person listed will be asked to show a photo I.D. upon pick-up at the site. If the person does not have an ID, we will not release the child to them. The person picking up the child must be at least 16 years old. If a parent has been denied access to a child by court order, the center needs to be given a copy of this documentation and will maintain it on file.

If the parent or person authorized to pick-up the child appears to be physically or emotionally impaired to the extent that the welfare of the child is in danger that child will not be released to that person.

Staff members will try to contact alternate persons authorized to 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-up

If your child is not picked up by 6:30pm, you will be charged a late fee of \$1 per minute after 6:30pm and these procedures will be followed:

Child will be supervised at all times by at least 2 staff.

Staff members will attempt to contact parent or persons authorized to pick-up child.

If after an hour no one can be contacted, the YMCA staff member will call the Division of Youth and Family Services' 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline (800) 792-8610 to seek assistance in caring for the child until someone can be contacted to pick-up the child.

After the 3rd time the child is picked up late, we will have no other choice but to discontinue child care services for your child. We are under contract with the Board of Education to be out of their school buildings by 6:30pm and additionally, most of our staff have other jobs to go to, school courses to attend or personal commitments after 6:30pm, so we cannot afford to stay late.

Fees & Payment Information

Payment Methods

Payments may be made by check, cash, Visa, Master Card or American Express. **We highly encourage you to sign up for Bank Draft so that your monthly co-payment fees are charged directly to your bank account and they will always be on time.**

Payments may be made at the Member Services, or mailed to:

Elizabeth Branch YMCA
Attn: After-School Program Payment
135 Madison Avenue
Elizabeth, NJ 07201

Checks should be made payable to the Elizabeth Branch YMCA, and should include the following information:

Child's name

Name of program

Month for which you are paying for

Ex. (Memo – Matthew Harris, After-School Program for October, 2008)

Hours to make in-person payments at the Member Services Desk:

Monday – Friday 6:00 am– 9:00 pm

Saturday & Sunday 9:00 am – 5:00pm

Registration Fee

There is a \$35 registration fee per child for processing.

Late Payment Fee

Fees are due on the 1st of every month. The YMCA will not send a bill, so please keep the payment dates as a reminder. A grace period will be given until the 10th of the month. Payments made after the 10th will be assessed a \$25 late fee. Children will not be permitted to attend program if an open balance remains. If an outstanding balance is not paid by the end of that month, your child's slot may be replaced by someone on our waiting list. If there are any extenuating circumstances for non-payment, you need to call our Administrative Assistant/School-Age Child Care Coordinator to explain your situation. In the event of proven hardship, a Financial Assistance application can be filled out to determine temporary assistance in paying for after-school program services.

Returned Check Fee

There will be a \$25 fee for all checks returned by the bank for insufficient funds. If a check is returned, all future payments must be made with cash or credit card.

Late Pick-up Fees

Pick up for 6:30pm: After 6:30pm- \$1 per minute.

Upon pick up, a counselor will present you with a late slip that must be signed. The balance will be added to your account the following day. The balance needs to be paid by the end of the week in order for your child to participate in the following week. Failure to pay late pick-up fees may result in termination of services for your child.

Registration

All parents must set up an appointment to register for our after-school program by calling 908-355-9622 and asking to speak with Ms. Alma Velez, Administrative Assistant.

Parents must complete all registration paperwork prior to child's admission into the program. Due to state regulations, this paperwork must be submitted prior to entering any new program session; including the medical history form completed by the parent/legal guardian.

The following is due upon registration:

\$35 registration fee

Please note that your child will not be considered enrolled in our after-school program until all essential paperwork is completed and submitted and all applicable fees are paid by the deadlines setup by our child care department. If you do not follow through on this, your slot may be given to someone else on the waiting list.

Refund Policy

In order for the Elizabeth Branch YMCA to keep our fees as low as possible, we are unable to give refunds if your child does not attend the after-school program. All Deposits are non-refundable

STATE DFD CONTRACT for CBC Slots

Sliding Scale Fees

Sliding scale co-payment fees (CBC) are based on total household income/family size and the availability of a slot. There are certain strict guidelines established by the NJ State Division of Family Development that must be adhered to.

*Parent/Guardian MUST be working or in school/training FULL TIME in order to qualify for subsidized child care.

*Priority will be given first to those applicants working 40 or more hours per week followed by those working 30 or more hours per week and then finally to those working 20 or more hours per week.

*Income cannot exceed sliding scale standards set forth by the state.

**If married, incomes of BOTH parents MUST be submitted.

ATTENDANCE (LEVEL OF SERVICE-L.O.S.)

Due to the NJ State & Federal Government contract regulations that we are required to adhere to, it is CRITICAL that our government subsidized program slots are filled by participants that are going to attend our program on a daily basis. Our program is designed to provide child care services for families that TRULY NEED IT due to work/school responsibilities. IF your child is absent for more than 3 days without a valid medical excuse or other serious emergency, we do reserve the right to terminate program services for your child immediately and offer the slot to someone else on our waiting list. There are NO Refunds or Credits given.

Vouchers from Community Coordinated Child Care are accepted. A written confirmation MUST be received by our office prior to the registration process beginning.

SCHOLARSHIPS/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Families who can prove a hardship in their unavailability to make required payments may be considered for FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE to assist in payment of program fees. A complete application along with proper documentation must be submitted to the YMCA by the applicant. A determination will be made by the Senior Program Director/Branch Executive Director on a case by case basis.

INFORMATION TO PARENTS Licensing Information

*Your signature is required to be maintained in your child's file attesting that you have received the following information:

Our program is licensed by the state of New Jersey, Bureau of Licensing, Division of Youth and Family Services. In order to maintain this licensing, there are certain standards with which our camp must comply. These standards are stated in the Manual of Requirements for School-Age Child Care Programs. The YMCA has a copy of this manual available if any parent would like to review it. You may secure your own copy of the manual for a nominal fee by writing to the

Bureau of Licensing, Division of Youth and Family Services, CN 717, Trenton, NJ 08625.

Violation of Standards

If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing standards, you are entitled to report them to the Bureau of Licensing. Of course, we would appreciate you bringing these concerns to our attention as well. Parents are also entitled to review the site's copy of the Inspection/Violation Report issued after the inspection of the site.

DYFS Investigations

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

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 Division of Youth and Family Services Office of Child Abuse Control, Toll-Free at (800) 792-85610, or to any District Office. 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, CN 717, Trenton, NJ 08625.

Required Paperwork

We are required to have certain paperwork on file for each child prior to their beginning the program. Please understand that no child may attend after-school program, under any circumstances, if this paperwork is missing. This paperwork includes; registration form, persons authorized to pick-up, emergency information, permission for emergency care, permission for field trips, current medical history form completed by the parent and record of immunizations.

License Display

A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our site. An information board will have the license, diagram of rooms and areas approved for use and emergency exits; emergency numbers, daily schedule and rules posted.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents of enrolled children have the opportunity to visit the center at any time during the center's hours of operation to observe and participate in its operation and program activities without having to secure prior approval.

FIELD TRIP NOTIFICATION

A blanket permission slip for trips is signed by the parent at the time of registration. Individual consent forms need to be signed by the parents for other special events.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our center will post a written copy of our statement on discipline policy in a prominent location. Copies are available for parents. After-School program staff is required to sign off on this policy and a copy of these signatures is to be made part of our records.

EXPULSION POLICY

Our center will post a written copy of our expulsion policy in a prominent location. Copies are available for parents.

LAWS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION/AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Our center is required to comply with the NJ 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.). If anyone believes the center is not in compliance with these laws, you may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the NJ Department of Law and Public Safety. Filing a LAD claim: 609-292-4605 or contact, United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at 800-514-0383.