



# Parent Handbook

Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center, ImPACT After School Program, Summer Day Camp



## **Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center Parent Handbook**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center's goal is to be East Texas' leading child program. Our Infant through preschool program gives children age 6-weeks through 5 years enriching opportunities to develop the whole child. We focus on learning through child-directed play experiences and curriculum time. In all of our child care programs, 6 weeks to 12 years of age, we believe a balance of play and enhances growth and development in all areas: physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, and intellectually. This is achieved in a safe and loving environment with caregivers who are dedicated to enriching children's lives.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:**

The Palestine YMCA and Early Childhood Center does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the center.

### **ADA Policy Notice:**

To the extent it is reasonably able to do so; the Palestine YMCA Child Care Programs will provide services to children with disabilities in the same manner as services provided for other children of comparable ages.

Parents have the obligation to disclose significant medical, physical or behavioral issues at the time of the child's enrollment and on an ongoing basis. Due to the large group format of our program we are unable to provide one-on-one care for any child except on an intermittent basis, such as injuries, immediate disciplinary issues, and certain personal care needs customarily provided to other children.

Families who have children with significant medical, physical or behavior all issues must meet with the Child Care Director to review our ADA Policy and Program Policies and Procedures. Please note: The Y reserves the right to remove from the program any child who is determined to be in consistent need of one-on-one attention, keeping staff from maintaining appropriate staff-to-child ratios required by the State Licensing Department.

## **Required Policies**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The follow policies are required by Child Care Licensing per The Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers 746.501.

### **1. HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Palestine YMCA is open from 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, year round. We close to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, MLK Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Full tuition is due for holiday weeks.

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NOTE: In some cases, if the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center may close the day before or the day after the holiday. Parents will be updated on each year's holiday schedule in January.

### **2. RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Per Texas state laws, parents have a right to access their child at any time. All children must be signed in by 9:30 a.m. each day so that the child can take part in our full educational program. In the event that a parent is unable to pick up their child, they may authorize another legal adult to pick up. Children will not be released to a minor 18 years or younger. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form to pick up and the authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID.

### **3. ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION POLICY**

Children who are ill should not attend. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center observes the standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for ill children. The most common standards for exclusion are:

1. Illness that prevents the child from participating in child care activities, ***including outdoor play.***
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
3. Oral temperature of 101 or armpit temperature of 100.
4. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea, 2 or more vomiting episodes in 24-hours.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately, to pick up the child. In the meantime we will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices.

Parents need to pick up children within 1 hour of notification. In the event of severe illness or injury, or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, The Early Childhood Center may call for an ambulance at the parent's expense.

If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return until the child is symptom-free for 24-hours without medication, no what the child is sent home for.

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**4. MEDICATION**

Please inform your physician that your child is in full-day or part-day preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning and evening. Knowing this, many doctors will order longer acting medications. Due to state recommendation and risk management, all parents will have to administer all prescription medication to their child. The staff is not allowed to administer medication of any kind.

**5. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES**

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. **All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.**

If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance the staff will contact the Poison Control Center 1.800.222.1222.

**6. PARENT NOTIFICATIONS**

Open Communication with parents is very important to children's success. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center has multiple ways of communicating with parents. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Listed below are ways that Early Care and Education may communicate with parents:

- Bulletin board posting
- Kinderlime Messaging system
- Written memos placed in your child's weekly folders
- Verbal communication with the child's teachers, counselor, and/or director

**7. DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE POLICY**

The Palestine YMCA Child Care Staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are: praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior; reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive

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statements and redirecting behaviors. The Palestine YMCA Child Care staff will never use corporal punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues. Parents are required to read and sign the behavior discipline and guidance policy provided by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center reserves the right to terminate care for the child for discipline problems at any time.

With our school age children, we have aligned a proactive approach to behavior management by incorporating our 4 Core Values: Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility, which encourage positive behavior in all of our participants. Children are taught to consider the effect that their actions may have on others. Our four Core Values are guidelines that every program participant must follow to assure that our program runs smoothly, protects the safety of all, promotes cooperation and assists our children in taking responsibility for their actions.

### **YMCA Program Rules**

As participants, all children will be required to:

1. Respect the property of the Y.
2. Report to a counselor if they are sick or hurt.
3. Keep all personal belongings in their backpacks during program hours.
4. Behave in a responsible manner – being helpful and cooperative.
5. Demonstrate courtesy and respect for one another.
6. Respect their counselors and follow directions.
7. Respect the rights of other participants, counselors and staff.
8. Be honest – making every attempt to be truthful and fair with others.

### **Positive Discipline Measures**

It is our goal for counselors, children and parents to work together toward cooperative behavior and a cohesive atmosphere. Staff will always notify parents of emerging difficulties and ask for assistance in behavior management. When warranted, behavior contracts and/or specific written goals will be established to reduce or redirect serious misconduct. However, in some cases additional disciplinary measure may be pursued if a child inflicts physical or emotional harm to other children, is dangerous to themselves or others or is physically or verbally abusive to counselors and others

The following behaviors are considered serious in nature:

Theft or Attempts to Steal or Property Damage

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-Theft, Attempted Theft or Property Damage is defined as any property not belonging to participant.

-Verbal Abuse of Counselor or Other Participants (i.e. Bullying)

-Verbal Abuse is the belittling, humiliation, intimidation or threatening of another.

-Physical Aggression

-Physical Aggression is the deliberate intent to hurt or jeopardize the safety of oneself or others. This behavior will not be tolerated, even when the child is angered or emotionally upset and requires immediate intervention.

-Disruptive, Defiant or Disrespectful Behavior

-Disruptive, Defiant or Disrespectful Behavior is behavior that requires repeated one on one attention and redirection thus taking the counselors attention away from the other children putting them at risk.

-Inappropriate Touching/Behavior

-Inappropriate touching is defined as any physical contact to another individual that causes emotional or physical distress.

-Inappropriate behavior is defined as any behavior that disrupts daily activities and/or causes distress to staff or other participants.

-Children Leaving the YMCA without Authorized Escort

-Children who attempt to leave without the assistance of a counselor are seriously endangering their safety and strict measures must be taken to prevent such occurrences. All children are required to stay within clearly designated Summer Day Camp boundaries when indoors as well as during outdoor recreation time. If a child is troubled or hurt, he or she must seek the assistance of a counselor immediately.

-Verbal Threats of Severe Harm or Death Threats

-Severe verbal threats that potentially endanger the life of a participant will be taken seriously and responded to with great caution. Immediate steps for resolution will take place in all such cases. It is not our intention or within our jurisdiction to determine the intent of the child or to interpret the meaning of statements or actions. However, we cannot minimize the serious nature of such threats and will therefore enforce strict and

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### **Discipline Action Write Ups**

The Y recognizes that this is a difficult time for the families involved; however, the Y has an obligation to provide a safe and quality environment to all of the children who are enrolled.

#### **1st Offense:**

With the 1<sup>st</sup> offense parents / guardians will be contacted and arrangements will be made for immediate child pick-up. The child will remain in supervised YMCA suspension until the parent arrives.

#### **2nd Offense:**

With the 2<sup>nd</sup> offense a 1-3 day's suspension from the program with the number of days being based on the severity of the incident. At this time a discussion between the Director and authorized member of the family will take place, followed by a signed written agreement that a repeat offense may result in removal from the program.

#### **3rd Offense:**

With the 3<sup>rd</sup> offense The Child Care Director will review all documentation and determine if the child will be removed from the program.

In all instances, the Child Care Director will ensure that fairness and consistency is demonstrated with all disciplinary steps taken. He or she will get to know the child involved and observe, assess and review documentation. Every reasonable measure will be taken to ensure that the child's needs are met. Please note that our primary goal is to provide effective supervision and positive support for every child and to anticipate, successfully prevent, and resolve conflicts. In some instances, however, the YMCA reserves the right to remove a child from the program after reasonable attempts have been made to help the child and the desired results have not been achieved.

## **8. FOOD SERVICE & PREPARATION**

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The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center is a participant of the USDA's Special Nutrition Program. We do not charge an extra fee for meals or snacks.

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA

Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272.

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center supplies cereal, baby foods, and iron fortified formula for infants. Parents are asked to complete an "Infant Feeding Sheet" at the beginning of each month. This instructs us on how to feed your baby according to your directions.

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center provides fully nutritious meals to all the children in our program. A menu is posted in each classroom. We serve breakfast for all children present at 8:00a.m.till 9:00 a.m. Lunch is served between 11:00am. until 12:00 p.m. Afternoon snack is served after around 3:00 pm,. During the school year a full meal is served to afterschool kids 3:30 p.m. till 4:30 p.m. All prepared foods are kept out of the reach of children. Menus are posted in each room and are sent home at the beginning of the month. Parents please advise us of any allergies. All staff is educated about food allergies. If a child requires an alternative meal or substitution, a note from a doctor may be required. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center is a peanut free environment. No outside food may be brought into the center.

### **9. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

Immunization records must be current for all children enrolled in Infant through preschool program. A copy must be in the child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment. The Palestine YMCA Child Care Program does not take non vaccinated children. All school children must have their health records on file with the schools

Tuberculin testing is not required in the state of Texas or in our facility.

### **10. HEARING AND VISION SCREENING**

Hearing and Vision Screening for possible vision and hearing problems is required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4-years old. Parents may also bring in screening proof from their local pediatrician.

### **11. ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND FEES**

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Upon selecting The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center to meet your child's families' needs, all enrollment must be complete on line through kinderlime to start our program. Upon receiving acceptance invite by Kinderlime you must pay registration fees at the Welcome Desk and the following forms must be picked up, completed, and turned into the Child Care Desk before your child's enrollment in any program is complete.

All programs will have separate registration and tuition fee fact sheets.

- Physician's Statement / Not required for school age
- Shot Records /Not required for school age
- Food Program Enrollment Form
  
- CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form
- Infant Feeding Preference (if applicable)
- Child Assessment form /Not required for school age

### **12. Traveling/Field Trips**

When the Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center provides transportation from the schools as well as to and from field trips and activities off site, all drivers for our program will have a CDL with passenger endorsement and have passed a Motor vehicle record check. Each child will be secured in a seatbelt. When the After School Program or Summer Day Camp takes a field trip we notify parents at least 48 hours before of location, departure, return and any cost associated.

The Palestine YMCA Infant through Preschool does not take part in traveling field trips.

### **13. WATER ACTIVITIES AND SWIMMING POOL**

The Wobblers through Chipmunks participate in sprinkler play and wading pools. If you want your child to participate in these activities, you must check the appropriate box on the admission form.

Cheetahs (4 and 5 year olds) and Summer Day Camp kids will use the swimming pool located at Steven Bennett Aquatic Center during summer months. A certified lifeguard will be on duty during these times. Parents will be notified in advance of swimming. Children may not wear flip flops or sandals to the pool or during the water activities they will either need to wear water shoes or tennis shoes. A certified lifeguard and staff will be on duty during these times.

### **14. SUN PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN**

The YMCA promotes outdoor activities; therefore, sun protection for children is essential. Since sunburn may appear hours after sun exposure, it is critical that preventive measures be taken to avoid sunburn. The following measures should be taken to protect your child:

- Sun block is MANDATORY in your child's backpack daily during summer.

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- Give your child's teacher or school aged child instructions to apply sun block prior to outdoor activities.
- Staff will have scheduled sunscreen checks throughout the day to ensure that all children are properly protected.
- A hat or cap with a bill would be beneficial for noses and cheek protection.

### **15. ANIMALS**

From time to time, The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center may have classroom pets that meet the requirements by Texas Child Care Licensing. A notice to parents will be posted outside any classroom door when a pet is present.

### **16. QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher, AfterSchool and Summer Day Camp Coordinator and/or the Center Director. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education.

### **17. OPEN DOOR POLICY**

We welcome parents at any time, in any area of our school. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center is a privately owned and operated facility. We have the right to refuse service at anytime to anyone.

### **18. PARENT PARTICIPATION**

We encourage parent involvement, especially with class parties. Also, if you have a concern, please schedule a time to meet with the classroom teacher, AfterSchool Program and Summer Day Camp Coordinator and/or the Director of the facility.

### **19. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and we follow the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Parents may review of a copy of these standards in the classroom or view the standards online at [www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Child\\_Care\\_Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp)

### **20. COMPLIANCE HISTORY**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center encourages parents to view our compliance history with Child Care Licensing. Our most recent inspection is posted on our parent communication board or you may view this at

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[www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Search\\_Texas\\_Child\\_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp) Parents may also contact our local child care licensing office at 1-800-582-6036

**21. GANG-FREE ZONE**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center is a GANG-FREE ZONE.

**22. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Below is the Emergency Preparedness Plan designed for The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center Parents are encouraged to read this information carefully. In the event a parent is present in the building during an emergency, The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center will ask parents to participate accordingly.

During any emergency the best course of action is to BREATHE AND STAY CALM, know how many children you have, and have your sign-in and -out log and transition sheet in your hands.

If you have children of your own in the facility, but in another classroom, trust that their teachers will take care of them just as you are taking care of the children in your care.

In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, "Director" refers to Carl Simons, and Assistant Director, Sherry Gossett. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director, Assistant Director, or designated person in charge will notify Child Care Licensing and/or the Health Department and/or call 911 as each situation dictates. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge may delegate any portion of his/her duties to other staff members, volunteers or emergency personnel as he/she deems necessary.

**TORNADO/BAD WEATHER**

- Stay calm. Watch the kids, not the situation.
- Get your sign-in/out sheet and your transition sheet and stuff it in your clothing. Grab your flashlight.
- Take all of your children to the center hallway. Have the children sit as close together as possible and have the children duck and cover. This will be familiar to the children since you practice this each time you have a severe weather drill.
- Infant classroom: Place your babies in two cribs and cover the top with a mattress from another crib. Place mattress sideways across top of the crib and huddle next to it. Roll the cribs to the center hallways.

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- Stay there until advised that the bad weather has passed.
- 
- It can be helpful to quietly sing songs with the children to help them keep calm.
- The Director in charge will monitor local weather stations and the weather alert radio for updates.

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASE OUTBREAK**

- All staff members will vigilantly follow policies and procedures regarding diaper changes, toileting, hand-washing, food preparation and general common sense measures such as keeping surfaces clean, changing bedding,
- Teaching children how to cover coughs and sneezes, etc., to prevent the spread of germs that cause illness in the first place.
- In the event of an outbreak, the Director, or person in charge, will notify the Health Department and Child Care Licensing to inform them of the situation and ask for instructions and guidelines to follow for specific illness or outbreak.
- The Director, or person in charge, will inform all staff members of instructions and guidelines and require them to follow the same.
- The Director, or person in charge, will also notify all parents about the situation in writing within 48-hours as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Child Care Licensing.
- All staff is to follow the school's confidentiality policies when speaking of the above outbreak. Any violation of the confidentiality policy is grounds for immediate termination.

**LOCK DOWN**

**(INCLUDES WEAPON, HOSTAGE INCIDENT, INTRUDER, TRESPASSING, DISTURBANCE)**

- The Director, or person in charge, will announce, "Lock Down" or a discrete code and will call 911.
- Upon hearing this, or sooner if you are aware that an intruder has entered the building or immediate vicinity, say calmly to the children a discrete phrase, such as "Bear in the Cave"; the children will know what to do because you practice this every month.
- Infant classroom: Place babies in two or three cribs with a few quiet toys. Place another empty crib or two in front of your classroom door. This might cause an intruder to change his/her mind about entering your classroom.
- Get your sign-in/out sheet in your hands and stuff them into your clothing.
- Close all your classroom doors and lock them if possible.

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- Turn off the lights.
- Whisper and remind the children that "we are to be very quiet."
- Keep the children and yourself safe, in place, and away from all interior and exterior windows.
  
- Watch the children, not the situation!
- If the intruder enters your classroom, do not argue with him.
- The Director, or person in charge, will ensure that all building entrances and exits are locked and that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building.
- Await further instructions from the Director, or person in charge, or emergency personnel.

### **ACCIDENT**

- Breathe and stay calm.
- Make sure all children are supervised. If you are alone, tell them to sit down near you.
- Comfort the child by speaking in a low, quiet voice.
- Apply first aid as needed.
- If you need further assistance have someone call 911.
- If the child is bleeding profusely, apply pressure to stop the bleeding. (In an extreme case, take off the child's shirt and use that.)
- If injury is to the head or face, report it to the office immediately - even if it is minor.
- Complete an Accident/Incident Report, have the Director sign it immediately, and have the parent sign it when the child is picked up.
- Turn the Accident/Incident Report in to the Director, or person in charge, before you leave on the same day.
- Keep the Accident/Incident Report confidential while in your presence.
- In the event of serious illness or injury involving an adult, contact the office and a Director, or the designated person in charge, will call 911 and/or the person's emergency contact.

### **ILLNESS**

- Ask the child, "What doesn't feel good?"
- Take the child's temperature. If the fever is over 100 degrees, the Director, or person in charge, will contact the parent.
- If no fever, make the child comfortable and keep an eye on him.
- If the child complains of pain, ask him to point with one finger where it hurts the most and then investigate that spot for injury or discoloration let the Director or designee know.

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- Light vomiting or mild diarrhea: If no pain, call the parent after the third episode.

**EXPLOSION, CHEMICAL SPILL OR GAS LEAK**

***That occurs INSIDE the facility***

- See procedures for FIRE and OFF-SITE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION

***That occurs OUTSIDE the facility***

- Close doors and lock if possible.
- Turn off air conditioner/heater.
- Turn off lights, computers, TV, radio, CD player, aquarium pump or anything else that may cause a spark.
- Keep children seated on the floor and calm. Sing quiet songs or read stories.
- Be prepared to evacuate if told to do so by the Director, or person in charge, or emergency personnel.
- If you detect a strong odor, show the children how to lift up and breathe through their shirts.
- If told to evacuate, consider crawling to avoid strong fumes that are floating higher in the air. Ask for clarification, if time.

**BOMB THREAT OR OTHER THREAT**

- Write down everything the person says.
- Ask where the bomb is.
- Ask when the bomb (or other threat) will "go off" or "happen".
- Write that down, too.
- Notify Director, or person in charge, to call 911 immediately.

**OFF-SITE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION**

- Your primary responsibility is to keep the children safe.
- Keep your sign-in/out sheet and transition sheet in your hands or stuff them into your clothing.
- If time allows, gather children's diaper bags, bottles, baby formula / food, and coats.
- Children will be evacuated in the center's Bus from oldest to youngest so that older children can assist with keeping children seated at the evacuation site. Depending on the situation, the Palestine ISD may also send transportation vehicles.

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- The Director is responsible for keeping a charged cell phone with him/her and overseeing and directing the evacuation process. She/he is the last person to leave the building.
- Each Teacher is responsible for taking the emergency binder (of permission slips and parent contact information)
  
- Evacuation and relocation site for The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center is Reagan Park or Palestine ISD.
- After all children and staff have been relocated to the evacuation site and are safe and have had all needs taken care of, the Director and Assistant Director will designate staff to contact parents and notify them of the situation.
- Staff members will continue to supervise and take care of the children including entertaining them with songs, stories, games, etc. at the evacuation site. Watch the kids, not the situation.
- The Director will be the contact person for emergency personnel
- The center's usual verification process for allowing adults to pick up children from the center will be used at the evacuation site. (i.e. only persons listed on the child's enrollment form as authorized to pick up will be allowed to do so after showing photo ID.)

### **FIRE**

- When aware of fire or when alarm sounds, quietly say, "Fire drill boys and girls; line up at the door, please." This should be familiar to them since you say it every month when you practice monthly fire drills. *Your primary responsibility is to get the children safely out of the building. Do not attempt to put out the fire unless it is between you and a child or preventing exit.*
- Get your sign-in/out sheet.
- Make a quick head count.
- Make sure you have everyone.
- Infants: Place all of the children in two cribs.
- Proceed to the proper fire exit and exterior meeting place as designated on the floor plan in the classroom. This is the same spot you take the children each month during your fire drill.
- Do a name / face check once you are outside and check it against your sign-in/out sheet. If anyone is missing, tell the Director, or person in charge, or a fire fighter immediately, but never leave the children unsupervised.
- The children must be safe (out of way of emergency vehicles and the fire) and supervised at all times. Watch out for anthills, broken glass and other hazards.
- Watch the kids, not the situation.

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- The fire department, Director, or person in charge will tell you when you and the children can re-enter the building or begin off-site evacuation procedures.

### **KITCHEN STAFF AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- When aware of fire or when alarm sounds, the Director sounds the alarm, if necessary, thus alerting everyone and notifying the fire department.
- She/he then proceeds to each classroom to ensure that everyone is out of the building.
- When aware of fire, or when alarm sounds, if the Kitchen Staff is in the building (and not when already counted in child/staff ratio), she will assist the young Infant classroom.

### **23. BREASTFEEDING**

The Palestine YMCA will provide a comfortable place with a seat for mothers to breastfeed their child if they choose to do so. Parents may also provide breast milk for their child to be served while in our care.

### **24. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW REQUIREMENTS**

The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

### **25 . WELL CHECKS**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center staff will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If a staff member notices anything unusual they are required to point this out to the parent at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects.

## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

### **26. CUSTODY SITUATIONS**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center prefers not to get involved with custody disputes. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. *PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS.* With this being said, it is

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imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents information. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the Director's discretion. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center has the right to terminate care.

### **27. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICIES**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center will follow the Palestine ISD inclement weather schedule. Please listen to KYYK for closing. Full tuition is due during inclement weather times.

In case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, or loss of power/water, parents will be notified, if possible, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive.

### **28. INFANT THROUGH PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center uses the Champion Educational Program for our infants through 5 year olds. This curriculum is based on the belief that children learn best through actively engaging with people and things in their environment. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center is a place where essential readiness skills are nurtured through play, investigation, and of course, fun! These programs provide developmentally and age-appropriate activities and materials for exciting and wonder filled environments.

### **29. CLASSROOM/GROUP ASSIGNMENTS**

Classroom and school age group assignments are based on each individual child's chronological age, developmental age, emotional age, and physical age. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center may transition children to new classrooms or groups throughout the year based on age and the individual child's needs.

### **37. CHILD TO STAFF RATIOS**

The Palestine YMCA exceeds state ratios in most classrooms. From time to time, we may follow state ratios, but will never be non-compliant unless under emergency situations.

### **38. NAP TIME**

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children under five years of age who remain at The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center for six or more hours a day, and for all other children who show a need for a rest time. Your child will be provided a cot to rest on for naptime. Please provide a clean blanket for naptime

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and take them home Fridays for washing. You may also bring in a pillow, or stuffed animal if desired, but they must be able to fit in your child's cubby. Day out of School Clubs and Summer Camp children will observe a time for rest.

### 39. CLOTHING

Preschool children must have a complete change of clothing, **clearly marked with the child's name**, left at The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center. ALL children need to be dressed for the weather. Caps, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Accidents can happen, even for the older preschoolers, when they wait too long before going to the bathroom, or if they get wet on the playground.

The Program promotes outdoor activities, consideration for appropriate clothing and sun protection for children is essential.

- Sneaker or athletic shoes must be worn.
- For safety reason, flip flops, sandals, or dress shoes may not be worn.
- If your child wants to participate on the Climbing Wall they may not wear denim.
- For time management, children will not be allowed to change clothing.

### 40. PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Parents must supply all bottles for their child. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center provides toddler training cups. Please label everything with your child's first and last name.

We use washable crayons, markers and paint during art time, but the children's clothing may get stained from just being kids! Please dress your children in play clothes since PLAY is what we do!!

Please leave all valuable items at home since The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center cannot be responsible for broken or lost items.

### 41. OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. Children may **NOT** wear flip flops due to the danger these shoes may cause on the playground.

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**42. BIRTHDAYS**

Most children enjoy celebrating special events with their friends (birthdays, new babies, and holidays). Parents may send a “store bought” treat to share with the class. Please make arrangements with staff several days in advance.

**43. SCHOOL SAFETY POLICIES**

Parents need to personally escort their child(ren) inside the building to sign in and out when their children enter and leave the facility. Parents are welcome to visit the center any time during the day to observe their child without prior approval. However, if you would like to stay and spend time with your child during activities, please see the office so we can do a proper criminal history check, as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Our facility is equipped with a fire sprinkler system and fire drills are practiced monthly.

You will be notified with a phone call of any incidents other than minor scrapes or bumps with a phone call. We will also give you a written report at pick up time. First aid will be applied for minor incidents. In the event medical attention is required, we will notify you immediately. Parents are responsible for all medical fees.

**44. PHOTOGRAPHS**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center believes in the benefit of using real life pictures in our educational program. Photos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera and will only be used in our program. If parents choose to take pictures of events held at our program, they may only photograph their child, unless written permission is given by the other parent. Please note: during certain parent events, such as Pre-K graduation, Christmas programs, and other activities, photographs may be taken. If you wish for your child to not be photographed, you may want to remove them from these events.

**45. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Employees of The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center are prohibited from outside employment with parents of the organization. This includes, but is not limited to, babysitting and/or nanny- type jobs.

**46. CYBER IDENTITY/SOCIAL NETWORKING WEB SITES**

Cyber identity and social networking is very exciting these days. However, please understand that employees of The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center are prohibited from participating in social networking with parents and children. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace.

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**47. BITING**

Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between providers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Proper communication will help determine why a child is biting. The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center will work with parents when biting becomes a problem. We will make every effort to solve the issue as soon as possible.

**48. COMPUTERS**

The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center does not use computers or television in the classroom. It is the belief of the Palestine YMCA Early Childhood center that the children have enough screen time in their daily lives to use the computer and watch television. If we do decide to show a movie for a special occasion or event, we will send a notice home to parents.

**49. CELL PHONES**

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms. Please help us stay in compliance with this new standard.

*We, at The Palestine YMCA Early Childhood Center, know that you trust us with your most valuable treasure, your child, and we strive to serve our families the absolute best in preschool education and childcare. We believe that excellent early childhood development is the foundation for a bright future for our children.*