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WESTPORT WESTON FAMILY YMCA
School Age Child Care
2024–2025

Parent Handbook

Updated 04/09/2024



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Program at a Glance

A Letter from the Director

Welcome and thank you for registering your child for our School Age Childcare (SACC) program where we strive to ensure that every child in our care has a safe and nurturing place to learn, grow, thrive and belong. Our program serves children in Kindergarten through 5th grade and provides a wide variety of fun activities that promote youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. We maintain a strong commitment to building character in youth through our four core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility.

Our staff is committed to providing your family with the best possible experience. Our goal is to have your child have a safe and fun experience, while we reinforce academic, social-emotional, and life skills in an environment that welcomes all. We aim to model healthy habits to our students in all that we do, which you can see reflected in our curriculum and lesson plans, newsletters, and communication with you. Celebrating community is another prominent theme of our program and we invite families to join us as volunteers or lead a service project the children are involved with. If you should have any questions please contact me at the information below. Together we can ensure a safe and healthy environment for children between school and when they get home.

Here's to a wonderful school year!

Kathy

Program Contact Information

Kathy Giglio

Hablo Español

Childcare & Youth Services Director

Camp Hafaday Director

Special Needs Programming

Events Coordinator

Direct Line: (203) 571-6040

Main Line: (203) 226-8981

kgiglio@westporty.org

Westport Weston Family YMCA

14 Allen Raymond Lane

Westport, CT 06880

Registration and Fees

Where is the after school program located and how do students get there?

The Westport Weston Family YMCA (WWFY) SACC programs are located at the YMCA's Bedford Family Center and Beck Lodge at 14 Allen Raymond Lane. Children from Westport and Weston Public Schools will be bussed from school to the YMCA in the afternoons. On school half days, children who are normally scheduled on those days will be picked up at early dismissal and brought to the site. Please make sure to let the school know when your child will be attending the YMCA by using the Dismissal Manager application.

How do I enroll for the School Age Child Care Program?

A child will be accepted for admission if (1) there is space in the program, (2) all enrollment and release forms are completed and signed, and (3) a copy of the most recent regularly scheduled school physical and immunizations is submitted, along with any medical documentation for medication. A deposit of \$150, which will be put towards your child's first month, will be due at registration. Registration can be on a one-month trial basis, which you may cancel before the beginning of the next month. You can visit us at www.westporty.org to enroll your child!

What specific paperwork do I need to submit at registration?

Children will not be officially registered and allowed to attend the program until they have ALL of the following documents on file:

- Release form signed/dated
- Payment Authorization form or credit card on file in our digital system
- Health form, including Health History page filled out, signed, and dated by guardian
- Behavior Management Policy signed/dated
- Authorization for Medication Administration form (if needed)
- Emergency Action Plan (if needed)
- Additional forms specific to the program may be required
- **Legal Custody and Injunctions:** A copy of any court ordered custody decree or injunction must be kept on file at the YMCA.

How do tuition and payments work?

The SACC after care program is tuition-based. The yearly cost per child for the program is based on the 182 calendar days in the school year and divided into 10 equal payments. Monthly payments remain the same regardless of weather related closings, absences, and holidays. All families are required to use auto-bill payment for program tuition, even those utilizing financial aid. Automatic payments will be drafted on the 1st of each month of services rendered. So, for example, a December payment will be collected on December 1st. If fees are not paid by the 5th day of the month, the tuition will be considered not paid and the child will not be eligible to be in the program. Payment can be made by debit or credit card or in the form of an EFT, which would come directly from your checking account. A late payment charge of \$25 will be imposed if any form of payment is declined or if the payment is made after the 10th of the month it is due.

The YMCA is a nonprofit organization that prides itself on being able to meet the needs of the community. If you need financial assistance in order to attend the program, please contact the YMCA for an application or download it from <https://westporty.org/membership/financial-assistance/>.

How does pick up and sign out work?

To comply with State of CT regulations, each child must be signed out from the program every day by an authorized adult, including when being brought to an activity such as sports. Only adults who are given permission in writing may sign the children out of the program. Adults other than parents or guardians who you wish to give permission to pick up may be listed on your registration form. If you need to add someone to the approved pick-up list, please

provide their information via email to the Childcare Director prior to the day of pick up. Staff will question those with whom they are unfamiliar and check their authorization and identification; they must provide a photo ID to pick up. Anyone without proper authorization will be refused from taking a child from the YMCA's SACC program. Please understand that this is an important security issue.

Schedule and Curriculum

What are the teachers and staff like?

The WWFY SACC staff is made up of caring individuals who work to provide a safe and nurturing environment for your child. Most of our teachers are CPR and First Aid certified and have been cleared to work through a rigorous process, including a thorough background check and fingerprinting. The following are minimum requirements for positions with the WWFY SACC program:

- Experience working with children either in a child care or summer camp setting
- Monthly trainings focused on medical competency, youth development, risk management, and other related areas

YMCA staff are not permitted to babysit or transport children outside of the YMCA program. Please understand that a staff member can lose their job at the YMCA if they are found to be babysitting, transporting, or visiting with families outside of the YMCA.

What is the daily schedule of the SACC program and how are children grouped?

After Care runs from the end of school, including half days, through 6:00pm. Parents must pick up their child no later than 6:00pm, or late fees will apply. Children must be enrolled for a minimum of three days a week. Groups are created based on grade level and enrollment participation so that children are able to interact with others their age, participate in developmentally appropriate activities, and have chances to play with peers they are familiar with outside of the program. We do not accept friend requests. Groups and classroom assignments are subject to the Director's discretion and can be changed throughout the year.

What if I have to change my child's schedule?

One time changes should be communicated both to the Childcare Director as well as the school through Dismissal Manager. If you need to change your child's schedule for a long period of time, please contact the Director so the schedule can be changed on the rosters. Be sure to let the school know of any changes you make as they are the ones who organize the children at dismissal and send them to the YMCA bus. Please keep changes to a minimum and realize we may not be able to make changes depending on availability. Permanent changes will become effective on the first of the following month and must be made in writing to the Director 5 days prior to the first day of the month of change.

What happens if my child is absent from school?

Safety is our number one priority. The Childcare Director must be notified through email at kgiglio@westportny.org or ClassDojo by 12:00pm on days your child will be absent for any reason. For the safety of your child and to ensure children are not left at school, it is important that we know if your child will be missing any of their normally scheduled days.

Are there programs for school vacations?

The SACC program does not meet on school holidays or days off from school. Instead, Vacation Special Camps are offered to all children in the community in grades PK3 through 6th. Vacation Special days include swimming, crafts, games, and special activities. A separate registration is required and is not part of your regular payment. Registration is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

What is the policy for school cancellations, delays, and early dismissal?

On scheduled early dismissal days, the SACC program will pick the children up early and run until 6:00pm as usual. If there is an early dismissal, unscheduled, for any reason, the SACC program WILL NOT RUN. If school is cancelled, for any reason, the SACC program WILL NOT RUN. Please make sure you have an alternative care option for these situations and keep an eye out for notifications from the YMCA through our texting app. Please make sure your most up-to-date phone number and email address are on file to ensure accurate communication. We will make sure to let you know as soon as possible if we will be running or not.

How can I add extra activities to my child's schedule?

Extra activities require an additional fee. Children who are a part of our After Care program are able to also register for other YMCA programs that take place during the time the kids are at the YMCA. This includes swimming, dance, gymnastics, soccer, karate, fencing, other sports, and adaptive classes. After registering their child for the program, parents should notify the Director of the day and time of the program. Program staff will walk the child to the program and pick them up at the end of the class, unless the class ends at 6pm or later, which then the parent will be responsible for pick-up. To register your child for a class, please visit our website online or call the YMCA front desk at (203) 226-8981. The Childcare Director will not register children for additional programs and we are not responsible for any children not brought to activities if the information was not provided and confirmed via writing (email, ClassDojo, etc.).

What activities do the children do?

Organized games and activities are planned for After Care. Outside play at Mahackeno Outdoor Center, gym time, STEM, art, social-emotional learning, community involvement, and BOKS Kids programming, as well as a healthy afternoon snack and other special activities are planned for the children to participate in. We provide alternate activities at all times for children who would like to do other ideas and the curriculum is formatted to fit all ages and abilities. We provide the opportunity and assistance for children to do their homework but are not responsible for monitoring studies. It is the responsibility of parents to encourage their children to do homework during the aftercare program. Additionally, the children are outside for activities unless there is severe weather. Please make sure they are prepared with the appropriate clothing to be comfortable outdoors.

Late Fees, Credits, and Refunds

What happens if I am late to pick up?

We all run late on occasion, but we ask that you respect the time of our program staff who stay to keep the site open for our students. If you are running late, please call the YMCA at (203) 226-8981 and ask them to get a message to the SACC program staff. Please do not leave a voicemail on an office phone as it may not be checked in time. At least two staff, 18 years or older, will stay with your child if you are running late.

If your child is not picked up by 6:00pm, and it is the first time, you will get a warning. After that, you will be charged \$15 for every set of 15 minutes you are late. If a parent does not show up by 6:15pm, an emergency contact will be called. If emergency contacts cannot be reached by 6:30pm our next step is to call the Police and then DCF. Repeated occurrences may result in dismissal from the program.

Do I receive credit for absences/school vacations?

We do not give refunds for days that children are absent or days when the program has to close. There is no partial payment if a child is out sick or on vacation. The only exception would be if a child were away from the program due to a prolonged illness. In such a case, the Childcare Director should be notified at the beginning of the absence, not upon returning to the program. No credit will be given for long-term absences, of over a week, without a doctor's note.

What about a refund if we withdraw?

We require five (5) days' notice prior to withdrawing a child from the program. No refunds or credits will be given for payments made or for any portion of a month during which the child leaves the program. If you have paid in advance, you may ask for the remaining refund. This refund will take approximately two weeks to process OR you may apply the credit toward another program within the WWF YMCA.

Communication

How will the program staff reach me?

In case of an emergency program staff will reach out via phone. For all other matters, program staff may reach out via voice call, ClassDojo, or email. It is very important that we have the most current contact information for you and the emergency contacts we keep on file for your child. Throughout the school year we will provide you with a form to update your information, but if something changes, please remember to let the staff know.

What if there are problems in school or at home that carry over to the SACC program?

We want to make sure that the After Care program is fun and safe for our students. We know that sometimes there may be issues that your child has at school or at home which can affect their behavior at the program. Please keep us informed of such issues so we can be sensitive to your child's needs. The SACC staff works as a team with schools and families. This enables us to provide the best environment for your child's growth and development.

What is parent communication and involvement like?

We strongly believe that parent involvement is a key ingredient in a quality childcare program. We have an open door policy and you are welcome and encouraged to visit the program at any time your child is enrolled.

To understand each child better, the staff welcomes any opportunity to talk to parents about their children. It is critical that the lines of communication stay open. If communication is frequent, together we can provide security and continuity for your children. Any time during a child's participation in the program a parent may request a meeting with the staff to discuss the child's needs. The meeting will be set at a time that is convenient for both the parent and staff.

Parents are encouraged to share a special talent, hobby, or vocation with our children. Contributions of toys, supplies for creative art projects, scrap office paper, or recycled materials are very useful and are always appreciated by the children and staff.

What about legal custody agreements?

We require a copy of the legal custodial agreement in situations when parents are unable to pick up their children on specific days or at all. If a court has not determined parental custody, both parents have a right to pick up their children and we are not legally allowed to keep a parent from picking their child up from our program.

Are there resources there to help my child and our family?

The SACC program has agreements with educational, dental, social services, and health professionals. The professionals are available for annual review of our policies and program. They are also available for consultation as needed.

Health and Wellness

What happens if my child needs to take medications?

At least one YMCA staff member on-site is trained in the Administration of Medication and Epi-pen injections. The SACC program will accept emergency medications such as asthma pumps, epi-pens, and insulin. We will also accept non-topical medications and oral medications such as Benadryl. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that all

medication and the paperwork that goes with it is up to date. If your child requires any form of medication or Epi-pen, the child's physician must fill out our medication administration form and provide us with an emergency action plan. We cannot accept the form from the doctor without your signed portion.

Individual Care Plans are required for any child who has developmental or special health care needs, such as allergies, asthma, seizure disorder, chronic illness, specific dietary needs, hearing or visual impairments, history of a contagious disease, or specific behavioral needs.

All medications must come in a week before their start date with the original container, labeled with the pharmacy label with the child's name. All medications must match the dosage and type of medication listed on the form. All medications must be in their original child resistant safety container and clearly labeled with child's name, name of prescription, date of prescription, and directions for use. Except for non-prescription medications, premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications (i.e. Epi-pens), glucagon and asthma inhalant medications, all medications will be stored in a locked container and, if directed by a manufacturer, refrigerated. Controlled medications will be stored in accordance with 21a-262-10 of the RCSA. Non-prescription topical medications will be stored away from food and inaccessible to children.

Staff responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring the medication administration form is complete and that the medication being received matches the medication orders and stored as directed. The center staff will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included, but not limited in the documentation are:

- Name, address and DOB of the child
- Name of the medication and dosage
- Pharmacy name and prescription number
- Name of authorized prescriber
- The date & time the medication was administered
- The dose that was administered
- The level of cooperation of the child
- Any medications errors
- Food and medication allergies
- Signature of the staff administering
- Any comments

Parents will be notified by phone when/if a child has been administered any prescription medication. Staff are trained in the administration of medication by a physician, physician assistant, APRN, or RN and renewed every three years. Training for premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications is renewed each year. At no time is an untrained staff allowed to administer prescription medications.

All unused or expired medication shall be returned to the parent/guardian or disposed of if it is not picked up within one week following the termination or the order, in the presence of at least one witness. The center shall keep a written record of the medications destroyed, which shall be signed by both parties.

Please contact the Childcare Director if your child will require medication during their time in the program.

What if my child becomes sick?

If your child shows signs of illness while in the program, the parent or the emergency contact on file will be called to pick them up, within a one (1) hour period. As we serve many working parents, it is essential to your child's well-

being that a pick-up plan be in place. Please make sure to notify the WWFY if your home, work, or emergency contacts on file change.

Children with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain in our program:

- Too sick to participate normally in the day's activities, including going outside
- Fever of 100 degrees or above, with or without accompanying symptoms
- Any pain, fever or lack of normal participation due to an ear infection
- Any diarrhea
- Any vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Unexplained rash
- Excessive cold symptoms—cough, sneeze, constant runny nose
- Other unexplained pain or discomfort or listlessness
- Lice/ringworm/scabies

For the protection of all children, we will only serve well children. You must immediately notify the WWFY if your child contracts a communicable disease so that other parents may be given necessary information.

A child may only return when they have been home for at least one complete day, not counting the day when the child or staff member was sent home for illness, and when:

- The child or staff member's temperature has been 99.9 degrees or less for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medications
- Chickenpox (varicella): when all lesions have scabbed over (usually 7-10 days)
- Bacterial Conjunctivitis (pink eye): 24 hours after treatment starts
- Strep throat/scarlet fever: 24 hours after treatment starts
- Ear infection: when child or staff member is fever free (see above) and drinking, eating, and sleeping comfortably (pain-free)
- Impetigo: 24 hours after treatment starts
- Diarrhea: 24 hours diarrhea free
- Vomiting: 24 hours vomiting free
- Lice – deemed nit-free by Health Consultant
- Ringworms/scabies: if the ringworm can be covered by a bandage, the child member may return immediately after treatment has started

What if my child is injured?

Minor injuries will be addressed by our First Aid certified staff and you will be informed at pick up. If more advanced emergency attention is required, the staff will take the necessary steps to obtain emergency medical care. These steps may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Attempts to contact a parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached we will then contact the persons listed on the emergency contact information form that we have on file.
- Calling an ambulance or paramedic. If emergency room care is needed, the child will be accompanied by the Childcare Director or in their absence, another SACC staff member they are comfortable with.

Please note that the YMCA does not provide health or accident insurance. The parent/guardian assumes total liability for all charges incurred for medical treatment or property damage.

What are the legal requirements for suspected child abuse and/or neglect?

All SACC program staff are mandated by the State of Connecticut to report suspected child abuse, child neglect, and child risk to the Department of Children and Families. The parents/guardians of any child involved in the DCF report will be notified after a report is made if they are not listed as the potential perpetrator. Parents/guardians will be updated on the status of any investigations or lack-there-of. A report to DCF should be made any time a staff member suspects a child is being abused or neglected in some way. This includes, but is not limited to, at home, in the program, by an adult, and/or by another child. In circumstances where a child touches another child inappropriately during program hours, and it is either a reoccurring instance or involves dialogue of abuse, the WWFY staff must self-report.

If your child, you, or anyone you know, experiences red-flag behavior or suspected/substantiated abuse or neglect, please contact the Childcare & Youth Services Director, Kathy Giglio, at kgiglio@westporty.org or the COO, Christina Scherwin, at cscherwin@westporty.org.

Behavior Policies

What is the policy on toys and electronic devices?

The SACC program does not allow children to bring expensive/valued toys and items to the program. This includes trading cards (Pokémon), phones, music devices, smart watches, or DSS or Nintendo Switches. There is always a risk that something can be broken or lost. The WWFY is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items. We ask that all toys stay at home, and prohibit trading possessions of any kind.

What are the school age program rules and discipline policy?

The WWFY believes in positive behavior based upon the core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The SACC program environment is one in which children are nurtured and encouraged. We recognize that behavior issues will arise and therefore, we have developed progressive procedures that, while standardized, are adaptable to individual circumstances.

The goal of discipline is to help the child develop self-control and move toward appropriate social behavior.

Examples of developmentally appropriate methods utilized for resolving conflict are:

- Positive guidance - When disputes arise among children or between a child and staff, the staff will encourage a “talking out” process where the goal is to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using the children’s ideas wherever possible.
- Setting clear limits - Staff will encourage and model positive behavior, positive reinforcement, the use of peer support and clearly defined rules. They will set reasonable and positive expectations while ensuring that children understand the expectations and can share thoughts and feelings.
- Redirection - A child who may be aggressive or who is disruptive or destructive of other children’s work may be asked to make an activity choice in another area or separated from the group until they are ready to re-join. If a child cannot rejoin the group, a parent will be called for pick-up, as well as 211 or the police in extreme situations for further support and evaluation. Staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions.

Staff shall not be abusive, neglectful, or use corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. Inappropriate use of power, such as coercion, intimidation (body language or tone of voice), along with other unacceptable behavior from staff towards children is not allowed. No child will be physically restrained

unless it is necessary to protect the safety or health of the child or others, using least restrictive methods, as appropriate.

Rules and policies on behavior are listed on the Behavior Management Policy in the School Age Childcare Online Registration Waivers. Below are some highlights of the policy.

- No child may leave the program without an authorized adult (with a valid photo I.D.), who signs the child out, noting the departure time. There are no exceptions to this rule; it helps to ensure the safety of your child.
- Children must remain in view of staff members at all times.
- There will be no fighting (including hitting, pinching, kicking or spitting).
- Inappropriate/unacceptable behaviors are not allowed, including, but not limited to, bullying, threatening, name-calling, etc.
- Stealing and foul language are not allowed.
- Children and parents must follow building rules. SACC program, WWFY, and school property will be respected.
- All food, garbage, and activity messes must be cleaned up by the group with staff supervision before going on to another activity. The SACC program classrooms must be cleaned before the children leave for home.
- Noise level will be kept at a moderate level in the room. The gym and outdoor play are provided for “louder level” activity.
- Respecting others is required at all times.

Are there rules and policies for parents?

Yes! We expect all parents, family members, and staff to act as role models to the children. If, at any time, parents/guardians exhibit unkind behaviors towards YMCA staff, the Y holds the right to decide actions on membership and participation. This may include, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children
- Threatening physical or intimidating actions toward staff members
- Failure to pay or habitual lateness in payments
- Failure to complete required forms including the child’s immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child

Further, if any staff member suspects substance abuse on the part of a parent/guardian, the staff will call an authorized adult on the release form to pick up the child. If the parent/guardian is aggressive or threatening, the Y staff will call the police. According to State of CT regulations, the Department of Children and Families will be notified of any presumed substance abuse. If the situation happens more than once, the Y reserves the right to discontinue care for the child enrolled in the program.

Do you have an expulsion policy?

Proactive Actions to Prevent Expulsion:

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior
- Staff will model positive conflict resolution skills, listening, and teamwork
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate activities, supervision
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children
- Staff will praise appropriate behavior
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules
- Child will be given verbal warnings
- Child will be given time to regain control

On rare occasions we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. This is a last-resort measure and we do everything possible to work with the family of the child to minimize this from occurring. We may have to immediately expel a child from the program for the following reasons:

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself
- Failure of the child to adjust to our programs after a reasonable amount of time
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Excessive biting

If the above recommended remedial actions do not work, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the behavior warranting the expulsion. This action is meant to allow a period of time so that the parent/guardian can work on the behavior or to come to an agreement with us about next steps. The following procedure will be set:

- The parent/guardian will be informed about the length of the expulsion period.
- The expected behavioral changes required in order for the child/parent to return to the center.
- The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent a reasonable period of time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety).
- Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the program and all other group child care programming at the WWFY, including summer camp and Kids Club access.

A child will not be expelled if a child's parent(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding the YMCA's alleged violations of the Licensing requirements
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center
- Questioned the program regarding policies and procedures