

Stephens Family YMCA Y Little Explorers

Parent Handbook 2025

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Stephens Family YMCA
2501 Fields South Drive
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Welcome to the Stephens Family YMCA's Little Explorers!

We're excited to have your child join us! Our program is designed for children ages 3 to 5 years old and focuses on social, mental, and emotional growth through creative, hands-on activities in art, science, music, and dramatic play. **Children must be fully potty trained to participate.**

We value open communication and encourage you to share any concerns or discuss your child's progress with their teacher. Our open-door policy invites you to visit anytime.

Thank you for choosing the Stephens Family YMCA. We look forward to a great year!

YMCA Mission Statement

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

Y Little Explorers Staff

Our dedicated team at the Y Little Explorers Program is committed to your child's safety and development. All staff undergo background checks, receive ongoing training, and are certified in CPR and First Aid. We also participate in annual early childhood education training to stay current on the best practices for engaging and nurturing children. We provide a safe, caring, and stimulating environment for your child to thrive.

Admission & Discharge

1. **Eligibility:** Children who are three to five years old by the time of registration are eligible to attend. *Children must be potty trained.
2. Program Times:
 - o **Three-day Y Little Explorers:** Meets on Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 8:30-11:15 AM
 - o **Two-day Y Little Explorers:** Meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30-11:15 AM.

***Class Sizes:** All classes are limited to 20 students.

We at Y Little Explorers operate under intermittent care. There is no set schedule for children to attend. If we see they are attending on a regular, not intermittent, basis we will discuss with parents of other options of care in our area that may be suitable.

Pick-Up Policy: Y Little Explorers staff will only release children to persons who are authorized in writing on the childcare enrollment information packet. **If a person is not recognized by sight, he or she will be asked to present a valid photo ID for verification.** Anyone without prior authorization is prohibited from taking a child out of the Y Little Explorers program. Additions to the authorized pick-up list must be made in person or an email to the Director. Prompt pick-up is expected. A \$1.00 per minute late fee will be charged for late pick-ups.

3. **Emergency Forms:** All enrolled children must have written consent forms for emergency medical care and field trips on file before admission. We will only take walks around the outside of the Y and to the park behind the Y. The children will be able to utilize the YMCA's Facility.
4. **Medical Examination:** A completed medical examination form must be submitted before a child can be admitted to the class.
5. **Deposit and Fees:**
 - A registration fee of \$50.00 per family and the first month's tuition is required to hold your child's spot. Both the registration fee and the first month's tuition are non-refundable.
6. **Tuition:**
 - The programs run for 10 months, from August to May.
 - Tuition is due on the first of each month for the entire month. Payment will be set up with an ACH or credit cards only.
 - A \$25 fee will be assessed for returned checks.
 - Tuition is based on full attendance, and no credits are provided for holidays, vacations, illnesses, or snow days. Fees are non-refundable.
 - Tuition rates will be reviewed annually and may be subject to change.
7. **Member and Guest Member Tuition**

- Members
 - Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays: \$281 per month
 - Tuesday and Thursdays: \$187 per month
- Guest Members
 - Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays: \$330 per month
 - Tuesday and Thursdays: \$219 per month

8. Withdrawals and Re-enrollment:

- To withdraw your child, a two-week written notice is required. If you do not provide this notice, you will be responsible for the following month's tuition.
- If you wish to re-enroll after withdrawal, your child will be placed on a waiting list if space is unavailable.

9. Child Removal:

- The Y Little Explorers Program reserves the right to remove any child from the program if, after a reasonable trial period, the child demonstrates an inability to participate or benefit from the program, or if their presence is detrimental to the group.

Holidays/Closures

- The Y's Little Explorers Program runs from February 3rd through Friday, May 23rd. We will be closed on: **April 18th**

Inclement Weather Statement

When the center is closed due to bad weather, you will receive an email from the director notifying you of the closure. If you are unsure, please call the YMCA at 217-239-2835 or email Devin@ccymca.net.

Tornado and Fire Plans

1. Tornado Plan:

In the event that the tornado siren sounds, all children will be escorted to the locker rooms for safety. We will remain there until it is safe to return to the classroom, after the weather has cleared.

2. Fire Plan:

In the event of a fire alarm, the alarms will sound at the Y. Staff will evacuate the children through the fire exit and proceed to the designated safe area near the pavilion.

Maintaining Children's Records

Parents are required to update their children's forms annually and prior to the start of the Y Little Explorers Program. Children's personal records will be

managed by Devin Brocksmith, Child Watch and Preschool Program Director. All records are securely stored in a locked cabinet in the office to ensure confidentiality.

Little Explorers Program Compliance

The Y Little Explorers Program is not licensed or regulated by DCFS. However, we conduct background checks on all staff, provide ongoing staff training, and ensure compliance with all CCRS-mandated Child Development Trainings, including the mandated reporter training through DCFS.

Our staff members are also certified in CPR and First Aid through certified trainers. Additionally, the YMCA adheres to the standards set by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Fire Safety Standards established by the Illinois State Fire Marshal.

Photograph and Video Policy

The YMCA and the Y Little Explorers Program may take photos or videos of participants for promotional purposes, including brochures, websites, social media, and other materials. By participating in YMCA programs, events, or activities, the participant (or parent/guardian of a minor) grants permission for the use and distribution of their (or their child's) image in these materials without compensation or further approval.

Behavior Policy: Discipline

The YMCA Preschool uses positive discipline techniques to help children develop self-control and problem-solving skills. Staff will employ methods like redirection, logical consequences, and positive reinforcement.

Restricted Parent Information

For court-ordered custody arrangements with visitation restrictions, we require a written, dated statement and a stamped copy of your legal custody papers. If one parent cannot pick up the child without the other's consent, please provide a written statement confirming this, along with the name and relationship of the individual who is not authorized for pick-up. This documentation must be submitted to the child center office.

CCRS Program (Dept. of Human Services)

The Child Care Resource Service (CCRS) offers financial assistance to qualifying families through the Illinois Department of Human Services. For

more information, contact CCRS at 217-355-1163 or visit www.ccrs.illinois.edu.

DCFS Program

DCFS provides financial assistance for daycare services to low-income families. To apply, contact the local DCFS office at 217-337-9000.

Annual Scholarship Fund

The policy at this YMCA is to provide financial assistance to the extent that funds are available to anyone who can demonstrate a financial need. Advanced application and restrictions apply. To apply or for more information please contact our Scholarship Director at Amy@ccymca.net or go online at www.sf-ymca.net

Health and Illness

Important: Please notify the Preschool if your child is ill or absent. Sick children should stay home to protect their health and that of others, as many communicable diseases begin with cold-like symptoms. A child must stay home or will be sent home if they exhibit any of the following:

- Elevated temperature of 101°F or higher with another symptom, or 102°F+
- Vomiting
- Unidentified or contagious rash
- Diarrhea
- Red, weepy eyes (possible conjunctivitis)
- Any communicable disease
- Evidence of head lice
- Excessive cough or nasal discharge
- Mouth sores
- Any symptoms that prevent participation in activities

Please inform us of the nature of any illness, including when a communicable disease first appeared. A doctor's release stating that your child is no longer contagious is required for their return.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, staff will contact parents or guardians for pickup.

When Can My Child Return to the Program?

- The child has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol, ibuprofen, or other fever-reducing medications.
- The child has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.
- For head lice, children must be completely free of all nits to return. Our center enforces a nit-free policy, and staff will conduct head checks on all children before re-entry.

Medication Policy

Directions for prescription medication that needs to be administered at the Y Little Explorers program:

- Medicine must be brought directly to the program director by the parent/guardian in the original prescription container.
- It must be accompanied by written instructions including the quantity and time when it needs to be administered, name and phone number of the doctor, the prescription number, and the name of the pharmacy along with any other pertinent information.
- In addition to these things, written clearance must be given by filling out the "Medical and Medication Authorization" forms at registration.
- All medication will be kept on the child's medication record at the Y Little Explorers Directors office.

Injury Policy

In case of injury, staff will provide immediate first aid and notify the parents. All injuries are documented in writing, and parents are informed of any incidents involving their child.

Thank you for being part of the Y Little Explorers community! Together, we'll foster a supportive environment for your child's growth and development.