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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Parent Handbook MCGAW YMCA CHILDREN'S CENTER

Information for families of all Children's Center programs including infant and toddler care, full day preschool, part day preschool, Camp Rainbow, Camp WaNaGo, and School's Out.

McGaw YMCA Children's Center

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Northwestern University Partnership

The McGaw YMCA Children's Center is the preferred provider for early childhood education and school age programs for Northwestern University. Through an arrangement with Northwestern, the Children's Center provides priority enrollment to children of NU faculty, staff, and students. For more details on this partnership, please contact Lori Anne Henderson, the NU liaison to the Center.

Through this partnership, Northwestern funds the Children's Center's music and movement enrichment classes as well as other fine arts enhancements.

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NORTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY

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Welcome to the McGaw YMCA Children's Center

Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as notification of our policies and procedures to the parents of the children in our center. Parents will be notified in writing if there are changes to the handbook. This publication is updated annually. Any suggestions or questions should be forwarded to the Vice President of Child Care Services. Please sign the Parent Signature Page (Appendix D) to indicate that you have read the handbook and return the signature page to the front desk.

Definition of Terms

The term "parents" is used throughout this manual to refer to parents, caregivers, or legal guardians of the child.

Who We Are

McGaw YMCA Children's Center is a private, not-for-profit charitable organization established to serve the children of Evanston, Skokie, Rogers Park, and North Shore communities without regard to sex, race, skin color, religion, national origin, socio-economic background, ethnicity, age, physical or mental handicap, or sexual orientation.

Our Vision Statement

We will welcome everyone, inspire, activate, and impact all in spirit mind and body.

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the McGaw YMCA is to develop responsible, honest, respectful, and caring youth and adults through the promotion of healthy body, mind, and spirit in an open membership association organized to serve its diverse community.

Philosophy and Goals

Human Relationships: We believe positive relationships among the children, their teachers, the administrative team, and the parents are critical for a child's healthy development and education. Our staff is responsive to a wide range of children's feelings, needs, cultures, abilities and languages. We strive to empower children by allowing them to offer ideas to expand or enrich an activity and to suggest and initiate activities. Our staff spends time developing positive relationships with families to facilitate open communication.

Environment: Our environment is spacious enough for children to work and play without crowding. It is well organized and has plenty of inviting areas to stimulate children's exploration and involvement. Outside play and exploration time are important components also. Children need room to run, jump, and make noise.

Activities: Our activities are all about development, learning, and fun. We keep children engaged in activities that are reflective of the children's interests and cultures, and as often as possible initiated by them. The activities reflect children's developmental stages. The daily routine will be stable enough to provide comfort and security while being flexible enough to allow changes based on circumstance.

Safety & Health: The safety and health of children are top concerns for us. We screen all of our staff before hiring, staff appropriately for the number of children, maintain safe classrooms, screen visitors, provide nutritious food, and are responsive to the individual health needs of each child.

Effective Administration: Our solid administrative leadership team establishes and maintains the stability of our Center's programs – directly affecting the comfort, security and development of the children. Our administrative team makes it possible to hire and retain qualified, caring teachers;

maintain appropriate staff to child ratios; build relationships with other community groups; ensure continued staff training; and provide regular evaluation and improvement of the programs.

Inclusion:

We are fully committed to the participation of all individuals in our programs, and will make every effort to meet your child’s needs based on our available resources.

Children’s Center Objectives

Our programs are designed to develop the whole child – spirit, mind, and body.

Our Children’s Center objectives are to:

- Provide a warm, caring environment where children are safe and have fun.
- Promote character values by demonstrating and encouraging acceptance of the values of honesty, respect, caring, and responsibility.
- Encourage children to develop an awareness of human diversity – to appreciate and accept the differences in others.
- Increase self-confidence and independence by strengthening leadership skills through teamwork activities.
- Provide a positive adult staff person who models the behavior expected from the children.
- Stimulate an awareness of emotions and feelings, as well as offering positive role models to help the children understand appropriate and positive means of expression.
- Use and teach effective conflict resolution.
- Encourage and support open communication with children and their families.

Our Facility

Our center houses two Infant classes, two Toddler classes, five Full-Day Preschool classes, four Part-Day Preschool classes and five School-Age classes. We also have an indoor playroom, 250-seat auditorium, large lunch/activity room, arts & crafts room, a library, a computer center, outdoor playgrounds, administrative offices and an on-site enrollment office. In addition, we use the McGaw YMCA pool, locker rooms and gymnasium for swim and fitness activities.

Ratios

We have excellent child to teacher ratios. We meet or exceed DCFS and NAEYC guidelines in our classrooms. All Full Day classrooms are staffed with two full time teachers who work four 10-hour days and part time teachers who work at least two 10-hour days. This schedule provides a high degree of consistency for both children and families. Teachers are there at the beginning and end of the day to discuss daily happenings, developmental milestones and other important information.

Teacher-to-Child Ratios

Age of youngest child in the Class group	Ratio
Infant (6 wks-15 mos.)	1 staff member per 4 infants
Toddler (15-23 mos.)	1 staff member per 4 toddlers
Two Years Old (24-36 mos.)	1 staff member per 6 children
Three Years Old	1 staff member per 9 children
Four – Five years Old	1 staff member per 10 children
School Age	1 staff member per 14 children

Our Staff

McGaw YMCA Children's Center is fortunate to have a highly qualified and committed group of professionals. Our staff consists of the following:

Administrative Staff:

Our administrative staff members have bachelor's degrees relevant to their positions, coursework and experience in early childhood education, school age programming, and/or business administration.

- **Vice President, Children & Family Services:** Oversees all operations of the Children's Center and is a member of the McGaw YMCA Leadership Team. Supervises the Registration/Customer Service Manager, the Director of School Age and Part Day Programs, and the Early Childhood Director. Is responsible for ensuring that the Center meets DCFS requirements & NAEYC guidelines.
- **Early Childhood Director:** Is responsible for supervision of staff and the classroom activities (including curriculum, swim, gym, music) for programming for children under the age of five years (Infants, Toddlers, Twos & Preschool) including the Full Day program, Part Day preschool program and Camp Rainbow. The **Early Childhood Assistant Director** assists the director in the management of the Full Day program and the **Part Day Preschool Coordinator** assists the director in the management of the Part Day Preschool Program and Camp Rainbow and is supervised by the Early Childhood Director.
- **Director of School Age Programs:** Oversees the activities and development of all School Age Programs including summer day camps. The **Assistant Director of School Age Programs** is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day activities of the School's Out program and assists the director in the management of those programs and is supervised by this Director.
- **Registration Manager:** Is responsible for enrollment and billing issues. Has overall responsibility for registration of all Center programs. See the Registration Manager for enrollment, billing and paperwork questions.
- **Director of Services and Facilities:** Oversees registration, customer service, food program and facilities. This position supervises our Registration Manager, Front Desk/Customer Service staff, Kitchen Manager, and Cleaning and Maintenance Staff. See the Director of Services and Facilities regarding scholarship awards, food questions and building issues.
- **Kitchen Manager, and Maintenance Coordinator:** These staff each have distinct responsibilities for areas that serve the children in our Center.

Teaching Staff:

- **Full Day Lead Preschool Teachers** have bachelor's or associate's degrees, child development coursework, and experience working with preschool age children. Some also have coursework towards master's degrees.
- **Infant, Toddler and Twos Lead Teachers** have bachelor's degrees or child development associate's degrees and experience working with children. Some have coursework towards master's degrees.
- **Part Day Preschool Teachers** have either bachelor's degrees, associate's degrees in child development, or two years of college and at least six credit hours in child development.
- **School Age Lead Teachers** have at least two years of college and six college credit hours in recreation, physical education, and child development, or a teaching credential and at least six months experience.
- **School Age Assistants** have at minimum a high school diploma and experience working with children. They work under the supervision of a School Age Lead Teacher.

All teachers are required to have a minimum of 15 hours of continuing education each year in the field of Early Childhood Education or School Age programs. Our teachers far exceed this requirement by attending workshops, classes and YMCA trainings.

Information for New Families

It is important for your child to feel comfortable from the start at the McGaw YMCA Children's Center. The director and your child's teachers will help you plan your child's first few days. You should plan to spend time at the Center during your child's adjustment to the program.

During the adjustment period, which varies with the individual child, your child will be reacting to the separation from you and to their new environment here. Some children adjust to changes more easily than others, but by working together, we can make this a smooth transition for your child. Please help us by sharing important news from home, any special likes or dislikes, and any special needs that he or she may have.

Preparing For Entrance into the Children's Center

- Visit the Center, including the room where your child will be. Meet the new teacher with your child. Call the Center in advance to discuss a good time to visit.
- Read a book about childcare or school with your child.
- Talk to your child about the Center and meeting new friends in advance.
- If you are starting at the Center after the August break, there will a Curriculum Night (formerly called Open House) in September/October.
- See the list "Items Needed for the Early Childhood Programs" in Appendix A.

How to Help Your Child Adjust

- Establish routines when you are getting ready. Routines provide children with predictability and a sense of control.
- Allow your child to take a comfort item with him/her to the Center, like a stuffed toy or pacifier. Discuss with your child's teacher whether he/she can bring the item into the classroom.
- Take a picture of your family for your child to have at the Center. Our classrooms will have a display of children with their families. This gives children a sense of community and belonging.
- Allow plenty of time to get ready in the morning. When parents are rushed and stressed, they can be assured their children will also feel stressed. Separations under stress will not go smoothly.
- While driving to childcare, sing songs or talk about what he/she will do at school today and what you will do together in the evening.

Ideas for a Smooth Separation

Separations from parents can be especially stressful for young children, particularly older infants and toddlers. But there are things that parents can do to help children make the adjustments go a little more smoothly.

- Arrive early, so you have plenty of time to ease your child into the activities before you leave. Children need time to adjust to their surroundings before they are comfortable enough to stay without their parents.
- Greet your child's teacher with your child. Children need to feel assured that their parents are comfortable with the teacher and the classroom.
- Allow your child to express sadness at saying good-bye. We help children when we allow open expression of feelings and when we let them know we understand.
- Give your child advanced notice that you are leaving. For example, say "In one minute, I will leave for work."
- Tell your child when you will pick them up. For example, say "I'll pick you up after nap time."
- Give your child something to do when you leave. For example, ask your child to shut the door for you, or wave to you.

- Always say good-bye with a hug, kiss, smile or wave. Your child needs to see that you are comfortable leaving. Even if you are feeling sad about leaving, you need to let your child see confidence in the choice to leave.
- After you have said good-bye, leave... even if your child is crying. Going back to comfort your child will only make separations more difficult. Teachers will assist your child by holding or comforting the crying child. Then they will help get the child involved in an appropriate activity.

Ideas for a Smooth Reunion

- Be aware that there are a variety of common reactions from children at the end of the day at the Children’s Center. Some children ignore their parents and are hesitant to leave. Some are ecstatic about the reunion. Parents should be prepared to respond positively to whatever reaction their child has.
- Help your child make the transition from Center to home by following some routines, like putting away toys, getting his backpack and saying good-bye to friends.
- Talk to your child’s teacher and/or read about your child’s day on the Daily Information Sheet and ask your child about those activities on the way home. Ask specific questions about activities of the day; avoid general questions like “What did you do today?”

Registration and Payment

Registration

Full Day Registration is year round, accepted at all times.

Annual Priority Registration (School Age and Part Day) occurs on the second Monday in February - Current families, including siblings of currently enrolled children, may register by mail or in person.

Fall Registration (School Age and Part Day) occurs on the second Monday in March – Community registration, open to the public for new registrants.

Wait Lists

Registration applications must be submitted with the appropriate registration fee in order to be enrolled or to apply for the wait list. The waiting list operates on a first come first serve basis offering the open space to the first child of the appropriate age on the waiting list. If the parent of the child declines the spot the slot is offered to the next age appropriate child on the waiting list.

The following groups receive priority on the Children’s Center program wait lists:

- Children of YMCA staff
- Siblings of children currently enrolled
- Northwestern Affiliates

Within each of these categories, enrollment is offered according to the date applications are received and the availability of age related openings.

When an opening becomes available, the next family will be notified and given 3 business days to respond. If the family fails to respond we will move to the next family on the list and the child’s name will be moved to the bottom of the list. A decline of an offered space is a forfeit of registration fee. You may defer up to 6 months from the date of offer one time if you are unable to accept an offered space. Registration fees are forfeit upon deferral or decline.

A verbal or written notification is required in order to be removed from the wait list unless no return contact is received for more than 3 months.

Registration Fees:

Full day Programs:

Registration fees are \$250 per child. If you have paid your registration fee to secure your spot on the waitlist and have to remove your child from the waitlist, you will be refunded \$150 of your registration fee. If we offer your child a spot and you decline the spot your registration fee is forfeited. If we offer your child a spot, you can choose to defer to another month for up to 6 months from the month a spot was offered. If you choose to defer your child will be put at the end of the waitlist for the new month you choose; also, you are then no longer eligible for the \$150 refund if

you choose to remove your child from the waitlist. A second offer requires the acceptance of a space or your spot on the waitlist and registration fee will be forfeited. If we are unable to offer your child a spot within a year, you will continue to have your secured spot on the waitlist. In any other circumstance, registration fees are non-refundable.

Part Day Programs and School's Out:

Please see registration form for current registration fees.

Payment

- Payments are processed through an automatic draft system from a checking account or credit card.
- Forms to authorize payment by automatic draft are included in the packet you will receive prior to the beginning of the school year. You can also get the necessary forms from the Customer Service Associate at the Front Desk.
- If you would like to make changes to your automatic draft you must fill out a new draft form and have your credit card imprinted (if necessary). All changes will take a month to process.
- It is the parent's responsibility to update credit cards that have expired.
- Fees are paid monthly and are drafted on the 1st of each month. Our Full Day Program has on-going enrollment. In other words, once you have enrolled your child, enrollment continues until we are notified otherwise.
- Tuition for School's Out and Part Day Preschool are set up in 9 equal monthly payments. The first payment for a school year is drafted on September 1st. The last payment for the school year will be due on May 1st.
- A receipt will be mailed to you.
- **There is no credit of fees for days when the Center is closed, for family vacations, or for illness.**

Tuition Penalties/Termination of Services

- There is a \$25 service fee for any returned payments.
- Parents must notify the Center of a withdrawal or change in service **one month in advance** using the Termination of Services form available at the front desk. Early withdrawal (without one month notice) will result in payment for the entire month's tuition.
- Cancellations for Part Day Preschool, School's Out, and Full Day Programs will be charged a \$100 cancellation fee, which may be waived with proof of relocation out of the area or job loss.
- ***The Center cannot refund tuition based upon absences due to illness or vacation.***
- The Center will not refund or credit fees due to suspension from a program.

The Children's Center has the right to suspend or terminate services if payment deadlines are not met. This suspension or termination from programs may be with immediate effect.

McGaw YMCA Membership

- Children must be members of the McGaw YMCA prior to starting at the Children's Center.
- Memberships must be kept current while enrolled.
- Your child's membership entitles him/her to participate in YMCA programs at member rates.
- We encourage you to upgrade at anytime to a family membership. To upgrade to a family membership, please visit our Registration Manager.
- Benefits of our family memberships listed below:

Over 65 free group exercise classes each week
Open & lap swimming in our two pools
Open gym time on our two full basketball courts
Four free guests passes per year
Member pricing for Camp Echo overnight camp & Summer Day Camp
Babysitting service - two free hours per day (must stay in the building)
Membership privileges in hundreds of YMCAs across the country

Fitness Center orientation
FitLinxx, a personalized electronic training partner
Parking permit for our lot
Family gym, swim, & special events
Towel service
Family Locker Room with private changing rooms
Free registration for Adventure Guides

Second Child Discount

Families with more than one child enrolled in Children's Center programs will receive a 10% discount on the lowest tuition. This discount only applies when both children are enrolled for 5 days per week.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available to families with documented financial need. Our generous donors provide these funds. If you wish to apply for a scholarship, please contact the Children's Center for more information or to receive an application. Scholarship applications require submission of your most recent 1040 tax form to verify family income. Scholarships are limited and available on a first come, first serve basis.

If you are interested in becoming one of our generous donors by contributing to our Annual Campaign, please contact the VP of Children & Family Services at 847.475.8580.

General Operating Policies for McGaw YMCA Children's Center

Hours of Operation

- The Children's Center is open from 7:00 am - 6:15 pm, Monday through Friday.
- Full Day Preschool program hours are from 7:00 am - 6:15 pm.
- Part Day Preschool program hours are 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.
- School's Out Program hours are from school dismissal time until 6:15 pm.
- A calendar listing days that the Center is closed is included with the Parent Packet and is also available at the Front Desk. School's Out days and Part Day Preschool days are subject to change throughout the year sometimes due to District 65 changes. Parents will be notified of the changes if they occur as soon as the district notifies us.

Drop-off Procedures

- When you bring your child into the classroom, please sign in on the classroom daily sign-in sheet.
- Parents of children in the Early Childhood Programs are expected to include the time of arrival, their signature, the daily phone number where they can be reached, and the anticipated pick up time. If the pick-up time will change, please call to let the teacher know.
- Infant and Toddler Parents are also asked to complete a daily report form to indicate when the child last ate, the time of the last diaper change, if medication was administered, and other information to assist the teachers in caring for your child.
- **Your child may not be dropped off at an offsite location (this includes the main YMCA building) or be included in another classroom if his/her classroom is offsite.**
- Parents and children (including siblings) must wash hands when they enter the classroom.
- Infant parents and siblings must remove shoes before entering the infant classrooms.
- *Whenever possible please drop off older siblings first for the safety and health of our infants.*

Pick-up Procedures

- When picking up your child, please sign him/ her out on the daily sign-in sheet. Take the time to ask the teacher about your child's day.
- Only parents/legal guardians and those people you have designated in writing will be permitted to pick up your child. Please designate in writing anyone that you may want to pick up your child. Please turn in all changes or additions into the front desk.
- If someone who is not listed on the designated pick-up list or on the emergency contact sheet will be picking up your child, we will need signed written permission from a parent or guardian.
- Our staff will ask to see photo identification before they release a child to a person they do not know. Please advise your emergency contacts/authorized pick-ups of this policy.
- **Your child may not be picked up from an offsite location unless it is a scheduled part of the program (this includes parks and the main YMCA building).**
- School Age children may still participate in programs at the main YMCA during after school hours. The leader of the other activity must be authorized to sign out and your child and must do so when we transition them to that activity.

Late Pick-up

It is important that children are picked up promptly at the end of your child's program. The consequences of not picking up children on time are as follows:

- **Parents of participants enrolled in Children's Center Programs will be charged \$2.50 per minute / family based on the program pick-up times listed below:**
- **Part Day Preschool 12:00pm**
- **Explorers Program 2:00pm**
- **Full Day Programs and School's Out 6:15 pm**
- If you know you are going to be late, please notify the center so we can let your child and the teachers know. **Late fee will still be charged.**
- If a parent or authorized pick-up person does not arrive or call by 5 minutes past the designated pick-up time, staff will assume an emergency exists and will begin to call emergency contacts for your child.
- If no emergency contact can be reached within 1-hour past designated pick-up time, staff may contact the Evanston Police Department who will pick up the child.
- It is the teaching staff's responsibility to fill out late slips and hand them to each parent that arrives late. Please do not question the staff or plead with them. If you have questions about the charge you must talk to the administrator on duty. The teaching staff cannot waive late fees.
- **Late fees will be due within two business days. Late fees can be paid to an Administrator upon pick up.**
- Continued disregard for the pick-up time or failure to pay late pick-up fees can be cause for the child's termination from the program.

Parking

- Parking is permitted in front of the building or in the parking lot behind the building, except for the reserved spaces. All spaces along the fence are reserved for teaching and administrative staff.
- Please note that these are short term parking places for drop-off and pick up only.
- Cars may be ticketed if they are parked for longer than a half-hour.
- **Do not park in the alley next to the building.** This is a fire lane and your car can be ticketed/towed.

Tobacco Free Space

- To promote a healthy learning environment, workplace and lifestyle, smoking and the use of tobacco products must not occur anywhere on YMCA property during the Children's Center operating hours, or as part of any YMCA activity. No smoking is permitted in the presence of children.

Current Information

Please notify the Front Desk immediately of any change in contact information for your child (phone numbers, emergency contacts).

Collaborating with Program and Teaching Staff

The McGaw YMCA Children's Center fosters an environment of collaboration between staff and families. We encourage families to raise concerns and are committed to working collaboratively with them to find mutually satisfying solutions that can then be incorporated into our classroom practice.

We use a variety of techniques to negotiate difficulties that arise in interactions with family members. These techniques include welcoming families into our program through our open door policy, communication through email, calling, writing or by having conversations with either teachers or the director. Any communication regarding difficulties or concerns will be treated by staff with respect and confidentiality, including providing a private space for conversations to take place between staff and families to communicate about differences. If a translator is needed for any communication, the YMCA will provide the resources necessary to ensure communication is possible

with any family, including arranging for an interpreter as needed. Every attempt will be made to communicate with families in a language they feel comfortable with.

Community Partners and Resources

The Children's Center, through our partnership with the Childcare Network of Evanston, is able to provide families with information about programs and services for each family. Our staff support and encourage all families' efforts to negotiate health, mental health, assessment, and education services, including culturally and linguistically appropriate services, for their children and will assist the process in any way possible. Through this partnership, the Children's Center is able to further our ability to meet the needs and interest of children and families within our Children's Center community.

For a currently list of community resources, please see our parent resources board, located in the lobby of the Children's Center or contact any member of administration. Our staff are committed to assisting families them in locating, contacting, and using community resources that support their child's and family's well-being and development.

Babysitting/Personal Relationships

We understand that our teachers and staff develop deep bonds with the children and families in our care. Because of this relationship building, it is common for staff and teachers to have interactions outside of the Children's Center operating hours. An Unsanctioned Childcare Wavier form is needed for any staff member who is asked by a family to be alone with a child outside of the Children's Center (i.e., babysitting). A copy of the Unsanctioned Childcare Wavier can be found in the administrative hallway and in the appendix of this handbook. The Unsanctioned Childcare Wavier should be completed by the family, and then signed by the family and staff member. By signing this waiver, the family and staff member both acknowledge that the staff member is not under the supervision of their program director when interacting with the family and child outside of the Children's Center. This form should then be submitted to your supervisor and will be kept on file in the Children's Center. Please remember that professionalism and confidentiality of all staff and children in the Children's Center extends to families outside of the center, even if an Unsanctioned Childcare Wavier is on file.

Confidentiality Statement

We understand that administrators and teachers operate in a position of trust. As a caretaker of your children, we the staff take seriously our responsibility to keep information about the children and parents in our Children's Center confidential.

All information regarding a child, family or staff member is considered confidential. Children's actions, responses, progress or problems in the Children's Center will not for shared in the community or with staff that are not directly involved in the care of the child.

Children's records are kept in individual folders in the administrative offices and will be kept locked and confidential. Access to the keys for this filing cabinet will be restricted and controlled by the Director of Facilities and Services. The information in these files will be updated as needed, with a minimum of quarterly updates. Access to children's files will be restricted as follows:

- **Administrative and Teaching Staff:** Only administrative staff or teachers who have permission from the child's family will have access to children's files.
- **Regulatory Bodies:** As mandated by law, the Department of Children and Family Services and Health Department officials will have access to files upon request for licensing purposes only.
- **Children's Center Nurse:** The Children's Center nurse reviews children's files on a monthly basis to ensure medical record compliance. Information obtained by the nurse will only be used for medical compliance purposes.
- **Parents and/or legal guardians:** As a legal guardian, you may request access to your child's file at all times.

Any request for information from an outside agency , relevant provider, or program other than our regulatory and accrediting bodies will not be honored without the signed written permission from the

parent/guardian of the child. If the request for information is made concerning your child, you will be asked to sign a release of information prior to any information being shared about your family or child.

Confidentiality and Family Rights in Illinois

According to Section 407.80 - Confidentiality of Records and Information in the Department of Child and Family Services Group Day Care Licensing Standards:

- a) The facility personnel shall respect the confidential nature of the child and personnel records.
- b) Information pertaining to the admission, progress, health, or discharge of an individual child shall be confidential and limited to facility staff designated by the child care director and Department representatives unless the parent(s) of the child has granted written permission for disclosure or dissemination.
 - 1) The facility shall have confidentiality release forms signed by the parent(s) which specify to whom information may be released and the length of time the release form is valid. Such release forms shall be on file at the facility prior to the release of confidential information.
 - 2) If information is requested by outside persons or agencies, a specific written request signed by the person requesting the information shall be obtained and placed on file at the facility prior to the release of the information.
 - 3) Except in extreme emergency or when there is evidence of child abuse or neglect, any child 12 years of age or older must be informed of such disclosure of information.
- c) Authorized Department licensing representatives, Department child protection investigators, or other Department representatives who have the Department Director's written authorization (specifying the statutory authority or administrative rule under which access is granted) shall have access to the day care center's records and reports. All persons with access to records and reports shall respect their confidential nature.

Family Communication and Notices

- All family communication will be given in a language the family can understand, either by staff or through translation – including program policies and operating procedures.
- The Children's Center makes every attempt to keep parents fully informed of situations that may impact their child's classroom.
- Important alerts to parents will be on YMCA letterhead and illness letters will be made available through email and by hard copy through the classroom.
- Parents may also receive communication from the Children's Center staff via email whenever possible. Please make sure to fill out an email information sheet to designate which email you would prefer to be sent communication from the Children's Center.
- There is a parent communication board located on the door of each classroom. This parent communication board contains menus for meals served in the program, a classroom lesson plan, daily schedule, and enrichment schedule.
- Each classroom is given the independence to choose a communication system with parents that is most effective for their classroom. Please see your lead teacher for details.

Restrictive Custody

- We cannot prevent a parent from picking up his or her child unless we have proper documentation showing that custody has been restricted.
- We must have copies of the proper court documents, including the custody order.

Emergency Closings

The Children's Center may close without prior notice if an emergency situation exists that interferes with the safe operation of the program. Examples include power failure, heating/cooling concerns, telephone failure, and/or weather conditions which may prevent staff from being present. When such an emergency occurs during the day, parents or their emergency contacts will be notified and asked to pick up the children as soon as possible. When an emergency occurs before opening, efforts will be made to inform parents as soon as possible.

In the event of an emergency closure, parents will be contacted via the constant contact email system. Emergency Closures will also be posted on the Emergency Closing Center. Please sign up for email notifications through the website www.emergencyclosings.com. Parents may also contact the Front Desk at the Main YMCA, 847-475-7400, for information. Parents may be charged for up to three days per year for closings on an emergency basis.

Emergency Plan

When an emergency occurs within the McGaw YMCA Children's Center building that prohibits children being in the Center, we will evacuate to the Main YMCA Building located at 1000 Grove Street. We will contact parents as soon as we are in a safe location. The Main YMCA phone number is 847-475-7400.

Security

Our building is locked at all times. We have a video security system that allows us to monitor anyone entering or exiting our building through all entrances. During our hours of operation, please press the doorbell to enter either the front or rear door.

Toys

Our classrooms are equipped with a variety of toys and playthings.

- We discourage children from bringing toys from home unless they are part of a planned activity or a transition plan discussed with your child's teacher.
- When a planned activity calls for bringing a toy from home, please do not send toy weapons or destructive/violent toys. Please remember that we are teaching our children that McGaw YMCA Children's Center is a safe place.

Visiting

- We have an open door policy – parents and legal guardians are welcome to visit any area of the facility at any time during our hours of operation.
- All visitors are expected to follow Center rules.
- All Visitors must sign in at the front desk.

Lost and Found

There is a lost and found collection at the Children's Center. Any lost and found items that are not claimed by the last day of each month will be donated to a local charity. If you are missing items, please inquire with your child's teacher or the Front Desk.

Outdoor Activities

Children participate in outdoor activities throughout the year if the weather permits. To allow for safety with all of the children enrolled in programming, the Children's Center will follow the recommendations for outside exposure as indicated on the weather watch chart below.

Understand the Weather

Wind-Chill



- 30° is *chilly* and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is *cold*
- 0° to 15° is *very cold*
- -20° to 0° is *bitter cold* with significant risk of *frostbite*
- -20° to -60° is *extreme cold* and *frostbite* is likely
- -60° is *frigid* and exposed skin will freeze in 1 minute

Heat Index



- 80° or below is considered *comfortable*
- 90° beginning to feel *uncomfortable*
- 100° *uncomfortable* and may be *hazardous*
- 110° considered *dangerous*

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)

Air Temperature	Wind Speed in mph									
	Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	
40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27	
30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13	
20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1	
10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15	
0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29	
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43	



Comfortable for outdoor play



Caution



Danger

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)

Air Temperature (F)	Relative Humidity (Percent)												
	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
104	119	124	131	137									

Child Care Weather Watch

Watching the weather is part of a child care provider's job. Planning for playtime, field trips, or weather safety is part of the daily routine. The changes in weather require the child care provider to monitor the health and safety of children. What clothing, beverages, and protections are appropriate? **Clothing** children to maintain a comfortable body temperature (warmer months - lightweight cotton, colder months - wear layers of clothing). **Beverages** help the body maintain a comfortable temperature. Water or fruit juices are best. Avoid high-sugar content beverages and soda pop. **Sunscreen** may be used year around. Use a sunscreen labeled as SPF-15 or higher. Read and follow all label instructions for the sunscreen product. Look for sunscreen with UVB and UVA ray protection. **Shaded** play areas protect children from the sun.



Condition **GREEN** - Children may play outdoors and be comfortable. Watch for signs of children becoming uncomfortable while playing. Use precautions regarding clothing, sunscreen, and beverages for all child age groups.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS are unable to tell the child care provider if they are too hot or cold. Children become fussy when uncomfortable. Infants/toddlers will tolerate shorter periods of outdoor play. Dress infants/toddlers in lightweight cotton or cotton-like fabrics during the warmer months. In cooler or cold months dress infants in layers to keep them warm. Protect infants from the sun by limiting the amount of time outdoors and playing in shaded areas. Give beverages when playing outdoors.

YOUNG CHILDREN remind children to stop playing, drink a beverage, and apply more sunscreen. OLDER CHILDREN need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens). They may resist applying sunscreen and drinking beverages while outdoors.



Condition **YELLOW** - use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of outdoor time.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS use precautions outlined in Condition Green. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of time for outdoor play.

YOUNG CHILDREN may insist they are not too hot or cold because they are enjoying playtime. Child care providers need to structure the length of time for outdoor play for the young child. OLDER CHILDREN need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens), applying sunscreen and drinking liquids while playing outdoors.



Condition **RED** - most children should not play outdoors due to the health risk.

INFANTS/TODDLERS should play indoors and have ample space for large motor play. YOUNG CHILDREN may ask to play outside and do not understand the potential danger of weather conditions. OLDER CHILDREN may play outdoors for very short periods of time if they are properly dressed, have plenty of fluids. Child care providers must be vigilant about maximum protection of children.

Understand the Weather

The weather forecast may be confusing unless you know the meaning of the words.

Blizzard Warning: There will be snow and strong winds that produce a blinding snow, deep drifts, and life threatening wind chills. Seek shelter immediately.

Heat Index Warning: How hot it feels to the body when the air temperature (in Fahrenheit) and relative humidity are combined.

Relative Humidity: The percent of moisture in the air.

Temperature: The temperature of the air in degrees Fahrenheit.

Wind: The speed of the wind in miles per hour.

Wind Chill Warning: There will be sub-zero temperatures with moderate to strong winds expected which may cause hypothermia and great danger to people, pets and livestock.

Winter Weather Advisory: Weather conditions may cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not become life threatening.

Winter Storm Warning: Severe winter conditions have begun in your area.

Winter Storm Watch: Severe winter conditions, like heavy snow and ice are possible within the next day or two.

Please provide your child with appropriate outdoor gear at all times. We request that each child has appropriate winter gear (hat, gloves, boots, snow pants, coat) during fall and winter months.

Heat, Cold, Severe Weather and Pollution Alerts:

When the weather poses a risk to children and adults - extreme cold, extreme heat or too high of a level of pollution outdoor exposure will be restricted as follows:

- Some days, particularly during the summer, pollution alerts may be given by the National Weather Service. If a pollution alert is issued, an administrator will decide on the amount of exposure the program feels is safe for the children according to the advice of the alert given. To protect children and adults from high levels of pollution from smog or heavy traffic, children and staff may be required remain indoors or to limit outdoor activity as a precaution during smog or other air pollution alerts.
- All children should be protected against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect-borne disease. To ensure the safety, please be certain that your child wears clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather or allows for the body to cool itself in heat.
- During warm weather, staff will ensure that each area the class visits, whether it is to a local park or on a walk in the community, gives children the opportunity to play in the shade.
- When in the sun, children should be wearing sun-protective clothing, have applied skin protection, or both. Applied skin protection should be either sunscreen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher that is applied to exposed skin. Parents should apply sunscreen prior to bringing your child to the center. Staff will reapply sunscreen as necessary throughout the day. Each child should have their own sunscreen that is labeled with both first and last name and a signed topical ointment form on file that gives permission for staff to apply it. Each child will only be given sunscreen that has been brought in by his/her parent/guardian.
- At the beginning of the school year, parents are asked to supply a bottle of bug repellent with DEET with their child's name on it (only applied to children two months or older). On days that the public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, an administrator will let classroom staff know prior to going outside to apply bug repellent. Insect repellent will not be applied more than once a day and only with written parental permission (on the Topical Ointment Form). Application of insect repellent will only occur upon the recommendation of local health authorities. Without significant risk of insect-borne disease, the use of chemical repellents may present an alternative health risk to children. The only exception to this procedure would be if a parent specifically asks that insect repellent be applied on any given day.

Special Occasions

- You are welcome to share a birthday or special occasion with your child's class. Please let your child's teacher know ahead of time so he or she can plan accordingly. Please check with the teacher to see if there are children in the classroom who have food allergies.
- **Healthy snacks and take home bags are encouraged.**
- If you are interested in creative ways to celebrate your child's birthday in the classroom that aren't limited to the traditional cakes and cookies, please talk to your director for suggestions.
- Please do not bring latex balloons to the Center. They are a serious choking hazard for young children.
- If you wish to bring in food items, please note that they must be commercially prepared and must arrive unopened as packaged by the bakery or manufacturer.

Parent Involvement

Parents and others, regardless of family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds, gender, abilities or preferred language are welcome to assist in classroom activities, to share a special talent, be room helpers, or trip chaperones.

- Through developmental history forms and conversations with families, the interests and skills of each family and the needs of the program will be considered when offering or accepting volunteer opportunities.
- Family events are regularly scheduled and collaboration between staff and families are encouraged for the planning and creation of these events. This collaboration between staff and families helps to ensure families' schedules and availability for events are considered.
- Licensing standards require that any parents or volunteers who spend more than two full days a month, on a consistent basis, must be given a background check and fill out appropriate volunteer paperwork.
- Two room parents will be recruited to volunteer for each full day and part day preschool classroom to act as "Room Parents" and help coordinate special activities for the classroom. Room Parents must be a parent or guardian.
- Parents and family members are encouraged to take leadership roles within the Children's Center. This can be done through:
 - Parent volunteers will be recruited for **Parent Advisory Groups** for the Full Day Program, Part-Day Preschool Program, and School's Out Program. Any parent is invited to these meetings, either on a regular basis. Each meeting will have the agenda and topics announced prior to the meeting. This enables parents who may not attend on a regular basis to participate in events or decisions that are of particular interest to them. These groups will assist staff in:
 - Reviewing and evaluating program activities
 - Planning and conducting family events ; fundraising activities
 - Discussing and resolving problems
 - Enhancing communications
 - Identifying and securing resources and materials
 - The McGaw YMCA Board of Directors Committees – these committees are created by the Board of Directors and parent volunteers are encouraged to participate in the implementation and creation of strategic planning processes.

A survey/sign-up form is included in the Parent Packet. For more information contact the Early Childhood Director or the Director of School Age Programs.

Discipline and Guidance

A positive guidance approach is used to help children develop positive self-esteem, build trust in the world around them, and develop autonomy and pride in their work. A supportive, nurturing environment with caring adults is the first step in the development of inner control and appropriate behavior.

Our teachers set limits by providing choices for children and allowing children to assume responsibility for their actions. In doing so, children develop self-control and become aware of the rights of others. Consequences (logical and natural) developmentally related to the child's behavior might include reinforcing positive behavior, modeling appropriate behavior, and assisting children with finding words to describe how they are feeling.

There are four basic values/rules we teach regarding acceptable behavior. They are as follows:

1. We respect others and things through our words and actions.
2. We are responsible for our words and actions.
3. We are honest about our words and actions.
4. We are caring people.

The YMCA expects the cooperation of parents to ensure that the behavior management plan supports all the children in the program.

Behavior Modification Procedures:

When a child demonstrates that he/she has not followed the rules regarding acceptable behavior, the following procedures will be set into motion:

- Staff will remind the child of the behavior guidelines and rules.
- Staff will allow the child to return to the activity.

Should the negative behavior persist:

- Staff will remind the child of the behavior guidelines and rules.
- Staff will redirect the child to a more appropriate behavior and stay with the child until the child has adjusted to the new situation.

Should the negative behavior persist:

- Staff will remind the child of the behavior guidelines and rules.
- Staff will take the child to a separate area, in the room, help the child with the words to describe what or how he/she was feeling and why.

Should the negative behavior persist:

- Staff will remind the child of the behavior guidelines and rules.
- Staff will notify administrative staff.
- The incident will be documented and parents will be notified at pick-up time.

If negative behaviors disrupt the classroom environment on a regular basis:

- A conference with the child's parents will be set involving the lead teacher, the child's parents, and administration.
- During this conference a strategy and timeline for improved behavior will be developed.

Early Childhood/School Age Specialists will be consulted and assist in persistent cases. While we strive to provide what every child needs to succeed in group care, we may not have the resources to implement or sustain a plan for managing extreme behavioral issues. It is not our intent to provide any disservice to keep a child in our program if we cannot meet the child's individual needs while maintaining a safe and productive environment for all children and staff.

The Early Childhood Director or School Age Director, as well as the Vice President of Children & Family Services, will meet with parents in situations where the continuance of a child's enrollment is in question.

The following behaviors are not acceptable and may result in immediate termination:

- Endangering the health and safety of other children or staff
- Continuous disruption of the program
- Unacceptable behavior such as use of profanity or threats to other children or staff

Parents are also expected to follow proper rules of conduct and may be barred from entering the premises if they exhibit violent or threatening behavior to their own child, another child, another parent/caregiver, or YMCA staff.

If there is any concern regarding our ability to continue providing care for a child, meetings between teachers, administrative staff, and parents to discuss concerns and corrective action plans will precede any termination of services decision. No parent will suddenly find his/her child without care. Should the Center decide that services must be terminated, every effort will be made to assist families with finding alternative services.

Health Policies

Good Health Practices

- Parents and children are required to wash hands upon entering the classroom.
- Whenever your child uses the toilet, please remind him/her to wash their hands.
- Remind them to use facial tissues to blow/wipe their nose and then wash their hands.
- Remind children to cover their mouths with their elbow when sneezing/coughing.
- Everyone, including parents, siblings and guests, must remove their shoes before entering the infant classrooms (rooms 6 & 7).

Illness

Guidelines regarding illnesses are designed to protect your child and all the children at the Center. A child should not attend school for the following reasons.

- **Fever** of 100 degrees auxiliary (armpit) or 101 degrees orally/rectally. Your child must stay home until his/her temperature has been normal for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. If your pediatrician indicates in writing that your child's fever has a non-contagious cause, such as teething, or reaction to an immunization, and your child is well enough to participate in activities of the group, an exception may be made.
- **Severe cold.** Your child may return to the Center when well enough to participate in the activities of the group.
- **Diarrhea.** Your child must stay home until he/she is having solid stools, or until he/she has not had a diarrhea stool for 24 hours. If your pediatrician indicates in writing that the diarrhea is of a non-contagious nature, and your child is well enough to participate in classroom activities, an exception may be made.
- **Vomiting.** Your child may return to the Center when he/she has not vomited in 24 hours.
- **Rash/Lesions** including herpes infection, impetigo, ringworm, yeast infection or any other undiagnosed rash or skin lesion. If we suspect that a rash or skin lesion is contagious, your child will be required to see a pediatrician for diagnosis and treatment. If the rash or skin lesion is of a communicable nature, your child must stay home until the rash is resolved. In the case of a rash in a covered area, such as the diaper area, your child may return to the Center after using a prescribed ointment for 24 hours.
- **Conjunctivitis "pink-eye"** or other unusual discharge from the eyes. These infections are often very contagious. Your child will be allowed to return to the Center when he/she has been prescribed appropriate medication and when the discharge has been resolved.
- **Strep infection** or any other infection for which an oral antibiotic has been prescribed. Your child may return to the Center when he/she has been on antibiotics for 24 hours and is able to participate in the activities of the group.
- **Thrush.** Your child may return to the Center when he/she has been on medication for 24 hours.
- **Childhood contagious diseases** (chicken pox, roseola, measles, mumps, and rubella). Your child may return to the Center when he/she is no longer contagious.
- **Lice.** Your child must be nit-free in order to return to the Center. Be sure to use the medicated shampoo and work to get all nits off of the hair follicles.
- **Unexplained irritability, fatigue, loss of appetite,** etc. If your child seems sick, is acting or looking different, please don't bring your child to the Center. Children are often most contagious when an illness is just starting.

If a child becomes ill while at school with any of the above symptoms, we will contact his or her parents (or other emergency contact if parents are not available) and ask that the child be picked up **within one hour.**

Notification of Communicable Illnesses

Parents will be notified of communicable illnesses of children in their child's classroom. You will receive details of the particular illness and the potential symptoms. We do not include the name of the child who is ill. If required, we will also report the illness to the Health Department.

HIV/AIDS Policy

Parents are not required to disclose a child's HIV status. We do not require that any child or family member be tested for HIV.

If we learn that a child in the program is HIV positive that information will be kept confidential. No notification will be given to other parents that an HIV infected child is attending the program. Persons directly involved in the care of that child will be informed, provided that the child's parent gives us permission to make this disclosure.

The decision to admit a child who is HIV positive or who has AIDS will be made on a case by case basis, using a team approach, including the directors, teachers, parents and the child's physician. Admission will be based upon the child's immune status, health, development and behavior. The criteria will be periodically reviewed in order to advise on continued enrollment.

Generally there are two reasons to exclude a child who is HIV positive or who has AIDS: 1) the presence of weeping skin or oral lesion which cannot be covered and 2) the presence of active biting behavior by the child.

The Department of Human Rights has determined that AIDS is a physical handicap under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Medication

We will dispense medication at the Center as follows:

1. Both prescription and non-prescription medication will be accepted only in its original container. Prescription medications must be labeled with the full pharmacy label. Over-the-counter (non-prescription) medication must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. The container must be in such condition that the name of the medication, and the directions for use, are clearly readable.
2. All medication must be brought to the front desk, where an administrator will speak with the parent regarding reasons for the medication as well as proper administration.
3. Medication will be administered in a manner that protects the safety of the child. A specific classroom teacher trained in medication administration (or other designated staff person) will be designated to administer and document the dispensation of the medication each day.
4. Prescription medication will be administered as directed by a physician, and only upon receipt of the medication consent form signed by a parent. These release forms are available from the classroom teacher and at the front desk.
5. Over-the-counter medications will be dispensed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and must also be accompanied by a medication consent form signed by the parent. Over-the-counter medications that need to be administered for more than two days require a doctor's note.
6. Inhalers and medications for allergies may be kept at the Center with written instructions from the child's physician regarding when the medication is to be given and the dosage. A nurse, doctor or parent must train staff on the dispensation of these medications.
7. If your child has taken medication before arriving at the Center, please inform your child's teachers.
8. Parents must sign a Topical Ointment Form stating whether their child should receive any sunscreen, ointment or lotion. If you choose that your child not wear sunscreen, you must provide protective clothing.
9. Parents should label the sunscreen/lotion/ointment with the child's name in permanent ink and give to the teacher for storage in the classroom. (These items should not be stored in children's lockers.)

Accidents/Emergencies

- Parents must complete an authorization form for their child's emergency care. This form is included in your child's enrollment packet and serves as a release authorization and provides us with emergency contact information. It is extremely important that you keep emergency contact information up-to-date.
- In the event of a serious illness/injury, we will take all necessary steps to obtain emergency care for your child, including calling 911 if appropriate.
- The center will first try to contact the parent at the number provided on the sign-in sheet. If the center staff cannot reach you at this number, we will phone the emergency contacts you have identified.
- If an authorized person is not available and the child needs to go to the emergency room, a member of administration will accompany your child.
- We complete an accident report for all injuries that occur while your child is in our care. Your child's teacher will describe the incident to you, show you the report, and ask you to sign the report.

- As a precautionary measure, you will be notified immediately of any head or neck injury that your child sustains.

NUTRITION

Food and Meal Time Policies

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Children’s Center participates in the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program, which plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable for many low-income families. This program allows us to serve the children in our care a morning snack, hot lunch, and two afternoon snacks at a relatively low price daily. In order to participate in this program, we follow strict guidelines of food service and documentation of meals.

We provide morning snack, lunch and afternoon snacks for any child who is in our care for the meal time. Additionally, if program is in operation during typical “eating” times, i.e., Explorers program, School’s Out Holiday program, etc., then meals will be served for children.

Our meals are planned in accordance with nutrition standards set by the Illinois State Board of Education Child and Adult Care Food Program. Menus will be posted for parents on monthly basis on our website on the Parent Board in the first floor hallway and on the Parent Communication Boards in each classroom.

The Children’s Center views meal times as an opportunity to promote conversation and encourage the use of polite manners. Staff will sit with children who are eating to demonstrate proper eating habits and encourage conversation among children. Food will never be used as a punishment or a reward.

Meals and snacks are served at least two hours apart but not more than three hours apart. Please see your child’s classroom schedule for snack and lunch times. Children enrolled in an infant classroom will be fed on a schedule that is agreed upon between the child’s family and teaching staff.

Food Substitutions, Lunches from Home, Allergies and Medical Exemptions

All children and parents should be encouraged by staff to eat the meals that the center provides. In the case of exceptions, the procedure below must be followed;

- Due to our DCFS licensing, any outside food requires a letter from the parent stating that they are responsible for the safety of the food brought into the center. This letter should be submitted to the front desk to be placed in the child’s file.
- If food is sent from home, every attempt should be made to present the child with options that align with the USDA guidelines for a healthy meal. Parents are encouraged to send matching our CACFP component guidelines, ensuring healthy options for all children that are well balanced. For information on these component guidelines, please contact the Director of Facilities and Services, who will help parents meet our nutritional guidelines even when food is sent from home.
- Any substitutions due to medical reasons, allergic reactions, or religious reason need to have the “Medical Exemption Statement for Food Substitution Form” completed by a physician. All Medical Exemption Statement for Food Substitution Forms should be submitted to the Front Desk of the Children’s Center. Once the center receives this form, we will be able to provide food to substitute. (ie: Black Beans can replace a beef patty for a child who is a vegetarian for religious reasons.)
- Any child with a food substitution, lunch from home, allergy, and/or medical exemption must have an allergy form posted in the classroom. Your child’s teacher will ask you to sign this form.
- All foods and beverages brought from home need to be labeled with the child’s name and the date.
- All food requiring refrigeration should be placed in the classroom refrigerator to ensure it remains cold until served.

- If necessary, food from the Children’s Center should be provided in accordance to all documented food restrictions on file for the child to supplement food brought from home.
- For each child with special health care needs or food allergies or special nutrition needs, the child’s health care provider gives the program an individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child’s care. This form is available at the Children’s Center front desk.

Food from Outside of the Classroom

If a child arrives at the center eating food the parent will be asked to supervise the child away from the other children until he or she is finished eating.

Nut Statement

The Children’s Center does not allow any peanuts, nuts or peanut oil to be brought into the building by staff or parents. We cannot state that we are a nut free facility because our catering company is not a nut free facility.

Children’s Files

The Children’s Center is a DCFS licensed childcare center and, therefore, is required to have current medical information on all children who are enrolled in the Center. Please see the Required Forms checklist in the parent packet or at the front desk that details all requirements for physical examinations and immunizations. Children will not be allowed to attend until these forms are submitted to the Center.

Children’s files, including medical, health and safety information, will be kept confidential but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records. These files are also immediately available to the child’s parents or legal guardian as well as to our regulatory and accrediting bodies upon request.

Physical Examinations and Immunizations: An immunization schedule for children under 3 years of age is available for parent’s use. Contact the Registration Manager if you would like to receive an immunization schedule for your child, or if have questions regarding any forms. Please bring the DCFS physical form with you for each scheduled doctor’s visit. Forms are available in your classroom or at the Front Desk.

Lead Testing: A blood test for lead is required for all children living in “high risk” areas, which includes all of Chicago, and local zip codes 60201, 60202, 60022, and 60093. **If your child is age 1 or older, and you live in one of the areas noted above,** your child must have a blood test for lead with the date and result noted on the form. The result should be noted on the right side of the form (it should be a number). **If you live in a different zip code than those noted above (e.g. 60203),** your doctor must still complete a lead assessment/questionnaire (this is a separate form that is provided by your Dr. and is not available at the Children’s Center) and note whether a blood test is indicated (yes or no) on the form. If your doctor marks “yes” after completing the assessment, the date and result of the test must be noted on the form.

TB Skin Test: If your child is age 1 or older, we must have either a date and result for a TB skin test noted on the medical form, **or** a signed statement from your child’s doctor (written on letterhead or a prescription pad) saying that he/she has determined that a TB test is not necessary.

Required Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

All staff members in the Children’s Center receive child abuse and neglect prevention and reporting training upon orientation annual follow up training. Due to the Childcare Act of 1969, all staff members in the Children’s Center are Mandated Reporters of suspected child abuse.

The procedure for reporting is:

1. Staff will report such information to the Director of the program.
2. The Director of the program is responsible for making the report by telephone, followed by a written report within 48 hours.
3. Documentation of suspected child abuse or neglect shall be maintained by the Children's Center. Information will be kept confidential unless requested by an official representing DCFS during an investigation of suspected abuse.

As a result, all injuries that a child has upon arriving to care will always be internally documented, regardless of the reason given for the injuries. Adults signing the child in or out of care will be asked about the reason or cause for all injuries. These injuries include, but are not limited to:

Cuts	Unusual smell
Bruises	Repeated wearing of clothes
Unexplained behavior	A child arriving with extreme hunger or thirst
A story related by the child	A diaper that is soiled to extreme
Extreme sunburn	

Insurance Policy

- The McGaw YMCA Children's Center does not carry health or accidental insurance for children.
- Parents or guardians assume all responsibility for any medical or other professional services that may be required for their child.

Full Day Early Childhood Program

Infant, Toddlers and Twos Program

The first three years of a child's life form the foundation for the years to follow. These years are critical for brain and language development. During this period, the child's life experience plays a fundamental role in the hard wiring of the brain, laying the foundation for all intellectual and emotional development. From birth, babies are marvelous learners, investigating the sights, sounds, and feel of the world. They need a world filled with responsive interactions and language: many conversations with others, books, songs, and lots of listening and responding to their vocalizations.

Our program is geared to address the unique and special needs of children in these age groups. Our curriculum provides individualized care and activities for each child. Teachers work with families to build partnerships and to establish and follow schedules that are designed to meet the needs of each child and the child's family. Teachers create weekly lesson plans that promote each child's development through literacy, music and movement, gross and fine motor activities, art, and social experiences.

Individual schedules are created to meet the needs of each child. Our classrooms have large, soft areas that are perfect for children learning to crawl and walk as well as climbing structures for children who are ready for them. Whenever the weather permits, infants are taken outside for buggy rides. Toddlers, Twos and older infants make visits to our indoor and outdoor playgrounds that create opportunities for fun and enjoyment.

Curriculum


We use the Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers. It is a child-based, emergent curriculum, using the children's interest to create activities and learning centers that develop all subject areas. Each day for your child will be a combination of teacher directed activities and child directed activities, with relationship and secure bond building the foundation for each interaction. Each classroom's daily schedule allows for equal amounts of activity and rest, as well as indoor and outdoor activities. Prior to planning activities for a child or classroom, teachers will review the developmental history form for each child and family and actively use this information to create and adapt the curriculum to the families they serve. Information considered is: family home values, beliefs, experiences, religion, and home language. This information will also be used throughout the year to adapt the classroom environment, the curriculum offered and the teaching methods used to best support the children and be responsive to the families in each classroom.

Curriculum goals are a set of competencies we strive to achieve for each child in our center. The curriculum goals for infants and toddlers are:

These goals will be communicated to parents through the lesson plans, and presented in a more in-depth manner during Curriculum Night in October. At the beginning of a relationship with a family, teaching staff will engage with families to learn from their knowledge of their own child's interests, approaches to learning, and the child's developmental needs, and to learn about their concerns and

These goals will be communicated to parents through the lesson plans, and presented in a more in-depth manner during Curriculum Night in October. At the beginning of a relationship with a family, teaching staff will engage with families to learn from their knowledge of their own child's interests, approaches to learning, and the child's developmental needs, and to learn about their concerns and goals for their children. This information will then be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning.





As the curriculum progresses, teachers will be assessing each child's progress using a combination of anecdotal notes, work samples and developmental checklists. Upon analyzing these assessment



THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM®
FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS & TWOS

Goals and Objectives

At a Glance

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
<p>To learn about self and others</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trusts known, caring adults 2. Regulates own behavior 3. Manages own feelings 4. Responds to others' feelings with growing empathy 5. Plays with other children 6. Learns to be a member of a group 7. Uses personal care skills 	<p>To learn about moving</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Demonstrates basic gross motor skills 9. Demonstrates basic fine motor skills  	<p>To learn about the world</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Sustains attention 11. Understands how objects can be used 12. Shows a beginning understanding of cause and effect 13. Shows a beginning understanding that things can be grouped 14. Uses problem-solving strategies 15. Engages in pretend play 	<p>To learn about communicating</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Develops receptive language 17. Develops expressive language 18. Participates in conversations 19. Enjoys books and being read to 20. Shows an awareness of pictures and print 21. Experiments with drawing and writing 

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tools, lesson plans and activities will be adjusted to meet each child's educational needs and align education offered to each child to our curriculum goals.

As teachers implement curriculum plans, interactions with children will be used to assess their strengths and needs to inform curriculum development and individualize future teaching activities. While planning classroom curriculum, teachers consider children's interests and use these interests

to plan classroom activities to meet curriculum education goals. This at times may call for adaptations and modifications to ensure access to the curriculum for all children in the classroom.

Another source of knowledge concerning each child and family will be obtained during conversations during drop off, pick up, Meet & Greet events, Curriculum Night events, and individual family conferences. This information will include the child's interests, the family's approach to learning, the child's developmental needs, concerns and the goals for their children. The information received from these conversations will then be used in ongoing classroom planning.

As an aid to our curriculum, teaching staff use a variety of formal and informal methods to communicate with families about the program philosophy and curriculum objectives, including educational goals and effective strategies that can be used by families to promote their children's learning. Information gained from these methods help staff receive input from families about curriculum activities throughout the year. Examples of formal and informal methods of communicating with families include:

- new family orientations
- small group meetings
- individual conversations
- written questionnaires
- email communication
- daily sheets

An additional component unique to our program curriculum is our intention to instill in each child the feeling of belonging to our Evanston community. Our community is full of rich and diverse opportunities to teach children the value of their neighborhood and those in it. This is achieved by taking active walks in the community, visiting local community helpers, inviting guest speakers into the classroom, and local walking fieldtrips to local business and attractions.

Monthly Planning Forms

Monthly Care Forms

At the beginning of each month, a monthly care plan will be completed for each child by their primary caregiver. This form highlights the child's schedule, needs and habits that help him/her feel more comfortable in our care. These forms will be posted in the classroom where they can be used by teacher staff assigned to the care of your child.

Infant Classrooms

Each month, the primary caregiver will create a monthly care plan as well as an individualized lesson plan for each child. At the start of each month a copy is given to each child's parent for whom the lesson plan is written for, either through their classroom mailbox or via email.

Toddler Classrooms

Weekly Planning Forms

Each toddler classroom creates a weekly classroom lesson plan for the group of children in the classroom. Each week, the new lesson plan will be posted on the parent board in your classroom and distributed to every family in the classroom each week, either by classroom mailbox or via email.

Changes to the Environment Forms

At the beginning of each theme, a Changes to the Environment form should be completed. This form indicates how teaching staff will incorporate the classroom theme into each area of your classroom.

Toilet Training

We will partner with the parents and support them with the effort of toilet training when the family is ready. Generally, the rule of thumb for readiness is:

1. Does the child verbalize his/her wants using four word sentences?
2. Does the child understand physical relationships like "on", "in"?
3. Can the child follow a two or three component command?

We encourage the children, when ready, to use the toilet. We work in partnership with the parents in preparing the children to be successful when potty training.

Preschool Program

Our preschool programs are designed to provide a well-rounded early learning program for children prior to kindergarten. According to NAEYC's "Early Years are Learning Years," the first years of a child's life are a crucial development period. Children who are nurtured and stimulated during these years are much more prepared for formal reading and math and are more likely to have the social skills they will need when it's time for kindergarten. Parents are a child's first teachers, but an important choice for many families in their child's early years involves preschool and childcare. Our goal is to partner with the parents in order to prepare your child to be a successful, life-long learner.

Curriculum

Second only to human relationships, a well-planned curriculum helps define a child's experience in their preschool program. To ensure that our early childhood programs deliver high-quality activities and interactions, we have embraced The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, developed by Teaching Strategies, Inc. This curriculum is grounded in a child-centered and holistic approach to early childhood. Children experience the core components of the preschool curriculum through blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, science, sand and water, music and movement, cooking, and computers. In addition to our classroom instruction, children receive a formal music program that is funded by Northwestern University and physical fitness activities taught by YMCA fitness instructors. Children who are three years and older receive swimming instruction from YMCA certified swim instructors twice per week. McGaw YMCA Children's Center also incorporates the YMCA Character Development, asset building, anti-bias, and anti-violence principles with the curriculum through the vehicle of weekly themes. Each day will be a combination of teacher directed activities and child directed activities. Each classroom's daily schedule will allow equal amounts of activity and rest, as well as indoor and outdoor activities.

Prior to planning activities for a classroom, teachers will review the developmental history form for each child and family and actively use this information to create and adapt the curriculum to the families they serve. Information considered is: family home values, beliefs, experience, religion, and home language. This information will then be used throughout the year to adapt teaching methods to best support the children and families in each classroom.

When planning classroom curriculum, teachers will observe children’s interests and use these interests to plan classroom activities to meet curriculum education goals. This at times may call for adaptations and modifications to ensure access to the curriculum for all children in the classroom.

The Creative Curriculum[®] Goals and Objectives at a Glance

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Sense of Self</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shows ability to adjust to new situations 2. Demonstrates appropriate trust in adults 3. Recognizes own feelings and manages them appropriately 4. Stands up for rights <p>Responsibility for Self and Others</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Demonstrates self-direction and independence 6. Takes responsibility for own well-being 7. Respects and cares for classroom environment and materials 8. Follows classroom routines 9. Follows classroom rules <p>Prosocial Behavior</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Plays well with other children 11. Recognizes the feelings of others and responds appropriately 12. Shares and respects the rights of others 13. Uses thinking skills to resolve conflicts 	<p>Gross Motor</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Demonstrates basic locomotor skills (running, jumping, hopping, galloping) 15. Shows balance while moving 16. Climbs up and down 17. Pedals and steers a tricycle (or other wheeled vehicle) 18. Demonstrates throwing, kicking, and catching skills <p>Fine Motor</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Controls small muscles in hands 20. Coordinates eye-hand movement 21. Uses tools for writing and drawing 	<p>Learning and Problem Solving</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Observes objects and events with curiosity 23. Approaches problems flexibly 24. Shows persistence in approaching tasks 25. Explores cause and effect 26. Applies knowledge or experience to a new context <p>Logical Thinking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 27. Classifies objects 28. Compares/measures 29. Arranges objects in a series 30. Recognizes patterns and can repeat them 31. Shows awareness of time concepts and sequence 32. Shows awareness of position in space 33. Uses one-to-one correspondence 34. Uses numbers and counting <p>Representation and Symbolic Thinking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 35. Takes on pretend roles and situations 36. Makes believe with objects 37. Makes and interprets representations 	<p>Listening and Speaking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 38. Hears and discriminates the sounds of language 39. Expresses self using words and expanded sentences 40. Understands and follows oral directions 41. Answers questions 42. Asks questions 43. Actively participates in conversations <p>Reading and Writing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 44. Enjoys and values reading 45. Demonstrates understanding of print concepts 46. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet 47. Uses emerging reading skills to make meaning from print 48. Comprehends and interprets meaning from books and other texts 49. Understands the purpose of writing 50. Writes letters and words

As the curriculum progresses, teachers will be assessing each child’s progress using a combination of anecdotal notes, work samples and developmental checklists. Upon analyzing these assessment tools, curriculum should be adjusted to meet each child’s educational needs and goals.

Another source of knowledge concerning each child and family will be obtained during conversations during drop off, pick up, Meet & Greet events, Curriculum Night events, and individual family conferences. This information will include the child’s interests, the family’s approach to learning, the child’s developmental needs, concerns and the goals for their children. The information received from these conversations will then be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning.

As an aid to our curriculum, teaching staff use a variety of formal and informal methods to communicate with families about the program philosophy and curriculum objectives, including educational goals and effective strategies that can be used by families to promote their children’s learning. Information gained from these methods help staff get input from families about curriculum activities throughout the year. Examples of formal and informal methods of communicating with families include:

- new family orientations
- small group meetings
- individual conversations
- written questionnaires

An additional component to our Creative Curriculum is our intention to instill in each child the feeling of belonging to our Evanston community. Our community is full of rich and diverse opportunities to teach children the value of their neighborhood and those in it. This can be achieved by taking active walks in the community, visiting local community helpers, inviting guest speakers into the classroom, and local walking fieldtrips to local business and attractions.

Planning Forms

Weekly Planning Forms

Each classroom creates a weekly classroom lesson plan. Each week, the new lesson plan will be posted on your parent board in your classroom. This lesson plan is also sent home each week to families, either by classroom mailbox or via email.

Changes to the Environment Forms

At the beginning of each theme, a Changes to the Environment form should be completed. This form indicates how teaching staff will incorporate the classroom theme into each area of your child's classroom.

Primary Caregivers

When your child begins in his/her classroom, they will be assigned to a primary caregiver. A primary caregiver is a consistent teacher who is primarily responsible for an individual child's care. This provides continuity of one relationship and allows for the teacher to form a special bond with your child and family. While all teachers that care for all of the children in the classroom, having a primary caregiver provides the teacher and family the opportunity to create a special bond that results in strong communication.

Primary caregivers provide ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect the well-being of children assigned to their care. Primary caregivers will be well acquainted with the developmental abilities and educational goals of each of the children assigned to their care.

Responsibilities of Primary Caregivers:

- Complete the Individual Care Plan Family Information Form through communication, either through an intake meeting or during pick up and drop off.
- Review the child's developmental history and be familiar with any individual needs the child may have.
- Ensure that all staff caring for the child in the classroom are aware of any special needs the child may have.
- Complete the Individual Child Profile checklist 3 times per year at each assigned checkpoint
- Personally complete the child's daily sheet each day, according to the Children's Center Assessment Plan
- Conducting parent/teacher conferences 2 times per year, according to the Children's Center Assessment Plan
- Complete or contribute to the classroom's weekly lesson plans to ensure that educational activities are presented to children to help reach their individual curriculum goals and objectives.
- Create progress notes to send home to the family of each child at each assigned checkpoint
- Maintain an individual child portfolio for each child that includes photos and work samples over the course of the year.
- Observations of each child which will later be used to complete the Individual Child Profile.
- Contribute to curriculum development aligned with our assessment plan which individualizes learning for each child in a group – providing meaningful learning activities.
- Supervision and immediate care as needed to protect each child's well-being.
- Provide ongoing personal contact for the family in the classroom.

Daily Schedules

- Daily schedules will be posted in each classroom, highlighting the times the children may be out of the building for walks, gym, swim, park excursions, etc.

- All activities outside of the Children’s Center will begin after 9:00am and finish before 4:00pm. If your child is dropped off or picked up between these hours, please discuss this with your teacher so arrangements can be made.
- Your child may not be dropped off at an offsite location or be included in another classroom if his/her classroom is offsite.
- Daily schedules vary by classroom. Your teacher will provide you with an overall schedule of activities and a weekly curriculum. Please look below for two examples of daily schedules.

Sample Toddler Daily Schedule

7:00-8:00	Welcome/Free Play
8:00-8:45	Morning Snack
8:30-9:30	Cognitive Activities
9:30-10:00	Gross Motor Activities/Playroom
10:00-10:15	Circle Time
10:15-11:00	Social Activity
11:00-11:15	Clean-up Time
11:15-11:45	Lunch
11:45-12:15	Free Play/Diapering/Transitioning
12:15-3:00	Nap Time/Quiet time
3:00-3:45	Playroom/Science Activities
3:45-4:15	Afternoon Snack
4:15-5:00	Science/Math Activity
5:00-5:30	Cognitive Activities
5:30-5:45	Evening Snack
5:45-6:15	Center Play/Goodbye

Sample Full Day Preschool Daily Schedule

7:00-8:30	Welcome / Morning Snack
8:30-9:15	Playground
9:15-9:45	Small Group Activities
9:45-10:45	Art & Centers
10:45-11:15	Gym/Swim/Music Class
11:15-11:45	Circle Time
11:45-12:00	Story Time
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	Nap Time
3:00-3:30	Afternoon snack
3:30-4:15	Center Play
4:15-5:00	Small Group Activities
5:00-5:30	Evening snack
5:30-6:15	Quiet Activities

Sleeping Arrangements

Infant/Toddler Sleeping Arrangements

We are happy to accommodate your child’s sleeping needs which may be at any hour of the day for Infants and Toddlers. As early childhood professionals we understand that some children need more sleep than others. Your child will always have the opportunity to rest using their crib/cot if he/she is in need of sleep.

To reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS): **Infants, unless otherwise ordered by a physician with a note from that physician on file, are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface manufactured for sale as infant sleeping equipment that meets the standards of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.** After being placed down for sleep on their backs, infants may

then be allowed to assume any comfortable sleep position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position.

Your child will have an individually assigned and labeled crib or cot. All children under 15 months will be sleeping in a crib. Children over 15 months will be transitioned to a cot.

While infants and toddlers are sleeping, every child will be within sight and sound of a teaching staff member. The use of mirrors, video and sound monitors are never substituted for supervision in the Children's Center.

Cots and cribs are placed so that a solid barrier or a distance of 3 feet separates sleeping children from one another. Each classroom will have a cot/crib map that you can refer to if you have any questions.

Preschool Sleeping Arrangements

After lunch, classroom teachers will put assigned cots out, dim the lights, turn on soft music, and lower the blinds to block out sun light. In preschool rooms, nap time generally begins no earlier than 12:00 and no later than 1:30.

Due to the differences in children's bodies, we understand that some children need more sleep than others. We encourage each child to try to rest for at least 30 minutes. If a child cannot fall asleep in that time, alternative quiet activities will be offered. We have an activity room for children who are absolutely unable to rest.

Every child's cot will be labeled with their name. Children can keep items (blankets, small pillows, etc.) on their cot while the cot is stored if it does not come into contact with the cot on top of it. For example, a light blanket folded and placed on the top of the cot while stored would be fine. However, a large pillow would not be able to fit without touching the cot above it, so it will be stored in the child's cubby or locker each day.

Assessment

Assessments are ongoing at the Children's Center and are the cornerstone of our curriculum planning. Assessments are conducted on all children according to the McGaw YMCA Children's Center Assessment Plan.

In each classroom, the primary caregiver will be responsible for the assessment of your child. However, assessment will be overseen and directed by the lead teacher(s) in each classroom, who will ensure that assessments are carried out as directed by the Children's Center Assessment Plan. All observations and assessments are kept confidential. Access is strictly limited to those directly involved in the child's care and any request from a regulatory or accrediting body. As a parent you may request access to your child's assessment information at any time.

Each primary caregiver is trained in the Creative Curriculum Assessment System, which includes the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum, the Individual Child Profile as well as the Child Progress and Planning Report and Family Conference Form. This system was created following an extensive, literature-based research review of some of the most recent works in the field of early childhood education and many individual research studies describing predictors of school success. The scoring of this system is individual to each child, assessing baseline data at the beginning of a child's enrollment in our program and using progress measured against this baseline data to interpret results.

Our assessment plan uses a variety of informal and formal assessments, including anecdotal notes, observations, conferences, screenings, developmental continuum checklist, work sampling and individual child profiles. Children are measured based on their physical, social and even emotional health to ensure they are meeting milestones or to identify areas that may need special attention or professional assistance for improvement. Family members may ask their child's teacher to see the instruments used or the compiled assessment information of their children at any time.

Information obtained through assessment will be used to communicate with family members regarding child progress and to inform teaching staff during the curriculum planning process to help all children achieve their educational goals. By using assessment information to inform curriculum planning, teaching staff are able to maximize future learning activities on an individual basis for each child.

When children are assessed, they are done so in as natural a setting as possible, with the teacher observing in a way that does not interfere with child interactions. Teachers also use their day to day interactions as a form of assessment when compiling information in the Individual Child Profiles. These interactions are priceless forms of personal communication that are particular to each child.

Teaching staff will work to achieve consensus with your family about assessment methods that will best meet your child's needs prior to beginning assessments. There will be two parent/teacher conferences per year, the first one in November and the second one in May. The first parent/teacher conference of the year, held in November, will review the baseline assessment data collected on your child and agree on future assessments as well as a progress plan to collaborate on your child's education and progress goals. The second parent/teacher conference will be a review of the year's progress as well as establishing future educational goals for your child.

Special Needs and Differing Abilities

As part of our philosophy, we strive to provide high quality care and education to all children regardless of their abilities. Each child's education, especially children with identified needs, is individual and requires different accommodations.

1. Upon enrolling in the program, the director of the program, the classroom teachers, and the parents of a child with special needs will set up a meeting prior to the start of the program or the beginning of the school year to ensure the needs of the child are discussed and met. If this is a child who is already enrolled and is transitioning classrooms, this same meeting will be set up with the incoming teachers to ensure continuity of accommodations.
2. This meeting will address all aspects of the child's care and education, including: arrival, departure, transportation of the child, any accommodations that would assist the child in the classroom, a review of differing abilities and limitations of the child, any special feeding requirements, a review of medications (if any) and proper administration, IFSPs, IEPs, and other individualized plans etc.
3. The parents and classroom teachers will agree on a form of communication that works best for the family and classroom to ensure information is exchanged on a weekly basis. This could be an email connection between classroom teachers and the family, a notebook that goes back and forth with the child between home and school, a daily sheet that is completed each day by parents and teachers, etc.
4. A follow up meeting will be set up for 30 days after the child is enrolled to assess progress or further accommodations needed.
5. The results from this meeting will then be used by the lead teacher to create an individual care plan for the child, which will then be posted in the classroom with the permission of the parents.
6. The classroom teachers will then use the agreed upon system of communication to ensure information that is needed for the care and education of the child is exchanged.

For children who have special needs that prevent the child from communicating in a typical way, a daily sheet will be used to communicate food and fluid intake, activities for the day and diapering/potting times throughout the day.

In some cases, we will not be able to accommodate a child's special needs. If we are unable to provide the resources for a child with special needs, the director will meet with the parents to discuss extra support or suggest other programs.

The Children's Center does have extra support from our mental health resources. These extra supports include community programs or resources such as mental health consultants and social

workers. If you are in need of these extra supports, please contact the Director or see the Community Resource Guide available in your classroom and at the front desk.

Field Trips

Field Trips are scheduled in advance and communicated to parents via calendars, curriculum and through teacher communication. Typically, field trips occur during the summer session and during camps. The one trip that occurs outside of the camps and summer session is the Preschool Art Appreciation program which has an annual trip to the Art Institute in May.

Children are transported on school buses that are equipped with seat belts. Children will be seated with belts buckled before the bus begins its journey. Teachers will be seated throughout the school bus to ensure safety of each child. If for any reason there is a problem with the bus, our transportation company will send an alternate bus within the hour.

When children are out of the building on a field trip there will always be a means of communication with the group. One or more of the teachers and administrators will carry a cell phone and have the phone number listed at the front desk in order to easily get into contact with the group.

As a precaution when classrooms are off campus, children are clearly recognized as members of the Children's Center through identification bracelets, YMCA pinnies, or matching YMCA t-shirts.

A portable first aid kit will be taken on any excursion outside of the classroom in a backpack. Included in each classroom's backpack will be any required medication for children in that classroom.

Classroom teachers will sign out on the log at the front desk with an estimated time of return any time they leave the classroom. Please feel free to contact the front desk to find out estimated and actual return times of any classroom excursion.

Family/Teacher Conferences

Parents will be invited to participate in four events each school year to discuss classroom activities and child observations. These meetings are:

1. **Parent Orientation Night:** Held in August, the orientation provides parents with an overview of the policies, procedures, and classroom curriculum. Parents have the opportunity to meet administrative/leadership staff. The District 65 preschool observation/assessment tool will be discussed as well as our method of following children's work and development through a portfolio.
2. **Curriculum Night (formerly called Open House):** Held in September/October, the curriculum night is a time to visit your child's classroom, talk with the teachers, and meet other parents.
3. **Conferences** will be held in November/December and May/June. The conference provides parents/guardians with opportunities to discuss your child's development with the teachers and view your child's ongoing portfolio. Portfolios will travel with your child throughout their experience here at the McGaw Children's Center.

Food Guidelines & Dietary Restrictions

- State licensing standards require that children over one year of age, who are capable of eating table food, must eat food provided by the Center unless a note from the child's physician and a parent's letter of consent state that the child requires a special diet. These forms are available at the Front Desk and should be turned in Registration Office for distribution to the classroom and kitchen.
- If your child has dietary restrictions or food allergies, we will make every effort to follow your physician's guidelines. We will not offer children younger than four years these foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard

pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

- All food consumed by children under the supervision of the Center shall be provided by the Center, except as follows:
 1. Parents may provide food for infants not yet consuming table food or for any child requiring a special diet that cannot reasonably be provided by the Center.
 2. Special foods provided by parents shall be clearly labeled with the child's name, the date, and the identity of the food and shall not be shared by other children.

Infant Meals

- The Center provides Similac with Iron formula. Please introduce it to your child prior to coming into the program unless you choose to provide your own formula or breast milk.
- If you want us to use your own formula, label bottles with your child's first and last name, the date, and name of formula. State licensing standards requires that you sign an Infant Waiver Form stating that you do not wish to use the Center's formula. This waiver is available from the classroom teacher or at the Front Desk.
- Licensing standards also require that a physician's written authorization, as well as an Infant Waiver Form, be provided if you wish to provide a non-milk based (soy, etc.) formula.
- Bring 5 empty bottles each day. These bottles should have all the parts labeled in permanent marker with your child's name. **All used bottles must be taken home and sanitized every evening.**
- If your child is breastfed and you are unable to come to the Center to breastfeed your child, expressed milk will be accepted when in bottles and properly labeled with the date and your child's first and last name.
- All mixed formula or breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Frozen breast milk may be stored in our freezer for up to two weeks. Please be sure all frozen breast milk has the date labeled when it was pumped. We are unable to serve any milk after the expiration date.
- The Center provides commercial baby food in jars and rice cereal. You may supply your own; it must be in a one-serve container labeled with the child's first and last name and the date you bring it to the Center.

Toddler Meals

- Table food is usually introduced between 8 to 11 months for snack foods and 10 to 12 months of age for breakfast and lunch.
- The catered food served at the Center is size and texture appropriate for toddlers. Please discuss with your child's teacher to determine when your child should starting eating whole food.

Full Day & Part Day Preschool Program Components

Music Program

Our Orff Schulwerk music program is funded by Northwestern University. Orff Schulwerk is a way to teach and learn music. It is based on things children like to do: sing, chant rhymes, clap, dance, and keep a beat on anything near at hand. With Orff Schulwerk, improvisation and composition start students on a lifetime of knowledge and pleasure through personal musical experience.

Orff Schulwerk uses poems, rhymes, games, songs, and dances as examples and basic materials. These may be traditional or original. Spoken or sung, they may be accompanied by clapping and stamping or by drums, sticks, and bells. The special Orff melody instruments include wooden xylophones and metal glockenspiels that offer good sound immediately. Played together as in a small orchestra, their use helps children become sensitive listeners and considerate participants.

The title "Schulwerk" is an indication of the educational process taking place: Schulwerk is schooling (in music) through working, that is through being active and creative.

Composer Carl Orff and his associate Gunild Keetman evolved the basic texts for the Schulwerk as models for teachers worldwide. Now translated into eighteen languages, Orff Schulwerk is based on the traditional music and folklore of each country in which it is used. At present more than 10,000 teachers in the United States have found the Schulwerk to be the ideal way to present the magic of music to their students.

Gym Program

The McGaw YMCA believes that children should be active whenever possible. Children registered in a 2-year-old classroom and older participate in the gym program. The gym class encourages hands-on fun while children learn about cooperation, sharing, getting along with others, and following directions. Under the supervision of the gym instructor and the classroom teaching staff, children are allowed to explore mats, tunnels, climbing equipment, balls and hoops. The children also do some cooperative games and a cool down routine.

Swim Program

The McGaw YMCA follows the national YMCA progressive swim program. Children registered in a 3 years old classroom and older participate in this program.

- Teachers join the Y's aquatic staff in the pool.
- We maintain an appropriate child-teacher ratio in the pool and are experienced in working with timid swimmers as well as those who are more advanced.
- Children are encouraged to progress at their own pace.
- You will get a schedule of swimming days at the beginning of the school year.
- Children who attend the program are required to swim.
- If, however, your child has a cast, is recovering from surgery, or has a doctor's note excusing the child from swimming, please send him/her in his/her swimsuit so that he/she can sit comfortably in the pool area during swim time.
- Please work with your children to dress themselves prior to the start of swim class. We encourage independence in the locker rooms, and children are encouraged to dress themselves. Please be patient if shirts end up backwards or inside out.
- Most importantly, please dress your children in clothes that allow your child to be successful in undressing and dressing themselves on swim days. Do not dress your child in tights or many layers that will make it difficult for them on swim days.

Items Needed for Swim program:

- A plastic bag for wet items
- A swimsuit/trunks (should be worn under clothes that morning)
- A towel
- Ear plugs, if recommended by pediatrician
- Swim cap is required if hair is shoulder length or longer and not in pony tail
- Rubber swim pants for any child who is not potty trained. These are available for purchase at the McGaw YMCA Front Desk located at 1000 Grove Street.
- A pair of underwear
- A backpack or bag to carry everything in

Please label all items to ensure our child returns home with the right clothing.

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing appropriate for play in the gym or on the playground. You should expect that your child will get paint, glue, etc. on his or her clothes. We use washable paints and markers, but even washable materials sometimes stain clothes. The Children's Center is not responsible for damaged or stained clothing.

Children must wear close-toed shoes. Open toed shoes are prohibited.

Children in diapers must wear clothing that covers their diapers.

Each piece of clothing and items brought to the Center must be labeled with child's first and last name.

Part Day Preschool Program

Part Day Preschool: 9:00 am - 12:00 noon

Our preschool program is designed to provide a well-rounded early learning program for children prior to kindergarten. Our goal is to partner with the parents in order to prepare your child to be a successful, life-long learner.

Second only to human relationships, a well-planned curriculum helps define a child's experience in their preschool program. To ensure that our preschool programs deliver high-quality activities and interactions, we have embraced The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, developed by Teaching Strategies, Inc. This curriculum is grounded in a child-centered and holistic approach to early childhood. Children experience the core components of the preschool curriculum through blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, science, sand and water, music and movement, cooking, and computers. In addition to our classroom instruction, children receive a formal music program that is funded by Northwestern University and physical fitness activities taught by YMCA fitness instructors. Children who are three years and older receive weekly swimming instruction from YMCA certified swim instructors.

McGaw YMCA Children's Center also incorporates the YMCA Character Development, asset building, anti-bias, and anti-violence principles with the curriculum through the vehicle of weekly themes.

Daily Arrival

Teachers plan their curriculum to begin at 9:00 am. It is important for your child's enjoyment, and to avoid classroom disruption, that your child is dropped off by 9 am. Classes often go off-site for walks to the park, etc. **Children may not be dropped off at an off-site location (this includes the main building) or be included in another classroom if their classroom is offsite.**

Snacks

Children are given a snack each day. The Center will provide the snack. Your classroom teacher will post a monthly menu on the parent communication board.

Sample Part Day Preschool Daily Schedule

9:00-9:05	Arrival & Washing Hands
9:05-9:30	Classroom Project Time/Open Learning Centers
9:30-9:45	Circle Time
9:45-10:00	Snack/Potty Break
10:00-10:30	Playground or Playroom
10:30-10:45	Potty/Wash Hands
10:45-11:45	Open Learning Centers, Gym Games** or swim lessons*
11:45-12:00	Closing Circle/Songs/Instruments

* On gym/swim days children are picked up at the Main Building in the Youth Lobby

** Swim lessons are provided for children age 3 and older

Items Needed for the Early Childhood Programs

Many of these items can be stored in your child's locker.

- 1.5 inch binder (per child) with clear overlay to be used for your child's portfolio
- Family picture
- 2 full sets of weather-appropriate clothing including socks and underwear.
- Gym shoes/sneakers (should either wear them to school or have them in locker)
- Sunscreen (may NOT be stored in locker) or protective clothing (i.e. large hat, loose clothing)
- Outerwear appropriate for the current weather
- Disposable diapers (if not potty trained). At least six diapers should be on hand each morning.
- Wipes (if not potty trained)
- If bottle-fed, 5 empty bottles with all the parts labeled
- Diaper cream, if desired (may NOT be stored in locker); must have approval to administer on the Topical Ointment Form.
- A pacifier, if using one
- Extra underwear (if potty trained or in training)
- Blanket for nap
- A soft toy, if you wish, for use during nap (not allowed for infants)
- _____
- _____
- _____

School's Out

Our after-school program provides a safe and caring environment where children can make new friends and have fun! School's Out begins when school dismisses and lasts until 6:15 pm. This includes early dismissals. Children can be enrolled for a 5-day or 3-day per week session. See program details and curriculum below.

School's Out + Holidays

This program includes the School's Out program (dismissal until 6:15 pm) and most of District 65 institute days, school holidays, and half days. On half-days we pick-up children at their schools (half-day dismissal times) and they are served lunch. On institute days and school holidays, children enrolled in this program may be dropped off at the Children's Center as early as 7:00am. Children receive a catered breakfast (if they arrive before 8:45am) and a lunch as part of all School's Out Holiday Programs. All School's Out Holiday Programs end at 6:15pm. See Children's Center Calendar for a listing of all School's Out Plus Holidays. **Please note that School's Out plus Holidays does not include Winter Break and Spring Break Camp.**

School Age Vacation Camps

School Age Vacation Camps run during District 65's winter and spring vacation weeks. Camp program hours are 7 am – 6:15 pm. Fun "camp type" activities (games, crafts, swimming) are offered, and morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack are provided. A separate registration and fee are required for Vacation Camp. Flyers and registration information will be distributed to all School's Out children and also available at the Center's Front Desk one month prior to the Vacation Camps.

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule is flexible, and it offers enough security, independence, and stimulation to meet the needs of all children. Children can choose from a wide variety of activities.

- There are regular opportunities for:
 - active, physical play (swim lessons and fitness in the gym)
 - creative arts and dramatic play
 - homework assistance
 - character development
 - activities that compliment District 65's curriculum (math, science, literacy)
 - special interest groups
 - quiet activities and socializing

Transportation

We provide supervised transportation from your child's school to the Children's Center each school day. A School's Out staff member is assigned to each school and arrives at the school (before dismissal) with a list of children who are enrolled for School's Out program for that day. The staff member greets the children, takes attendance, and ensures that they get on the bus or van safely. The staff member then rides the bus or van with the children to the Center.

If your child will be absent or not riding the bus, please notify the Center at 847.475.8580 so that the staff member assigned to your child's school knows not to look for your child. Failure to notify the center of your child's absence puts your child's safety at risk.

After-School Activities

If your child is staying after school for an after-school class/program, and will be transported by someone else to the Children's Center, an After School late arrival bus form **must** be filled out. Please note that the McGaw YMCA Child Care Center is not responsible for children until they are under the supervision of Center staff.

School's Out Activity Time

Planned activity time each day is from 4:00–5:30 pm. To ensure that your child has an opportunity to enjoy these activities, we suggest that parents pick up their children **after 5:30 pm**.

Meals and Snacks

- We provide an after-school snack to School's Out children upon their arrival at the Center.
- We provide morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack for children who are registered in our School's Out plus Holidays program.
- Our meals are planned in accordance with nutrition standards set by the Illinois State Board of Education Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Food Guidelines & Dietary Restrictions

- State licensing standards require that children eat food provided by the Center unless a note from the child's physician and/or a parent's letter of consent depending on the circumstance, states that the child requires a special diet. These forms are available at the Front Desk and should be turned in to the classroom teacher and to the Front Desk. If your child has dietary restrictions or food allergies, we will make every effort to follow your physician's guidelines.
- Parents may provide food for any child requiring a special diet that cannot reasonably be provided by the Center. Please discuss this with your child's teacher. Special foods provided by parents shall be clearly labeled with the child's name, the date, and the identity of the food and shall not be shared by other children.

Curriculum

Our well-planned YMCA School-Age Care Curriculum helps to make your children's experience instructional, inspirational and fun. Developed through a partnership with the YMCA of the USA, the YMCA of Greater Providence and the National Institute of Out-of-School Time (NIOST) at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College, it takes into account the specific needs and interests of the children; the unique needs of the school and the community; the talents and strengths of the staff; and the available resources both at the YMCA and within the community.

Swim Program

Children registered for the School's Out Program receive swim lessons during the program year. These lessons are under the direction of the YMCA's Aquatic Department. Lessons follow the national YMCA progressive swim program. All ages and levels include YMCA swim components: personal safety, personal growth, stroke development, water sports, games and rescue.

- On swimming days, please make sure your child has a swimsuit and towel in his or her backpack. Your child must have a swimsuit in order to swim – clothing is not allowed in the pool. Remember to pack goggles, too, if your child prefers to swim with them.
- Children who attend the program are expected to swim.
- If, however, your child has a cast, is recovering from surgery, or has a doctor's note stating that he cannot swim, please send him/her in his/her swimsuit so that he can sit comfortably in the pool area during swim time.

The YMCA School-Age Care Curriculum encompasses eight core areas:

Curriculum component	Child outcome: Children will . . .	Examples of how we do this in our School's Out Program.....
Arts and humanities	Demonstrate an appreciation for arts and humanities.	The School's Out program offers arts and humanities activities a minimum of three times per week. Children participate in arts and humanities activities. The staff encourages children's creativity by displaying visual arts, providing a forum for dramatic arts, and reading and commenting on children's literary arts.
Character development	Demonstrate caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.	Staff and activities teach, celebrate, model, reinforce, and practice character development values on a daily basis. Staff confronts behaviors that are inconsistent with the values. The staff facilitates discussions about values, asking questions that inspire children to think about them.
Health, wellness and fitness	Demonstrate physical fitness and knowledge about healthy lifestyles.	Program offers daily physical activity, cooperative games, dance, or sports. Instructional swim lessons and a physical fitness curriculum are implemented directly into the School's Out Program. Children in the program spend one afternoon each week getting swim lessons from our certified aquatic staff in our pool. Each week children are taken over to the gym and get instructional physical fitness from our youth health and fitness staff.
Homework support	Complete homework and demonstrate a commitment to learning.	The School's Out program offers a space for homework and homework support every day. The Learning center is well equipped and staff members assist in homework completion as needed.
Literacy	Read for pleasure.	Staff re-enforce children's reading.
Science and technology	Demonstrate a commitment to learning and demonstrate problem-solving skills.	Program offers science and technology activities a minimum of two times per week. Staff members understand the objectives and ask questions that challenge children's thinking.
Service-learning	Demonstrate caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility, as well as problem-solving and leadership skills.	Program offers a minimum of one service-learning project monthly. Staff members plan reflection activities that help children understand the benefits of their efforts.
Social competence and conflict resolution	Demonstrate age-appropriate social skills, compliance with requests, problem-solving skills, maintain adequate self-esteem, and not engage in antisocial behavior.	The program integrates social skills and social competence activities into the daily curriculum. Staff members provide appropriate guidance and are positive role models for youth. Staff facilitate, mediate, and arbitrate problem solving as needed.

Donations to the Center

We accept voluntary donations of:

- Disinfecting wipes
- Facial tissue/Kleenex type product
- Baby wipes
- Magazines, old calendar pictures or other bright pictures of objects
- Toys your child has outgrown, but still in good condition. **PLEASE NO CLOTH/PLUSH TOYS!**
- Parent time or talents (foreign language, reading, songs)
- Disposable cameras
- CD players
- Cassette recorders
- Children's music CDs and tapes
- Children's books, puzzles, games
- Balls, jump ropes
- Sidewalk chalk, bubbles
- Gently used clothing. We especially need swim suits, pants, shorts and winter gear.
- Machine Washable Dress Up Clothing (costumes, dresses, shoes)

Individual classrooms often have 'wish lists' of items they would like to have. Please feel free to ask teachers for their wish lists.

McGaw YMCA Children's Center Parent Signature Page

I have received and read the 2011-2012 McGaw YMCA Children's Center Parent Handbook and agree to the policies and procedures set forth within.

Child's name (please print) _____

Parent's name (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please return with paperwork.