DEAR GASTON COUNTY:

It’s going to be a fantastic school year and we are glad you are here! The Gaston County Family YMCA offers After School Enrichment programs, family activities, and special programs just for your children!

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

All YMCA programs are designed to meet the following goals.

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

Thank you, Gaston County Family YMCA Program Team
JOIN US IN SOMETHING BIG

YMCA Locations

Cherryville YMCA
119 East Main Street
Cherryville, NC 28021
Phone 704-445-9622

Central YMCA
615 W Franklin Blvd
Gastonia, NC 28052
Phone 704-865-8551

Pharr Family YMCA
208 Main Street
McAdenville, NC 28101
Phone 704-824-1131

South Gaston Family YMCA
3210 Union Road
Gastonia, NC 28056
Phone 704-865-2193

Stowe Family YMCA
196 YMCA Drive
Belmont, NC 28012
Phone 704-822-9622

Who is watching my child?

We feel confident that we have the best staff in town! Our staff is as diverse as our children and comprised of men and women who want to make an impact on their community. The majority of our counselors are college students and graduates, although we do have some exceptional 16 and 17 year olds too! Many members of our staff team are enrolled in teaching credential programs or are full time teachers.

Staff members have been drug tested, had a criminal background check, are CPR and basic first aid certified, and receive regular childcare trainings. Additionally, three references are checked for each staff member. Staff of all our water related activities are certified Red Cross lifeguards. We do everything to make sure your child will be safe in the event of an emergency.

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

What is the staff/child ratio?

Toddlers = 1 staff per 6 children
School Age children = 1 staff per 15 children

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

Will my child be playing with kids their own age at the Y?

To make Y programs more age-appropriate and easier to schedule, children are divided into small groups. This allows for small group activities, ease of supervision, and fosters the relationship between children and staff. For a complete daily schedule, please see the director.

Welcome

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

Financial Assistance

As a 501(c)3, no one is turned away due to the inability to pay for membership. See the front desk for information about an affordable income based rate.
How do you make sure a stranger doesn’t pick up my child?

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

Children should NOT know their own Code Word.

Can a friend or family member pick my child up?

Yes. They just need to know your child’s code word.

What if I forget my child’s code word?

People who come to pick up your child that do not know the Code Word or use an incorrect word will be asked to go to the YMCA front desk to confirm pick up authorization by checking a valid identification card.

What if I am late picking up my child from Y Programs?

Please make note of the following:

Children MAY NOT be dropped off before the program begins.

Children MUST be signed in and out by a staff member. They may not check in or out themselves.

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

For After School this means by 6:00pm.

What if I am late picking up my child from Y Programs? (continued)

The YMCA staff will contact the local authorities or Department of Social Services if parents are more than 30 minutes late.

My child loves their counselor. Can they babysit for our family?

Although Y staff work well with children, our policy states that our staff (while they are employees of the YMCA) are not permitted to babysit for families involved in our YMCA programs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Give envelope and “Medication Form” to the counselor at the check-in area.

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

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

What should my child wear and bring to the Y?

- Please label everything sent to the Y
- Closed-toe shoes & socks daily
- Pants/shorts
- T-Shirt/long sleeve
- A jacket on chilly days
- Swimming Trunks/Full cover bathing suit, and Towel for swim days
- Backpack
- Refillable water bottle

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

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

My child lost something, where can I find it?

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

*PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILD’S BELONGINGS

**The YMCA is not responsible for camper possessions that are damaged, lost, or stolen.

What are the bathroom procedures?

No child is sent to the bathroom alone and one child is never alone with a staff member. Our children will take trips to the bathroom with their group and Y staff. We use the rule of three or more, meaning that one staff member and at least three (or more) children use the restroom every time. Children will only use restrooms inspected for safety by staff prior to entering the restroom.
What if my child doesn’t want to swim? Or forgets his/her bathing suit on swim days?

If your child doesn’t want to swim or forgets his/her bathing suit they simply won’t go swimming. Usually 75% of children want to swim, but the other 25% engage in other activities. We have trained lifeguards that are challenged with periodic in-service training to keep their skills sharp.

***To swim in the deep end, children must pass the swim test by jumping into the pool, swimming the length of the pool, and then tread water for 2 minutes.

*Children who pass the swim test MUST wear the swim band for the entire session. For your child’s safety the swim band MUST be present at all times while in the pool. No exceptions.

What if my child cannot swim?

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

***Life jackets are available but we encourage children to bring their own to ensure proper fit.

What if there is inclement weather?

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

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

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

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

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

Inclement weather cancellations are not subject to refunds.

Do you accept children with special needs?

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

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

How are behavior issues dealt with during Y Programs?

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

What are the YMCA’s guidelines for discipline:

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

**Rule of Five**

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

***Depending on the severity of an issue the YMCA reserves the right to dismiss participants for unruly behavior.
What are the Rules?

- Children will speak for themselves and not anybody else.
- Children will listen to others including staff and peers.
- Children will not put others down.
- Children will show respect to staff, peers, the facility, and the bus driver.
- Children will keep their hands and feet to themselves.
- Children are not allowed to bring inappropriate items to the YMCA. This includes but is not limited to weapons, drugs, and clothing.
- Children will not use vulgar, aggressive, or abusive language
- Parents are also expected to follow the above rules.

How do I register for a program?

Please visit the YMCA front desk or our website for registration forms and information. Each program will have program specific information available that will include dates, sessions, cost, etc. Many programs are available to register and pay for online. www.gastonymca.org

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

How do I pay for the program?

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

DSS Vouches must be paid by the 15th.

After School Enrichment and Summer Camp

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

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

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

What are the Bus Rules?

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

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

What are grounds for immediate suspension/removal?

We strive to work with each parent and child however, the below behaviors are grounds for immediate suspension and/or termination:
 Exchange of bodily fluids, striking other children or staff, leaving a mark on another child or staff member, running away, and/or creating an unsafe environment.

... WITH POSITIVE EXAMPLES.
What is Teacher Work Day Care?

Care is provided on Teacher Work Days at the Central YMCA and Stowe Family YMCA from 7:00—6:00 pm. This care is included for After School Enrichment children and available at an extra fee for those who are not. Children must be dropped off by 10:00 am to ensure proper staff ratios.

What do I do if I need to add or cancel a program?

Additions/Cancellations must be made in writing on a “Addition/Cancellation Form”.

Deposits, registration fees, and/or paid portions are non-refundable.

Email, fax, or drop-off Addition/Cancellation Forms to your Program Director.

All cancellations must be made in writing two weeks prior to the program.

If a cancellation form is not completed and received or your child does not attend the program, you are still responsible for payment.

If your child is suspended or sent home for disruptive behavior, no refunds will be issued.

You can find Addition/Cancellation Form at each YMCA location, on our website www.gastonymca.org.

What is financial assistance?

The YMCA is committed to providing quality programs regardless of one’s ability to pay. Our financial assistance program is available for those who otherwise would be unable to enjoy the benefits of YMCA membership & programs. Eligibility is determined based on applicant’s income and is administered on a sliding scale. Please inquire at the membership service desk.

Past Due Payment Guidelines

- A $20.00 late fee will be assessed on all payments received after the scheduled due date.
- Services will be suspended if payment is not received within one week of the due date.
- Overdue fees will be handled by Jean Springer, Program Account Manager.
- Balances will be sent to a collections agency if not collected in-house.

Please direct all payment questions to Jean Springer at 704.865.8551 or jspringer@gastonymca.org.

Return Fee Charge

Any returned checks received will be turned over to the Gaston County Family YMCA collections department. Outstanding balances resulting from returned checks must be cleared up before the child may enroll or attend any YMCA program. There will be $25.00 fee for any returned checks or bank draft payment. This will be collected through eCashflow and via your bank draft information.
YMCA offers After School Enrichment in schools across Gaston County. Please see the list below to see if the Y serves your school and which Gaston County Family YMCA to contact for information:

**Central Family YMCA**
- Brookside
- Carr
- Gardner Park
- Sherwood

School Pick Up Sites transported to the Central Branch YMCA -

**Central Branch YMCA Onsite**
- Forest Heights
- St. Michael’s
- Pleasant Ridge
- Grier Middle School
- York Chester Middle School
- Sadler
- Woodhill
- HH Beam
- Rhyne
- Piedmont Charter
- Lingerfeldt
- Holbrook Middle

**Cherryville Family YMCA**
- Cherryville Elementary
- Costner

**South Gaston Family YMCA**
- New Hope
- WA Bess
- Hawk’s Nest (participants go to Robinson)
- Robinson

**Stowe Family YMCA**
- Belmont Central
- Lowell
- Page Primary
- Pinewood

School Pick Up Sites transported to the Stowe Family YMCA -

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

**Year Round Registration**

The YMCA offers the option to register for a year’s worth of programs at once! This includes 2015—2016 After School, Holiday Camps, and 2016 Summer Camp! The weekly cost remains the same for all 52 weeks.

Registration for this option is only available until September 30, 2015.

gastonymca.org
YMCA Programs by Age

**Infant**
- Swim Lessons (6 months+)
- Y Play

**Toddler**
- Dance/Gymnastics
- Fit Tots
- Kinder Camp
- Parents Night Out
- Preschool Yoga
- Swim Lessons
- Toddler Classes
- Y Play
- Youth Sports—Soccer, Basketball, T Ball and Coach Pitch

**Elementary**
- Adventure Guides
- Afterschool
- Art
- Birthday Parties
- Dance/Gymnastics
- Holiday Camp
- Home School Swim and Gym
- Judo/Karate
- Parents Night Out
- Summer Day Camp and Sports Camps
- Swim Club
- Swim Lessons
- Teen Leaders’ Club
- Teens Changing Gaston County
- Youth In Government
- Youth Fitness

**Teens**
- Achievers
- After School
- Camper In Leadership Training (CILT)
- Holiday Camp
- Lifeguarding Certification Classes
- Middle School Madness
- Middle School Travel Basketball
- Middle School United Nations
- Outdoor Teen Adventure Club
- Parents Night Out
- Personal Training
- Stroke and Turn Classes
- Summer Day Camp and Sports Camps
- Swim Club
- Swim Lessons
- Teens Changing Gaston County
- Youth In Government
- Youth Fitness

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

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.
Important Childcare Dates to Remember

Monday, August 24, 2015—Gaston County School begins
Monday, September 7, 2015—Labor Day, No childcare provided
Wednesday, September 30, 2015—Early Dismissal, childcare provided
Thursday, October 15, 2015—Early Dismissal, childcare provided
Friday, October 16, 2015—Teacher Work Day, childcare provided
Thursday, November 5, 2015—Early Dismissal, childcare provided
Friday, November 6, 2015—Teacher Work Day, childcare provided
Wednesday, November 11, 2015—Veteran’s Day, childcare provided
Wednesday, November 25, 2015—Teacher Work Day, childcare provided
Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27—Thanksgiving Holiday, No childcare provided
Monday, December 21* and Wednesday, December 23, 2015—Holiday Camp available
Thursday, December 24 and Friday, December 25, 2015—Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, No childcare available
Monday, December 28 through Wednesday, December 30, 2015—Holiday Camp available
Thursday, December 31, 2015—New Years Eve, No childcare provided
Friday, January 1, 2016—New Years Day, No childcare provided
Monday, January 18, 2016—Martin Luther King Jr. Day, childcare available
Thursday, January 21 and Friday, January 22, 2016—Teacher Work Day, childcare provided
Monday, February 15, 2016—Teacher Work Day, childcare provided
Wednesday, March 2, 2016—Early Dismissal, childcare provided
Friday, March 25, 2016—Good Friday, No childcare provided
Monday, March 28 through Friday, April 1*, 2016—Spring Break, Holiday Camp available
Thursday, April 21, 2016—Early Dismissal, childcare provided
Monday, May 30, 2016—Memorial Day, No childcare provided
Thursday, June 9 and Friday, June 10, 2016—Teacher Work Days, childcare provided
Monday, June 13, 2016—Summer Camp begins
Monday, July 4, 2016—Fourth of July Holiday, No childcare provided

Early Dismissal—Care available to all current Afterschool and Year Round participants at their regular Afterschool site from school dismissal until 6:00 pm. Fee is included in weekly draft.

Teacher Work Day—Care available to all current Afterschool and Year Round participants at the Central and Stowe Family YMCAs from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Fee is included in weekly draft.

Holiday Camp—Care available to anyone registered at the Central and Stowe Family YMCAs from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Fee not included in weekly draft. Early registration mandatory.

*Monday, Dec 21 and Friday, Apr 1st are considered Holiday Camp Days.
GASTON COUNTY FAMILY YMCA

Building a better Gaston ... one family at a time.

gastonymca.org