

BUILDING BLOCKS PRESCHOOL

2023–2024 Parent Handbook



BENTON HARBOR–ST. JOSEPH YMCA

ymcagm.org • (269) 428-9622

BUILDING BLOCKS PRESCHOOL STAFF

Preschool Director: Kelly Freye, kfreye@ymcagm.org

CLASSROOMS:

Angelfish	Kaley Kitron, Lead Teacher Allison Golladay, Co-Teacher	Dinosaurs	Kristen Martin, Lead Teacher Jessica Bridge, Co-Teacher
Butterflies	Katelynne Nunez, Lead Teacher Nathaniel Prince, Co-Teacher	Sign language	Coanne Hohman
		Post Care	Allison Golladay

WELCOME TO BUILDING BLOCKS!

1. We are here to serve children ages 2 1/2–5 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 Side Door 8:40 AM

M/W/F Drop Off Times

Dinosaurs 2nd Classroom 8:40 AM

F Drop Off Time

Angelfish Front Classroom 9:20 AM

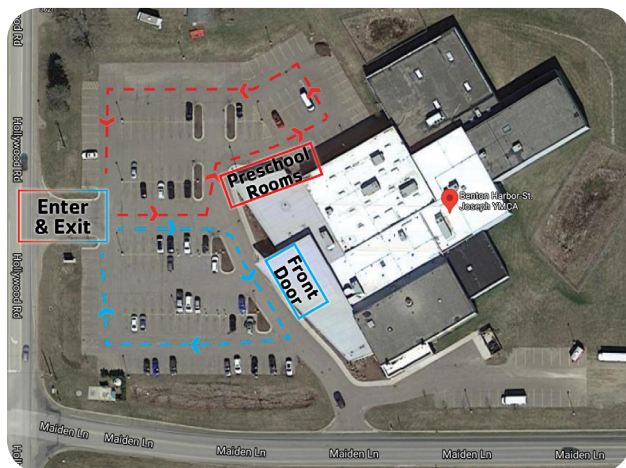
PICK UP

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.

Angel Fish 11:30 AM

Butterflies 12:00 PM

Dinosaurs 12:00 PM



EXTENDED CARE

A continuation of your child day that includes learning activities as well as crafts and stories. Care is available for three hours after dismissal.

Angelfish: 11:30 AM–2:30 PM

Butterflies: 12:00–3:00 PM

Dinosaurs: 12:00–3:00 PM

12:00 PM: Lunch

12:20 PM: Clean-up from lunch

12:30–1:00 PM: Gym for large motor activities or playground.

1:10 PM: Get ready for rest and story time

1:20–1:40 PM: Get ready for rest time

1:45–2:30 PM: Table activities, games, crafts

2:30–2:50 PM: Free play

2:50 PM: Clean up

3:00 PM: Dismissal

	2-day	3-day	4-day
Member	\$145	\$190	\$260
Youth	\$155	\$200	\$270
Community	\$165	\$210	\$280

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.

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. All supervised volunteers will receive a Public Sex Offender Registry clearance before having contact with a child in care.

HEALTHY KIDS

ILLNESS/DELAYS

If your child will not be attending class due to illness, please contact 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 Extended Care, with appropriate fees applied.

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. Health appraisal must be turned in by September 30. Immunization records or waiver must be turned in before the first day of school. 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.

MEDICINES

Prescription medication must be in the original container with the original label, strength and current date

attached. If you wish for us to administer prescription or over-the-counter medicine, we must have a doctor's order on file that indicates the dosage, the frequency, the name of the medicine and the symptom. These orders are valid for one full year.

Medications must be signed in by the parent and the staff will complete the form upon administering the medication after a safety check is performed. We must have a signed parent's note if a child should be kept indoors.

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. 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 day 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: **HHMNY**

GYM / ACTIVE AREA TIME

Students will have the opportunity each day to use our active play area and gym 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. If the book becomes missing or damaged, we will ask for a donation of a new book.

SIGN LANGUAGE

Once a week a certified sign language teacher will come in and teach the basics and will add monthly seasonal signs.

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 enough healthy snacks for your child's class. Exceptions to healthy snacks are holiday parties and birthdays. We will try to coincide your child's snack day with their birthday. As a reminder, we are a nut-free program.

We do have a supply of snacks available if a parent forgets—we just ask that you restock our supply. Building Blocks Preschool will ensure that children with dietary needs are provided a snack in accordance with the instructions of the parent or licensed health provider.

We require children to bring a spill-proof cup with their first and last name written on it. Water cups are available to your child throughout the day.

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.

When field trips are away from the YMCA, you will be giving Build Blocks Preschool permission to ride the YMCA bus to the said destination on a said date.

We use the YMCA bus for transporting children on field trips.

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.

Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (1994 PA 451, MCL 324.8316) requires the following:

- Building Blocks Preschool will notify parents in September that pesticide applications may occur in the building and on the premises.
- A second notice will happen 48 hours prior to the application of a pesticide, first a sign will be posted in a common area of the YMCA and on the door entering the Child Care wing. A second notice will be emailed.
- As required by section 8316 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.8316, a center shall develop and implement an integrated pest management program when pesticide applications occur on the premises. The integrated pest management program shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - The annual notification to parents or guardians specifying two methods by which the advance notice of pesticide application will be given.
 - An advance notice containing information about the pesticide, including the target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of application, contact information at the center, and a toll-free number for national pesticide information center recognized by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.
 - Liquid spray or aerosol insecticide applications may not be performed in a room of a center unless the room will be unoccupied by children for not less than four hours or longer if required by the pesticide label use directions.

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.

MONTHLY COST

Plus a one-time \$50 registration fee for full tuition preschool

CLASS	TIME	MONTHLY COST	
ANGELFISH Age 2 by March 1, 2023	Friday 9:30–11:30 AM <i>Extended Care: 11:30 AM–2:30 PM</i>	Household	Fee \$85
		Youth	\$95
		Non-Member	\$105
		<i>No swim</i>	
BUTTERFLIES Age 3 by Sept. 1, 2023	Tuesday & Thursday 8:45 AM–12:00 PM <i>Extended Care: 12:00–3:00 PM</i>	Household	Base Fee w/ Swim \$160 \$205
		Youth	\$200 \$245
		Non-Member	\$250 \$310
		<i>30-minute swim lesson fee \$40/member • \$55/non-member</i>	
DINOSAURS Age 4 by Sept. 1, 2023	Mon, Wed, Fri 8:45 AM–12:00 PM <i>Extended Care: 12:00–3:00 PM</i>	Household	Base Fee w/ Swim \$195 \$245
		Youth	\$220 \$270
		Non-Member	\$270 \$335
		<i>30-minute swim lesson fee \$40/member • \$55/non-member</i>	
 Age 4 by Dec. 1, 2023	Half Day Monday – Thursday 8:45 AM–12:30 PM	Free or reduced rate for eligible families.	
 Age 4 by Dec. 1, 2023	Full Day Monday – Thursday 8:15 AM–3:15 PM	Free or reduced rate for eligible families.	

CLASS INFORMATION

ANGELFISH

Fridays 9:30–11:30 AM

Ages 2.5–3 • Teacher/Student Ratio 1:5 No Swim

Goals: Social skills, independence in a classroom setting

Typical Day: Free play, circle time (songs, rhymes, finger play, books, shapes, colors), restroom/snack/puzzles, centers (fine motor art/craft activities and small group focused activities), group movement (gross motor, music and movement), prepare to go home with goodbye song, dismissal.

BUTTERFLIES

Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:45 AM–12:00 PM

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.

DINOSAURS

Mon., Wed., Fri. 8:45 AM–12:00 PM

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.

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.

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, 10:00–10:30 AM
Dinosaurs	Wednesdays, 10:00–10:30 AM

2023–2024 CALENDAR

AUGUST

- August 22, Parent Night
Angelfish & Butterflies: 5:00–6:00 PM
Dinosaurs: 6:15–7:15 PM
- August 29, Ice Cream social/Meet The Teacher,
4:00–6:00 PM

SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 6: First Day of School
Dinosaurs: 8:45 AM (no swim)
- Sept. 7: First Day of School
Butterflies: 8:45 AM (Swimming – Please pack your child’s backpack with a swimsuit, towel and plastic grocery bag.)
- Sept. 8: First Day of School
Angelfish: 9:30 AM

OCTOBER

- TBD: Jollay Orchards
- TBD: Fire Station visits Dinosaurs & GSRP
- TBD: Royalton Fire visiting YMCA
- Oct. 2–6: Scholastic Book Fair – Sign up to volunteer and you will be eligible to receive free books. Ask your child’s teacher or call Kelly 269–428–9622 for more information.
- Oct. 19: Picture Day for Butterflies
- Oct. 20: Picture Day for Angelfish and Dinosaurs
- Oct. 25: Dinosaur Halloween Party and Watch Me Swim
- Oct. 27: Angelfish Halloween Party
- Oct. 31: Butterfly Halloween Party and Watch Me Swim
- First Assessment for Dinosaurs is sent home

NOVEMBER

- TBD: Field Trip to visit Sarrett Nature Center for Dinosaurs & GSRP
- TBD: Sarrett Nature Center visits YMCA
- Nov. 17: Angelfish Thanksgiving Feast
- Nov. 20: Dinosaurs Thanksgiving Feast
- Nov. 21: Butterflies Thanksgiving Feast
- NO SCHOOL for Thanksgiving: November 22–24

DECEMBER

- Dec. 4: Dinosaurs and GSRP caroling at Nursing Home
- Dec. 15: Angelfish Christmas Party
- Dec. 19: Butterflies Christmas Party and Watch Me Swim
- Dec. 20: Dinosaurs Christmas Party and Watch Me Swim
- NO SCHOOL for Winter Break: Dec. 22–Jan. 5

JANUARY

- School resumes: Jan. 8
- Jan. 15: NO SCHOOL for MLK Day

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 19: NO SCHOOL – Presidents’ Day

MARCH

- March 11–14: Scholastic Book Fair – volunteers can get free books.
- March 12: Watch Me Swim for Butterflies
- March 13: Watch Me Swim for Dinosaurs
- March 22: NO SCHOOL for Dinosaurs – Parent Teacher Conferences
- March 28: NO SCHOOL for Butterflies – Parent Teacher Conferences

APRIL

- April 1–5: NO SCHOOL – Spring Break

MAY

- May 17: Last Day of School for Angelfish
- May 20: Dinosaurs Graduation
- May 21: Butterflies Graduation and Swim with Me. Last Day of School.
- May 22: Carnival for all Classes