

# PARENT HANDBOOK

Parent Handbook Early Learning Center

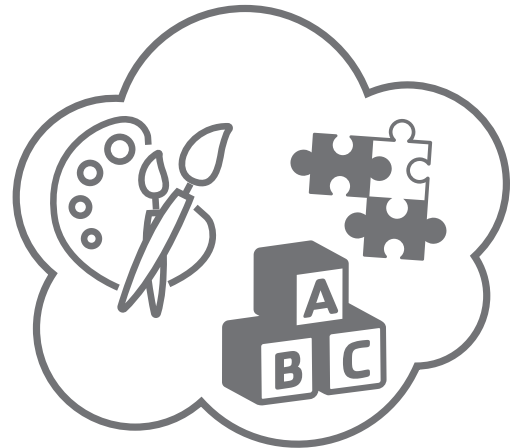


FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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## OBJECTIVES

The YMCA OF GREATER RICHMOND Youth Development programs welcome you and your child! We desire to make this a happy and safe experience. The Y is the largest nonprofit child care provider with a history of stability built on the core values of CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY.

At the YMCA, healthy child development starts early. That's why we offer early care and learning programs that help children learn the essential skills they will need to be ready for school. Our trained, supportive staff works to help children receive the best possible start to their education.

The YMCA's Youth Development programs seek to help each child.

- Develop an appreciation for themselves, family, school, community, country, and other cultures.
- Learn through discovery and play, developing a love for lifelong learning.
- Prepare children for school readiness.
- Develop and improve personal skills such as neatness, originality, patience, and dependability.
- Develop and improve social skills: acceptance of others, cooperation, and responsibility.
- Develop healthy living and safety practices.
- Have FUN!

## PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The STREAMin3 curriculum is designed for children from birth through kindergarten. The curriculum is based on five Core Skills (Relate, Regulate, Think, Communicate, Move) that form the building blocks for later learning and six STREAM Skills (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, & Math) to prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond. Designed using the latest developmental and early education research, the STREAMin3 Curriculum Model provides an innovative and effective curriculum, assessments, observation, guidance, coaching and professional development, and daily activities/routines for Early Childhood Education programs for ages infancy-preschool.

All components include a focus on:

- Children's interests and experiences
- Active engagement and direct experiences
- Being in the context of play (fun!)
- Encouraging problem-solving & curiosity

## ADMISSION

The YMCA recognizes and celebrates the growing diversity of our community. At the YMCA, everyone belongs.

The YMCA OF GREATER RICHMOND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT programs serve preschool, elementary and middle school-aged children and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its personnel and admissions policies.

The YMCA will address physically challenged and special needs children on a per request basis with the hope that we can serve all children who come to us. The YMCA considers the needs of each participant to promote success and provide a positive experience. Disclosure of special needs will not bar participation. Let us know when you register if your child is developmentally, emotionally, or physically challenged or requires another type of assistance. All activities are open to all individuals who meet the following essential Eligibility Requirements by themselves with or without a reasonable accommodation. To assure the maximum enjoyment of the program by all participants, please review the following guidelines with your child.





- Display appropriate behavior at all times.
- Exhibit individual and group behavior that models our Core Values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility and that doesn't disrupt the flow of teaching and learning.
- Stay with the group.
- Be pleasant to others.
- Refrain from putting themselves and others in danger.
- Use equipment, supplies, and facilities as instructed.
- Have the ability to follow verbal and/or visual direction.
- Always wear shoes and clothes that conform with the Parent Handbook.
- Is able to ambulate on own or with a mechanical device in varied terrains, including, sloped and uneven ground.
- Is able to perform developmentally appropriate gross motor functions and fine motor functions with reasonable guidance.

## ENROLLMENT

The enrollment application for Youth Development programs are performed online and must be re-done for each school year. In accordance with Department of Education requirements, the following information must include the relevant information, (i.e. none or n/a are not acceptable.) Failure to provide this information may delay your child's attendance in the program:

- Child's full name, full address and phone, gender, school, grade, and age of birth.
- ONE, at a minimum, custodial guardian to include guardian's full address and at least one phone number.
- TWO, at a minimum, emergency contact LOCAL ADULTS to include the emergency contact's full address and at least one phone number.

The Youth Development site your child will be attending must also have a copy of the following prior to attendance in the program:

- Commonwealth of Virginia's physical form,
- Child's proof of identity.
- Allergy Action Plan form, if applicable,
- Medical Authorization form, if applicable, and
- Over-the-Counter Skin Products Authorization form (as needed).

The Commonwealth of Virginia's physical forms must be signed by your physician. Regulations by the State Board of Health for the immunization of children requires documentation of all age-appropriate immunizations prior to each child's admission to a licensed child care center.

Proof of child's identity and age may include a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, birth registration card, notification of birth (hospital, physician or midwife record), passport, copy of the placement agreement or other proof of the child's identity from a child placement agency, record from a public school in Virginia, certification by a principal or his designee of a public school in the U.S. that a certified copy of the child's birth record was previously presented, or an adoption/foster care placement agreement. If the guardian fails to provide needed documentation within seven days of initial attendance, the YMCA is required to notify the local law enforcement agency.

In accordance with Department of Education standards, if a guardian lists a FOOD allergy on the Youth Development application, the YMCA is required to have a completed Allergy Action Plan for the child prior to the child's attendance in the program. The Allergy Action Plan includes the physicians plan of action in the event of suspected and confirmed allergic reactions.

The YMCA cannot accept your child into Youth Development Programs without this aforementioned documentation.

It is also the responsibility of the guardian(s) to keep proper registration information and current phone numbers in the child's permanent record. Services may be withheld if this information is not updated in a timely manner.

## MEDICATION

If a child requires medication while at the program, the following must be completed. In accordance with the Department of Education standards, the YMCA cannot accept medication without these requirements met.

- A Medication Authorization form must be completed by the parent/guardian for medications being taken over a period of time no greater than 10 days. The medication, including over-the-counter, must be prescribed by a doctor.
- A Medication Authorization form must be completed by the parent/guardian AND the prescribing physician for long-term medications for such things as asthma, ADHD, epi-pen, etc.
- Medicines must be in original containers, with the child's name on it.

All medication will be kept in a locked box. We are not required by law to administer medication and only do so as a service to the guardian. Only those Youth Development staff who are certified "Medication Administrators" may dispense medications. Please consult the on-site supervisor prior to leaving medication at the site in order to ensure all Department of Education paperwork requirements are met.

**The YMCA cannot accept your child into Youth Development programs without this aforementioned documentation.**

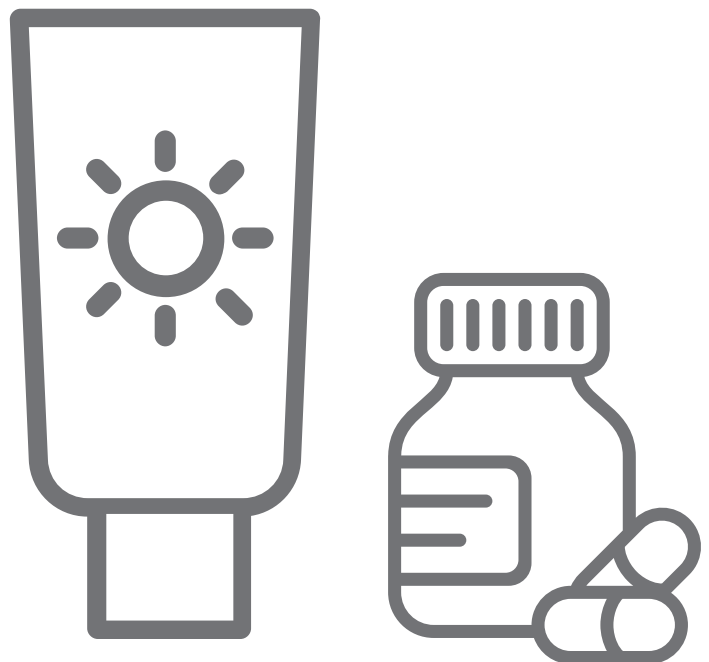
## OVER-THE-COUNTER SKIN PRODUCTS

The YMCA does provide sunscreen to its participants. In accordance with the Department of Social Services standards, during enrollment, the YMCA obtains guardian permission for the YMCA's chosen sunscreen products.

If the guardian desires to purchase sunscreen and insect repellent for his/her child, in accordance with the Department of Education standards, during enrollment, the YMCA obtains guardian permission for the parent/guardian's chosen sunscreen and insect repellent products. The Department of Education requires that:

- YMCA staff collect an Over-the-Counter Skin Products Authorization form with information about the sunscreen and/or insect repellent selected by the guardian.

- The sunscreen and/or insect repellent must be in the original containers labeled with your child's name.
- Children under nine years of age may not administer their own sunscreen, according to Department of Education standards. YMCA staff will administer sunscreen and will encourage your child to administer sunscreen as much as they are developmentally able.
- The YMCA OF GREATER RICHMOND strongly recommends that children, especially during the summer months, use insect repellent, as they are likely to come into contact with biting and stinging insects like bees, mosquitos, and ticks. In addition, the use of sunscreen is also essential for outdoor play. It is strongly recommended that parents send their children to the program with sunscreen and insect repellent already applied.



## PICK-UP

Your children may be picked-up by authorized persons only, as stated in the enrollment application. Other arrangements may be made in writing to inform the YMCA of an additional authorized person.

- Staff will question those persons with whom they are unfamiliar and check authorization before releasing a child.
- Identification will be requested of anyone that we do not know. Authorized persons must have a valid driver's license or identification card from the DMV.
- In addition, the Y requires a copy of any legal documentation that restricts another guardian's access to your child. We will restrict access as required by the legal documentation only.
- Authorized persons must sign the child out of the YMCA program.

If a parent/guardian who has been denied such access to a child attempts to enter the YMCA program or otherwise access the child actively participating in the YMCA program, the YMCA will contact local law enforcement. Without legal documentation, the YMCA cannot restrict access.

Should an authorized person arrive to pick-up your child and appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the YMCA staff members will take necessary measures to ensure the safety of the child, including contacting the police. Please do not put staff in a position where they have to make this judgment call.

## LATE PICK-UP

If your child is not picked-up by the end of their program, a late fee of \$1 per minute, per child will be drafted at the YMCA's earliest convenience. This fee is used to pay the staff who remain with your child.

- If you know you are going to be late, call us. We do understand that things come up and traffic can be challenging even in the best of times. We tend to worry about your safety just as much as your child does. Please be considerate.
- If we have not heard from you by 15 minutes after closing time and we cannot reach you by phone, emergency contacts will be called.
- If a child has not been picked-up one (1) hour after closing, Child Protective Services will be called.

The YMCA has found that it is necessary to have an excessive late pick-up policy, which could result in you being asked to remove your child from our program. Many

of our staff go to school or have other positions within the YMCA which requires them to be on time for those duties.

In the event of a extreme inclement weather(not to include normal rainfall or other normal precipitation/weather), natural disaster, or man-made disaster emergency that causes you to be late for pick-up, the YMCA will not levy the late fee and will remain with the child until such time you can pick up your child safely. During this time, the YMCA will continue to try to contact your emergency contacts to pick up your child in your absence.

## DROP OFF

Upon arrival for the program the guardian or authorized person must:

- Accompany their child into the program. A YMCA staff member must be present when you drop your child off for Youth Development programs; do not leave your child if a YMCA staff member is not present. We cannot be held responsible for your child if we are uncertain of his/her presence.
- Sign the child into the YMCA program.
- Child **MUST** be dropped off prior to 9 am unless staff are notified in advance.



## PAYMENTS

The Youth Development program fees are as follows. Automatic Draft is the required method of payment.

- A Registration Fee is due upon enrollment. This fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.
- For Youth Development programs starting less than one week out, one week's fee is due for each child. This fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.
- The fixed weekly payment is due each Monday thereafter prior to the week services are rendered, whether an enrolled child is in attendance or not. Drafts are continuous and will occur every Monday.

**Early Childhood Youth Development program payments are divided equally into weekly payments for the years' service provided. Few of the operating costs of the facility are eliminated when a child is absent; we are prepared for each child, each day, whether the child attends or not. Because of the aforementioned, there will not be any refunds, pro-rated fees, vacations, nor free weeks for days absent, including Winter and Spring Break.**

Additional fees may be assessed for late pick-up of participants and returned drafts.

- **Late Payment:** If payment is not made by Friday prior to the start of the next week, you may risk losing your child's space in the program.
- **Late Pick-up fee:** A late fee of \$1 per minute, per child, will be charged for any child not picked-up by the scheduled end of day. The balance will be drafted at the YMCA's earliest convenience.
- **Returned Draft fees:** Should your bank or credit card issuer for any reason not honor your draft, a return payment fee of \$30 or less will be assessed on your account in addition to the program payment due. This is also in addition to any service fee your bank may charge. Your account will be automatically re-debited on the next day for payment of a draft not honored.

The aforementioned automatic draft and additional fee structure will remain in effect until all payments have been made for the duration of the program, or for the time the child is enrolled.

- Services will be terminated if outstanding balances (including additional fees assessed for returned drafts, late pick up, etc.) remain unresolved after the Friday following the payment due date.
- To terminate or change your draft, 14 days written notice must be provided via email to [ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org](mailto:ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org).

Questions regarding your draft should be addressed with the **YES Center** as soon as possible at **804.649.9622** or at [ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org](mailto:ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org). Any error must be identified no later than 60 days from the posted bank or credit card statement date. The YMCA is not responsible for errors occurring later than 90 days from the date of the initial error.

If you choose to pay via a personal checking account, please note that the YMCA of Greater Richmond converts check payments to a one-time electronic funds transfer. Electronic check conversion is a process by which your check is used as a source of information for the check number, your account number and the routing number identifying your financial institution. The information is then used to make a one-time electronic payment from your account; funds may be withdrawn from your account as soon as the day after we receive your check. The check itself is not a method of payment. If you don't want your check to be used for electronic check conversion, you will need to provide another form of payment (e.g., debit or credit card).

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The YMCA OF GREATER RICHMOND wants to provide services for everyone and does not want to turn anyone away due to their inability to pay for programs. The YMCA believes that all families deserve access to quality, affordable child care. Please review the following options that may provide financial help.

**OPTION 1:** Virginia Department of Education Child Care Subsidy Program (Qualify for up to \$200 per child per week)

**OPTION 2:** Thrive Birth to Five Mixed Model Delivery Grant (Qualify for up to \$200 per child per week, or \$10,000 annually)

**OPTION 3:** If you have worked through Options 1 and 2, but still need assistance, the YMCA has Financial Assistance available.

Links to these options can be found on our website. For additional information please contact the YES Center at 804.649.9622 or [ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org](mailto:ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org).

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Our program provides full-time care for children ages 3 years through 5 years and operates Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. – 6 p.m.

You may also visit [www.ymcarichmond.org](http://www.ymcarichmond.org) for the regularly scheduled hours of Youth Development programs. For more details, please contact the **YES Center** at **804.649.9622** or [ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org](mailto:ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org).

## GROUP SIZE

The number of children assigned to a staff member or team of staff members occupying an individual room or area is referred to as group size. The group size represents the maximum number of children that should be grouped together, distinct from the larger population of children, in a room or area with specific staff members. In accordance with the Department of Education standards, the YMCA Early Learning Center classrooms will have maximum group sizes of 20 children.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Early Childhood Youth Development programs have a consistent daily schedule for all children in the program. A typical day will provide a balance between child-directed and teacher-directed activities. Core content curriculum areas include literacy, math, science, social studies, art, character development and healthy eating and physical activity.

- Arrival
- Free Play Centers & Small Group Time
- Morning Snack
- Literacy/Creativity Activity
- Circle Time/Group Time
- Learning Centers/Individual Activities
- Outdoor Time
- Lunch
- Story Time
- Rest Time
- Afternoon Snack
- Outdoor Time
- Free Play Centers
- Departure

We appreciate families considering our schedule when picking up or dropping off children. It is better if arrivals and departures do not occur during quiet time, but when

they do, please take note of the fact that children may be sleeping. Come and go as quietly and quickly as possible. Children who arrive during quiet time will be expected to rest or play quietly until the rest period is over.

Parents will be emailed a copy of the daily schedule every month with the monthly newsletter. Hard copies will also be available at the sign-out table for parents to see. Parents are welcome to visit and be admitted into the YMCA site during YMCA hours of operation; please schedule an appointment.

## HOLIDAYS

The Early Childhood Center Youth Development program sites will be closed Labor Day, November 11 (Veteran's Day), Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, and July 4 . There will be no reduction in program fees during the weeks which these holidays occur.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

The Y will remind guardians in person and/or via e-mail about inclement weather procedures prior to an inclement weather event, if possible. You may also check your local news stations or the YMCA OF GREATER RICHMOND website for cancellations or delayed opening changes. If dangerous weather conditions develop during the day, parents/guardians may be contacted to pick up their children early due to the Early Childhood Center closing early. We contact all parents by phone about early closings.





## STAFF

The YMCA's Youth Development staff hold each child's safety and well-being at heart. YMCA staff have been selected based on their educational background, experience, and commitment to working with children. Pre-employment drug testing is required for all new staff and random drug testing is also conducted on a regular basis. Criminal background checks and TB tests are performed for all staff as well. Continual training is provided throughout the duration of employment including, but not limited to, CPR, First Aid and Daily Health Observation. We maintain a direct staff to child ratio that meets or exceeds Department of Education standards.

To ensure the health and safety of all, employees who work directly with children will follow required procedures to prevent the spread of exposure to disease to include:

- Wearing gloves and washing hands when handling or cleaning body fluids, such as after wiping noses, mouths, or tending sores
- Specifying that an employee with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits hand washing, such as casts, bandages, or braces, must not prepare food or have close contact with children
- Removing gloves and washing hands immediately after each task to prevent cross-contamination to other children
- Excluding the employee from direct care when the employee has signs of illness

In addition, staff members strictly adhere to the YMCA code of conduct. Staff members will act in a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible manner, portraying a positive role model for youth. Staff members will respond to guardian(s), children, and each other with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, disability, color, national or ethnic origin, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

Children need consistent caregivers in order to build a sense of security and trust. Our goal is for children to have a limited number of caregivers during a day. To ensure we preserve this continuity at our center, we maintain the following practices:

- Assigning full-time teachers to each classroom
- Unless a developmental need arises, transitions between classrooms will only occur during beginning and end of school year every August

- Job descriptions for lead and assistant teachers to include continuity of care practices
- Providing annual professional development to all teachers that addresses the continuity of care systems and practices

The YMCA's Youth Development staff at each site receive a lot of support from YMCA leadership. Each site's staff is supported by a Regional Director. The Regional Director reports to a Youth Development Operation Director. The Operation Director thereby reports to the Senior Vice President of Youth Development.

If you have reason to believe that a YMCA staff member is not abiding by the Y's core values, please contact the **YES Center** at **804.649.622** or **ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org**. The YES Center will put you into contact with the appropriate YMCA leadership.

## APPROPRIATE DRESS

We will be playing outdoors every day that weather permits. Our activities will include walks, outdoor gross motor play, playground, and water play. We do not go outside when temperatures are below 32 degrees (in accordance with wind chill), or 90 degrees and above (in accordance with heat index).

Children should wear comfortable and appropriate clothing for indoor and outdoor activities. We strongly recommend that you send your child in serviceable clothes, not "party" best. We do not reimburse for clothing rips, stains or normal wear and tear.

Closed-toes shoes must be worn at all times. Open-toed shoes or Heelies are not allowed, as they can be a safety hazard to your child. If you send your child in open-toed sandals or in "flip-flops", you may be called and asked to bring different shoes for your child. During the time it takes to bring your child's appropriate shoes, he/she may not be allowed to participate in the activity happening at that time.

## TOILET TRAINING

While it is normal, and developmentally appropriate, for young children to still have toileting accidents, we require that all children in our care be potty trained. Putting a child in diapers or training pants part time can be confusing and delay the training process and we therefore ask that children be dressed in underwear at school. We also ask that the child be dressed in "user friendly" clothing as much as possible. The best clothing items for children are shorts and pants with elastic waists, or dresses. Try

to avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, and overalls. These are difficult for children to remove in a hurry.

## **SUPPLIES PROVIDED BY THE GUARDIAN**

Parents and/or guardians must supply the following items that will be kept in your child's cubby:

- A sheet and blanket that are washed weekly at home. Sheets and blankets should go home every Friday and return every Monday.
- 2 complete sets of clothes
- Sunscreen and bug spray (if necessary)

All belongings should be clearly marked with your child's name.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

We have plenty of equipment and activities to keep your child busy. Please do not allow any toys, video games, iPods or cell phones to accompany your child. This eliminates fights, theft and/or lost items. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Exceptions to this policy will be that a child may bring in toys for show and tell activities. All personal items must be clearly marked with the child's name.

## **NUTRITION**

All food will meet the nutritional needs of children, as established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA guidelines for healthy menus can be found at [cnpp.usda.gov](http://cnpp.usda.gov).

- Menus will be posted monthly for parental/guardian notification.
- Food portions are appropriate for the age of the child.
- Children will be encouraged, but not forced, to try new foods.

Guardian(s) may provide specific food for their children on the basis of religious, medical or dietary reasons. A written letter must be submitted by the guardian identifying the reason for the specific diet; guardian(s) must ensure the specific food still complies with the USDA nutritional guidelines. Food must be delivered in airtight containers or the original container. We will not keep leftovers.

The YMCA guidelines for food items brought from home for all Youth Development programs are as follows:

- The lunch must be in a sealed container and clearly labeled with the child's name and date.
- Do not include any items that need refrigeration or heating in a microwave, as these appliances are not available.
- The YMCA discourages sugary snacks or empty calories, so please do not allow your child to bring candy, gum or other junk food.
- For the protection of all children, the YMCA does not allow children to share foods they bring from home.

With prior approval, guardian(s) may bring food or beverages for celebrations. The YMCA does not allow any sweetened beverages, fried foods, or any "junk" foods for parties or holiday events. If you want to bring food for a special celebration, we ask that it be healthy. We suggest food items such as raisins, popcorn, pretzels, vegetables and dip, or frozen yogurt.

## **HYGIENE**

The YMCA Early Learning Center teachers and staff do our best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before and after meals, entering the classroom from the playground and after toileting. We use paper towels for drying hands, so children do not have to use the same towel. All employees are required to wash their hands frequently.

## **SICK CHILD PROCEDURES**

The Health and Safety of your child is a matter of major importance to all of us. In order to protect the children in the program who are well, we have very stringent rules about sick children. These rules are in compliance with all Commonwealth of Virginia regulations.

Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to the Early Learning Center if the child shows any signs of illness (see symptoms requiring removal of care below) or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular activities. Staff members will observe the health of each child, each day, as they enter the program, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. We will notify you if your child shows symptoms of an illness. For the below common illness and injuries, the child must be removed from participation with other children and the child's authorized person(s) are required to pick-up the child immediately. A late fee may be applied if your child is not picked-up immediately after notification of illness.

- Vomiting or diarrhea (Child can return to the program when symptom free for 24 hours.)
- Contagious illness evidenced by sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, constant cough, heavy nasal discharge, headache, etc. (Child can return to the program when symptom free for 24 hours.)
- Child's temperature > 100\* (Child can return to the program when symptom free for 24 hours.)
- Allergic reaction
- Severe bleeding
- Possible sprain or break
- Head lice (Child can return once it has been treated. Must be checked by a staff member prior to the student returning.)
- Ring Worm (Must be treated and area must be covered; if it cannot be covered, we will need a doctor's note for the student to return.)
- COVID-19 (positive, suspected to be positive, or exposed to a person that is positive with COVID-19).
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without impacting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our care

The child may return 24-48 hours (depending upon illness) after they have received the first dose of an antibiotic. If a child receives an antibiotic for an ear infection, they may return to Early Learning Center immediately if they have been free of other symptoms for at least 24 hours. Allergy related symptoms and non-communicable diseases do not require exclusion if you have a note from your doctor.

The parent/guardian will inform the site within 24 hours or the next business day after his child or any member of the immediate household has developed a reportable communicable disease, as defined by the State Board of Health, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately, to include coronavirus (COVID-19).

Please notify us if your child will be absent from the program.

## INJURIES

If your child has a serious injury that may require more than our First Aid skills allow, involves a bump to the head in any way, and/or meets the Department of Education's definition of serious injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you. If we are unable to reach you or the person you have designated in case of such

emergencies, we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will call an ambulance.

Please make every effort to keep the Y up to date on phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information. This is of the utmost importance because the hospital will not treat your child without you being there.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The director and staff of each site are responsible for the safety of the children and have coordinated their facility emergency action plans with community public safety official and the landlord's security and facilities (when applicable). The intent of this plan is to assist the Youth Director and staff in responding to emergency situations and provides a basis for the restoration of services. Staff and children also perform drills in accordance with the plan monthly. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are welcome to review this document at any site or branch location.

If the YMCA site experiences an emergency situation, e.g., fire, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you. If we are unable to reach you in a timely manner, we will attempt to contact your emergency contact. **Please make every effort to keep the Y up to date on phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information. This is of the utmost importance in emergencies.**

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Throughout its history, the Y has been a strong advocate for the child and children's rights; as a result, mistreatment or neglect of children and the resulting severe effects are of primary concern to the YMCA.

To prevent the abuse of children in our care, the YMCA requires the following conduct and prohibitions:

- Staff and volunteers shall not abuse or neglect children. The following may be examples of abuse and neglect:
  - Physical abuse: strike, spank, shake, slap.
  - Verbal abuse: humiliate, degrade, threaten, yell.
  - Sexual abuse: inappropriate touch or verbal exchange.
  - Mental abuse: shaming, withholding love, cruelty.
  - Neglect: withholding food, water, basic care, etc.
- Staff and volunteers are prohibited to have contact with children with whom their only relationship is through YMCA programs at any time outside of the YMCA facilities or program(s). This includes babysitting.

- Staff and volunteers are prohibited from transporting children in their personal vehicles.
- Staff and volunteers shall never leave a child unsupervised.
- At no time during a YMCA program may staff or volunteers be alone with a single child where others cannot observe him/her. As staff and volunteers supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff can see them.
  - Staff and volunteers should conduct or supervise the following private activities in pairs, if at all possible: putting on bathing suits, changing clothes, taking showers, etc.
  - When this is not feasible, staff and volunteers should be positioned so they are visible to others.
- Staff and volunteers will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable and their right to say "no". Affectionate touch and the warm feelings it brings is an important factor in helping a child grow into a loving and peaceful adult.
  - The rule of thumb for staff is to not touch any areas that a bathing suit would cover, including swim trunks.
  - Appropriate touch includes side hugs, pats on the back and high fives.
- Staff and volunteers will make sure that suspicious or unknown individuals are not occupying the restroom before allowing children to use the facilities.
- Children in YMCA programs must treat each other with Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. Child-to-child prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:
  - Bullying
  - Sexual behaviors to include inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, using sexualized language, making threats of sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity and similar types of interactions.
- Staff and volunteers report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation. The YMCA is mandated by state law to report suspicions of abuse.

If you observe violations of these procedures or any other red flags, the YMCA asks that you bring your concern to the Site Supervisor/Director. If you feel your concerns are not addressed appropriately, some additional reporting options are as follows:

- Contact the YES Center at **804.649.9622** or **ygradmin@ymcarichmond.org**

- Call the YMCA Safety Line at 804.474.4345 (This is a voicemail; please leave a message and the Y will get back to you.)
- Email **ethics@ymcarichmond.org**

To prevent abuse of children in our communities, it is our job as a community organization to educate ourselves, our children and their parents and guardians about potential dangers in our community and to protect them from these dangers. At the Y, we ask our parents and guardians to be our partners in child abuse prevention. The Parent Education Guide seeks to equip you to be informed about child abuse and to protect your child from abuse. See attached Parent Education Guide.

## GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION

We believe communication between guardians and the Youth Development programs is crucial in ensuring a positive, enjoyable experience for your child.

- The YMCA will provide written notices regarding changes in policy, scheduling, or special events. It is the responsibility of the guardian to provide the YMCA with the most up to date contact information, including email address, and check for any changes daily.
- From the guardian(s), we ask that you let us know if your child will be absent from programs.

Parent conferences may be arranged at any time with teachers or the director. We appreciate your input regarding suggestions, ideas and comments on ways to improve our service to you and your family. You may direct suggestions, concerns, compliments or complaints to the immediate caregiver or one of the directors.

Children may not receive personal phone calls at the YMCA except in emergency situations.

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERISM

As your child learns and grows with us, we hope that you will choose to participate in parent engagement activities three-four times a year. We will plan activities to help our families be physically active, have healthy eating and nutrition habits, and enjoy quality time together. Please read our newsletters and watch for tips for helping your family be healthy and active.

Volunteers will need to have clear criminal background as well as complete our YMCA child abuse prevention training in order to volunteer in the program. Parents and volunteers are never left alone with a group of children and will always have a staff member with them.



## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

YMCA staff strive to provide a safe and fun environment for all program participants, while holding its staff as well as its participants to its Core Values: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

For the safety and well-being of everyone, all children are taught and expected to follow these center rules:

- Walking feet will be used in the center.
- Hitting, pushing, biting, grabbing, kicking, spitting, or pinching other children or adults will NOT be allowed.
- No use of obscene, derogatory or disrespectful language.
- Children may not walk around the center with food or cups.
- Respectful treatment of other people and all property, toys, and furniture is expected.

If children do not comply with these center rules, the directors and teachers will have regular, ongoing conversations to express concerns and to discuss strategies for challenging behaviors with you to ensure that we are working together as partners to help your child. Parents will be kept informed of their child's progress.

The YMCA will not allow children who continually display disruptive behavior to hinder the safety or enjoyment of others.

When a child engages in unacceptable behavior that hinders the safety and enjoyment of others, the below consequences for these behaviors may occur:

- Participation in an activity will be denied for repeated misbehavior and the child will be directed to an alternate activity. The guardian(s) will be notified in writing about the misbehavior.
- For violations of our Code of Conduct which include, but is not limited to, the following, parents will be notified in writing, their child may be suspended temporarily from the program, and the YMCA may require a guardian conference:
  - Engaging in physical aggression as a means to resolve a conflict.
  - Bringing weapons of any kind on YMCA property or into YMCA off-site programs at any time.
  - Stealing or defacing property.
  - Refusing to follow basic safety rules.

- Exhibiting disrespect for staff members or other children.
- Displaying an inability to follow established guidelines.
- Acting in an unsafe or unacceptable manner as determined by staff members.

To reinforce good behavior, staff members use positive techniques of guidance including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement. Physical discipline will not be used nor will food be denied as a punishment. We ask for your support in encouraging appropriate behavior of your children.

## SUSPENSION

If a child continues to display misbehavior in accordance with Behavior Management:

- Suspension may result, based on the frequency and severity of the behavior.
- If the unacceptable behavior endangers another's safety or the child's safety, immediate suspension/termination may result.
- The guardian may be required to pick-up his/her child **WITHIN ONE HOUR** after notification, depending on the nature of the misbehavior.



## TERMINATION

The Y reserves the right to terminate Youth Development program services at any time. If your child has been terminated from any of our programs, they may not attend the same program at a different location.

## VIRGINIA CHILD DAYCARE PROGRAMS

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. The Code of Virginia gives the Department of Education authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exemptions to licenser, licensed programs include child day centers, family day homes, child day center systems, and family day systems. The state may also voluntarily register family day homes not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, and a ratio of children per- staff member, equipment, program, and record keeping. Criminal records checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health and building codes. Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Education. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program, which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Regional Office of the Department of Education closest to you:

### Central Regional Office

1604 Santa Rosa Road  
Richmond, VA 23229-5008  
804.662.9743  
[central.cclicensing@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:central.cclicensing@doe.virginia.gov)

## CONCLUSION

The YMCA Early Learning Center staff takes great delight in creating a safe, healthy, exciting and stimulating learning environment. Our staff takes pride in the classes they teach and students they nurture. We encourage you to contact our teachers and directors with comments, questions, concerns, or praises about your child or the school. We hope that this YMCA Early Childhood program will be the first “step” in your child’s involvement with the YMCA. Thank you for letting us be a part of your family.



# PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## Parent Education Guide

### THE Y'S COMMITMENT

The YMCA OF GREATER RICHMOND serves more than 60,000 youth each year in youth development, aquatics, health and fitness and various community outreach programs in the Richmond and surrounding communities.

The Y offers an environment where children learn values and positive behaviors that build strong building blocks to becoming successful adults. Our core values caring, honesty, respect and responsibility —are part of everything we do. At the Y, children develop a community of friends and have fun in a safe, nurturing environment.

The Y understands that children today are faced with situations that may affect their safety and well-being. It is our job as a community organization to educate ourselves, our children and their parents and guardians about potential dangers in our community and to protect them from these dangers. At the Y, we ask our parents and guardians to be our partners in child abuse prevention. This Parent Education Guide seeks to equip you to be informed about child abuse and to protect your child from abuse.

### INFORMATION ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse and neglect can endanger or impair a child's physical or emotional health or development. We have the power to stop it and understanding the issue is the first step.

**TYPES OF ABUSE** (as defined by the Virginia Department of Social Services)

- **PHYSICAL** Causing or threatening to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury or having a child present during the manufacture or attempted manufacture of a controlled substance or during the unlawful sale of such substance.
- **EMOTIONAL** A pattern of verbal assaults towards a child and/or a pattern of ignoring and indifferent behavior towards a child; or constant family conflict.
- **SEXUAL** Committing or allowing to be committed any illegal sexual act, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, prostitution or allowing a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.
- **BULLYING** Unwanted, aggressive behavior of a peer towards another child that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

Parents have a fundamental right to raise their children, and the YMCA and the community presume that parents will act in their children's best interests. When parents do not protect their children from harm and put them at risk of abuse or neglect, the YMCA and the community have a right and a responsibility to intervene to protect the health and welfare of children.





## ABUSE WARNING SIGNS

Physical injuries and severe neglect are more readily detectable than the subtle, less visible injuries which result from emotional and sexual abuse and bullying. Most child abuse and neglect is not a one-time event, but more often occurs in a pattern over time. Abused children are often subject to more than one form of abuse.

### Signs common to all forms of abuse

- Fear of parents, other adults or other peers; fear of going to a certain place.
- Withdrawal, depression, anxiety, phobias or sleep disorders/problems.
- Emotional and behavior extremes, including acting out or aggression toward peers, pets or other animals.
- Immaturity or delays in development.
- Poor peer relationships.
- Poor self-image and self-care, lack of confidence.
- Sudden absenteeism, decline in school performance.
- Self-destructive behavior or attitudes, including suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, running away or recklessness.
- Unexplainable/unidentifiable illnesses.

### Signs of Neglect

- Hygiene problems and body odor as well as clothing that is the wrong size, in disrepair, dirty or not right for the weather.
- Often hungry, stockpiles food, seeks food, may even show signs of low body height and weight and even malnutrition.
- Often tired, sleepy, listless.
- Talks about caring for younger siblings, not having a caregiver at home.
- Untreated medical and dental problems, incomplete immunizations.
- Truancy, frequently incomplete homework, frequent changes of school.

### Signs of Physical Abuse

- Visible and severe injuries on different surfaces of the body, unexplained or explained in a way that doesn't make sense, after weekends, vacations, school absences, of a distinctive shape, occurring frequently or are at different stages of healing.
- Wearing long sleeves out of season.

## Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Difficulty sitting or walking; bowel problems or bleeding; bruises, pain, swelling, itching of genital area; frequent urinary tract infections or yeast infections; and/or any sexually transmitted disease or related symptoms.
- Refuses to talk about a secret they have with an adult.
- Develops special relationship with older friend that may include unexplained money, gifts or privileges.
- Inappropriate/adult-like knowledge, drawings, or play about sexual behavior.

The Y strives to protect our children from all forms of abuse. The YMCA OF GREATER RICHMOND and the YMCA of the USA with its partner organization, Praesidium, have worked to increase awareness of ways to recognize and prevent child sexual abuse.

### How Sexual Offenders Behave

In addition to the warning signs our children may exhibit, sexual offenders have common characteristics. An offender may groom a child for abuse by pushing physical, emotional and behavioral boundaries. An offender may also groom persons in the community, working to build friendships and trust with a child and their parents. The warnings signs are:

- Excessive touching with physical contact games, backrubs, tickling or wrestling, even when a child resists.
- Inappropriate conversation, like talking about a child's developing body, discussion of specific sexual acts or explicit sexual language or even spending excessive time e-mailing, texting or calling children.
- Showing favoritism to a certain child with gifts/money, performing special favors to the child and/or family or doing things for the child that the parents may not be able to do or taking a child to activities or on special outings.
- Sexualized behavior, including engaging in sexually harassing behavior online or in person.
- Pattern of rule breaking/thinking the rules do not apply to them like exposing kids to inappropriate activities (e.g. drugs) and allowing children to break parent rules (e.g. smoking, staying up late).

Offenders are:

**30%** Family members

**60%** Someone the child knows and trust

**40%** Another juvenile



It is challenging to think of children and adolescents we know as capable of sexually abusing others. Children, particularly young children, may engage in inappropriate interactions without understanding the hurtful impact it has on others.

It is particularly important for parents and guardians to recognize the warning signs of any of the forms of abuse because children find it difficult or scary to tell an adult in words.

### Why Children Do Not Tell

- Are not aware it is abuse.
- Afraid no one will believe them.
- Afraid that this news will hurt parents.
- Are protecting the offender that they care about.
- Hopes if they are “good enough”, the abuse will stop.
- Afraid to tell because of the offender’s threat.
- Are confused by the offender’s suggestions that they enjoyed the abuse and wanted it to happen (for Sexual Abuse).

Real prevalence of child abuse is not known because so many victims do not disclose or report their abuse:  
**73%** of victims do not tell anyone for at least 1 year  
**45%** of victims do not tell anyone for 5 years  
Some **NEVER** tell

### CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AT THE Y

The Y does not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of children in its programs by an adult or the mistreatment or abuse of one child by another child, including any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying. Staff, volunteers and the children in our programs are expected to act in a caring, honest, respectful and responsible manner. Staff and volunteers abide by a Child Code of Conduct, parts of which are listed below. For the full Code, please contact the YMCA at **804.474.4345**.

#### Staff and Volunteer Expectations

- Never leave a child unsupervised.
- At no time during a Y program may a staff member or volunteer be alone with a single child where others cannot observe them.
- Conduct or supervise the following private activities in pairs: putting on bathing suits, changing clothes, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, be positioned so they are visible to others.

- Ensure that suspicious or unknown individuals are not occupying the restroom before allowing children to use the facilities and stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom.
- Respect children’s rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable and their right to say “no.” Other than diapering, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
- Refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents, volunteers and staff.
- Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one’s personal life and all forms of harassment are prohibited.
- Shall not abuse children physically, emotionally, sexually nor neglect children. Any type of abuse or neglect will not be tolerated and will be cause for immediate dismissal.
- Use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in situations where it is necessary to protect the child or other children from harm.
- Observe the health of each child, each day, as they enter the program, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments are addressed with the parent or child in a non-threatening way.



- Treat all reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with children or allegations of abuse very seriously. Y staff are mandated reporters and report any suspicions of abuse to Child Protective Services.
- Staff are prohibited from being alone with children outside of Y activities when their only relationship with the children or family is through the Y. This includes prohibitions against babysitting members of the Y who staff know through the Y.
- Not to transport children in their own personal vehicles except in cases of emergency and with the approval of administration.
- Communication between children and staff via social media, e-mail and phones must involve YMCA business and must not be personal (e.g. sharing emotional issues, seeking more than a client relationship, etc.) in nature. E-mail and social media communications must be on Y-supported, sponsored or approved sites only. Y staff may not use their personal social media or e-mail accounts to contact children who they know through the Y.

#### Additional Y Abuse Prevention Procedures

- Thorough staff and volunteer screening and selection procedures.
- Staff and volunteer training and re-training on abuse prevention.
- Abuse prevention curriculum for children in youth development programs.

## PROTECTING YOUR CHILD

### Parents as Y Partners

At the Y, we ask parents to be partners in child abuse prevention by:

- Reading this flier so you are equipped to recognize and address abuse.
- Stopping by our programs to observe and talk with staff.
- Talking to your child about his or her experiences in the YMCA programs (as well as school, sports and other activities).
- Trusting your instincts. Don't wait to tell us if something seems "strange". Speak up.

### Open Communication

Open communication with your child on serious topics, like abuse, in an environment that encourages your child to share his or her views or concerns often means your child will be more likely to come to you for help and be equipped to respond appropriately to attempted abuse. Really listen.

Here are talking points:

- **Boundaries** Review rules about boundaries, both in the privacy of your home and outside the home, and how to know when someone is violating them. Instruct your child that they do have the right to say "NO", even to a family member or friend; your child can choose who he or she wants to hug or kiss.
- **Intuition** Instruct your child to listen to their intuition. If it does not feel right, it probably isn't!
- **Secrets** Explain the difference between Safe Secrets (will the surprise at the end make someone happy, secrets that bring good to you and others) vs. Unsafe Secrets (secrets that make you feel bad or they hurt you or someone else). Instruct your child that, if someone tells you to keep a secret from you, you want to know.
- **How to Stop Abuse Before It Happens** Teach your child various phrases to tell the offender to stop, like: I'm not supposed to do that; That's against my family rules; I can't; My parents would be mad at me. Teach them to walk away.
- **Trusted Adults** If abuse were to occur, instruct your child who a trusted person to tell is: family, a Y staff member, friends, teachers or coaches. Help your child to understand that you want them to come to you if someone makes them feel bad or sad, and that you will believe and help them and that they will not get in trouble.



## Internet Safety

Children and adolescents are naturally curious about sex. Adolescents questioning their sexuality are even more at risk, as they may go online with the intent of finding support and companionship. By acting as guides, predators can exploit this curiosity or vulnerability and gradually lure children into sexual activity. 1 in 5 kids who go online regularly will be sexually solicited. To prevent abuse via the internet:

- Set limits before allowing your child to go online anywhere.
- Keep computers in a high traffic area of your home.
- View your child's browsing history by pushing CTRL+SHIFT+H to see history or look for the History tab to Show All History.
- Set parental and safe search controls on all electronics.
- Review cell phone records for unknown numbers and late night calls/ texts.
- Become knowledgeable of which social networks, apps, instant messaging, e-mail, gaming, blogging and webcams your child is using and who your child communicates with via these portals.

## Internet Safety Info for Parents

- [netsmartz.org](http://netsmartz.org)
- [noslang.com/parents.ph](http://noslang.com/parents.ph)

## What to Do if You Suspect Abuse or A Child Makes a Disclosure

If your child discloses that someone hurt, scared, or made them feel uncomfortable, stay calm and listen. Your reaction has a powerful influence on your child! Do not react with anger and disbelief, as they may feel shame or guilt and shut down. Instead, believe your child and make sure your child knows you believe them, thank your child for telling you and praise their courage for speaking up.

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with children or allegations of abuse at the Y will be taken seriously. The Y will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made and investigated. The Y cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any staff or volunteer is expected to cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the Y or persons given investigative authority by the Y.

If you have any questions or concerns about Y staff or volunteers or another program participant, you can:

- Report concerns to Y staff.
- Call the YMCA Safety Line **804.474.4345** (This is a voicemail. Please leave a message and the Y will get back to you.)
- Email [ethics@ymcarichmond.org](mailto:ethics@ymcarichmond.org)

## Community Resources

- Virginia Child Protection Services (CPS)  
**1.800.522.7096**
- For reports of immediate danger, call local law enforcement at 911.
- Sex Offender Registry  
[sex-offender.vsp.virginia.gov/sor/](http://sex-offender.vsp.virginia.gov/sor/)



## BRANCH LOCATIONS

### DOWNTOWN

**10TH STREET YMCA**  
919 E Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Phone: 804.200.6070

**DOWNTOWN YMCA**  
2 West Franklin Street  
Richmond, VA 23220  
Phone: 804.644.9622

### EAST END

**CHICKAHOMINY FAMILY YMCA**  
5401 Whiteside Road  
Sandston, VA 23150  
Phone: 804.737.9622

**FRANK J THORNTON YMCA  
AQUATIC CENTER**  
3201 Watts Lane  
Richmond, VA 23223

### NORTHSIDE

**ATLEE STATION FAMILY YMCA**  
8017 Rutland Center Boulevard  
Mechanicsville, VA 23116  
804.427.9622

**NORTHSIDE FAMILY YMCA**  
4207 Old Brook Road  
Richmond, VA 23227  
Phone: 804.329.9622

**PATRICK HENRY FAMILY YMCA**  
217 Ashcake Road  
Ashland, VA 23005  
Phone: 804.798.5770

### SOUTHSIDE

**CHESTER FAMILY YMCA**  
3011 West Hundred Road  
Chester, VA 23831  
Phone: 804.748.9622

**ELIZABETH RANDOLPH LEWIS  
POWHATAN YMCA**  
2269 Mann Road  
Powhatan, VA 23139  
Phone: 804.598.0250

**MANCHESTER FAMILY YMCA**  
7540 Hull Street Road  
Richmond, VA 23235  
Phone: 804.276.9622

**MIDLOTHIAN FAMILY YMCA**  
737 Coalfield Road  
Midlothian, VA 23114  
Phone: 804.379.5668

**PETERSBURG FAMILY YMCA**  
120 North Madison Street  
Petersburg, VA 23803  
Phone: 804.733.9333

**SWIFT CREEK FAMILY YMCA**  
15800 Hampton Park Drive  
Chesterfield, VA 23832  
804.595.9622

**YMCA CAMP THUNDERBIRD  
OUTDOOR CENTER**  
9300 Shawonodasee Road  
Chesterfield, VA 23832  
Phone: 804.748.6714

### WEST END

**GOOCHLAND FAMILY YMCA**  
1800 Dickinson Road  
Goochland, VA 23063  
Phone: 804.556.9887

**JOHN ROLFE FAMILY YMCA**  
2244 John Rolfe Parkway  
Henrico, VA 23233  
Phone: 804.360.8767

**SHADY GROVE FAMILY YMCA**  
11255 Nuckols Road  
Glen Allen, VA 23059  
Phone: 804.270.3866

**TUCKAHOE FAMILY YMCA**  
9211 Patterson Avenue  
Henrico, VA 23229  
Phone: 804.740.9622

