



Y ACADEMY

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

FAMILY HANDBOOK



YMCA OF GREATER NASHUA



Dear Parents,

Welcome to Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness!

Welcome to a new school year! We are so grateful that you have chosen Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness for your child. We are excited to partner with your family and look forward to a year filled with learning, growth, friendships, and wonderful memories.

As we begin this new school year, we are also excited to share an important change. Creation Station is now Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness! While our name is changing, our commitment to providing a nurturing, engaging, and high-quality learning experience for your child remains at the heart of everything we do.

The first few years of a child's life are incredibly important for their cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development. At Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness, we strive to create an environment where children feel safe, valued, encouraged, and excited to learn.

Our program uses guided self-discovery, hands-on experiences, and engaging activities to help children build the skills and confidence they need for kindergarten and beyond. Through thoughtfully planned learning experiences and curriculum, children have opportunities to grow academically, socially, physically, and emotionally.

We recognize that every child is wonderfully unique. Our goal is to build positive relationships with each child while helping them develop through the YMCA's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

We also value our partnership with families. Your feedback, questions, and ideas are important to us and help us continually strengthen our program. We encourage you to develop a positive relationship with your child's site director and teachers. If you have a question or concern, please reach out to your site director first. I am also always available to help and support you when needed.

We hope this handbook provides helpful information about our program, procedures, and practices and serves as a useful resource throughout the year. Please know that while the handbook provides important guidance, our team is always here to answer questions and help in any way we can.

Thank you for trusting us with your child and allowing us to be part of such an important season in their life. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to serve your family and are excited about all that this new year will bring!

Welcome to Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness—we look forward to a wonderful year together!

Warm regards,
Carlisa Choate M.Ed.
Vice President of Youth Development & Achievement
cchoate@nmymca.org
(603) 689-2430

PROGRAM BASICS

KINDERGARTEN READINESS – WHAT IS IT?

Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness is a kindergarten readiness program designed for children ages 3–4 years old who are toilet trained. It is a half day program that runs from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

COMMUNICATION

We utilize Brightwheel for communication between parents and staff. Brightwheel is an application (app) that allows us to send real-time messages, emergency alerts, and newsletters all from one platform.

Staff are encouraged to communicate with parents/guardians during program hours. Please note that **staff are not available on weekends or after 6:00 PM on weekdays**. They have family and other outside commitments, however they will respond to you as promptly as possible. You can also send messages via Brightwheel or email.

For urgent matters, please notify the Site Director on Brightwheel or email, which are the most effective ways to reach our directors.

Click here to download Brightwheel: www.mybrightwheel.com.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Y Academy School-Age Director: Angel Demanche – ademanche@nmymca.org

Please contact Amy should you have any questions regarding the program or your child's progress, to update physical & immunization records, a change of home address, or add to your authorized pick up list.

Accounts Receivables: Aline Connors – aconnors@nmymca.org

Please contact Aline should you have any billing questions.

Vice President of Youth Development & Achievement:

Carlisa Choate – cchoate@nmymca.org

Please contact Carlisa with concerns that require further support beyond the site level or if issues have not been resolved through the Director.

Note: Email is the best to contact Aline or Carlisa.

TUITION & PAYMENT

Y Academy's tuition is based on attendance, with program options for 5, 3, or 2 days per week. Payments are automatically drafted from your authorized payment method every Wednesday, prior to the service week. For your child(ren) to remain enrolled, your payment method and tuition payments must remain up to date. If a payment is missed, the Accounts Receivable Manager or Finance Department will contact you to arrange payment.

A two-week written notice is required for any account changes or withdrawals. Please note that no credits are given for holidays, inclement weather days, or illness-related absences.

REGISTRATION & PROGRAM INFORMATION

New Hampshire Bureau of Child Care Licensing mandates that all children have a completed physical examination and updated immunization records on file.

Parents or guardians are responsible for keeping registration records up-to-date. If there are changes to phone numbers, contact information, or authorized pick-ups, please inform the staff as soon as possible.

REGISTRATION

All families are required to register their children every program year. A \$30.00 nonrefundable registration fee is assessed each year. This fee covers:

- **Administrative Costs:** Processing paperwork, setting up accounts, and managing registrations.
- **Program Enrollment:** Securing a spot for the participant in the desired program or class.
- **Initial Supplies:** Covering costs for any necessary materials or equipment needed at the start of the program.
- **Background Checks:** Ensuring staff and volunteers meet safety and compliance standards.
- **Orientation and Training:** Providing initial orientation or training for participants or their families.

All registrations are subject to availability.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Y Cares Financial Assistance Program

In an effort that every child can participate, the YMCA provides financial aid through our Y Cares Financial Assistance Program. For more details please visit one of our YMCA Welcome Centers, or visit our website at: <https://nymymca.org/membership/financial-assistance/>.

New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship Program

New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship and the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Scholarship is available for income-eligible families.

Complete the Child Care Assistance Request through the State of New Hampshire. Apply online at: <https://nheasy.nh.gov/#/apply-benefits>

SCHEDULE CHANGES

If you need to adjust the days your child is registered, please check with your Site Director for availability.

Availability is not guaranteed, and changes require a two-week written notice.

Extra Days: If you should need to add an extra day or two for care in a particular week, please check with your Site Director for availability. We cannot guarantee accommodations. Do not send your child on unscheduled days. Any **approved** additional days will incur an extra charge of \$37.00/day and will be manually invoiced and charged to your authorized payment method on file.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

The YMCA of Greater Nashua requires a two-week written notice for withdrawals. Notify your Site Director and the Accounts Receivable Manager. Refunds will not be granted for withdrawals without written notification.

SIGN IN / OUT PROCEDURES / AUTHORIZED INDIVIDUALS

We ask that all Parent(s)/Guardian(s) check in with the Welcome Center upon entering the YMCA. Each child is signed in and out using Brightwheel and a paper roster. Our program staff will only release children to adults listed on the authorized pick-up list. A sibling must be 16 years or older to be considered an authorized pick-up. During the first few weeks of the program, you must present a photo ID each time you pick up your child, to ensure their safety, until all staff are comfortable recognizing you.

To add someone to the authorized pick-up list, contact the Site Director with the new person's full name and phone number. Please inform your authorized pick-up that a photo ID will be required for them to pick-up your child(ren).

AUTHORIZED PICKUP EXCEPTIONS

Impaired Persons

If someone attempting to pick up a child appears impaired by alcohol or drugs, our staff will not release the child to them. The Site Director will be informed, and an alternate emergency pick-up will be contacted. If the impaired individual is the parent or guardian and insists on taking the child, the police will be notified.

Parental Restrictions

All parents have equal access to their child as permitted by law. The YMCA cannot restrict one parent's access based on the other parent's request without a certified court order. If one parent wants to prevent the other from seeing the child, they should keep the child with them until a court order is obtained. For any issues, please notify the Site Director immediately so staff can be informed.

Guardian / Court Orders

If a child is under guardianship or court-ordered care by someone other than a parent, provide copies of the court orders to our Director before the child starts the program. Similarly, if there are any court orders restricting contact with the child, such as no-contact, domestic violence, or restraining orders, those documents should also be submitted to the Executive Director of Education prior to the start of the program.

PERSONAL TOYS

Personal toys are the source of a lot of tears.....**Please leave them at home.** At times teachers may allow "personal toys" in for a special activity, however, you will be notified in advance.

SNACKS/LUNCH

Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness does not provide snacks. Snacks will be provided by each individual family. If your child has a hearty appetite, you may wish to provide your child with additional snacks.

Allergy Alert: classrooms are nut-free zones. Please do not pack any snack items that contain peanuts/peanut butter, tree nuts or avocados.

PARKING LOT

The parking lot is very busy during morning and afternoon pickups. We ask that you do not park in the Fire Lane. There is parking in front of the building, on the side and in the overflow parking lot across the street. Please drive slowly and be attentive to our little friends. Also, please supervise your children walking to and from the building.

CLOTHING

(Please label jackets, backpacks and lunchboxes)

As we do live in New England, please dress your children appropriately for the weather (very difficult at times). We will go outside everyday possible so layers work well. Also, be mindful of footwear. Be sure that your child can run and climb safely.

EMERGENCIES/DRILLS

We will practice Fire Drills with our little friends. We want to ensure that in the event of an emergency they know what to do at Y Academy. They may be a little nervous at first when hearing the alarms but our staff is superb at reassuring them that we are practicing being safe.

In the event of an emergency, you will be notified as quickly as possible. We have an emergency plan in place and our first priority will be to make sure our children are safe, then, the proper authorities have been contacted, and next, we will contact you.

Safety is our priority here at Y Academy. All staff members are CPR and First Aid certified in the event of an incident. All injuries requiring first aid will be reported and filed in our injury/incident log. Parents/Guardians will be notified by phone and will be required to sign an injury.

SICKNESS

We practice hand washing skills and classroom sanitation daily. Please monitor children. If your child is sick, has a fever, lethargic or has any symptoms that will prevent them from functioning with his/her peers for the day, they should be kept home. We will call you to pick up your child if they should have any of these symptoms. A child should be symptom free for at least 24 hours with no medicines. With sickness and all absences, please notify the director if your child will be out.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

All medications must be given to the Site Director or staff personnel and the parent will be required to complete a Medication Authorization Form. **Under no circumstances should medicine be left in a child's backpack.** All medicine must be in its original container, with the child's name, physician's name, name of medication and dosage instructions.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather there will be no Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness. You will be notified on Brightwheel or on the YMCA's website. There is no adjustment to tuition in this instance.

HOLIDAYS/VACATIONS

Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness will be closed on all holidays and school vacations. The Site Director will provide you with a calendar of closure dates. Tuition will be pro-rated for preset closure days. There will be no costs for vacation week.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

Y Academy Kindergarten Readiness makes every attempt to create an environment that is fun, appropriately stimulated and respectful of our children's needs. Various methods are used for different situations. Positive reinforcement and redirection are very constructive.

CHILD PROTECTION

As mandated reporters, all staff are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate state authorities. The Center will cooperate fully with any investigation while maintaining confidentiality as required by law.

The YMCA of Greater Nashua is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and respectful environment for all children, families, staff, and volunteers. New Hampshire State Law requires all YMCA staff and volunteers to be mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. If staff suspect any form of abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behavior, they are legally required to immediately report it to their supervisor and the appropriate state authorities.

Our Early Education Center programs follow the YMCA of Greater Nashua Child Protection Policy, which outlines clear expectations for supervision, staff conduct, abuse prevention, reporting procedures, and overall program safety standards. Families are encouraged to review the full policy for more detailed information on these protections and procedures. [Click here to review the full policy.](#)

Y ACADEMY GRIEVANCE REPORTING

The YMCA of Greater Nashua is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for all members, participants, families, and guests.

If you have a concern, we encourage you to first speak with an Early Education Center staff member or leadership team. If you are not comfortable doing so, if your concern involves a staff member, or if the issue is not resolved, you may contact YMCA leadership or submit a grievance form. Anonymous reports are accepted.

Please report concerns as soon as possible and include as much information as you can, such as the date, location, people involved, and a description of what happened.

All concerns are reviewed promptly and fairly. Confidentiality will be maintained whenever possible, and appropriate action will be taken when needed. The YMCA strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports a concern or participates in an investigation.

GRIEVANCE REVIEW PROCESS

This may include:

- Report concerns to Early Education Center staff, leadership, or through the grievance form.
- Human Resources reviews all concerns and begins an investigation when appropriate.
- Investigations are completed as promptly as possible, generally within 10 business days.
- Follow-up is provided when appropriate while maintaining confidentiality.

[YMCA of Greater Nashua Grievance Form: Fill Out Form](#)

We hope these guidelines were helpful. You may always contact the Site Director with any additional questions or concerns.