



**BENTON HARBOR-ST. JOSEPH YMCA
YOUTH CENTER PRESCHOOL
FAMILY HANDBOOK**

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Attachments:

- School Calendar
- Daily Schedule

MISSION STATEMENT:

The YMCA of Greater Michiana is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

BUILDING BLOCKS PRESCHOOL STAFF

Preschool Administrator: Kelly Freye, kfrey@ymcagm.org

CLASSROOMS:

Angelfish	Katelynne Nunez, Lead Teacher Britany Lowry, Co-Teacher	Butterflies T/TH	Jessica Bridge, Lead Teacher Brittany Lowry, Lead Teacher
Butterflies M/W/F	Veronica Smuda, Lead Teacher Hannah Ketchum, Co-Teacher	Sign language	Coanne Hohman

WELCOME TO BUILDING BLOCKS!

Welcome to preschool! We are dedicated to providing a nurturing and stimulating environment where children can learn, grow, and have fun. Our team of experienced educators is committed to fostering a love of learning and encouraging children to explore the world around them. We look forward to partnering with you in your child's early education journey.

1. We are here to serve children ages 2 1/2–4 years.
2. 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.
3. 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.
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. Our licensing information is available at michigan.gov/michildcare.

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.

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 newmibridges.gov for details.

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.

CLASS

TIME

MONTHLY COST

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

<p>ANGELFISH Age 2 by Sept. 6, 2025</p>	<p>Friday 9:00–12:00 PM <i>Extended Care: 11:30 AM –2:30 PM</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Fee</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household</td> <td>\$105</td> <td rowspan="2">No swim</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community</td> <td>\$125</td> </tr> </table>		Fee		Household	\$105	No swim	Community	\$125	
	Fee										
Household	\$105	No swim									
Community	\$125										
<p>BUTTERFLIES Age 3 by Sept. 6, 2025</p>	<p>Tuesday & Thursday 8:45 AM–12:00 PM <i>Extended Care: 12:00–3:00 PM</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Base Fee</td> <td>w/ Swim</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household</td> <td>\$175</td> <td>\$240</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community</td> <td>\$190</td> <td>\$260</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>30-minute swim lesson fee \$65/member • \$70/community</i></p>		Base Fee	w/ Swim	Household	\$175	\$240	Community	\$190	\$260
	Base Fee	w/ Swim									
Household	\$175	\$240									
Community	\$190	\$260									
<p>BUTTERFLIES Age 3 by Sept. 6, 2025</p>	<p>Mon, Wed, Fri 8:45 AM–12:00 PM <i>Extended Care: 12:00–3:00 PM</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Base Fee</td> <td>w/ Swim</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household</td> <td>\$235</td> <td>\$300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community</td> <td>\$250</td> <td>\$320</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>30-minute swim lesson fee \$65/member • \$70/community</i></p>		Base Fee	w/ Swim	Household	\$235	\$300	Community	\$250	\$320
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Household	\$235	\$300									
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	Base Fee	w/ Swim									
Household	\$380	\$445									
Community	\$400	\$470									

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 and then walk your child to their prospective classroom.

If you arrive after 8:50 AM, you must check-in through the front entrance of the building.

T/TH Drop Off Times

Butterflies 2nd Classroom 8:45 AM

M/W/F Drop Off Times

Butterflies 2nd Classroom 8:45 AM

F Drop Off Time

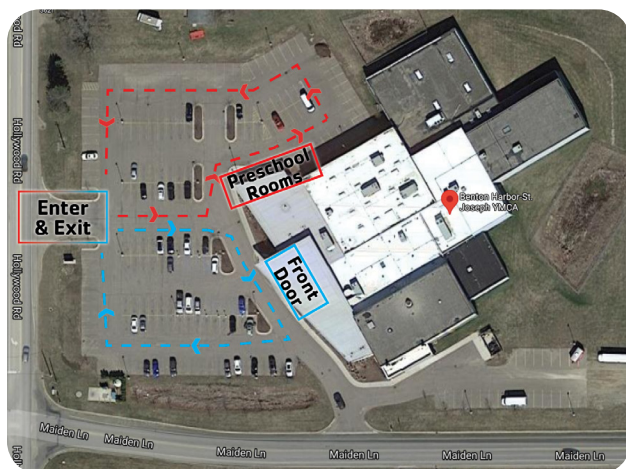
Angelfish 1st Classroom 8:55 AM

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 12:00 AM

Butterflies 12:00 PM



EXTENDED CARE

A continuation of your child day that includes learning activities as well as crafts and stories.

Angelfish: 11:30 AM–2:30 PM

Butterflies Pre-Care - 7:30 AM–8:45 AM

	2/day	3/day	5/day
Member	\$60/month	\$75/month	\$160/month
Community	\$75/month	\$90/month	\$175/month

Butterflies Post-Care - 12:00 PM–3:00 PM

	2/day	3/day	5/day
Member	\$120/month	\$150/month	\$275/month
Community	\$135/month	\$165/month	\$290/month

Both

	2/day	3/day	5/day
Member	\$170/month	\$215/month	\$425/month
Community	\$200/month	\$245/month	\$455/month

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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**

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.

GYM / PLAYGROUND TIME

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

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Your child will be engaged in a minimum of 20 minutes of outdoor play where they can be active and physical. This includes but is not limited to running, jumping, climbing, etc. The outdoor environment is an extension of the classroom and provides students with many opportunities to explore and continue to build social skills.

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 from the healthy snack list located inside of the snack bag for your child's class. Exceptions to healthy snacks are holiday parties and birthdays. We will try to coincide with your child's snack day with their birthday. As a reminder, we are a nut-free program and all snacks must be pre-packaged or store bought.

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 will have in house guests come to the YMCA for your child to experience "field trips"

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

YMCA Preschool provide a safe, secure and happy place for children to grow and learn. The curriculum provides intentional instruction to meet each child's needs through a play-based and developmentally appropriate philosophy; meaning attention is given to social, cognitive and physical development. All of the learning areas are created to support the "Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Pre-Kindergarten" updated in 2013 by the Michigan State Board of Education. Children interact in both large and small groups while the environment and activities are designed to help develop pre-reading, pre-math, science, social studies and the arts.

SCREENINGS

Children are screened within the first thirty days of school. This provides information about a child's physical development, language, and other skills and is used as a baseline to determine each individual child's needs. Families are informed of any concerns the screening tool may show and parents/guardians will need to provide consent if the child requires further evaluation.

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Our program is designed to offer intentional experiences that promote comprehensive development, including social-emotional, physical, academic, creative expression, cultural awareness, character development, and STEM skills. Through a variety of activities, we aim to provide opportunities for children to learn and grow in all these areas. Social-emotional activities focus on building healthy relationships, communication skills, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. Physical activities promote physical fitness, healthy habits, and an active lifestyle. Academic activities offer opportunities for children to learn new skills, enhance their knowledge, and develop critical thinking skills. Creative expression provides opportunities for children to explore their creativity, develop artistic skills, and express themselves through various forms of art. Cultural awareness activities promote awareness about different cultures and promotes diversity. Character development focuses on building values like kindness, respect, responsibility, and leadership. Finally, STEM activities promote problem-solving skills, curiosity, and innovation. By offering intentional experiences in all these areas, we hope to provide a comprehensive program that supports the development and growth of the whole child.

DIVERSITY AND CULTURE

Our program is committed to incorporating and representing diverse backgrounds of children, families, and communities. We believe that diversity is a strength, and everyone should be valued and respected for their unique backgrounds and experiences. Our diverse curriculum includes materials, activities, and resources that reflect the diversity of our community and the world. We include books, music, and art from different cultures, and we celebrate holidays and traditions from around the world. Our staff are trained on cultural competence and how to work effectively with families from diverse backgrounds. Our families may come in as guest speakers, performers, or other resources to help us better understand and appreciate the diversity of our community. Regular feedback from families and community members is important to ensure that our program meets the needs of all the children and families we serve. We believe that creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity is essential for the success of our program and the children and families we serve.

Our program gathers information about family culture, home language, and home life through various methods. We may send home surveys to parents or guardians that ask about their cultural background, language preferences, and daily routines. Additionally, our program holds parent-teacher conferences to gain a deeper understanding of the family's values, beliefs, and goals for their child's education. By gathering this information, we can better understand and respect the diversity of the families we serve, and tailor our approaches to meet the unique needs of each family and child.

Using greetings or phrases in the home languages of our children and families we work with is a powerful way to build relationships and show respect for other cultures. This creates a sense of belonging and helps our children feel valued. We try to learn and use basic phrases like “hello” and “thank you” in other languages which can help bridge communication gaps and make interactions more meaningful. It’s a small but important step towards creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone involved.

CLASS INFORMATION

ANGELFISH

Fridays 9:30–12:00 PM

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

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:45 AM–12:00 PM

Monday–Friday 8:45 AM–12:00 PM

Ages 3–4 • Teacher/Student Ratio 1:7

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.

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:

2-day: Tuesdays, 10:00–10:30 AM

3-day: Wednesdays, 10:00–10:30 AM

5-day: Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 10:00–10:30 AM

IMPORTANT POLICIES

REFERRALS

We believe that home and school together form a positive support system for the growing child. Parents are always kept informed of their child's progress. If a referral is needed for additional support, the family will be involved in contacting their local school district and creating a plan and setting specific goals for the child. Families will be informed at any point that the child is receiving one-on-one support services, and classroom teachers will partner with support staff to create an inclusive and supportive environment.

Each site has a Great Start Resource Directory which provides information and contacts for numerous Berrien County programs that support families with young children. Preschool teaching staff are available to assist parents in contacting needed resources and having any needed documentation.

INCLUSION

At the YMCA, we understand that each family and child have unique needs and we strive to accommodate and support them in every way possible. We offer a range of services and resources to ensure that families and children feel welcome, safe, and supported in our programs. This includes providing access to specialized equipment and materials and collaborating with families to create individualized plans for their child's learning and development when needed. Our dedicated team of educators and staff work closely with families to ensure that every child has the best possible experience in our programs.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Our staff policy emphasizes the importance of observing and supporting the social and emotional health of children in our care. We believe that a child's emotional well-being is just as important as their physical health, and our staff are trained to recognize and respond to signs of distress or emotional needs.

We also place a strong emphasis on communication with families regarding their child's social and emotional development. Our staff regularly communicates with families about their child's progress and any concerns that may arise. We encourage open and honest communication with families so that we can work together to provide the best possible care for each child.

Overall, our goal is to create a safe and supportive environment where children can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.

GRIEVANCES

Our program strives to provide a positive environment for all. However, at times a concern may arise. If you have any questions or concerns you cannot resolve with the teacher directly, please bring the concerns to the attention of the Director who will work through concerns with you.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

All staff are mandated by law to report any suspected case of child abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation to the Department of Human Services or immediately over the telephone at 855-444-3911 and that they should also follow the report up in writing within 72 hours. Reporting forms are available online at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs>. Form number DHS-3200. Any reasonable suspicion will be reported including a child telling a staff member about abuse, witnessing the abuse, a parent's statement of abuse, or any physical or behavioral signs of abuse. A copy of this law may be obtained from the program director.

IMPORTANT POLICIES

INCLUSION POLICY

The YMCA of Greater Michiana does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, disability, color, religion, or national origin. No one will be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefit of, or be subject to discrimination during any program or activity or in employment.

Our goal is to meet the individual needs of each child within the structure of our program while mandating a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Child and family records will not be disclosed without written consent of the parent or legal guardian, except as needed when child abuse and neglect is a concern. Confidential information is shared only with staff members who need the information to perform their jobs. Families have the right to examine their own records.

DRUG FREE AND SMOKE FREE ZONE

Our facilities and grounds are drug-free and smoke-free zones. Please extinguish cigarettes and properly discard smoking products prior to entering the parking lot and building. This includes vapes and chewing tobacco. Help us stay in a drug-free and smoke-free zone by informing anyone who will be escorting your child to and from school of our policy.

CELL PHONE USE

If you find it necessary to use your cell phone while in our building, please remember that we have many children and staff in our classrooms who are focused on learning activities. You may not want others to hear your conversation, or it may not be an appropriate conversation for the public. We may have children napping depending on the time of day. Please limit cell phone use to emergency use only in our lobby area or outside the building. We do ask that you are not on your phones during drop-off or pick-up. The teachers may need to talk to you about your child or an upcoming event.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

A comprehensive background check is required to be completed in the Michigan Childcare Background Check System (CCBC) on all licensee/licensee designees, program administrators, childcare staff, and volunteer staff with unsupervised access to children. Supervised volunteers are required to have a public sex offender registry (PSOR) clearance with results located at the facility. All staff and volunteers are also required to sign abuse and neglect statements.

- **Unsupervised Volunteers**–Unsupervised volunteers shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times and act in a manner that is conducive to the welfare of children.
- **Supervised Volunteers** will not have a comprehensive background check and will always be under the supervision of the childcare staff. Supervised volunteers must always be in the line of sight and sound of staff and shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times and act in a manner that is conducive to the welfare of children.

CHILD RELEASE POLICY

For the safety of our students, these guidelines will be followed.

- No child will be released to a person other than a parent or guardian during school hours without the prior permission of parent or guardian as provided on Emergency Contact information.
- If a parent/guardian desires that his/her child be released to another person not indicated on the Child Information Record, the following must be received in WRITING: 1) the name of the person to whom the child is to be released; 2) the time of the release and the length of time for which the child is to be released; 3) the purpose of the release.
- Exceptions will be made only in times of emergency. The Program Director or Designee will make the determination of whether an emergency exists.
- The person to whom the child is to be released will be required to sign a log indicating the time and purpose of the release. If the person is not known/recognized by the staff a photo identification will be required. If the director or designee has any doubts about the documentation presented, a decision not to release will be made.
- **Where applicable, parents with sole or joint custody should inform the school of court custody arrangements and provide court documents, which will be kept on file in the school office. Without these court documents, the school cannot legally prevent the non-custodial birth parent from taking the child from school.**

ABUSE OR MISTREATMENT

Our organization's top priority is keeping individuals safe. Any form of abuse or mistreatment of all individuals, children, employees, and volunteers is prohibited. Individuals shall not abuse or mistreat employees, volunteers, or other consumer in any way. Use of abusive language, obscene or profane language, including racial, religious or sexual references directed at other people will not be tolerated. It is important to treat others as you would like to be treated.

REPORTING

Because our organization is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone, including you actively participates in the protection of all our individuals. In the event that someone observes any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of other employees, volunteers, or others, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations. Remember, at our organization, the policies apply to everyone.

Our Code of Conduct and policies include:

- appropriate and inappropriate displays of physical affection.
- appropriate and inappropriate verbal communication.
- one-on-one interactions and outside contact between employees/volunteers and individuals
- electronic communication between employees/volunteers and individuals.
- gift giving and receiving between individuals and employees/volunteers.
- appropriate and inappropriate individual-to-individual interactions.
- The process for individuals to report concerns, complaints or grievances back to the organization.

How to Report Abuse

You do not need proof that abuse is occurring to make a report, only reasonable suspicion. Reporting child sexual abuse is key in preventing and intervening in abuse. Call Children's Protective Services at (855) 444-3911 for Michigan and (800) 800-5556 for Indiana, or you can contact the YMCA of Greater Michiana by scanning the QR Code.



SCHOOL CLOSING AND WEATHER

WEATHER POLICY

Preschool classrooms will follow the building weather policy. Please send your child to school with the appropriate outdoor clothing (coats, hat, mittens, snow pants, boots, etc.) Your child will be going outside in snow and wind so please plan accordingly.

The State of Michigan "Department of Human Services" states that:

- Playing outdoors in cold weather does not cause illness in children. Colds, flu and illness are caused by viruses and bacteria. Children confined in warm, stuffy rooms with several other children have greater exposure to germs causing sickness.
- Frequent exposure to fresh air, exercise, and sunshine increases a child's general fitness and resistance to infections.
- During active play outdoors, the viruses and bacteria are dispersed into a larger, more mobile air space **decreasing** the risk of spreading to others.
- Physical activity increases the air exchange in children's lungs and improves blood flow through the body, giving germs shorter contact with respiratory surfaces.

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.

MATERIALS FROM HOME

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR PRESCHOOL

Preschool clothing should be comfortable and washable so that it does not interfere with any activities. Tennis shoes are suggested for all children. Please remember your child's clothing will be exposed to paint, sand, and markers. **It is important that you put your child's name on all their belongings.** Many children have similar clothing, and it is sometimes impossible to identify ownership without a name. We cannot be responsible for lost items that are without a name label. Children participate in outdoor time most days except in heavy rain or extremely cold weather. Please dress your child accordingly. Warm mittens, coats, hats, boots, and snow pants are necessary every day once cold weather begins! If you need assistance with cold weather clothing, please contact your child's teacher.

It is suggested that each child bring a large bag or backpack to class every day to carry home their artwork, papers, and notes from the teacher. Accidents can happen; it is a good idea that an extra change of clothes be sent and kept in your child's classroom. We have a limited supply of clothing for emergency use. If your child should come home wearing an item provided by his/her teacher, please wash and return it to school promptly.

TOYS FROM HOME

Please leave all toys at home. Toys brought from home can easily get misplaced or even broken. We prefer that your child enjoys them at home or brings them only on special sharing days.

The center is not responsible for any lost or broken items that are brought from home.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

ACCIDENT/INJURIES

Parents **MUST** inform the program staff of any health or safety needs of the child that the program may be required to address. If your child has had an injury or illness that may prevent an activity, please let the director and your child's teacher know.

If an accident occurs resulting in the injury of a child, staff will complete an incident report. This report will include the name of the child, date of the incident, witnesses, and medical professionals consulted if applicable. If other children are involved in the incident, they shall **not** be identified by name in the report. This report will be given to the director to be kept in the center file.

If the injury is not serious, staff will report the incident to the parents/guardians when the child is picked up at the end of the day. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately by phone in case of serious injury. The emergency contact will be notified if the parent/guardians do not answer. In an accident involving emergency care, a medical attention report will be completed and returned to the director.

- **MAJOR** injuries include: a head injury, a broken bone, severe laceration or any other injury that requires a doctor's visit or emergency attention.
- **MINOR** injuries include: scratches, bruises or bumps.

INCIDENTS

An incident includes the following: a child is lost or left unsupervised, alleged sexual contact between children or a child and a staff member or volunteer or physical discipline of a child by a staff member or volunteer. In the event this occurs, the following will take place:

- Parents will be notified immediately by phone or personal contact
- If deemed appropriate the local authorities will be notified
- LARA agency will be notified using the appropriate reporting form BCAL 4605

HEALTH DOCUMENTS

All students must have a copy of their updated immunization record in their center file before their first day of attendance. If a parent chooses not to have his/her child immunized, an immunization waiver may be obtained through the local health department.

A well-child exam must be submitted within the first 30 days of school for continued enrollment. If a well-child exam is not on file by the required date, your child will not be able to attend school until well exam is completed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

MEDICATION POLICY

A Doctor must complete and sign the Medication Permission and Instruction form for prescription medication required during class hours. The doctor should be very specific about instructions for administration of medication. "As needed" is NOT specific enough. Medicine CAN NOT be dispensed without required forms.

- Prescription medication MUST be in its original container labeled with a date, the child's name, and the exact dosage.
- Medication should never be transported to and from school by the child. An adult should bring the medication, along with the completed permission /instruction form directly to the school office.

* Children with ASTHMA must have an "asthma action plan" on file, signed by a physician.

* Children with DIABETES must have a "diabetes action plan" on file, signed by a physician.

Program staff are trained in First Aid and CPR and will secure medical and/or emergency treatment for your child in possible emergency situations.

MEDICATION COMMUNICATION POLICY

It is the YMCA of Greater Michiana Childcare program's policy that we do not administer medications unless needed for safety (allergy-related) or behavioral purposes. In these instances, we ask that parents keep communication open with teaching staff regarding changes in medication and/or dosing.

HAND WASHING

Hand washing is probably the most critical element in reducing the spread of germs. Children should learn about hand washing early in life to help them develop healthy habits. Children will be required to wash their hands before eating, after using the restroom, when returning from outdoors, and other times as determined necessary by the staff. We ask that you encourage and reinforce this behavior to keep everyone as healthy as possible. Staff also follow this policy and wash their hands before any food preparation.

ILLNESS POLICY

SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD HOME TODAY?

When parents are debating whether it is okay to attend, remember that the most contagious time is just prior to the emergence of full-blown symptoms. Parents may want to keep children home for a day to ensure the illness is not contagious.

Upon arrival, if a child seems too ill to be at the Center (determined by Center Director or person in charge), parents will be asked to take him or her home. If we disagree about the child's health, please understand that it is a judgment aimed only at trying to keep everyone healthy.

A parent will be notified, and the child sent home for these reasons:

- Fever over 100.4 degrees (ear) or 99.5 degrees (axillary)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (2 loose stools within an hour)

The child must be symptom-free for 24 hours to return

Children must be free of all symptoms below for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medicines before returning to school.

A child should stay home if experiencing:

- Are feverish or have had a fever in the last 24 hours
- Hacking cough or sore throat
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours
- Have pink eye symptoms which might be pink eye
- Have been on antibiotics for strep or other contagious infections less than 24 hours
- Are too "out of sorts" to participate in class activities
- Unexplained rash
- Skin rash

**These guidelines apply for staff and volunteers as well*

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the teachers when their child will be absent from school. Please call your child's teacher as soon as you know your child will be absent.

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 property or center as part of the 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 director.

General notifications will include

- Notification every September
- A posting will be displayed at the entry point on the facility with at least a 48-hour notification.
- Hand delivered notification through the child's backpack.

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 at least 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 school district 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.

PARENT NOTIFICATIONS

LICENSING REPORTS

The center does not keep a licensing notebook, but internet is available onsite. Reports from at least the last three years are available at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

PROGRAM FEEDBACK

Our program takes a child-centered and family-focused approach to gathering feedback. We recognize that children and families are the experts on their own experiences and needs, and we value their input and perspectives. To gather feedback, we use a variety of methods appropriate for different age groups and developmental levels, such as surveys, advisory groups, and informal conversations. We also involve parents and caregivers in the feedback process, as they play a critical role in supporting their children's growth and development. Our goal is to ensure that children and families feel heard and that their feedback is used to inform the ongoing improvement of our program.

SAFETY DRILLS

Our programs are required to practice safety drills several times a year for fire evacuation, tornado safety and any other threat that may occur. In the event our building is evacuated, staff will notify you or another adult on your child's emergency contact form.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The family involvement component of preschool is based on the belief that the best environment for children exists where there is close family-school interaction. We encourage parents to volunteer in the classroom and attend family events. Anyone interested in volunteering in the classroom will need to give consent to program staff and complete a Central Registry Request. All volunteers and parent volunteers are under the teaching staff's direct supervision when children are present, with at least one staff person per class.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication and collaboration with families is one of the most important aspects of child development. The YMCA's early childhood programs use a variety of processes to facilitate this, such as regular meetings with families to discuss their child's progress, sending home progress reports, or providing opportunities for parents to observe their child in the classroom. Additionally, our educators can use digital communication tools like email or messaging apps to keep families informed and engaged in their child's learning. By maintaining open lines of communication and working collaboratively with families, we can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for each child.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

We have positive expectations for the children who are in our care. We concentrate on the behavior we want and model what is needed to build positive relationships between adults and children and among children. Teachers provide ongoing support as children learn social and problem-solving skills. Program staff are prohibited from using any form of punishment. (i.e. spanking, threatening, humiliating, and withholding of basic needs including food and outdoor play, or isolation from the group).

Our program recognizes that challenging behaviors can be addressed through daily routines and activities. We believe that providing structure and consistency to a child's day can help to reduce anxiety and uncertainty, which may be contributing factors to challenging behavior. Our program is designed to have consistent daily schedules for our students and our curriculum provides opportunities for children to engage in activities that they enjoy and that align with their interests. We believe this approach can help foster a sense of fulfillment and reduce the likelihood of challenging behaviors. We strive to create a positive and supportive environment that promotes growth, development, and overall well-being through ongoing communication and collaboration with our staff, students, and families.

CHOICES: Throughout the school day, children are recognized and encouraged to make choices. Choices within limits allow a child to feel empowered and feel part of a decision-making process. The more choices a child has, the more likely he or she will cooperate with adults.

INTERVENTION: Conflict can occur when a child is trying to assert control over a situation. Teachers diffuse conflict by using statements such as, "You may play in the gym after you put the trucks away." When children are experiencing a conflict, the teacher will approach the children calmly and acknowledge their feelings ("you are feeling really angry"). Next the teacher will gather information from the children and find out why there is a conflict ("what happened?"). The teacher will help each child use empowering words and problem-solving strategies to resolve the conflict ("Ask your friend, 'Can I use this truck?' Tell your friend, 'I am using this truck right now. I'll give it to you when I am done.'") As children learn and practice using problem solving words and strategies, they often begin to use these without adult intervention as the year goes on.

REDIRECTION: When a conflict has been resolved, the child/children will be redirected with new choices (example: "Would you like to play in the sand or with play dough?")

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES: Sometimes children make choices that have consequences. Children who experience logical, natural consequences learn that they have control in situations. The consequences are met with calmness and empathy for the child. (Example: "This is sad. Remember I asked you not to throw sand? Throwing sand hurt his/her eyes. What can you do to help?")

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The process for connecting families to community resources involves assessing the family's needs, identifying appropriate resources, providing referrals to those resources, and following up with the family to ensure that their needs have been met. This process may vary depending on the specific community resources and the needs of the family, but in general, it involves a collaborative effort between our program and families to ensure that referrals are made in a respectful, helpful, and safe manner.



berriencountyParentNET.org helps connect parents to the resources in Berrien County that are available to families – whether it be healthcare, schools, fun activities or parenting support. The development of this website has been made possible through a grant given to Berrien County to promote positive parenting through county wide implementation of Triple P (Positive Parenting Program).

Triple P is a program that supports parents by offering simple, practical parenting strategies for a wide range of parenting concerns. Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) can help! Triple P is a program that suggests simple routines and small changes that can make a big difference for families. Every family is different. Yet parents all over the world face problems that are surprisingly similar. The issues you deal with in your home affect families everywhere.

Triple P Positive Parenting helps parents to:

- Create a stable and harmonious family environment
- Encourage behavior they like
- Build positive relationships with their children
- Deal positively, consistently and decisively with problem behavior

Read more at berriencountyParentNET.org

2025-2026 CALENDAR

AUGUST

- Aug. 28: Drive-up Packet Pick-Up.
Drive up by the classroom doors on the northside of the building and the teacher will hand you your packet.

SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 4: Preschool Open House 4:30-5:30 PM
- Sept 8: : First day of school for Butterflies MWF and M-F classes (drop off begins at 8:40 AM)
- Sept. 9: First Day for Butterflies T-Th classes (drop off begins at 8:40 AM)
- Sept. 12: First Day Angelfish Drop off Begins at 8:55 AM
- Sept. 16: First day of Swim for T/Th and M-F Butterfly classes (please pack a towel & swimsuit in a plastic grocery bag)
- Sept. 17: first day of swim for MWF Butterfly class (M-F will swim too. Please pack a towel & swimsuit in a plastic bag)

OCTOBER

- Oct. 28, 29: Butterflies Watch me swim and Halloween parties
- Oct. 31 Angelfish Halloween party.
- TBD Firetruck and police car visiting preschool classes.
- TBD Picture Days

NOVEMBER

- NO SCHOOL for Thanksgiving: November 26-28

DECEMBER

- Dec. 16, 17: Butterflies Watch me swim and Christmas parties
- Dec. 19: Angelfish Christmas Party
- NO SCHOOL for Christmas Break: December 22-January 5

JANUARY

- Jan. 5: Back to School
- Jan. 19: NO SCHOOL for MLK Day

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 16: NO SCHOOL - Presidents' Day

MARCH

- March 17-20: NO SCHOOL - Conferences ((your child's teacher will have a sign-up sheet for times)
- March 30- April 3: NO SCHOOL for Spring Break.

APRIL

- April 5: Back to school
- April 14: Watch Me Swim
- April 15 Watch Me Sim

MAY

- May 14: Carnival
- May 15: Angelfish Graduation
- May 18: M/W/F Butterfly Graduation
- May 19: T/TH Butterfly Graduation

Please be sure to check your child's monthly calendar for any changes to this calendar.