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YMCA of the Pines PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

YMCA of the Pines

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YMCA OF THE PINES
EXPLORE. GROW. THRIVE.

Welcome to Preschool!

Thank you for enrolling your child in the YMCA of the Pines Preschool program! We are proud to partner with Medford Township Public Schools to provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children can explore, grow, and thrive. For many of you, this may be your first introduction to the YMCA of the Pines—welcome! If your family is already part of our YMCA community, welcome back.

For more than 100 years, YMCA of the Pines has been serving children and families throughout the Medford area. Today, our organization includes a day camp, two overnight camps, wilderness tripping programs, an outdoor center, and school-age childcare programs that provide before- and after-school care in Medford, Medford Lakes, Tabernacle, and Shamong.

Our preschool program operates under a New Jersey childcare license and is committed to meeting the high standards established by both the New Jersey Department of Education and the Department of Children and Families. Our staff receive training that meets the requirements of both agencies, in addition to YMCA professional development standards. Our teachers hold the same P–3 teaching certifications as Medford Township Public Schools preschool teachers, and all employees complete the required background checks through our licensing agencies. Classrooms implement the district-adopted Creative Curriculum, and students have access to district support services whenever needed.

Your partnership is one of the most important factors in your child's success. The information in this handbook outlines what you can expect from the YMCA of the Pines, as well as the policies and expectations that help us provide a safe, positive, and enriching experience for every child. We look forward to working together throughout the school year.

Our entire preschool team is excited to welcome your family to the YMCA of the Pines for the 2026–2027 school year in each of our preschool locations. We hope you find this handbook to be a helpful resource. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jill Jewell
Senior Preschool Director

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*Please note that all information in this handbook is subject to change.

YMCA OF THE PINES MISSION STATEMENT

YMCA of the Pines is an interfaith, charitable organization dedicated to helping children, teens and families explore, grow, thrive and ultimately become the best version of themselves.

PHILOSOPHY OF YMCA SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE

The philosophy of YMCA of the Pines' program is to nurture each child through care, understanding, and affection. We offer programs that promote learning through structured classes, open-ended and imaginative play, and recreation.

YMCA of the PINES SIX CORE VALUES

Caring: Show a sincere concern for others.

Honesty: Be truthful in what you say and do.

Respect: Treat others the way you would want to be treated.

Responsibility: Be accountable for your promises and actions.

Courage: Be brave toward your best self.

Inclusion: Accept, welcome, and embrace all.

REGISTRATION

Initial registration for the preschool program will take place through the school district's genesis portal. Additionally, families will be required to register through the YMCA portal at schoolsout.campbrainregistration.com in order to help keep us in compliance with all Department of Children and Families childcare regulations. Parents can also register for before and after school care in the YMCA portal. You can also access registration by navigating to ycamp.org and then clicking on the "Register Now" button. If you have registered online for a YMCA of the Pines' program at any time in the past, please sign in to your existing account using the same email address and password. If your computer access is limited, you may obtain a paper registration packet in our office. A new registration must be filed for each child in our program, each school year, before they can attend the program. There is no cost to register for preschool.

TRANSPORTATION

For our camp location:

For those students who are not provided busing by the Medford School District, parents are responsible for transporting their students to and from the preschool location on McKendimen Road. While there is no distinct address for access to the preschool building, the entrance is located southeast of 320 McKendimen Road. Coming from Medford Lakes, the entrance is the first right PAST the entrance and exit to Lake Stockwell Day Camp. When entering the parking lot you will head towards the right of the building and enter into our drop off/pick up line. Students will be escorted to your car directly, so there is no need to stop and park.

For our Hartford Rd. location:

For those students who are not provided busing by the Medford School District, parents are responsible for transporting their students to and from the preschool location at 2 Hartford Road.(Medford Methodist Church) When entering the parking lot you will head to the right of the building and enter into our drop off/pick up line. Students will be escorted to your car directly, so there is no need to stop and park.

EXTENDED CARE

School's Out is available for an additional fee beginning at 7:00 AM and additionally each afternoon until 6:00 PM. Registration will be available at schoolsout.campbrainregistration.com. You can add extended care at any point throughout the school year. AM sessions are held on site, and PM sessions are held onsite or at another Medford School District location depending on enrollment.

MIXED-AGE CLASSROOMS

Mixed-aged instructional grouping is an option that is considered a best practice by the Department of Education. The Department states, "Cross-age learning allows for social interaction, modeling, mentoring and leadership among children. A child may accomplish something earlier with support from a more advanced peer, while the older child experiences feelings of confidence and compassion. A multi-age setting allows teachers to foster an emotionally secure environment for children to grow, learn, take risks, and experience success. While children are developing social skills, learning responsibility, and engaging in more complex play, teachers are generally more child-centered, as they must adeptly accommodate individual strengths, interests, and needs."

ATTENDANCE

All absences, both day-of and preplanned, must be reported to absent@ycamp.org.

Like all Medford Township Public Schools, our preschool program maintains high expectations for attendance. Regular attendance allows students to benefit from well-planned and well-delivered instructional activities. The YMCA of the Pines will collaborate with the school district to work with parents to support their child's attendance in school. However, if a student is absent for 10 consecutive days, they could be excluded from the program and their spot would be forfeited to another student on the wait-list. Medford Township Board of Education adheres to New Jersey State Statute on attendance found in NJAC 6A:16-7.8 Attendance.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS / INCLEMENT WEATHER

If the weather conditions threaten a possible school closing or late arrival, please check the Medford School District website or watch the local TV news to see if the school district will be closed. We will follow the same schedule. You will also receive notification via the district call system if registered.

TOILETING

If your child does not use the toilet independently, please notify your child's teacher. If your child is wearing pull-ups or diapers, please send in a package and wipes labeled with your child's name.

LABELING

Please make sure your child's personal items are marked clearly with their names. This includes coats, sweaters, lunch boxes, book bags, bedding, etc.

CHANGE OF CLOTHING

All children should have a full change of clothing in the event of a spill or accident. Please send your child to school with a complete change of clothing that includes undergarments, clothing items, and socks. Please have these items labeled with your child's name in a zipper seal bag. These should be swapped out seasonally.

BEDDING

Each full day of school, there will be a resting period after lunch. A cot will be provided for your child. Your child will need to bring a crib or toddler sheet and a small blanket. While your child is welcome to bring a nap mat or small sleeping bag they must still bring a sheet to cover the cot. Please send these items in a bag marked with your child's name. Bedding will be sent home at the end of each week to be washed and returned.

OUTDOOR TIME

All preschool classes go outside daily whenever possible. Please plan accordingly and be sure your child is dressed for the weather with coats, hats and mittens as needed in cooler months. For the early fall and spring, most of our outdoor areas are shaded and our play areas are treated for insects prior to the start of the school year and again in the spring. If you wish, you may apply sunscreen, insect repellent spray, or bug-repellent stickers to your child at home. However, please note that staff will not be able to reapply these items during the school day.

Families are encouraged to have their children wear protective footwear, such as sneakers, each day to prevent injury during outdoor play. Closed-toe shoes are required.

SNACK

Each day, students enjoy a snack brought from home. Teachers request it be a healthy snack. The YMCA of the Pines is a **nut-free facility**. For the safety of all our students, **all snack items must be completely nut-free**. Children are expected to be able to feed themselves and packaging of snacks should require minimal assistance from staff.

LUNCH

Students will be eating lunch in the classroom each day. The YMCA of the Pines is a **nut-free facility**. For the safety of all our students, **all lunch items must be completely nut-free**. Students may bring lunch from home or eat the food provided by the YMCA (free, reduced, or paid lunch). Information will be provided on the ordering process and lunch menus for our program. If your child is eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch, meals will be provided for them.

BIRTHDAY TREATS

Medford Township Schools do not allow birthday snacks/treats to be brought in for the class. Please know that we want to celebrate your child's birthday and have not lost sight of the fact that it is, in the eyes of the child, one of the most important days of the year. We will recognize your child's special day with a crown, stickers, songs, etc. If your child has a summer birthday, we will celebrate at the end of the year.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The Medford Township Preschool Program at YMCA of the Pines is aligned with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards which addresses all domains of learning. We provide developmentally appropriate experiences where all students can succeed in a nurturing environment. We believe in a whole child approach that promotes a student's long-term development and growth by using a state-approved curriculum. The Creative Curriculum for preschool is a research-based curriculum that provides learning experiences for all content areas and developmental domains, including Approaches to Learning, Social Emotional, Language/Communication, Literacy, Scientific Reasoning, Mathematics Development, and Perceptual, Motor, Physical Development. This high-quality programming is based on comprehensive early learning standards that address the whole child and partners with families to facilitate learning.

The Creative Curriculum is assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD. The formative assessment model used in GOLD is based on classroom observations, a checklist, photographs, work samples, and family input as related to the 38 research-based objectives for development and learning.

The Medford Public School's preschool instructional coach, who supports the classroom teachers in curriculum implementation, will provide her expertise so that instruction is both developmentally-appropriate and appropriately challenging for each child.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are sent home 3 times per year and are based on your child's progress in each of the objectives.

CONFERENCES

Conferences are held once per year in November. An additional conference(s) may be requested by your child's teacher based on need.

PRESCHOOL INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL TEAM (PIRT)

The preschool intervention and referral team (PIRT) helps the preschool staff address children's challenging behaviors (i.e. physical, social, language, emotional) that interfere with successful participation in a general preschool classroom through development and implementation of an intervention plan. The primary role of the PIRT is to provide support and suggest interventions to teachers so that all students can succeed within the general education classroom.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING TOOL

Students are screened individually to identify those who may need additional support to perform successfully in school. All students in the preschool program will be screened within 6 to 8 weeks of the start date.

SAMPLE PRESCHOOL SCHEDULE/ACTIVITIES

Arrival
Sign In - Handwashing
Greeting Time/ Morning Meeting
Center Time
Small Group Time (Literacy/Stories)
Outdoor Time
Toileting & Handwashing
Lunch
Rest Time
Group Time (Music and Movement)
Literacy Focus
Center Time
Outside Time & Handwashing
Small Group Time (Math/Science)

Project Child Find

Project Child Find is a free referral and awareness service of NJDOE to help identify children from birth through 21 years of age who may experience difficulties in academic, and/or physical, emotional and cognitive areas, which result in a disability. For more information, call Project Child Find at 1-800-322-8174.

Children under the age of three who demonstrate delays in development are eligible for free services and support programs. Contact Early Intervention Services toll free at

1-888-653-4463.

POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Your child must be checked in by a parent/or guardian at AM drop-off or out at PM pick-up. Please bring identification with you when picking up your child. Each child will be released only to the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) or person(s) authorized in the registration paperwork. Those listed as an authorized person to pick-up will assume responsibility for the child(ren) in an emergency, if the parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be reached. No child shall be released from the program unsupervised.

If a non-custodial parent(s) is denied access or granted limited access to a child by court order, the YMCA shall be provided documentation to that effect by the custodial parent, maintain a copy on file and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s)/guardian(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s)/guardian(s) fails to pick up by daily closing time, the program shall ensure that:

1. The child(ren) is supervised at all times.
2. Staff members attempt to contact all emergency contacts/authorized pick-up persons listed on the registration form.
3. If no alternate pick-up arrangements can be made within an hour of closing time, the staff members shall call the NJ State Department of Children and Families 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1.877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s)/guardian(s) or authorized pick-up is able to pick-up the child.

If the parent(s)/guardian(s) or person(s) authorized to pick-up appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired, and in the judgment of the site supervisor or staff member the child(ren) would be placed in harm's way if released to such an individual, the YMCA of the Pines shall ensure:

1. The child will not be released to such an impaired individual.
2. Staff members will attempt to contact the child's alternative authorized pickup person(s).
3. If the site is unable to make an alternative arrangement, a staff member shall call the NJ State Department of Children and Families 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1.877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

MEDICAL POLICIES

Prevention

We try to minimize infections and control the spread of disease with the following measures:

- Monitoring students for signs of illness.
- Cleaning the eating areas thoroughly before and after each child.
- Washing hands before food handling.
- Using gloves during any food distribution.
- Requiring and supervising hand washing with children before lunch, snack and after toileting.
- Cleaning and/or disinfecting program supplies as needed.

Our staff will be following all updated Department of Children and Families, Department of Health, and CDC guidelines.

Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the program. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group, and the parent will be called to take the child home. The child may return when symptom free for 24 hours.

- 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;
- Vomiting
- Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over or axillary temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over in conjunction with behavior changes
- Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult rapid breathing or severe coughing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions that have not been treated by a health care provider
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck

24 hours after the child is symptom-free, or a healthcare provider indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or herself or to other children, the child may return to the center.

Excludable Communicable Diseases

A child or staff member who contracts an excludable communicable disease may not return to the center without a health care provider's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others. These diseases include respiratory, gastrointestinal and contact illnesses such as Impetigo, Scabies, and Shingles. If a child has chicken pox, a note from the parent stating that all sores have dried and crusted is required.

Communicable Disease Reporting Guidelines

Some excludable diseases must be reported to the health department by the center. The Department of Health's Reporting Requirements for Communicable Diseases and Work Related Conditions Quick

Reference Guide, and a complete list of reportable excludable communicable diseases, can be found at: http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/

reportablt_disease_magnet.pdf. If your child is exposed to any excludable disease at the program, you will be notified in writing.

Injury

Participants on a daily basis may play in the school's recreation room, classroom, playground, and/or outside recreation area. Therefore, closed-toe shoes shall be worn by participants while attending the program to prevent slipping/tripping incidents.

Staff on site are trained in basic first aid and CPR and will provide care as needed.

If emergency medical care is necessary, any of the following steps might be taken:

- Attempt to contact the parent/guardian.

- Attempt to contact additional authorized persons listed on the registration form.

- Contact an ambulance or paramedics to take child to the hospital if no responsible person can be reached or immediate medical care is required.

Contact with Home

In the event that your child becomes ill or seriously injured at YMCA of the Pines, a staff member will contact you. Upon notification, we require that your child be picked up from the program within one hour. In serious cases, the child will be taken to the hospital by emergency vehicle for treatment and the parents will be called immediately. Parents will be asked to sign an injury/illness report for any incidents that take place during the program.

Medication

Any medication which needs to be administered to your child, while in the program, must first be brought to the program director or site supervisor. A Parent Request to Administer Medication Form must be signed and completed. This form is found on our website.

Prescription medications must be in the original prescription packaging and be accompanied by a doctor's note prescribing that medication to your child. Only enough medication for a day's dosing should be brought in. For a child with ongoing medication needs such as an inhaler or EpiPen, a special care plan will need to be completed by your physician and submitted along with the medication.

Additionally, the parent and director will work with the overseeing district nurse for any additional approvals and guidelines pertaining to the individual situation.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMMUNICATION

Contact numbers

Please provide, on the registration form, accurate phone numbers you would like us to use to contact you for accidents/incidents involving your child(ren), emergency closings and other information we deem important.

We appreciate when parents/guardians keep us informed of any changes or special events in their child's schedule. Also, please let us know of any transitions in your child's home life (divorce, birth of a new child, death, etc.). This communication helps our staff remain sensitive to your child's needs.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Taking of photographs or videos with cameras, camera phones, video cameras or any recording device on YMCA Property or a YMCA administered site or trip is prohibited unless written consent of management is obtained. Posting of photographs or videos of children, other than your own, is prohibited without the written consent of the parent/guardian.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Please be advised that YMCA of the Pines will work closely with the school district to ensure that all of our students have the support they need to succeed in preschool.

LICENSING POLICY INFORMATION

Under the provision of the Manual of Requirements (N.J.A.C 10:122) every licensed childcare 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 childcare matters. The site must comply with the requirements by reproducing and distributing to parents this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Childcare, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In keeping with this requirement, the site must secure every parent's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our Preschool programs is required by the State Childcare Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing, Childcare, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our site. Look for it when you are in the site.

To be licensed, our Preschool program must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Childcare Centers which sets forth the official licensing regulations. The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety, staff qualifications, supervision, staff/child ratios, program activities and equipment, health, food and nutrition, rest and sleep requirements, parent/community participation, administrative and record keeping requirements, etc.

Each site will have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Childcare Centers and make it available to interested parents for review.

Parents can also go to http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf to review the manual.

NJ Department of Children and Families

Office of Licensing

Publication Fees

PO Box 717

Trenton, NJ 08625-0717

We encourage parents to discuss with the director any questions or concerns about the policies and programs, including the meaning, application or any 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 program may be in violation of licensing standards, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing, toll free at 1.800.667.9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention first.

Our program must have a policy concerning the release of the 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 program site.

Parents are entitled to review the site's copy of the Office of Licensing's Inspection/Violation Reports on the site, which are issued after every state licensing inspection. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the Office's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the site during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review.

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

Our sites must post a 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.

Our sites must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Office of Licensing, Childcare, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the site's allowed space.

Our sites must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to participate in and observe the activities of the site. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the site should discuss their interest with Preschool Director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

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

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAAD), P.L. 1945, c.169 (N.J.S.A 10:5-1 et seq.) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the 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 1.800.514.0301 (voice) or 1.800.514.0383 (TTY).

Our sites are required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the site and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at www.cpsc.gov/recalls. Internet access may be available at your public library. For more information, please call the CPSC at 1.800.638.2772.

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 any adult, whether working at the site or not, is required by state law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at 1.877.NJABUSE or 1.877.652.2873. Such reports may be made anonymously.

Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at 609.292.0422 or go to www.nj.gov/dcf and select publications.

MTPS BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES

For up-to-date information on the following policies, access the district website (District website – www.medford.k12.nj.us)