

**BUILDING BLOCKS
PRESCHOOL**

**2021–2022
Parent Handbook**



BENTON HARBOR-ST. JOSEPH YMCA

ymcagm.org • (269) 428-9622

BUILDING BLOCKS PRESCHOOL STAFF

Preschool Director: Kelly Freye

CLASSROOMS:

Butterflies Katelynne Nunez, Lead Teacher
Co-Teacher: Nathaniel Prince

Dinosaurs Karen Rooker, Lead Teacher
Co-Teacher: Ashlynn Hoffman
-Vanderploug

Chipmunks Lauren Brautigam, Lead Teacher
Co-Teacher: Melody Hatfield

Eagles Bridget Mangold, Lead Teacher
Linda Derby, Co-Teacher

WELCOME TO BUILDING BLOCKS!

1. We are here to serve children ages 3–5 years.
1. We believe all children should have the opportunity to discover who they are, express themselves, and be nurtured. Building Blocks is a licensed preschool where growing and learning happen every day. Your child will develop skills to build character values and self-esteem, and improve Kindergarten readiness.
2. We base our educational and guidance decisions for children on our knowledge of child development. Our number one goal is to provide the kind of environment that encourages all children to become creative, independent, and responsible students who can make positive choices for themselves.
3. We use a building blocks approach to our curriculum. Starting in Angelfish, we continue to build, adding new concepts throughout our other classes so that your child is Kindergarten ready!
4. Students will gain confidence through play, exploration, and social interactions. Students will develop skills to successfully communicate with others and discover different ways to be creative and expressive about their feelings and thoughts. They will have the opportunity to interact with other students in group activities; stations and free play will help children grow socially and emotionally. They will also have the opportunity to develop fine and large motor skills everyday through active games and activities.

We are honored that you have chosen to partner with us in the healthy development of your child. We take this role seriously and commit to providing your child with opportunities to explore and learn through developmentally appropriate activities in a safe, nurturing environment.

**Please use this handbook as a resource regarding
YMCA Building Blocks Preschool policies and procedures.**

Building Blocks Preschool is licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing. We have a license notebook that is located at our check-in desk and is available for you during Building Blocks Preschool regular hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:40 AM–1:30 PM and Tuesday, Thursday 8:40 AM–12:00 PM. The license notebook contains all licensing inspections and special investigation report and related corrective action plans since May of 2010. Licensing Inspection & Special Investigation reports from at least the past 2 years are available on the childcare licensing website at michigan.gov/michildcare

THE BASICS

DROP OFF

Drop off will be outside of the building, by the classroom. Parents are asked form a line with parents and children staying in vehicles. A teacher will come to your car a perform a health check (temperature and questionnaire) and then walk your child to their prospective classroom.

If you arrive after 9:00 AM, you must check-in through the front entrance of the building.

T/TH Drop Off Times

Butterflies Front Door 8:45 AM

Chipmunks 2nd Classroom 8:45 AM

M/W/F Drop Off Times

Dinosaurs 2nd Classroom 8:45 AM

Eagles 1st Classroom 8:45 AM

PICK UP

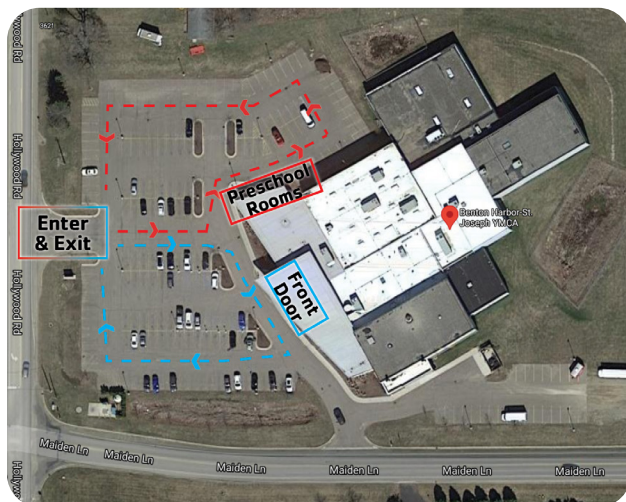
Pick up will be outside of the building, by the classroom. On the first day of school, parents will be given a card with their child's name on it. Parents are asked to drive up, hold up the card with their child's name on it, and our team will walk your child to your vehicle. No child will be allowed to leave with someone without that person being on their child record form or have a note/contact from parent or guardian.

Butterflies 11:45 AM

Chipmunks 11:55 AM

Dinosaurs 11:55 AM

Eagles 12:30 PM



BEFORE & AFTER CARE

Before care is available at \$20/month and after care at \$50/month. Both can be combined for \$60/month. Before or after care is also available at \$5/day or \$10/day for both. In your packet is a waiver that grants us permission to bring your child to the Childwatch area if you are running late or need extra care.

Before-Care 7:45–8:45 AM

After-Care 11:45 AM–3:00 PM

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

Please dress your child in comfortable, easy-wear play clothes that they can put on and fasten themselves. No pull-ups. Children must wear appropriate footwear to school. Unless your child can tie their own shoes, please provide Velcro shoes. No flip flops, please. Also, please label all of your child's belongings. An extra set of clothes is always recommended just in case of accidents.

ILLNESS/DELAYS

If your child will not be attending class due to illness, please contact the Preschool Director, Kelly Freye, at (269) 428-9622 or your child's teacher. If we do not receive your call, we will contact you to inquire about the absence (see medical requirements for details). If you are going to be late in picking up your child, please contact the YMCA so we can let the teacher know. If this is a continued issue, your child will be released to Childwatch with appropriate fees applied.

Your child will undergo a temperature check and questionnaire at drop off. If a child has a temperature of 100.4 F or higher, they must remain home until fever-free without fever-reducing medications for 24 hours.

VOLUNTEER POLICY

No volunteer will have unsupervised contact with children in Building Blocks Preschool. All volunteers must have a comprehensive background check done by the YMCA.

HEALTHY KIDS

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

Building Blocks Preschool is licensed by the State of Michigan and is required to keep medical records for each child. The state requires that we turn these records into the Berrien County Health Department so your child's immunization record can be on file.

This must be turned in by September 30. This is beneficial as the information will be needed for when they start Kindergarten. If you choose to forgo the immunizations for your child, you will have to schedule a meeting with the Berrien County Health Department in order to receive a waiver in the first 30 days.

CLEANLINESS

Children and staff will wash their hands before snack and after using the restroom. We will encourage the kids to use good hand washing technique: wet hands, add soap, rub hands together for 20 seconds, and then rinse with warm water. Our staff follows the State of Michigan licensing regulations for cleaning and sanitizing.

ILLNESS

If during the school day your child shows signs of illness such as nausea, diarrhea, fever, hacking, cough, thick nasal discharge, or unexplained rash, their teacher will call their parent and the child will be removed from the classroom and be brought to the Preschool Director's office.

Please keep your child home if they have any of the following symptoms: nausea, diarrhea, fever, hacking, cough, thick nasal discharge, or unexplained rash. Please also keep your child home if they, or anyone in your family, display symptoms of COVID-19 (Chills, sore throat, cough, vomiting, severe headache, fever, unusual shortness of breath.) If your child has a contagious disease, please contact Kelly Freye at (269) 428-9622 or kfrey@ymcagm.org. A written doctor's note may be required for any illness considered contagious. Children on antibiotics should not return to school until a full 24 hours after first dosage. Also, if your child has a fever, please do not bring them in until after 24 hours of their fever breaking. Children should be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Any student with live lice (or nits within one quarter inch of the scalp) may remain in school until school-designated personnel find no live lice on the child. For each day your child is sick, we will inquire details in order to fill out the necessary forms for the Health Department.

No refunds given for days not attended due to illness.

Staff and volunteers will follow the same guidelines.

OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

DAILY LESSONS

Your child will participate in rotating centers that focus on small group learning for a more individualized learning environment. In these centers your child will be working on alphabet activities, number skills, math, science, fine motor skills, and on their creative side with arts and crafts. We strive to make lessons open-ended and use a whole language approach to learning with developmentally appropriate practices.

STORY TIME

Story time is an important time in our program, as we hope to instill the love of reading and learning in our students. We have themed books that will be read each month that go along with other activities for the month or week. We will encourage them as they develop the necessary skills to read, and hope that you will read to them as much as possible.

CIRCLE TIME

This time is used for instruction and sharing. Activities include songs, show and tell, counting games, magnet board activities, calendar, musical instruments, story, and introduction to letters, numbers, and shapes.

BOOK CLUBS

We subscribe to Scholastic Book Clubs which allows you to purchase quality children's books and ebooks at a relatively low cost. Our program receives bonus points for each dollar spent for book club selections. We then use those points to purchase new books and other needed materials for our program. If you order online, use the activation code: **HMMNY**

GYM / ACTIVE AREA TIME

Students will have the opportunity each day to use our active play area, right outside our classrooms, to participate in large motor skill activities.

LIBRARY DAY

Every week, your child will bring home a book in a bag with their name on it. Please send the book back in the bag.

SNACK TIME

In addition to providing an energy boost for your child, snack time is also an opportunity to refine social skills such as listening, sharing, and practicing manners. Each month your child's teacher will provide a snack schedule with assigned days for your child to bring the class snack. When your child is snack leader, please send in prepackaged snacks. Exceptions to healthy snacks are holiday parties and birthdays. We will try to coincide your child's snack day with their birthday. We do have a supply of snacks available if a parent forgets—we just ask that you restock our supply. As a reminder, we are a nut-free program.

PARENT CONTACT

Please see page 3 for this year's pick up and drop off policy.

HEALTHY U

Our Healthy U teachers come in once a month and will spend time teaching students about living healthy lifestyles and getting them active with fun large motor skills activities.

FIELD TRIPS

We hope to have either field trips or in-house visitations throughout the school year. Parent permission letters will go home and must be signed in order for your child to participate.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

Building Blocks Preschool will close if either St. Joseph or Lakeshore School Districts cancel due to weather. Your child's teacher will contact you and we will update our Building Blocks Facebook page. Please inform your child's teacher how you would like to be contacted. We will not make up snow days and there will be no price adjustments.

SAFETY & DISCIPLINE

Our goal is to provide a safe, healthy, happy environment for your children while they are at our YMCA.

The Building Blocks Preschool is committed to building the self-esteem, character, and positive self-concept of each child. Acceptable behavior at preschool is encouraged by giving positive verbal rewards. This reinforces a child's good feeling about their behavior and serves as an example to other children to act similarly. Asking a child to stop and think about their negative behavior enables that child to work at self-control. For a child not cooperating or listening in a group situation, he or she will be reminded of acceptable behavior. If the behavior continues, he or she will be removed from the group to sit in the thinking chair and beginning at the age of 3, no longer than 1 minute per their age. Removal from the group for a period will be used for a child who continually demonstrates unacceptable behavior. This is used as a time for the child to calm down, remember appropriate behavior, and decide when they are ready to return to the group. Throughout the day, we try and focus on redirection to encourage appropriate behavior.

If behavior problems persist, you will be asked to attend a conference with the child's teacher and the program director to discuss what may be helpful in working on the situation that has developed. Serious problems that interrupt other children's learning or safety may result in suspension or possible withdrawal from our program. All of the following means of punishment are prohibited: hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting other forms of corporeal punishment; restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her; inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child; depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use; excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities; excluding a child from daily learning experiences; confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle. Non-severe and developmentally appropriate discipline or restraint may be used when reasonably necessary, based on a child's development, to prevent a child from harming himself or herself or to prevent a child from harming other persons or property, excluding those forms of punishment prohibited as listed before.

EMERGENCY

Building Blocks Preschool is a licensed program that has established emergency procedures according to the state of Michigan. All of our teachers and staff are CPR, First Aid, and AED certified by the American Red Cross.

ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS, AND INJURIES

Any minor situations that occur during school will be handled by the teacher and discussed with the parent upon pick up. Any serious situation that occurs, staff will take the necessary steps in contacting the parent with a phone call and the proper authorities to provide the care that is needed for the child.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

We schedule fire and tornado drills at different times during the school year as mandated by the State of Michigan licensing rules. Teachers will discuss procedures with the children prior to the drill.

CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

As a licensed child care provider, Building Blocks Preschool must follow Family Independence Agency mandates for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. If a situation warrants concern, preschool staff will report the needed information to child services. Strict confidentiality will be observed by all parties. As always, the safety and well-being of all children is our foremost concern. Building Blocks Preschool staff are mandated reporters by the State of Michigan.

PEST MANAGEMENT

As required per Licensing rules each classroom has an integrated pest management program and parents will be notified prior to the pesticide applications.

YMCA OF GREATER MICHIANA NOTICE OF PESTICIDE USE

Pesticides are periodically applied to YMCA property as part of the district's pest management program. Please be advised that parents or guardians of children attending the school or day care center are entitled to receive the advance notice of a pesticide application, other than a bait or gel formulation, by first class United States mail postmarked at least 3 days before the pesticide application, if they so request. If you prefer to receive notification by first class mail, please obtain a form from your building preschool director. The YMCA will also post notice on classroom windows and doors notifying of pest application in 48 hours prior to application.

Please understand that emergencies do arise and that pesticides may be applied without prior notice to parents or legal guardians. Parents or legal guardians that have requested prior notification, however, will be notified after pesticide application.

Application of pesticides will be performed only by certified or registered applicators where and when required. If a pesticide is applied in a building, students will not occupy the room for a minimum of four hours. Forty-eight hours prior to the time of application notification will be posted near the building's primary point of entry and in a common area of the building. When a pesticide is applied to YMCA grounds, the application will not be made within 100 feet of occupied classrooms, and flags will be inserted in the ground to mark the application area.

This notice was given in compliance with Regulation 637, as amended by Public Act 131 of 1993.

FINANCIAL

TUITION

A non-refundable \$50 enrollment fee, payable upon registration, guarantees your child's place in the class requested. If the program doesn't have the necessary amount of students, we will regretfully have to cancel the class. Monthly tuition has been prorated for September–May and there is no discount given for days missed during the year. If there is a prolonged absence due to an illness, please contact the Preschool Director about possible payment adjustment. Monthly tuition is due by the tenth of each month and a \$15 late fee will be added to your bill after that date. Children may be removed from the program if payment is not made. The first payment will be made in August and the last payment will be made in April.

WITHDRAWAL

If you need to withdraw your child from Building Blocks Preschool, please complete a program withdrawal form located at Member Service. The Preschool Director will be notified and will contact the parent with further information.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

As a leading non-profit organization, the YMCA of Greater Michiana will not turn away students and families who cannot afford tuition. To qualify for a scholarship from the YMCA, you must first apply to MI Bridges. Please contact the YMCA for further information if financial assistance is needed.

MI Bridges can help you access our state-licensed programs, like Building Blocks Preschool, through financial assistance for those who qualify. Please visit bit.ly/MI-Bridges (case sensitive) for details.

CLASS	TIME	MONTHLY COST	
		<i>Plus a one-time, non-refundable \$50 registration fee</i>	
BUTTERFLIES Age 3 by Sept. 1, 2021	Tuesday & Thursday 8:45–11:45 AM	Base Fee	w/ Swim
		Household \$135	\$180
		Youth \$175	\$220
		Non-Member \$225	\$285
		<i>30-minute swim lesson fee \$45/member • \$60/non-member</i>	
CHIPMUNKS Age 4 by May 1, 2022	Tuesday & Thursday 8:45–11:55 AM	Base Fee	w/ Swim
		Household \$135	\$180
		Youth \$175	\$220
		Non-Member \$225	\$285
		<i>30-minute swim lesson fee \$45/member • \$60/non-member</i>	
DINOSAURS Age 4 by Sept. 1, 2021	Mon, Wed, Friday 8:45–11:55 AM	Base Fee	w/ Swim
		Household \$175	\$225
		Youth \$200	\$250
		Non-Member \$250	\$315
		<i>45-minute swim lesson fee \$50/member • \$65/non-member</i>	
EAGLES Age 5 by April 1, 2022	Monday - Thursday 8:45 AM–12:30 PM	Base Fee	w/ Swim
		Household \$250	\$300
		Youth \$275	\$325
		Non-Member \$300	\$365
		<i>45-minute swim lesson fee \$50/member • \$65/non-member</i>	

CLASS INFORMATION

BUTTERFLIES Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:45–11:45 AM

Ages 3–3.5 • Teacher/Student Ratio 1:7

Swim: Tuesday

Goals: Social skills, color and shape recognition, fine & large motor skills development

Typical Day: Free play, circle time (pledge, greeting, calendar, show and tell, story), movement break (large motor activity, yoga, etc), phonics (rhyming, letter introductions, and sounds through play), snack and story time, literary centers (writing, tracing their names, letters, shapes, etc), movement break, math centers, free choice.

CHIPMUNKS

Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:45–11:55 AM

Ages 3.5–4 • Teacher/Student Ratio 1:7

Swim: Tuesday

Goals: Social and thinking skills, color & shape recognition, fine & gross motor skills development

Typical Day: Free play, circle time (pledge, greeting, calendar, show and tell, story), movement break (large motor activity, yoga, etc), phonics (rhyming, letter introductions and sounds), snack and story time, literacy centers (writing, tracing their names, letters, shapes), movement break, math centers, science experiments, free choice.

DINOSAURS

Mon., Wed., Fri. 8:45–11:55 AM

Ages 4–5 • Teacher/Student Ratio 1:8

Swim: Wednesday

Goals: Kindergarten readiness – Learning Without Tears curriculum for letter/sound recognition, counting & number recognition, writing, social skills, working independently, math, science

Typical Day: Check in, write name, question of the day, assigned jobs, circle time (pledge, greeting, calendar, patterning, mystery bag show and tell, review letter or number of the day, counting yes and no answers to questions, adding them together, counting all of the children, story), movement break (large motor activity, yoga, etc), phonics (rhyming, letter introductions and sounds), snack and story time, rotating centers (literacy, handwriting, dramatic play/blocks/toys, movement break, math center), free choice.

EAGLES Monday–Thursday 8:45 AM–12:30 PM

Ages 4–5 • Teacher/Student Ratio 1:8

Swim: Wednesdays

Goals: Kindergarten readiness – Learning Without Tears curriculum for letter/sound recognition, level readers, counting & number recognition, writing (stories, sight words, name, etc), colors and shapes, social skills, working independently, math, science

Typical Day: Check in, write name, question of the day, table activities, morning meeting (pledge, greeting, calendar, patterning, mystery bag show and tell, review letter or number of the day, counting yes and no answers to questions, adding them together, counting all of the children, story), movement break (large motor activity, yoga, etc), phonics (rhyming, letter introductions and sounds), snack and story time, rotating centers (literacy, handwriting, dramatic play/blocks/toys, movement break, math center), free choice.

Please note, all class sizes are subject to change based on state guidelines for childcare centers.

SWIM TIME

SWIM LESSONS

These are an optional companion program to our preschool classes. Participants swim one day each week. Lessons are given by YMCA swim instructors and follow the YMCA progressive swim programs. There is an additional fee for the lessons. If a child does not want to participate, they will accompany the teachers on the pool deck or be checked into Childwatch.

GAINING INDEPENDENCE

Swim time is an excellent opportunity for your child to practice fine motor skills as well as develop large motor muscles. We schedule adequate time before and after swimming in the locker rooms for dressing independently, with our help as needed. You can help your child feel independent by choosing easy-to-wear clothing with a minimum of buttons, buckles, belts, etc. Tights for girls are also challenging on damp skin. Please mark all swim attire, towels, and backpacks with your child's name. An extra bag is also suggested for wet clothes and towel. We assume no responsibility for lost articles.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

You are welcome to observe your child's progress in the pool from the lobby window, however, we discourage regular visits in the pool area. Your child will respond to instructors better and gain confidence more quickly if they feel totally independent of you in this area. We schedule "watch me swim" and "swim with me" days throughout the year for the parents to be more involved in the pool.

Swim Times:

Butterflies	Tuesdays 10:30–11:00 AM
Chipmunks	Tuesdays 11:00–11:30 AM
Dinosaurs	Wednesdays 10:00–10:45 AM
Eagles	Wednesdays 10:45–11:30 PM

2021-2022 CALENDAR

AUGUST

- Parent Night: August 25
Butterflies & Chipmunks: 5:00-6:00 PM
Dinosaurs & Eagles: 6:15-7:15 PM

SEPTEMBER

- Ice Cream Social – A time for you and the children to meet the teachers: September 2
Butterflies & Chipmunks: 4:00-5:00 PM
Dinosaurs & Eagles: 5:15-6:15 PM
- First Day of School
Butterflies & Chipmunks: September 7 (no swim)
Dinosaurs & Eagles: September 8 (swim)
- Usborne Book Fair: September 13-17
- Mom2Mom Sale: September 25, 8AM-12PM

OCTOBER

- Lifetouch Picture Days: October 14 & 15
- Lincoln Township Fire Department visiting
Dinosaurs & Eagles: TBD
- Royalton Township Fire Department visiting
Butterflies & Chipmunks: TBD
- Halloween Party & Watch Me Swim
October 26: Butterflies & Chipmunks
October 27: Dinosaurs & Eagles

NOVEMBER

- Sarett Nature Center visiting
visiting Butterflies & Chipmunks: TBD
field trip Dinosaurs & Eagles: TBD
- NO SCHOOL for Thanksgiving: November 24-26

DECEMBER

- Caroling at the YMCA
December 16: Butterflies & Chipmunks
December 17: Dinosaurs & Eagles
- Christmas Parties & Watch Me Swim
December 13: Dinosaurs & Eagles
December 14: Butterflies & Chipmunks
- NO SCHOOL for Winter Break: December 20-30

JANUARY

- School resumes: January 3
- NO SCHOOL for MLK Day: January 17

FEBRUARY

- Hygienist visits: TBD
- Cookies with Parents
Butterflies & Chipmunks: February 10
Dinosaurs & Eagles: February 14
- NO SCHOOL for President's Day: February 21

MARCH

- Parent Teacher Conferences
Butterflies & Chipmunks: March 10
Dinosaurs & Eagles: March 11
- St. Joseph Kindergarten Roundup: TBD
- Watch Me Swim
Butterflies & Chipmunks: March 29
Dinosaurs & Eagles: March 30
- Librarian visit: TBD

APRIL

- NO SCHOOL for Spring Break: April 4-8
- Forever Books & Kilwins: TBD
- Lakeshore Kindergarten Roundup: TBD
- NO SCHOOL for Good Friday: April 15

MAY

- Hearing & Vision: TBD
- Survival Swim: May 11
- Carnival, Art Show, Swim With Me
Butterflies & Chipmunks: May 17
Dinosaurs & Eagles: May 18
- Last Day for Butterflies & Chipmunks: May 19
- Last Day & Graduation
Eagles: May 19
Dinosaurs: May 20