BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

PARENT HANDBOOK
YOUTH PROGRAMS 2016–2017
GASTON COUNTY FAMILY YMCA
DEAR PARENT:

Welcome to the YMCA! The YMCA is for Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and we do this throughout the county at our YMCAs and offsite Afterschool sites. We also are able to make this impact through children and teens in programs such as Parents Night Out, Youth Sports, and Swim Lessons. We encourage all parents to take a look at our program offerings as well as information. For more information on programs and services at the YMCA please visit us online at www.gastonymca.org.

It’s going to be a fantastic school year and we are glad you are here! We will serve your children with compassion, patience, skill and respect. It is our desire that staff and parents become partners in youth development. In turn, we ask that you, as a parent/caregiver, help us. Let us know of any ideas, thoughts or concerns that you may have regarding Y programs. The YMCA is a place for families and we want to do everything possible to strengthen and support your family.

All YMCA programs are designed to meet the following goals.

- Learn to appreciate oneself, gain confidence and self esteem
- Develop character values
- Develop skills in leadership and group work
- Meet new friends
- Have fun!

Thank you, Gaston County Family YMCA Program Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cherryville YMCA</th>
<th>Central YMCA</th>
<th>Pharr Family YMCA</th>
<th>South Gaston Family YMCA</th>
<th>Stowe Family YMCA</th>
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<tr>
<td>119 East Main St</td>
<td>615 W Franklin Blvd</td>
<td>208 Main St McAdenville, NC</td>
<td>3210 Union Rd Gastonia, NC</td>
<td>196 YMCA Dr. Belmont, NC</td>
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<td>Cherryville, NC 28021</td>
<td>Gastonia, NC 28052</td>
<td>28101</td>
<td>28056</td>
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YMCA Programs by Age

INFANT
Childwatch
Swim Lessons (6 months +)

TODDLER
Childwatch
Dance
Gymnastics
Fit Tots
Kindercamp
Parents Night Out
Swim Lessons
Youth Sports—Soccer, Basketball, T Ball and Coach Pitch

ELEMENTARY
Adventure Guides
Afterschool
Art
Birthday Parties
Childwatch and Gameroom
Dance
Gymnastics Classes and Gymnastics Camp
Holiday Camp
Home School Gym and Swim
Judo/Karate
Kids Get Fit Classes
Kids Yoga
Parents Night Out
Sports Camps
Summer Day Camp
Swim Club

ELEMENTARY CONTINUED
Swim Lessons
Youth Fitness—Cardio
Youth Sports—Soccer, Basketball, Flag Football

TEENS
Afterschool
Camper In Leadership Training (CILT)
College Tours
Holiday Camp
Lifeguarding Certification Classes
Middle School United Nations
Mission Trip
NetworX Youth
Parents Night Out
Personal Training
Saturday Night at Stowe
Ski/Tubing Trip
Summer Day Camp and Sports Camps
Swim Club
Swim Lessons
Teen Leaders’ Club
Teens Changing Gaston County
Youth In Government
Youth Fitness

Please visit our website, www.gastonymca.org, or the YMCA member services desk for registration information on these and other programs!

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.
YMCA AFTERSCHOOL

Building a better Gaston … one family at a time.

YMCA Afterschool Enrichment

The YMCA offers Afterschool Enrichment in schools across Gaston County. Please see the list below to see if the Y serves your school and which Gaston County Family YMCA to contact for information. If you don’t see your child’s school contact your local Y for possible options.

Central YMCA

School Based Sites –
- Brookside
- Carr
- Gardner Park
- Sherwood

School Pick Up Sites transported to the Central YMCA –

Central YMCA Onsite
- St. Michael’s
- Pleasant Ridge
- Grier Middle School
- York Chester Middle School
- Sadler
- Woodhill
- HH Beam
- Piedmont Charter Elementary and Middle School
- Lingerfeldt
- Holbrook Middle School

BOLD school accept DSS Vouchers.

Cherryville Family YMCA
- Cherryville Elementary
- Beam Intermediate (participants go to Cherryville Elementary)
- Costner

South Gaston Family YMCA

School Based Sites –
- New Hope
- WA Bess
- Hawk’s Nest (participants go to Robinson)
- Robinson

Stowe Family YMCA

School Based Sites –
- Belmont Central
- Lowell
- Page Primary
- Pinewood

School Pick Up Sites transported to the Stowe Family YMCA –

Stowe Family YMCA Onsite
- Catawba Heights
- Ida Rankin
- McAdenville
- North Belmont
- Belmont Middle
- Cramerton Middle
- Mt. Holly Middle

Year Round Registration

The YMCA offers the option to register for a year’s worth of programs at once, including a cost savings! This includes 2016—2017 Afterschool, Winter Holiday Camp 2016, Spring Break Camp 2017, and 2017 Summer Camp! The weekly cost remains the same for all 52 weeks.

Registration for this option is only available until September 30, 2016.
Important Program Dates to Remember

Monday, August 29, 2016—Gaston County School begins
Monday, September 5, 2016—Labor Day, No program provided
Thursday, October 20, 2016—Early Dismissal, program provided
Tuesday, November 8, 2016—Optional Teacher Workday, program provided
Friday, November 11, 2016—Veteran’s Day, program provided
Wednesday, November 23, 2016—Teacher Work Day, program provided
Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25, 2016—Thanksgiving Holiday, No program provided
December 21, December 22 and December 23, 2016—Winter Break Camp available for registration
Monday, December 26 through Friday, December 30, 2016—Holiday Camp available
Monday, January 2, 2017—Holiday, program provided
Monday, January 16, 2017—Martin Luther King Jr. Day, program available
Monday, January 23 and Tuesday, January 24, 2017—Teacher Work Day, program provided
Wednesday, February 15, 2017—Early Dismissal, program provided
Thursday, March 16, 2017—Early Dismissal, program provided
Friday, April 14, 2017—Good Friday, No program provided
Monday, April 17 through Friday, April 21, 2017—Spring Break, Holiday Camp available
Monday, May 29, 2017—Memorial Day, No program provided
Thursday, June 8, 2017—Student’s Last Day (early dismissal), program provided
Friday, June 9, 2017—No school, program provided
Monday, June 12, 2017—Summer Camp begins
Tuesday, July 4, 2017—Fourth of July Holiday, No program provided

Early Dismissal—The YMCA Afterschool program includes additional hours during all scheduled early dismissal days for children registered in the Afterschool and Year Round program at their regular Afterschool site from school dismissal until 6:00 pm. This is provided with no additional fee to your weekly draft.

Teacher Work Day—Childcare is included with all current Afterschool and Year Round participants. These days are held at the Central and Stowe Family YMCAs from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, students must arrive by 10:00 am. This program is provided with non additional fee to your weekly draft. Children not currently registered in YMCA Afterschool can sign up for Teacher Work Days if space is available.

Holiday Camp—This program is available to anyone registered at the Central and Stowe Family YMCAs from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. This fee is not included in weekly draft. Early registration mandatory and the program can fill.
Who is watching my child?
We feel confident that we have the best staff in town! Our staff is as diverse as our children and comprised of men and women who want to make an impact on their community. We strive to hire counselors that are college students and graduates, although we do have some exceptional 16 and 17 year olds too! Many members of our staff team are enrolled in teaching credential programs or are full time teachers. Prior to their employment, staff members have been drug tested, had a criminal background check, and are required to be CPR and basic first aid certified within their first 90 days. Additionally, three references are checked for each staff member. Staff of all our water related activities are certified Red Cross lifeguards. We do everything to make sure your child will be safe in the event of an emergency.

Most importantly, our staff are people who love kids. They want to spend their time playing, teaching, and working with children. They are good people with good hearts.

What is the staff/child ratio?
Toddlers = 1 staff per 8 children
School Age children = 1 staff per 15 children

Staff goals each day:
- Create a welcoming environment
- Total group cohesiveness
- Lead by positive example
- Inclusion of all children
- Keep children happy and safe
- Promote caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and faith in each environment

Will my child be playing with kids their own age at the Y?
To make Y programs more age-appropriate and easier to schedule, children are divided into small groups. This allows for small group activities, ease of supervision, and fosters the relationship between children and staff. However, there may be times when your child does have limited interaction with children of different age groups.

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA)
Based on years of research with key partners, the HEPA standards will build a healthier future for our nation’s children by creating environments rich in opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity.

Recreation/Physical Activity
The Y has implemented a series of HEPA standards in our programs as part of the Y’s national commitment to combat childhood obesity and ensure that all those who participate in YMCA programs live a healthier, balanced life. This designated physical activity time will allow youth to engage in 30—60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day and will take place outdoors whenever possible.

Screen Time
Limited access to television, movies, and digital device time to less than one hour per day. Digital device use is limited to homework or programs that engage children in physical activity.

Food and Nutrition
Healthy snacks and meals help ensure children receive the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow.

Financial Assistance
As a 501(c)3, non profit, no one is turned away due to the inability to pay for membership. See the member services desk for information about an affordable income based rate.

What is financial assistance?
The YMCA is committed to providing quality programs regardless of one’s ability to pay. Our financial assistance program is available for those who otherwise would be unable to enjoy the benefits of YMCA membership & programs. Eligibility is determined based on applicant’s income and is administered on a sliding scale. Please inquire at the membership service desk.
How do you make sure a stranger doesn’t pick up my child?

When picking up your children, you will be asked for their CODE WORD every single day. This Code Word is to be selected during the time of registration and will be used to release your child. This is to ensure the safety of every child. Your child will only be released to those who know the Code Word. The approved guardian will then initial next to your child’s name to sign them out.

- **Children should NOT know their own Code Word.**
- **Can a friend or family member pick my child up?** Yes. They just need to know your child’s code word. If they are unable to provide a code word, a photo ID and phone verification will be required.
- **What if I forget my child’s code word?** People who come to pick up your child that do not know the Code Word or use an incorrect word will be asked to go to the YMCA member services desk to confirm pick up authorization by checking a valid identification card.

Drop off/ Pick up Details

Children MAY NOT be dropped off before the program begins. They MUST be signed in with a YMCA Staff Member by a parent/caregiver. They MAY NOT check themselves in.

In fairness to our staff and because of subsequent program demands, it is very important that your child be picked up on time. A late fee will be charged for each child not picked up on time.

If picked up after the stated time there is a $1 per minute fee per child. This fee must be paid before the child returns and may affect child’s enrollment.

For Afterschool and Summer Camp, this is 6:00pm.

If picked up late the YMCA staff will begin calling parents/emergency contacts. If a child is not picked up within 30 minutes, local authorities will be called.

Custody Issues

In cases of separation or divorced parents where visitation rights are denied to one parent, we cannot deny releasing the child to such parent unless a court decree or separation documents are in our file expressly forbidding such parent to pick the child up from our program, or from pick up times not allowed by court decree. The court decree must also be specific to the rights of visitation on the YMCA property during Afterschool, Summer Camp, or other program. The court document must specify in writing that visitation is permitted by the non-custodial parent. Otherwise, visitation will not be permitted. Please call the Director if you have any specific custody issues.

Family Transitions

Children’s actions in our programs often reflect problems they are experiencing at home (i.e. pet’s death, parents divorcing, fight with sibling). If any such disruptive or traumatic experience should occur, please inform your Director. This will enable us to better meet the needs of your child.

Parent/Guardian Visitation

We have an open door policy in regards to having parents/guardians coming to see the great activities and fun their child is experiencing. We do require that all parents/guardians sign in with the Director/Coordinator that runs the program. From there, they will walk with you to the participant’s location.

What if a parent is impaired?

If a YMCA staff member believes that a parent is intoxicated when they arrive to pick up their child, we will detain the child until an alternate plan can be arranged for transportation.
BEING BRIGHT...

What if my child becomes ill or gets injured while at the Y?

If your child becomes ill while at the Y, our staff will contact you to pick him/her up. The Y is not designed to handle ill children, so it is important to tend to your child in a timely manner. If your child is injured, our staff will take whatever steps necessary to administer/obtain medical care. If we are unable to reach you or if you have not picked up your child after an hour and a half and your child needs medical attention they will be transported to the hospital by an ambulance. All expenses for emergency medical care are the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

Children must be fever, diarrhea, both nit and lice free for at least 24 hours before returning to the program.

Why do you need my child’s medical information?

The medical and behavioral information is the most important part of your child’s registration. This is the only information the YMCA has regarding any medical needs of your child. It also gives us permission to seek care for your child in the event of an emergency. Please be sure to list all medical and/or behavioral issues as well as any and all medications your child receives on a regular basis.

Does my child need to be potty trained?

Yes, however we know that accidents happen from time to time and our staff will assist your child when those accidents occur. If your child does happen to have an accident, we require that someone bring them new clothing immediately if they do not have any with them, or come to pick them up from the Y or offsite location.

What if my child needs medication while they are at the Y?

If medication must be administered to your child during program hours, please follow our Medication Procedure:

**MEDICATION MUST BE IN THE ORIGINAL PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE WITH THE CHILD’S NAME.**

Fill out the “Medication Form” and place the medication bottle in a Ziploc bag. This form is available at the YMCA member services desk or online. It is not available at curbside drop off.

Give Ziploc bag, medication and “Medication Form” to the counselor at the check-in area.

There must only be enough medication for the entire session. Please do not send more than needed.

Medications will be kept in a locked container. If child is outside or out of the childcare area the counselor for the child will carry medication in a backpack or fanny pack. Children are not allowed to carry or administer their own medication, including over-the-counter medication.

Medication that is left over (including epi-pens and inhalers) will be discarded 30 days after program end date.

When can I expect my phone call or email to be returned?

We work very hard to make sure your phone calls and emails are returned. Due to the nature of Program Director jobs they are not often in the office. You should expect to have your call/email returned within 24-48 hours. Please keep in mind the volume of important phone calls/emails we receive every day.

My child lost something, where can I find it?

We know that sometimes things get lost. At check-in or check-out inquire about the location for lost and found. Lost and found items are kept for 2 full weeks and then are donated to charity.

PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILD’S BELONGINGS

The YMCA is not responsible for program participant possessions that are damaged, lost, or stolen.
My child loves their counselor. Can they babysit for our family?

YMCA staff are not allowed to fraternize with, babysit, or transport your child outside of the YMCA program. We request that you not ask any Y staff to care for your child outside of the program. If a relationship exists outside the Y which predates the staff employment with the YMCA, staff should notify their supervisor.

What should my child wear and bring to the Y?

- Please label everything sent to the Y
- Closed-toe athletic shoes & socks daily
- Pants/shorts
- T-Shirt/long sleeve
- A jacket on chilly days
- Swimming trunks/full cover bathing suit, and towel for swim days
- Backpack
- Refillable water bottle
- Extra change of clothes for emergencies

What shouldn’t my child bring/wear to the Y?

- Money/Jewelry/Valuables
- Toys/Trading Cards
- Knives or any type of weapon
- Open toed shoes
- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, etc.
- Clothing that promotes vulgarity, alcohol, or tobacco
- Any electronics (cell phones, iPods, etc.)

What are the bathroom procedures?

No child is sent to the bathroom alone and one child is never alone with a staff member. Our children will take trips to the bathroom with their group and Y staff. We use the rule of three or more, meaning that one staff member and at least three (or more) children use the restroom every time. Children will only use restrooms inspected for safety by staff prior to entering the restroom.

What if my child doesn’t want to swim? Or forgets his/her bathing suit on swim days?

If your child doesn’t want to swim or forgets his/her bathing suit they simply won’t go swimming and will engage in other activities.

- To swim in the deep end, children must pass the swim test by jumping into the pool, swimming the length of the pool, and then tread water for 30 seconds.
- Children who pass the swim test MUST wear the swim band for the entire session. For your child’s safety the swim band MUST be present at all times while in the pool. No exceptions. It is $1 to replace a lost swim band.

What if my child cannot swim?

If a child is unable to swim they will stay in the closely supervised shallow end of the pool. If children want to go to the deep end they must take and pass the swim test.

- Life jackets are available but we encourage children to bring their own to ensure proper fit.
- All life jackets must be Coast Guard approved.

What if there is inclement weather?

Due to inclement weather our YMCA programs are subject to change and/or cancellation. This includes unsafe travel conditions to and from the Y and pick up inside the building.

Rain—Children may come home wet and/or muddy.

Thunder/Lightning—All programs will be moved inside. The Y pools will close.

Tornado/Hurricane—All programs will be moved inside to interior rooms. The Y pools will close.

Snow/ice—Y programs are subject to cancellation, delayed start time, or early pick up.

If school is cancelled during the school day the Afterschool program will also be cancelled.

Inclement weather cancellations are not subject to refunds. Please check www.gastonymca.org and our Facebook page for updates.

GASTON COUNTY FAMILY YMCA 9
Do you accept children with special needs?

Parents or guardians are required to inform the YMCA in writing, prior to a child’s acceptance in a YMCA program, of any special circumstances which may affect the child’s ability to participate fully and within the guidelines of acceptable behavior, including but not limited to any serious behavioral problems or special circumstances regarding psychological, medical or physical conditions.

Upon being informed of such circumstances, the Director may require a conference with the parent(s)/guardian to discuss issues created by these circumstances.

How are behavior issues dealt with during Y Programs?

Promoting social interaction and building interpersonal skills are what we strive for. We will help children with this goal by providing encouragement, feedback and assistance. Counselors are trained to provide corrective action in a positive and supportive manner.

What are the YMCA’s guidelines for discipline:

YMCA childcare programs make every effort to redirect disruptive behavior through positive reinforcement and reflection. In more aggressive cases, to ensure the safety of all participants the following procedure will be implemented.

Rule of Five

- 1st Offense: Documentation of offense, parent sign
- 2nd Offense: Documentation of offense, phone call to parent
- 3rd Offense: Documentation of offense, 1—2 day suspension from program
- 4th Offense: Documentation of offense, 1 week suspension from program, letter to parent regarding dismissal on next offense
- 5th Offense: Dismissal from program

Depending on the severity of an issue the YMCA reserves the right to dismiss participants for disruptive or unruly behavior.

What are the Rules?

- Safety First.
- Listen and follow directions.
  - children will listen to others
  - children are not allowed to use inappropriate or vulgar language
  - children will not bring inappropriate items or electronics to Y programs
- Do what is right.
  - children will speak for themselves and no one else.
  - children will not put others down
  - children will show respect to staff, peers, facility, and bus drivers.
- Try everything and do your best.
- Parents are also encouraged to follow the above rules.

What are the Bus Rules?

- Children will remain in their seats with their backs and bottoms touching the seats at all times.
- Children will keep their voices at an appropriate level.
- Children may not put anything (including body parts) outside the bus windows.
- Children will behave respectfully and use appropriate language.
- No eating or drinking on the bus.
- Children will show respect to the bus by leaving it clean and not defacing seats/walls.
- Children will wear seatbelts where applicable.
- All children must follow the directions of the driver and Y staff at all times.

Failure to follow bus rules could result in suspension or termination from the program.

What are grounds for immediate suspension/removal?

We strive to work with each parent and child however, the below behaviors are grounds for immediate suspension and/or termination: Exchange of bodily fluids, striking other children or staff, leaving a mark on another child or staff member, running away, and/or creating an unsafe environment.
How do I register for a program?
Please visit the YMCA front desk or our website for registration forms and information. Each program will have program specific information available that will include dates, sessions, cost, etc. Many programs are available to register and pay for online. www.gastonymca.org

To register at the YMCA please fill out the entire form before submitting it to the member services staff.

How do I pay for the program?
All payments are due prior to participating in Y programs. Many programs have a one time fee that is paid at the time of registration, for example youth soccer. Ongoing programs, such as summer camp and afterschool, offer several payment options such as weekly (on Fridays), twice-monthly (on the 1st and 15th), and monthly (on the 1st).

Parent portion of DSS Voucher must be paid by the 15th.

Afterschool Enrichment and Summer Camp
Registration forms are due by 6:00 pm on Friday the week prior to attendance. If payment is not made by the Friday before the week attending a $20 late payment fee will be added to your account and due before attendance. If no payment is made prior to the program registered for your child will be withdrawn to open space for additional children. There will be no exceptions, your child will not be able to attend Camp/After School.

There are five ways to make a payment:
Bank Draft Credit Card
Debit Card Checks
Cash at YMCA in advance

All payments must be made at the membership desk inside the YMCA or to the Program Account Manager; payments will not be accepted at off site locations.

What do I do if I need to add or cancel a program?
• Additions/Cancellations must be made in writing on an “Addition/Cancellation Form”.
• Deposits, registration fees, and/or paid portions are non-refundable.
• Email, fax, or drop-off Addition/Cancellation Forms to your Program Director.
• All cancellations must be made in writing two weeks prior to the program.
• If a cancellation form is not completed and received or your child does not attend the program, you are still responsible for payment.
• If your child is suspended or sent home for disruptive behavior, no refunds will be issued.
• You can find Addition/Cancellation Form at each YMCA location, and on our website www.gastonymca.org.
• A request to cancel Afterschool must be made two weeks in advance to avoid being responsible for additional fees.
• A request to cancel a week of summer camp must be made the Wednesday before that week of camp in order to not be charged.

Return Fee Charge
Any returned checks received will be turned over to the Gaston County Family YMCA collections department. Outstanding balances resulting from returned checks must be cleared up before the child may enroll or attend any YMCA program. There will be $25.00 fee for any returned checks or bank draft payment. This will be collected through eCashflow and via your bank draft information.

Past Due Payment Guidelines
• A $20.00 late fee will be assessed on all payments received after the scheduled due date.
• Services will be suspended if payment is not received within one week of the due date.
• Overdue fees will be handled by the Program Account Manager.
• Balances will be sent to a collections agency if not collected in-house.
GASTON COUNTY FAMILY YMCA
Building a better Gaston ... one family at a time.
gastonymca.org