



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Parent Policies & Procedures

**MCGAW YMCA
CHILDREN'S CENTER**



McGaw YMCA Children's Center
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Evanston, IL 60201
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www.mcgawymca.org

McGaw YMCA Children's Center

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The Children's Center is a department of the McGaw YMCA

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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 enrichment & other fine arts enhancements.

Northwestern University Director of Work/Life Resources

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NORTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY

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Dear McGaw YMCA Children's Center Families,

Welcome to the 2019-20 school year! We take pride in our program's partnership with family members to guide the development of infants to elementary school age participants. Please take time before the school year starts to share with your child what to expect in their day here at the Children's Center.

During the adjustment period when starting at our center, 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.

In this handbook, you will find policies and procedures regarding our operation, registration, health and wellness, nutrition, parent involvement, and program specifics. We utilize the term "parents" throughout this manual to refer to parents, caregivers, or legal guardians of a child. Any updates throughout the school year will be communicated with you in writing. Our handbooks are reviewed annually.

Our dedicated staff members look forward to a great year of learning and growth!

Sincerely,
McGaw YMCA Children's Center Leadership Team

McGaw YMCA Children's Center General Information

McGaw Mission Statement

The McGaw YMCA is an open, charitable membership association that promotes growth in spirit, mind and body through programs and services for all.

Children's Center Vision Statement

McGaw YMCA Children's Center strives for equitable and accessible quality childcare for our diverse community.

Who We Serve

McGaw YMCA Children's Center serves 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.

Philosophy

Raising children is a partnership between families and educators to nourish children's physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive development through play-based learning. We create an environment where children can feel safe to explore the world around them through curriculum and unique enrichments that build thoughtful life-long learners.

Objectives

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.
- Create opportunities for children to learn through play.
- Offer curriculum that allows for discovery through art, music, science, math, and literacy.
- Support motor development through swim, gym, and fine arts.

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:

Leadership staff members have at least a bachelor's degree relevant to their positions, coursework and experience in early childhood education, school age programming, and/or business administration.

All classroom staff members 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 staff members far exceed this requirement through in-service day opportunities.

Our Facility & Hours

Our center houses Full Day classrooms from Infant to Pre-K, Part-Day classrooms from Twos to Pre-K, and School-Age classrooms for K-5th grade. We have an indoor/outdoor play spaces, 250-seat auditorium, a multipurpose room, 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.

The Children’s Center is open from 7:00 am – 6:15 pm, Monday through Friday.

- Full Day Program hours are from 7:00 am – 6:15 pm.
- Part Day 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 available at the Front Desk or online.

*School’s Out days and Part Day Program days are subject to change throughout the year due to District 65 changes. Parents will be notified of the changes if they occur as soon as the district notifies us.

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.

Visiting

We have an open-door policy – parents and legal guardians are welcome to visit our facility at any time during our hours of operation.

- All visitors are expected to follow Center & McGaw YMCA rules as well as classroom routines.
- All visitors must sign in at the front desk.

Ratios

We have excellent child to staff ratios. We meet or exceed DCFS and NAEYC guidelines in our classrooms. We strive for a schedule which 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.

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 5 toddlers
Two Years Old (24-36 mos.)	1 staff member per 7 children
Three Years Old	1 staff member per 10 children
Four – Five years Old	1 staff member per 10 children
School Age	1 staff member per 14 children

Registration and Payment

Registration

Annual priority enrollment 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.

Registration Fees

Please see registration form for current registration fees.

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 (full time) per week.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available to families with documented financial need. Scholarships are limited and available on a first come, first serve basis for children who are Y members. 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.

If you are interested in becoming a donor by contributing to our Annual Campaign, please contact the Branch Director.

Current Contact Information

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

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 forfeited 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.

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 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 your responsibility to update credit cards that have expired.
- Fees are paid monthly and are drafted on the 1st of each month. Tuition for Full Day is based on an annual fee and is set up in 12-month equal installments.
- 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.
- 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.
- You 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 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

- If your child or family has a current membership, tuition is given at the member, a 10% reduction.
- Your child's membership entitles him/her to participate in YMCA programs at member rates.
- We encourage you to upgrade at any time to a family membership. To upgrade to a family membership, please visit one of our Registration Managers.
- Benefits of our family memberships listed below:

Over 100 free group exercise classes each week
Open & lap swimming in our two pools
Open gym time on our two full basketball courts
Unlimited Guest Passes
Member pricing for Camp Echo overnight camp & Summer Day Camp
Babysitting service - two free hours per day (must stay in the building)

Fitness Center orientation
Family Locker Room with private changing rooms
Parking permit for our lot
Family gym, swim, & special events
Towel service
Membership privileges in hundreds of YMCAs

General Operating Procedures

Drop-off Procedures

When you bring your child into the classroom, parents and children including siblings must wash hands and sign in on the classroom daily sign-in sheet.

Your child may not be dropped off at an offsite location (this includes the main YMCA building) nor be included in another classroom if his/her classroom is offsite.

- *Early Childhood Program:* you are expected to include the time of arrival, your signature, the daily phone number where you can be reached, and the anticipated pick up time.
- *Infant and Toddler:* you 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.
- *Infant:* all people entering infant classrooms must remove shoes. *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.

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).

- Only parents/legal guardians and those you have designated in writing will be permitted to pick up your child. In an emergency, you may call the front desk to give permission for a designated person to pick up your child. The customer service associate will ask for you to email your permission for pick up as well.
- 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.
- *School Age:* children may participate in programs at the main YMCA during after school hours. The leader of the other activity must be authorized to sign out your child and must do so when we transition them to that activity.

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. Proper documentation includes copies of the proper court documents, including the custody order.

Late Pick-up

It is important that children are picked up promptly at the end of your child's program. If a parent or authorized pick-up person does not arrive or call by 5 minutes past the designated pick-up time, staff will attempt to call parents and emergency contacts for your child to arrange pick up. 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.

The consequences of not picking up children on time are as follows:

Parents of participants enrolled in Children's Center Programs will be charged \$1.00 per minute / family based on the program pick-up times listed below:

- **Part Day Program 12:00pm**
- **Explorers Program 2:00pm**
- **Full Day Programs and School's Out 6:15 pm**

Late fees will be due within two business days and can be paid at the front desk. 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 for drop-off and pick-up

Drop-off and pick-up 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. Cars may be ticketed if they are parked for longer than a half-hour in St. Mary's lot. **Do not park in the alley next to the building.** This is a fire lane and your car can be ticketed/ towed.

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.

Family Communication and Notices

All family communication will be given in a language you can understand, either by staff or through translation when asked.

- The Children's Center makes every attempt to keep you fully informed of situations that may impact your 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.
- You may also receive communication from the Children's Center staff via email whenever possible.
- There is a parent communication board located in each classroom containing 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.

Confidentiality Statement

McGaw YMCA Children's Center safeguards all confidential information about children and families consistent with federal and state laws and regulations. As caregivers of your children, we have a responsibility to keep information about your children and your family confidential.

Children's records including medical, health, and safety information, are kept in individual folders and will be kept locked and confidential. Access to the keys for this filing cabinet will be restricted and controlled by the Director of Services and Facilities. The information in these files will be updated as needed. 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, Health Department, and other officials will have access to files upon request.
- **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, non-legal guardians, 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.

McGaw Children's Center has a photo release form for you to sign with paperwork indicating use of pictures for marketing and/or assessment purposes. Please refrain from taking pictures of children in your child's class to respect confidentiality of other families in our center.

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.

Upon enrolling in the program or transitioning classrooms, the director of the program and the classroom educators will set up a meeting with you to discuss the needs of your child and how they can be met within our program. A follow up meeting will be set up for 30 days after the child starts the program to assess progress or further accommodations needed.

Meetings will address all aspects of the child's care and education, including: IFSPs, IEPs, other individualized plans, 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, etc.

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.

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.

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 bathroom 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.

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, screenings, 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 front desk staff or contact any member of administration. Our staff are committed to assisting families in locating, contacting, and using community resources that support their child's and family's well-being and development.

Personal Relationships

We understand that our teachers and staff develop deep bonds with the children and families in our care. McGaw YMCA does not recommend staff or volunteers have outside contact with youth from the Y.

Toys

Please 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.

Lost and Found

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.

Emergency Closings | Plan

In the event of an emergency closure occurring before opening, you 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. You may also contact the Front Desk at the Main YMCA, 847-475-7400, for information. You may be charged for up to three days per year for closings on an emergency basis.

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, you or your emergency contacts will be notified and asked to pick up the children as soon as possible.

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 you as soon as we are in a safe location. The Main YMCA phone number is 847-475-7400.

Outdoor Activities

Children participate in outdoor activities throughout the year. Administration and teachers follow the recommendations for outside exposure as indicated on the child care weather watch chart as well as National Weather Service, DCFS and NAEYC standards to ensure child safety.

Please provide your child with appropriate outdoor gear at all times. We request that each child has appropriate gear (hat, gloves, boots, snow pants, and coat) during fall and winter months and sun-protective clothing or sunscreen during summer months. If you bring in insect repellent for your child, application will only occur upon the recommendation of local health authorities, once a day.

Parent Involvement

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

- Licensing standards require that any parents or volunteers who spend one or more times a month with children, on a consistent basis, must be given a background check, submit a health record, and fill out appropriate volunteer paperwork.

Special Occasions

You are welcome to share a birthday or special occasion with your child's class. We are committed to celebrating with your child on their special day through fun activities that your child can choose. Teachers have various suggestions on child-centered celebrations; just let them know!

- It is some family's preference not to celebrate birthdays or holidays at all. In this situation, you should inform the classroom staff, who will meet with you to find a solution that will meet your family's needs.
- Please do not bring balloons to the Center. They are a serious choking hazard for young children.
- If you are handing out invitations to an event outside of the Children's Center (i.e., a birthday party) you are welcome to pass out invitations through the classroom, but only if you are inviting all of the children in the class. If you are not inviting all children in the class, we ask that you pass out invitations outside of the classroom via email or mail.
- Early Childhood Programs permit food only for end of the year celebrations. All EC classrooms have a list of food items that adhere to YMCA Healthy Eating and Physical Activity guidelines and DCFS/NAEYC Standards. Please bring items to the front desk to be approved by a member of Early Childhood administration.

Health & Wellness

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.

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 your child to use facial tissues to blow/wipe their nose and then wash their hands.
- Remind your child 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- 24 Hour Wellness

A child should not attend school if they show symptoms of fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, strep, thrush, conjunctivitis aka "pink-eye", or any contagious childhood diseases. When a child is 24-hour symptom free, non-contagious, and can comfortably participate in our programs, they may return.

- If your pediatrician indicates in writing that your child's symptoms are 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.

The McGaw YMCA Children's Center makes decisions on exclusion and return to care based on information from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control and other health care agencies as appropriate. If a child becomes ill while at school with any of the above symptoms or communicable illnesses, you will be contacted (emergency contacts listed will be contacted if you are not available) and asked to pick up your child within one hour. Children can return once they get treatment or are no longer contagious.

- Lice Policy & Procedure: If head lice are found on a child, they will be sent home and can return to the Center the morning after one treatment of delousing shampoo and with no active lice or nits.

Children returning after having lice must be checked by administration before entering a classroom and will be checked a week later. If nits are found on a child's head, they will be monitored throughout the day at school and parents will be notified at the end of the day. Please wash blankets and clothing from school in hot water to prevent re-infestation.

- 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.

You will be notified of confirmed communicable illnesses and associated symptoms in your child's classroom. If required, we will report the illness to the Health Department.

HIV/AIDS Policy

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.

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

Health Requirements

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 including physical examinations and immunizations. Children will not be allowed to attend until these forms are submitted/updated to the Center. In order to protect our school community, especially pregnant mothers and the infants in our program who are at risk, the Center requires that all children attending the McGaw YMCA Children's Center must be immunized in accordance with Illinois law and DCFS.

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 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.

Medication

All medication must be brought to the front desk, where an administrator will speak with you regarding reasons for the medication as well as proper administration. You will need to fill out and sign a medical consent form. Medication will be administered in a manner that protects the safety of your child. A specific classroom teacher trained in medication administration (or other designated staff person) will be assigned to administer and document the dispensation of the medication each day.

1. 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 your 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. Prescription medication will be administered as directed by a physician.
3. Over-the-counter medications will be dispensed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Over-the-counter medications that need to be administered for more than two days require a doctor's note.
4. Inhalers and medications for on-going medical conditions 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.
5. If your child has taken medication before arriving at the Center, please inform your child's teachers.

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.

Accidents/Emergencies

Parents must complete an authorization form for their child's emergency care. This form 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 make every attempt to contact the parent at the number(s) provided. 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.

No Weapons on McGaw YMCA Property or at McGaw YMCA Programs

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe environment for children, families, and staff and visitors. The McGaw YMCA prohibits all persons who enter a McGaw YMCA property or program space from carrying a handgun, firearm, or weapon of any kind regardless of whether the person is licensed to carry the weapon or not. Possession of a concealed carry endorsement is not an exemption under this policy.

Required Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect

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

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 and neglect.

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	

NUTRITION

Food, Snack, and Meal Time Policies

The Children's Center meals are planned in accordance with IL State Board of Education and the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), 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 all 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.

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. Menus will be posted for parents on monthly basis on our website, on the menu board in the first-floor hallway, and on the Parent Communication Boards in each classroom. Children enrolled in an infant classroom will be fed on a schedule that is agreed upon between the child's family and teaching staff.

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.

Allergy Guidelines

While we are committed to responsibly limiting potential food allergens, we cannot guarantee a 100% nut-free or allergen-free environment because our catering company is not a nut free facility. Nut allergies are the most common food allergies in children – therefore, McGaw YMCA participants should not bring peanut butter, almond butter or cashew butter, NOR should they bring products containing peanuts or tree nuts (e.g., cashews, almonds, walnuts, pecans, etc.) or peanut oil to school in their lunch, snack, or to a celebratory event.

Outside Food – HEPA Standards

McGaw YMCA Children's Center complies with the YMCA's national Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards. Any food brought into the center must comply and be checked by administration. A comprehensive list is available for early childhood classrooms. This is to ensure that all food accepted is coming from a certified kitchen and is safe for our children.

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

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. In the case of exceptions, the procedure below must be followed;

- Medical Exemption Statement for Food Substitution Form is available at the front desk and needs to be completed by a physician, clergy, or parent indicating the dietary need of your child. An individualized care plan can then be followed for your child.
 - i. Any child with a dietary need, 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.
 - ii. 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.

- Any outside food to supplement your child’s diet requires a letter from you stating that you 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.
 - i. Food from home should align with the USDA guidelines for a healthy meal. For information on these component guidelines, please contact the Director of Operations.
 - ii. All foods and beverages brought from home need to be labeled with your child’s name and the date.
 - iii. Please use classroom refrigerator for food that needs refrigeration to ensure it remains cold until served.
 - iv. 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; spoonful of peanut butter (or alternative); or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.
- 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.

How to Help Your Child Adjust

Be aware that there are a variety of common reactions from children at the beginning and end of the day at the Children’s Center. Some children will be ecstatic and hesitant to leave while others will have a hard time separating and excited about reunions. You should be prepared to respond positively to whatever reaction your child has.

We ask parents to help transition children into the classroom by washing hands together and joining in a routine activity such as reading a book or playing with a classroom toy available to settle into the classroom. Once your child is settled, give your child notice that you will be leaving in two minutes and then transition yourself out of the classroom with a hug, kiss, smile or wave.

Help your child make the transition from Center to home by following some routines, like putting away toys, getting his/her backpack and saying good-bye to friends. Ask your child about activities on the way home that were indicated on lesson plans, mentioned by a teacher, or written on the parent communication board.

Early Childhood Programs

Infant, Toddlers, and Twos Program (Full Day)

Our program is geared to address the unique and special needs of children in these age groups. 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. 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 as well as materials to play and learn. Whenever the weather permits, infants are taken outside for buggy rides. Older Infants, Toddlers, and Twos make visits to our indoor and outdoor play spaces that create opportunities for large muscle development and exploration.

Primary Caregivers

A primary caregiver is a consistent teacher who is primarily responsible for an individual child’s care in the Infant, Toddler, or Two classrooms. This provides continuity of one relationship and allows for the teacher to form a special bond with your child and family. While all teachers 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. They are responsible for recording developmental achievements into Teaching Strategies Gold assessment system.

Sleeping

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. We accommodate your

child's sleeping needs which may be at any hour of the day for Infants and Toddlers. Older Toddlers and Twos transition to rest time starting around 1:00pm until 3:00pm. 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.

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.

Please take home blankets and pillows to wash every Friday.

Infant Meals

If your child is breastfed and you are unable to come to the Center to breastfeed your child, expressed milk will be accepted in bottles and properly labeled with the date and your child's first and last name.

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.**

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.

Preschool Program (Full Day)

Our preschool programs are designed to provide a well-rounded early learning environment for children prior to kindergarten. Children who are nurtured and stimulated during these years are prepared for formal reading and math and are more likely to have the social skills they will need when it's time for kindergarten. Our goal is to partner with you in order to prepare your child to be a successful, life-long learner.

Teaching Teams

Teams work together to make sure each child in the program has their needs met. Children have the opportunities to connect with each member of the teaching team throughout daily schedules. Teaching teams plan meaningful activities that will build on each child's knowledge and skills; teachers also record assessments of developmental abilities in Teaching Strategies Gold system.

Rest Time

Every child's cot is labeled with their name and will be available between 1:00 to 3:00pm. Your child can bring items (blankets, small pillows, etc.) for their cot and can store them in their lockers when not in use. 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 your child cannot fall asleep in that time, alternative quiet activities will be offered.

Teachers recommend children who cannot self-regulate during nap to attend the activity room. An alternative opportunity for additional afternoon enrichment is our Explorer's Program from 12-2p.

Please take home blankets and pillows to wash every Friday.

Part Day Program (9:00 am - 12:00 noon)

Our part day program is designed to provide a well-rounded early learning environment for children prior to kindergarten. Children who are nurtured and stimulated during these years are prepared for formal reading and math and are more likely to have the social skills they will need when it's time for kindergarten. Our goal is to partner with you in order to prepare your child to be a successful, life-long learner.

Explorers Programs

These programs are additional afternoon enrichment for any child enrolled in Full Day or Part Day Preschool. The teacher picks up children from their classroom to have lunch and explore STEM related themes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday or an introduction to Spanish on Tuesday and Thursday between 12:00 and 2:00 PM. An additional fee applies.

Curriculum

Our programs use Creative Curriculum developed by Teaching Strategies, Inc. for all age groups. This curriculum is grounded in a child-centered and holistic approach to early childhood using the children's interest to create activities and learning areas 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. 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 studies. Children experience our diverse community opportunities 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.

Teachers take into account the developmental history for each child and utilize family home values, beliefs, experiences, religion, and home language to inform curriculum and classroom environment.

Any information about home life for each child can be shared through conversations during drop off, pick up, emails, daily sheets, Meet & Greet events, Open House, and individual family conferences or meetings. 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.

Planning Forms

Infant Classrooms

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.

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 Teaching Strategies Gold.

Toddler, Twos, & Preschool Classrooms

Weekly Planning Forms

Each classroom creates a weekly classroom lesson plan including small group, large group, and independent activities along with changes to the environment for the class. 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 Teaching Strategies Gold.

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. Teachers plan their curriculum to begin at 9:00 am. It is important for your child's ease of transition to have drop off transition by 9 am.

- Each classroom's daily schedule allows for activity and rest, as well as indoor and outdoor activities.
- 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.

Screenings & Assessment

All children will be screened within 60 days of entry to the Early Childhood Program using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). Done in partnership with families, ASQ will allow teachers to share resources with parents to strengthen their development.

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. 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. 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. Children are measured based on their physical and social emotional health to ensure they are meeting milestones or to identify areas that may need special attention or professional assistance for improvement.

In each classroom, the primary caregiver or teaching team will be responsible for the assessment of your child and overseen by the lead teacher(s) in each classroom. 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 have access to your child's assessment through Teaching Strategies Online.

Information obtained through assessment will be used to communicate with family members regarding child progress and to inform teaching staff during the curriculum planning progress to help all children achieve their educational goals. Assessments will be shared via Teaching Strategies Gold site throughout the year. There will be two parent/teacher conferences per year to discuss assessments and plan goals for your child's continued development.

Family/Teacher Collaboration

You will be invited to participate in events each school year to discuss policy, classroom activities, and your child. These meetings are:

Meet & Greet: (August) the orientation provides parents the opportunity to meet classroom teachers, staff members, learn about policies, procedures, and sign-up to get involved!

Open House: (September) the curriculum night is a time to talk with the teachers, meet other parents, and hear about routines, curriculum, and assessments.

Conferences: the parent-teacher conferences are held in fall and spring and provide the opportunity to discuss your child's development with teachers and make educational goals for the year.

Guidance & Discipline

The McGaw YMCA Children's Center Early Childhood Guidance and Discipline Policy is based on the developmentally appropriate belief that young children must experience trust and respect in order to build essential, lifelong social and emotional skills. To move children gradually toward self-regulation, a skill that is the largest indicator of academic success and when developed promotes Kindergarten readiness, teachers create positive environments that reflect the ways children view the world. The environments provided to the children within the center assist in creating a community of caring learners by demonstrating respect and conveying appropriate behavioral expectations. Teachers recognize that every child learns to master group interaction at his or her own pace; any conflicts that arise during a child's development are seen as part of a natural process. Our goals within our community of caring learners include: helping children develop healthy self-esteem, learn to manage feelings and impulses, build satisfying social relationships, and strengthen communication and problem-solving skills.

Techniques used in the classroom to foster guidance include:

- Establishing clear, simple, consistent rules
- Modeling age appropriate behaviors
- Consistently reinforcing positive behaviors
- Redirecting unwanted behaviors
- Assisting in interactions with and among children
- Fostering communication and negotiation skills within children

The following techniques are not permitted when offering guidance and discipline to a child:

- A. Physical punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear;
- B. Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom;
- C. Abusive or profane language;
- D. Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment; and
- E. Any form of emotional or psychological abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child

In order to individualize for each child, strategies used to implement the techniques may vary depending on the situation, the child, and the needs of the group. The teaching teams at the Children's Center all use developmentally appropriate practices when managing behavior using both logical and natural consequences.

Most children respond favorably to such guidance and develop the appropriate and necessary skills to deal with ongoing interpersonal situations. Our goal is to ensure that each child in our program has a successful experience. We recognize that no single technique is always effective, and that different techniques work with different children.

From time to time a young child in group care may need additional support to master reasonable social skills. In the event that a child is having continual difficulty managing his/her behaviors, families may be asked or may request to attend a meeting with teachers, administrative staff, and outside child development consultants (when applicable). The goal of these meetings is to develop strategies in partnership to provide necessary support to assist the child. Every realistic effort will be made to help the child overcome challenges that interfere with his/her ability to effectively participate in group care.

If there are any concerns regarding our ability to continue providing care for a child, meetings between teachers, administrative staff, and the family will be held to discuss concerns and determine corrective action plans before a termination is reached. Should the Children's Center decide that care must be terminated; every effort will be made to assist families with finding alternative care.

Toilet Learning

We encourage your child, when ready, to use the toilet. We work in partnership with you, the parents, in preparing your child to be successful when toilet learning. When the child is showing signs of being ready to learn, 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?

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.
- Please label your child's clothes with your child's first and last name.

Preschool Enrichments

Music Program

Through a partnership with Northwestern University, we offer a music enrichment program designed to introduce basic music concepts to all of our classrooms. This includes different music theory, as well as exposure to different instruments. Our music instructor visits classes once a week.

Gym Program

The McGaw YMCA believes that children should be active as a part of the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity initiative. Children registered in a 2-year-old classroom and older participate in the gym program once a week from Sept to May. Under the supervision of the gym instructor and the classroom teaching staff, children explore mats, tunnels, climbing equipment, balls and hoops as well as participate in cooperative games and a cool down routine.

Swim Program

The McGaw YMCA follows the national YMCA progressive swim program. Children registered in 3-year-old classrooms and older are required to participate in swim lessons to maintain program safety and proper supervision.

- Classroom teachers join the Y's aquatic staff in the pool.
- Children are encouraged to progress at their own pace and staff work with timid swimmers as well as those who are more advanced.
- A schedule of swimming days will be provided at the beginning of the school year.
- Children are only permitted to be excused from swimming if they are provided with a note from their doctor. Please send them with swimsuit so that he/she can sit comfortably poolside during swim lessons for no more than three occurrences. If your child has a long-term medical concern, please contact the classroom manager to discuss the possibility for accommodations.
- We encourage independence in the locker rooms; please choose clothes that promote your child to successfully dress and undress themselves.

Please Note: Swim enrichment will be cancelled if the feels-like temperature drops to 15°F or colder or if there has been lightning sighted in the area.

Items Needed for Swim program:

- A plastic bag for wet items
- A swimsuit/trunks (should be worn under clothes that morning)
- A towel (optional)
- 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 toilet 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 your child returns home with the correct clothing.

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 Pre-K Art Appreciation program 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 and, in the summer, matching YMCA t-shirts.

A first aid kit is 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 sign out on the log at the front desk with an estimated time of return when they leave the classroom. Please feel free to contact the front desk to find out estimated and actual return times of any classroom excursion. Children cannot be signed into their class during a field trip.

School's Out and Holiday Program

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. Children can be enrolled for full time (4-5 days) or part time (1-3 days) per week and have a choice of enrichments to get engaged. 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**.

Holidays Add on Package

This includes the School's Out program and most District 65 institute days, school holidays, and early dismissal. Check the Children's Center Calendar on our website for dates of our Holiday Add-on Package. Early dismissal begins right after school and includes hot lunch and fun activities for the afternoon.

On institute days and school holidays, our center is open at 7:30am for children enrolled in this program to be dropped off. Children receive a catered breakfast (if they arrive before 8:45am) and a lunch as part of all School's Out Holiday Package.

All School's Out Holiday Programs end at 6:15pm.

Please note: Holidays Add-on Package does not include Winter Break and Spring Break Camp.

Super Holiday Add on Package

School Age Super Holidays run during District 65's winter and spring vacation weeks. Camp program hours are 7:30 am – 6:15 pm. Fun "camp type" activities (games, crafts, swimming) are offered, lunch and afternoon snack are provided. A separate registration and fee are required for Super Holidays. 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 Super Holidays.

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
- creative arts and dramatic play
- homework help
- character development
- activities that compliment District 65's curriculum (math, science, literacy)
- special interest groups
- quiet activities and socializing

Enrichments

Children choose enrichments to participate in throughout the year. Enrichments include sports of all sorts, arts & crafts, swim, mini-chefs, Dance Is My Everything (DIME), Science Technology Engineering Arts Math (STEAM), and other rotating options.

Transportation

We utilize bus transportation from your child's school to the Children's Center each school day. A School's Out staff member is assigned to greet the children, take attendance, and ensure that children coming to the Y program get off the bus safely for those who are enrolled for School's Out program for that day.

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 at 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.

Swim Program

Children registered for the School's Out Program can sign up for swim lessons during the program year as an enrichment. 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 your child has a doctor's note excusing them from swimming, please send them with a swimsuit so that he/she can sit comfortably in the pool area during swim time for no more than three occurrences. If your child has a long-term medical concern, please contact the program supervisor for accommodations.
- You are welcome to observe swim lessons from the observation deck.

Meals and Snacks

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

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.

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 of arts and humanities	The School’s Out program offers arts and humanities activities a minimum of three times per week. Children participate in the 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 & 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.

Guidance & Discipline

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 educators 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.

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 School Age Director, as well as the Executive Director of the Children's Center 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.

Donations to the Center

We accept voluntary donations of:

- Facial tissue/Kleenex type product
- Baby wipes
- Magazines, old calendar pictures or other bright pictures of objects
- Art supplies (stickers, glue, foam, feathers)
- Toys your child has outgrown, but still in good condition. **PLEASE NO CLOTH/PLUSH TOYS!**
- Parent time or talents (foreign language, reading, songs)
- CD players
- Children's music CDs and tapes
- Children's books, puzzles, games (non-licensed character)
- 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.

Items Needed for the Early Childhood Programs

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

- 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 (labeled & stored in classroom bin) or protective clothing (i.e. large hat, loose clothing).
- Outerwear appropriate for the current weather
- Disposable diapers (if applicable). At least six diapers should be on hand each morning. Extra diapers can be stored in your child's locker. Swim diaper for threes/fours if not potty trained.
- Wipes (required for Infant, Toddlers, 2s and optional for preschool)
- If bottle-fed, 5 empty bottles with all the parts labeled
- Diaper cream, if desired (labeled & stored in designated classroom bin).
- A pacifier, if using one
- Extra underwear
- Blanket for nap (not allowed for infants)
- A soft toy, if you wish, for use during nap (not allowed for infants)