



Young Children's Program

HANDBOOK FOR FAMILIES

**College of Education
James Madison University
www.jmu.edu/coe/ycp
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*Licensed by the Virginia
Department of Social Services*



HANDBOOK FOR FAMILIES

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Young Children's Program is an early learning program operated by the James Madison University College of Education. Its curriculum, environment, and organization are based on professional standards and research related to the learning and development of young children. The program operates daily with a morning session for three-year-olds and an afternoon session for four-year-olds. Each class is led by a master teacher and a support staff of students.

The Young Children's Program recognizes that children's development is best facilitated through cooperative efforts of families and school. Family members are welcome contributors to the ongoing curriculum and are encouraged to be involved in ways that support their children's adjustment and growth. Avenues for communication are varied and personal in order to meet the needs of all families.

In addition to providing a quality educational experience for children and their families, the Young Children's Program serves as a laboratory site for JMU teacher education students. They provide assistance to the teachers and individual attention in ways that are positive and supportive to children. The YCP also serves as a setting for professional observation and research within the University community.

The YCP is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and licensed as a child care facility by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

PROGRAM GOALS

The Young Children's Program provides an environment designed to help each child

- Grow in independence and self-sufficiency
- Develop enthusiasm and skills for learning
- Grow in the ability to interact positively with others
- Increase personal awareness and self-discipline
- Grow in the ability to use language effectively
- Value individual creativity and self-expression
- Construct knowledge through experience and inquiry
- Develop and refine motor skills
- Make choices that support personal wellness

The Young Children's Program provides an environment designed to help families

- Participate meaningfully in their children's educational experience
- Grow in their understanding of child development and appropriate early education
- Develop a support network with other families in the program
- Become more familiar with family support resources within the community

CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the Young Children's Program is dynamic, evolving, and personal. It is grounded in our mission to support the growth of children in all areas of development--physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic. Professional training, skillful observation, and personal relationships with each child and family enable teachers to make curricular decisions that facilitate optimal growth and learning.

Program goals represent the areas of development and provide the framework of the curriculum. They are aligned with the *Milestones of Child Development* (VA Early Childhood Development Alignment Project, 2007) which define specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate for children ages 3 to 5 years of age in each developmental domain. All choices that relate to short-term and long-term planning reflect these goals, as well as the understanding that children construct knowledge through interaction with materials, people, and the environment. Therefore, play, investigation, communication, and reflection are daily experiences for children. The foundation of the curriculum is frequent, first-hand experiences within the classroom and the community. These experiences may take the form of special classroom activities or events, ongoing projects, field trips, walks to campus or community sites, or visitors to the school. Teachers then build on these concrete experiences by providing activities and materials which encourage growth and learning in the goal areas. These opportunities for creative expression, symbolic representation, individual research, social interaction, dramatic play, and the use of language and literature encourage meaningful learning because they are extensions of children's personal experiences and are presented in a manner that is sensitive to each child's level of understanding. Appropriate content knowledge identified in national and state standards in the areas of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies is integrated into extension experiences.

The physical environment of the Young Children's Program is a critical component of the curriculum. The classrooms and outdoor learning spaces are designed to include a rich variety of materials that encourage meaningful exploration and play and, therefore, support learning and development in all program goal areas. The learning environment is constantly evolving. Teachers introduce new materials, develop unique interest areas, and display equipment in different ways to challenge children's thought and motivate involvement. The organization and presentation of classroom materials contributes significantly to the overall curriculum; intentional decisions are made that support children's cognitive development, as well as conceptual knowledge in the content areas.

The daily schedule supports the program goals by providing routines that contribute to children's feelings of security and purpose. Flexibility within the schedule supports growth in all goal areas and enables teachers to respond to the needs and involvement of the children at any time during the day. The majority of each session is dedicated to exploration and purposeful play. During this active time, children choose where they want to play and when they are ready to move to a new activity. Teachers encourage involvement in chosen activities for an amount of time appropriate for each child's developmental level, but do not impose a scheduled rotation of activities. When possible, special activities or materials are available for consecutive days in order to encourage children's involvement and in-depth investigation. The role of the teacher and support staff during this period is also active, moving among individuals or groups of children to provide supervision, observe children's use of materials, or interact in ways that support the construction of knowledge, personal independence, and social growth. Classroom routines for opening and concluding the session, preparing and eating snack, and the rotation of classroom responsibilities incorporate the use of written and oral language, numeracy, science, and social studies in concrete and meaningful ways.

The success of a dynamic, child-centered curriculum is dependent on the teachers' understanding of child development and their knowledge of individual children. YCP teachers know

how young children learn and incorporate this understanding as they plan activities and provide materials that will be motivating and intellectually engaging. Every aspect of the curriculum, the classroom, and the daily routine reflects extensive knowledge of child development in all areas--physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic. In addition to facilitating meaningful planning, this knowledge provides teachers with a basis for assessing the development of individual children. The assessment informs and enables the planning of experiences that will support optimal learning and growth of each child.

The final and most critical component of the Young Children's Program curriculum is the demonstration of sincere respect for every child. It is each teacher's responsibility to know the children personally--their special interests, fears or needs for dependence, out-of-school routines and activities, and family dynamics. This is accomplished through consistent and meaningful interaction with each child, careful observation and assessment within the school environment, and the development of a cooperative and communicative relationship with all families.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of children's growth and learning is an integral part of the curriculum. The information learned through purposeful assessment enables teachers to plan experiences for children that are personally meaningful, appropriately challenging, and consistent with their level of understanding. For this reason, the YCP assessment program is specifically designed to facilitate the collection of data on each child's growth in the developmental areas identified in the program goals. This is done through documentation of the observable knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified in the *Milestones of Child Development* (VA Early Childhood Development Alignment Project, 2007). Records are kept in individual assessment booklets and supported with samples of children's work. Involvement of family members is a critical component of the assessment program because of the knowledge they can contribute toward a complete understanding of each child's abilities, interests, and needs.

The assessment process begins before the opening of school each fall as parents are given the opportunity to write an introduction to their child. The introduction form is a part of the registration packet mailed to each family during the summer and serves as a focus for the preschool conference of the teacher and parents. At that time, program goals are reviewed and family members are urged to be involved in supporting and documenting their child's growth. Early in the school year, parents are also encouraged to collaborate with the teacher in determining individual goals for their child. These are recorded in the child's assessment booklet. Progress toward the goals is discussed during formal conferences and appropriate revisions are made as necessary.

Because the YCP program goals for each child represent assessment in all developmental domains, the data collection process constitutes an effective screening instrument. However, a separate developmental checklist is completed within each child's first three months of school attendance. Information learned from this screening is used to inform decisions that will support positive growth. If significant delays or areas of concern are recognized at this point or at any time during the child's enrollment, they are summarized and shared with the parents. Appropriate resource professionals are consulted if necessary and an intervention plan is developed in consultation with the family. If efforts to facilitate progress are unsuccessful, appropriate referrals may be made.

As much as possible, assessment of children in the YCP is conducted informally and as a part of their daily school activities. This is done through careful observation, collection of work samples, and the use of checklists and anecdotal notes. When assessment of specific, unobserved skills is necessary, it is conducted in an atmosphere that is supportive and enjoyable for the child.

All written information collected on individual children in the YCP is confidential and is kept in a secure location. Access is limited to the child's family, the teaching and administrative staff, and officials of regulatory agencies. Assessment information and the assessment booklets are shared with families at least twice during the school year.

In addition to facilitating individual growth and learning, the information compiled through consistent observation within the classroom is used to make decisions that result in the improvement of overall curriculum, teaching strategies, and classroom environment.

Assessment of Program Effectiveness in Meeting Goals for Families

The effectiveness of the YCP in meeting its goals for families is assessed in the following ways:

- An annual survey is conducted in the spring. This survey includes objective statements for response, as well as the opportunity for written feedback.
- Twice during the year contact is made with families for the specific purpose of soliciting feedback and ideas for program improvement.
- Because there is a family representative from each class on the YCP Advisory Council, it is a forum for input and suggestions for program direction and improvement.

GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Members of the YCP Advisory Council are the teachers, coordinator, head of the Department of Early, Elementary, and Reading Education, the YCP financial officer, a minimum of two parents of children currently enrolled in the YCP (one from each class), and a student in the Department of Early, Elementary, and Reading Education. The role of the Council is to support the ongoing operation of the Young Children's Program. Advisory Council members are consulted via email when input is solicited on program issues and face-to-face meetings are held as needed. Parents interested in serving in this position are encouraged to notify the coordinator or their child's teacher.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The morning session operates 8:45-11:15 and the afternoon session operates 12:15-2:45.

Arrival

The YCP exists as a laboratory setting for students in the Early Childhood Education Program. For this reason, in addition to the teachers' responsibilities to the children in the YCP, they have significant responsibilities for supporting the professional development of the JMU students. Both roles require time and planning which must happen before and after school hours. **Program arrival and dismissal times must be observed in order to provide the teachers with the time needed for daily preparation of the classroom and for meeting with student staff.** A flag is hung near the outside door when it is time for school to begin. It is expected that you will help your child learn to recognize and obey this signal for entering the building. For liability reasons, the playground and loft room are not available for use by YCP families before or after school.

Families and children should always enter and leave through the main doors beside the playground. Parents or authorized persons are responsible for checking children into the room upon arrival and checking out at the end of the school day. A sheet for this purpose is posted on the class bulletin board in the hall.

We realize that saying goodbye at the beginning of the school day is sometimes difficult. The teacher will help with this in a way that is sensitive to the needs she observes in your child. Parents are encouraged to remain in the classroom as long as the child needs their presence, but staying beyond this time may be counterproductive to our goal for each child to grow in independence and self-confidence. We ask that you trust the teachers as they work to provide an environment that is welcoming, secure, and challenging for each child. Feel free to talk with your child's teacher if you have concerns about leaving your child and would like to develop a specific plan for easing this transition.

It is important for teachers to be aware of situations or experiences that may impact children's behavior (loss of sleep, absence or illness of a parent or family member, visitors in the home, etc.) Please share this information at a level that is comfortable and will help the teacher and staff be more responsive to your child's needs. Please remember, however, that the beginning of the school day is an especially important time for the teacher to be free to make contact with each child. If there is lengthy information that must be shared, please provide it in writing or arrange a time that is convenient to both of you.

Items protruding into the hall from cubbies may create a fire hazard. Please be sure all clothing and possessions are contained inside your child's cubby before leaving the hall area.

Dismissal

Children will be dismissed to parents or authorized persons only. **As they are dismissed, please check cubbies for notes and/or belongings and assume responsibility for safe use of the stairs and exit door.** The playground is not open after school is dismissed.

To prevent confusion at dismissal, it is helpful if after-school visiting among children can be arranged in advance. The school must be informed in writing when a child is to be dismissed to someone other than a person listed on the authorization form.

Children must be picked up at the dismissal time. The teachers have scheduled meetings with student staff at the end of each day and cannot be responsible for after-hours care. If no one has arrived 10 minutes following dismissal and notification of an unexpected delay has not been received, a YCP staff member will attempt to contact the persons listed on the *Child Release Authorization* and arrange for an authorized person to pick up the child.

ATTENDANCE

Children are expected to have regular attendance when well enough to participate fully in all activities of the program, including daily outdoor activities.

Parents or caregivers are required to notify the teacher when their child will NOT be attending school. This may be done in writing or by leaving a phone message at the Young Children's Program (568-6089). In the event a child has not arrived 30 minutes after the beginning of the school day, the program is required to notify the family by calling the numbers listed on the *Emergency Information Form*.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays may be celebrated simply at school if the child and parents wish, but **without gift bags, balloons, or favors.** **Birthday snacks should be nutritious and easy to serve.** Foods that come from home must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. In addition to nutritional requirements established by VDSS licensing standards, the YCP is committed to avoiding products with excessive sugar and high fructose corn syrup as much as possible.

The distribution of written invitations to special events for a select group of children is not appropriate at school.

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event of hazardous weather, the Young Children's Program follows cancellation decisions made by the University. There are additional times, however, when the safety of children necessitates closure of the YCP when the University is in operation. YCP cancellation announcements are reported to WHSV-TV (www.whsv.com) and WSVA radio (550 AM). When possible, announcements are posted on the YCP website (www.jmu.edu/coe/ycp) and families are notified by email. All are encouraged to make the travel decision that is safest for their family regardless of whether school is in operation.

Because of the lack of availability of student assistance, days missed due to weather emergency are not made up.

CLOTHING

Children should dress in comfortable, washable clothing appropriate for active play. Clothing that is easy to manage encourages independence (mittens instead of gloves, velcro fasteners on shoes, pants with elastic at waist, etc).

Shoes with non-skid soles that are safe for climbing and running are strongly recommended. **Flip-flops, crocs, and stiff boots interfere with a child's safe use of equipment and should not be worn to school.**

The class will spend some time outdoors daily except in severe weather. Because the classroom temperature is always comfortable, it is suggested that children dress in layers of clothing that will enable comfort for both indoor and outdoor play. On snowy days the classes often go outside to play in the snow. Families are asked to send children with the necessary protective clothing such as boots, mittens, and toboggan.

Children must have a seasonal change of clothes in their cubbies at all times (including several pairs of underpants). Place clothing in a gallon zip-loc bag labeled with your child's name. Occasionally it is necessary for children to borrow clothing from the school. When this occurs, the items should be washed and returned as soon as possible

COMMUNICATION

Because the YCP views early education as the shared responsibility of home and school, it is critical that we communicate often and well about all aspects of a child's school experience. Communication during the year is verbal and written, informal and formal, and may be initiated by family members and school personnel. In an effort to promote environmental responsibility, communication will be electronic as much as possible. Parents are encouraged to contact a teacher or the YCP coordinator if the family is unable to receive electronic communication (via the web and email) or needs to communicate in a language other than English.

Communication initiated by the YCP is in the following forms:

Handbook for Families

This publication is posted on the YCP web site and sent to new families prior to the opening of school. It contains information about program goals, curriculum, assessment, policies, and emergency procedures, as well as a school calendar, tuition payment schedule, communicable disease chart, and descriptions of licensing and accreditation standards. Returning families receive a list of new handbook information and revisions since the previous year. At their initial conference with the teacher, all parents are given the opportunity to ask questions about information in the handbook and are asked to sign a contract indicating commitment to abide by program policies. Teachers continue to share program information and classroom expectations when appropriate throughout the year. Questions are always welcome.

Daily Messages

Notes on special activities for each day are written on the message board in the entrance hall. Adults are encouraged to read this daily message with their children upon arrival.

Weekly Communication

Each teacher creates a one-page newsletter with information about special activities and the snack calendar for the upcoming week. These documents are posted on the individual class pages of the YCP web site and on the bulletin board in the entrance hall.

Monthly Event Calendars

Each teacher creates a monthly calendar of events that includes information about upcoming field trips, special activities, and birthdays. These are posted on the individual class pages of the YCP web site and on the bulletin board in the entrance hall.

Conferences

Conferences are a time for parents and teachers to share information. They may be as informal as a short discussion at the end of a school day, a phone call, or in a more formal scheduled meeting for private conversation and sharing. Conference days are scheduled before school begins in September, as well as in November, February, and at the end of the school year in May. Parents or teachers may initiate a conference at any time during the year. It is expected that all conference participants communicate respectfully and demonstrate openness to the perspective and concerns of others.

Developmental Summaries

Families are given a detailed summary of their child's developmental progress toward program and individual goals during two formal conferences each school year.

Program Newsletters

Newsletters from the YCP Coordinator provide program updates, details of family meetings, and information related to program accreditation and licensing.

Program Web Site

Program information, announcements, forms, and updates are posted on the YCP web site at www.jmu.edu/coe/ycp.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND SERVICES

The YCP staff makes a consistent effort to notify families of local events that may be of interest to children such as special activities at the Harrisonburg Children's Museum, campus theatre performances, storytellers, and community concerts and programs. A community liaison volunteer from each class assists this effort and is responsible for disseminating information to all YCP families. We encourage everyone to share announcements of events for children by placing them on the bulletin board in the entrance hall.

Information on local child and family support services is also maintained by YCP staff. This file is available in the Family Resource area (in the entrance hall). Families are welcome to take copies of any information that may be useful.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Parents are always welcome at the Young Children's Program. It is our desire to work in partnership with families to provide the best possible experience for each child. We want you to understand the curriculum, learn to know class routines, and be comfortable with the guidance techniques that are used. Let your child's teacher know how and when you would like to be involved in the classroom so a schedule that is mutually accommodating can be developed.

Our student staff usually provides the YCP with an adequate number of adults in the classroom, but family assistance is sometimes needed during field trips, special events, and exam week. The teachers will communicate information regarding trip dates and arrangements for each class (refer to

handbook section on Field Trips and *Appendix 2*). Family members are encouraged to notify the teacher of special ways they can share with the class (playing a musical instrument, sharing cultural information that is unfamiliar to the children, arranging a visiting presenter or reader, sharing a family pet, etc.). Licensing standards require that all adults who supervise children alone must have background checks and medical clearance, so please understand when the teacher makes decisions that reflect this regulation.

When family members visit in the classroom or participate on field trips, it is important to recognize that young children's behavior is often different than it is at home. At school the child learns to look to the teacher for security, support, and guidance. When a family member is present in this environment, children are sometimes confused about who is in authority or feel reluctant to share the special person with others. Therefore, behaviors such as challenging rules, whining, aggression, and clinging to the family member are common as children attempt to understand each adult's role in this new situation. It is important for the teacher and family member to communicate about the behaviors they observe and develop consistent responses that will ease the child's discomfort and make participation with the class a positive experience for everyone.

Attendance is encouraged at YCP family meetings. A minimum of four are planned during the school year. Topics for meetings are recommended by parents and staff. Notify your child's teacher if you would like to serve on this committee or if you have program suggestions.

FIELD TRIPS

Because first-hand experiences are vital to learning, many field trips are scheduled during the school year. Some are walking trips to nearby locations and others involve travel to sites that are further from school. The YCP must rely on families to provide transportation for all non-walking trips. In doing so, there are strict safety regulations that must be followed. The *Field Trip Permission* statement must be signed by a parent or guardian of every child. The form *Safety Verification of Field Trip Vehicles and Drivers* must be completed on each vehicle used for field trip transportation and signed by each driver who is involved in transporting children. These forms may be updated at any time during the school year. New copies may be obtained from your child's teacher or downloaded from the YCP website.

All children on YCP field trips must be in compliance with the Virginia Child Passenger Law. Families are expected to use approved child safety or booster seats and provide specific installation instructions if another adult is responsible for transportation of the child.

Field trips are considered an extension of the YCP classroom with specific learning objectives and expectations for appropriate behavior. JMU student staff and parent chaperones support the teacher's goals for the trip and help to assure the children's safety. Care is taken to avoid an excessive number of adults on a field trip so the children have the opportunity for group experiences that support their learning.

If siblings are invited by the teacher, parents are responsible for their safety and behavior. They should be removed from the area if they are disruptive to the trip leader or the YCP class.

Specific policies and procedures for field trips are described in *Appendix 2*. The teachers will communicate guidelines for individual trips.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Self-control grows as children are given opportunities to interact with others, make choices, and solve problems. The Young Children's Program provides a supportive and caring environment that encourages this kind of growth. The classroom is arranged so that negative behavior and conflicts are minimized. Guidelines are stated positively. Guidance techniques are non-punitive and accompanied by an explanation of expectations. Adults help children express their feelings in positive ways and encourage them to recognize and respect the feelings of others.

If a child exhibits persistent behavioral difficulties, the teacher will initiate a meeting with the family to discuss the cause of the behavior, a plan for meeting the child's needs, and a procedure for regular communication. Family members are welcome to request a meeting to discuss behavioral concerns at any time.

HANDWASHING

One of the most reliable ways of controlling the spread of germs is proper and consistent handwashing. This is emphasized with the children and modeled by all adults working in the YCP classroom. Children and adults are expected to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer at the following times:

- Upon arrival at school
- After using the toilet
- After touching body fluids
- Before AND after preparing, serving, or eating food
- After playing in water shared by two or more people
- After handling animals or materials that may be contaminated by animals
- After playing outdoors

Proper handwashing includes using liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including the back of the hands, wrists, and between fingers. Following handwashing, a paper towel should be used to avoid contact with the spigot when turning off the water. We seek the assistance of all families in helping our children develop this important habit.

ILLNESS

When a child becomes ill at school, a YCP staff member contacts the child's parent, legal guardian, or other person authorized to pick up the child from school. It is expected that the child will be picked up as soon as possible following notification. Illness is assumed if the condition prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

If it is suspected that a child's condition is contagious and requires exclusion from others, the child is made comfortable in a location where he or she is supervised by a familiar caregiver until the parent arrives.

Children are not to attend the YCP during a contagious period when they have communicable diseases such as roseola, measles, chicken pox, or when they have had any of the following symptoms within the previous 24 hours:

- A fever of 101 or higher
- Signs of a newly developing cold or persistent cough
- Diarrhea (two abnormal stools), vomiting, or an upset stomach
- Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability or headache
- Any discharge or drainage from eyes, nose, ears or open sores (conjunctivitis, impetigo)
- Nits or live lice
- Untreated conditions: pinworm, scabies, or ringworm

Parents will be contacted and are expected to pick up a child who becomes ill with any of these symptoms while at school.

The *Communicable Disease Reference Chart for School Personnel* in *Appendix 3* provides information about communicable diseases common to school age children. Families will be notified as soon as possible (within 24 hours or the next school day after the program is informed) if their child is exposed to a communicable disease. **Parents are required to inform the school within 24 hours or the next school day after their child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease.** In both cases, life-threatening diseases must be reported immediately.

The class will spend some time outdoors daily except in severe weather. If children are not well enough to play outside under normal conditions, school attendance is not appropriate.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the YCP coordinator if their child has an IEP or is receiving specialized services. The teacher and coordinator will meet with the family and school division officials prior to the child's attendance to confirm the appropriateness of the placement and specific expectations for the child's progress in the YCP setting. Program staff will cooperate with resource persons and support IEP goals as much as realistically possible.

INJURIES

Despite efforts to maintain the safest possible environment, sometimes minor injuries such as scrapes and bruises occur as children work and play together. A well-stocked first aid kit is maintained at the YCP and teachers are certified in first aid and infant/child CPR. If a minor injury is unusually upsetting to a child or poses reason for concern, parents are called immediately. Otherwise, parents are notified of the incident and the treatment that was given at the end of the school day.

An accident report is completed on every incident in which a child is hurt. Reports must be signed by the parent to verify notification. These documents are used to track the kinds of incidents that occur and help YCP staff consider ways to avoid future injuries.

The procedure for responding to serious injuries or medical conditions is outlined in the handbook section, *Emergency Procedures*.

ITEMS FROM HOME

YCP teachers welcome contributions to the class science table or other materials that extend experiences and learning. Toys from home often create a distraction from the activities planned for the day and should not be brought to school without prior permission. Guidelines for sharing special items will be provided by the teachers.

JMU STUDENT STAFF

The student participants in the YCP are in the teacher preparation program and are enrolled in early childhood education courses that focus on child development and curriculum. They have a dual role at the YCP—serving as both observers and teaching assistants—and will be involved in these very different capacities throughout the semester. They are expected to document their experiences, as well as children’s interaction, responses to specific activities, and use of equipment. Confidentiality of children and families is a requirement in all practicum settings within the College of Education. Real names of the children at the YCP are NEVER recorded or used in formal or informal records.

Students participate at the YCP one or two sessions each week. Because of their limited professional experience and participation time, their knowledge of individual children is minimal. Questions regarding a child’s involvement at the YCP should always be directed to the teacher instead of a student staff member.

Each semester the YCP publishes a list of JMU student staff members who are interested in babysitting. Parents will be given a copy of this list as soon as it is complete. The students agree to have their contact information published with the understanding that the list is for distribution to YCP families only.

MEDICATION

The ONLY medication that can be administered by YCP teachers is that which is essential in an emergency caused by a child’s chronic health condition. If it is possible a child will need emergency medication, the *VDSS Written Medication Consent* (available from the YCP web site) must be completed and signed by his or her physician, parent, and the YCP teacher or coordinator prior to the child’s attendance. This information must be updated every six months.

Because of the active ingredients in sunscreen and insect repellent, both are considered medications. As such, they may not be stored or administered by YCP staff without completion of a *VDSS Written Medication Consent*. Parents are encouraged to arrange for application of these topical treatments before arrival at school.

MOVEMENT BETWEEN CLASSROOMS

The two classrooms that make up the Young Children’s Program provide a large space for the children to explore, play, and learn. Movement between these rooms is monitored by the teacher and student staff members. The children are instructed to tell an adult when they want to move to another room and “follow the path” delineated by red tape as they do so.

OUTDOOR PLAY / PLAYGROUND

The class will spend some time outdoors daily except in severe weather. Because the classroom temperature is always comfortable, it is suggested that children dress in layers of clothing that will enable comfort for both indoor and outdoor play. On snowy days the children often go outside to play in the snow. Families are asked to send children with the necessary protective clothing such as boots, mittens, and hat.

The playground is maintained for the exclusive use of the Young Children's Program during its operating hours. **It is not available for use before or after school.**

PARKING

Parking lots for families of the Young Children's Program are **I** on the south side of Anthony-Seeger Hall and **S** on the north side (off Grace Street). Seven spaces near the playground in I Lot are designated as temporary parking for drop-off and pickup **ONLY**. **Persons who plan to stay for more than ten minutes should park in a regular parking space in I or S Lots.**

Emergency access to all campus buildings is critical. For this reason, all drivers must park in legal spaces and avoid blocking the flow of traffic through the lot. Violators may be ticketed and exceptions will not be made for YCP families. Drivers who receive a ticket should contact JMU Parking Services (568-3300).

JMU faculty and staff must display YCP passes when parking in reserved spaces for dropoff and pickup. **Use of YCP reserved parking for other University business is prohibited.**

PETS

The following procedures apply to classroom and visiting pets in the YCP:

- Classroom pets must have an appropriate temperament for being around children.
- Classroom pets that are handled by children must be in good health as documented by a licensed veterinarian.
- Children should be taught to handle animals gently and respectfully.
- Animal cages or containers must be kept clean.
- Animals, cages, and supplies must be kept away from areas used for food preparation, eating, and storage.
- In the event a child is allergic to a classroom pet, the appropriate response will be determined through consultation with the family.
- Visiting animals must be in good health and always in control of a responsible adult.
- All persons must wash hands thoroughly after handling animals and cleaning cages.
- Parents are responsible for notifying the teacher in writing of animal-related allergies.

REGISTRATION FORMS

The following forms must be on file for each child before school begins:

- **Registration Form:** General information about the child and family, a description of the child's interests and experiences, and specific health information (additional medical forms are needed if medication is to be administered at school or the child has special health needs)
- **Emergency Information Form:** Information required in the event of emergency including contact names and phone numbers, child's physician and health insurance coverage, permission for the YCP staff to initiate emergency care, and a list of persons authorized to pick up the child from school
- **Commonwealth of VA School Entrance Health Form:** Verification by a physician that the child has received all necessary immunizations and is in adequate health to attend school
- **Program Permission Form:** Permission for field trip participation, display of the child's art, use of photos on the YCP web site, and verification of family support of the mission of the YCP as a laboratory school
- **YCP Policy Contract:** Verification of understanding of YCP policies as stated in the *Handbook for Families* and a willingness to abide by them (located in the back of the handbook)
- **Safety Verification of Field Trip Vehicles and Drivers:** Information required by VA Department of Social Services to document the safety of drivers and vehicles used to transport children on field trips

(It is the responsibility of each family to update the information on the above forms as needed in order to maintain their accuracy. This may be done by contacting the child's teacher or downloading and submitting a revised form. Families will receive a quarterly reminder of this option to update.)

Verification of Identity and Age: Licensing standards require proof of identity and age of each child attending the YCP. Families do this by presenting a certified birth certificate or other official record to the teacher at their initial conference.

SNACK

A nutritious snack is provided each day. VDSS licensing regulations (which reflect USDA guidelines for Child and Adult Care Food Programs) require that snacks include two offerings (drink and/or foods) chosen from the following four groups: milk, fruit/vegetable, grains/bread, meat/meat alternate. Children are not required to eat; they are invited to come to the snack table during the activity period and serve themselves. Snack preparation and eating is organized to include valuable learning experiences such as counting and measuring, as well as the development of fine motor control and independence. Frequently the children prepare their own snack by following pictorial and simple written instructions on recipe cards.

Licensing and accreditation standards also mandate the following practices:

- Foods that come from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.
- Children younger than age four may not be served these foods: hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, or chunks of raw carrot or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

In addition to established nutritional requirements, the YCP makes an effort to offer whole grain crackers and cookies, avoid products with excessive sugar and high fructose corn syrup, and include fresh fruits and vegetables in snack menus as much as possible. We invite family support and participation as we seek to increase the children's awareness of the importance of good nutrition.

Parents are responsible for notifying the teacher in writing of specific food allergies or special dietary needs. Snack menus are published at the beginning of each week in the class newsletter (on the class page of the YCP website and on the hall bulletin board).

STUDENT RECORDS

Student records include all documents described in the *Registration Forms* section, as well as attendance and assessment records. This information is considered confidential and is stored in a locked cabinet at the YCP that is accessible to staff and regulatory officials only. Duplicates of the *Emergency Information Form* are kept in the departmental office and designated locations in the classrooms for easy access in case of emergency.

It is the responsibility of each family to update the registration forms as needed during the year in order to maintain accuracy. Parents have the right to inspect and review all records directly related to their children who are under eighteen years of age and/or who are dependents under the tax law. Unless a legally binding instrument or a court order governing divorce, separation, or custody provides to the contrary, both parents shall be permitted to inspect and review educational records of their children.

Student records are retained for two years after the child's final date of attendance.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Enrollment of a child in the YCP may be terminated for the following reasons:

- The child's parents/guardians fail to submit required documents or abide by program policies or procedures as described in the *Handbook for Families*.
- A tuition payment becomes one month past due.
- The child's behavior is a threat to the safety of other children, adults, and/or the child himself/herself as determined by the teacher and YCP Coordinator.

The Young Children's Program staff (the teacher and/or Coordinator) will communicate with families as soon as a problem is identified. In cases of incomplete paperwork, policy or procedure infractions, or delinquent tuition, a final date and conditions for resolution will be established in writing.

In situations regarding the inappropriate behavior of a child, the teacher will initiate a meeting with the family to discuss the cause of the behavior, a plan for meeting the child's needs, and a procedure for regular communication. A plan for ensuring the safety of other YCP children and staff while working with the aggressive child will be developed by the teacher and the Coordinator. While a reasonable effort will be made to accommodate to each child's individual needs, the Young Children's Program reserves the right to immediately terminate the enrollment of any child whose behavior becomes a threat to other children or staff. This decision will be made by the teacher and YCP Coordinator.

TOILETING

All children must be potty trained before entering the Young Children's Program. However, bathroom accidents are common, especially during the first months of school. Families are asked to keep a seasonal change of clothes at school so we can respond to accidents quickly and avoid embarrassment for the child. In compliance with licensing regulations, soiled underwear and clothing

will be returned in a sealed plastic bag with minimal handling. The teacher must be notified if a child is wearing a diaper or pull-ups to school for any reason.

Building codes prevent the YCP from having exclusive use of the bathroom that is adjacent to the main classroom. For this reason, the door is kept locked and the children are always supervised by an adult when using the bathroom. As an additional precaution, a sensor on the door frame activates a chime in the classroom when the door opens.

TUITION & FEES

Tuition for the 2011-2012 Young Children's Program is \$1,800. A deposit of \$100 is due in the spring prior to attendance and is applied to the March payment. The remaining tuition is due in nine installments of \$200 on or before the first of every month (September-May). The payment schedule is on the inside back cover of this handbook and on the website at www.jmu.edu/coe/ycp/Tuition.shtml.

Checks should be written to the *JMU Young Children's Program*. All payments must be mailed or delivered to the following address. **Do not mail or deliver payments directly to the Young Children's Program site or teachers.**

Young Children's Program
Mrs. Becky Elia, Secretary
MSC 6909 – Memorial Hall 3100-A
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

Because YCP tuition is an annual fee divided into monthly installments for the convenience of our families, payment amounts are unrelated to the number of school days in each month or days missed because of weather emergencies.

The YCP depends on the timely collection of tuition payments in order to meet budget and salary obligations. Tuition which becomes one month past due may result in termination of enrollment for the child.

Because it involves additional cost to the program, credit card payments are not accepted.

VISITORS

Non-enrolled children visiting the Young Children's Program must be supervised at all times by an accompanying adult. **Teachers and student staff members are responsible for enrolled children only and should not be asked or expected to provide additional supervision.**

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Temporary withdrawals from the Young Children's Program are not permitted. Tuition payments must be made when children are absent from school due to illness, family travel, or other reasons.

If parents choose to permanently withdraw their child from the program, a minimum of one month advance notification is required. Full payment is due for any month in which a child attends one or more days.

WHAT IS AN NAEYC-ACCREDITED PROGRAM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN?

National Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation
National Association for the Education of Young Children

- Accreditation is the status given to an early childhood program reviewed by a national commission composed of recognized experts in child care and early childhood education. The program must be judged to be in substantial compliance with the NAEYC Academy criteria for high quality early childhood programs. Accreditation is granted for a five-year period.
- An early childhood program—child care center, preschool, kindergarten, or before- and/or after-school program—voluntarily applies for accreditation by the NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation. The program then engages in an extensive self-study based on the Academy's criteria for high quality early childhood programs. The accuracy of the program's self-study is verified during a site visit to the program by volunteer validators. The validated self-study, including the program director's responses to the validation visit, is reviewed by a national commission.
- NAEYC Accredited early childhood programs are committed to ongoing program evaluation and continuous improvement. They agree to act upon the commission's suggestions regarding areas needing improvement and to submit annual written reports documenting improvements and continued compliance.
- NAEYC has created 10 standards that measure the quality of early childhood programs. The standards were created by a blue-ribbon panel of early childhood experts and are based on the latest early childhood research.
 1. Promote **positive relationships** for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth.
 2. Implement a **curriculum** that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social.
 3. Use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate **effective teaching approaches**.
 4. Provide **ongoing assessments** of a child's learning and development and communicate the child's progress to the family.
 5. Promote the **nutrition and health** of children and protect children and staff from injury and illness.
 6. Employ a **teaching staff** that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development, and to support families' diverse needs and interests.
 7. Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each child's **family**.
 8. Establish relationships with and use the resources of the **community** to support the achievement of program goals.
 9. Provide a safe and healthy **physical environment**.
 10. Implement strong personnel, fiscal, and program management policies so that all children, families, and staff have **high-quality experiences**.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (n.d.). *Information for Families*. Retrieved August 6, 2007 from www.naeyc.org.

WHAT IS A LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITY?

Department of Social Services
Commonwealth of Virginia

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs with responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.1, Chapter 10 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority for licensure. Licensed programs include child day centers, family day homes, child day care systems, and family day care systems. The state may also voluntarily register family day homes not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers set standards for health precautions, adequate play space, ratio of children to staff, equipment, program and record keeping. Criminal record 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 unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

Licenses may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program and allow up to six months for the program to demonstrate compliance with the standards. A regular License is issued when the program substantially meets the standards for licensure. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to comply with the standards. Operating without a license when required constitutes a misdemeanor, which, upon conviction, can be punishable by fine of up to \$100 or imprisonment of up to 12 months or both for each day's violation.

For additional information about the licensing of child day programs or to register a complaint, contact the Regional Office of Social Services:

Valley Licensing Office
Augusta Professional Park
57 Beam Lane, Suite 303
Fishersville, VA 22939
Phone: (540) 332-2330

Virginia Department of Social Services. (2005). *Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers*.
Richmond, Virginia: Division of Licensing Programs.

YOUNG CHILDREN'S PROGRAM POLICY CONTRACT

I have read ***A Handbook for Families*** and have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the stated policies of the James Madison University Young Children's Program.

I agree to abide by these policies while my child is enrolled in the YCP.

Signature of parent or guardian

Date

Child's full name (please print)

*(This document must be signed and given to the teacher
at the initial conference.)*

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION				
Staff Member	Position	Email Address	Phone	Office
Sue Hutchinson	Coordinator	hutchisl@jmu.edu	568-6800	Memorial 3104-F
Nancy Guerrier	Teacher	guerrinl@jmu.edu	568-6089	Anthony-Seeger 10
Kelly Rooney	Teacher	rooneykl@jmu.edu	568-6089	Anthony-Seeger 10
Becky Elia	Secretary	eliabj@jmu.edu	568-6292	Memorial 3100-A
YCP Classrooms			568-6089	Anthony-Seeger 10 & 11

2011-12 TUITION PAYMENT SCHEDULE	
Due Date	Amount Due
Enrollment Deposit	\$100
September 1, 2011	\$200
October 1, 2011	\$200
November 1, 2011	\$200
December 1, 2011	\$200
January 1, 2012	\$200
February 1, 2012	\$200
March 1, 2012	\$100
(Enrollment deposit is applied to March payment.)	
April 1, 2012	\$200
May 1, 2012	\$200
TOTAL	\$1,800

**Tuition payments must be received on or before the above due date.
Payments should be mailed or delivered to:**

**Young Children's Program
Mrs. Becky Elia, Secretary
MSC 6909, Memorial Hall 3100-A
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807**



SCHOOL CALENDAR 2011-2012
Young Children's Program
www.jmu.edu/coe/ycp

Morning Program hours: 8:45-11:15 AM
 Afternoon Program hours: 12:15-2:45 PM

Tuition payments are due on the first of each month, September-May. A payment schedule is on the inside back cover of the Handbook for Families and on the YCP website at <http://www.jmu.edu/coe/ycp/Tuition.shtml>

AUG 29, 6:30 pm (rain date-8/30)	GET-ACQUAINTED SOCIAL – Morning Class New YCP Playground
AUG 31, 6:30 pm (rain date-9/1)	BACK-TO-SCHOOL SOCIAL – Afternoon Class New YCP Playground
AUG 29-SEP 2	PRESCHOOL WORKDAYS FOR TEACHERS PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES
SEP 6-9	OPENING WEEK OF SCHOOL <i>School begins with small group attendance to facilitate a relaxed and comfortable transition for children (schedule to be shared at preschool conferences).</i>
SEP 21	ORIENTATION MEETING FOR NEW PARENTS 7:00 PM, YCP Classroom
OCT 6	CLASS AND INDIVIDUAL PICTURES - By Christa Gitchell (If weather does not permit outdoor photography, the date will be rescheduled.)
NOV 8	NO SCHOOL - PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES Conferences will also be scheduled during evening hours the first two weeks of November and during one additional school day. The graduate assistant Ms. Ashleigh Shepherd will assume teaching responsibilities.
NOV 21-25	NO SCHOOL – JMU Closed for Thanksgiving Holidays
DEC 19-JAN 10	NO SCHOOL – JMU Closed for Winter Break
JAN 11	SCHOOL RESUMES New student staff members begin.
JAN 16	NO SCHOOL – JMU Closed for Martin Luther King Day
FEB 14	NO SCHOOL - PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES JMU Closed for Student Assessment Day Conferences will also be scheduled during evening hours the first two weeks of February and during one additional school day. The graduate assistant Ms. Ashleigh Shepherd will assume teaching responsibilities.
MAR 5-9	NO SCHOOL – JMU Closed for Spring Break
MAR 29	NO SCHOOL – Professional Development Day for Teachers
MAY 7	SUMMER SESSION OPENS New student staff members begin.
MAY 18	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
MAY 21-25	TEACHER WORKDAYS PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

The Young Children's Program serves as an observation/participation site for preparing future teachers enrolled in the JMU Elementary and Inclusive Early Childhood Education Programs. For this reason, the YCP calendar reflects the University schedule. Because of the lack of availability of student assistance, days missed due to weather emergencies are not made up.