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TOM HARGROVE & ANITA GROVER, MD
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

KIDS UNLIMITED PARENT HANDBOOK 2021-2022



www.newcanaanymca.org • NEW CANAAN YMCA • 203-966-4528

I. Philosophy & Objectives

The Kids Unlimited After-school Program provides children in grades K-6 with quality care during after school hours. The program is based on the National School Age Child Care Model, which has worked successfully in hundreds of YMCAs across America. The purpose of the afterschool program is to provide an environment to promote self-confidence and growth in children through self-discovery, choices, varied environments, physical play, artistic development, quiet times, and home-work assistance.

The happiness, safety, and well being of the children enrolled are the primary objective of all staff associated with the after-school program. The staff provides a warm and nurturing environment which is conducive to the developmental growth of each child. The program is flexible enough to accommodate different age groups, as well as fulfill special needs of the children by allowing them to take part in their favorite activities at the YMCA.

The program is oriented toward the enrichment of the family. Parents are invited to visit the program at any time.

II. Enrollment

New participants for the 2021-2022 school year will be selected by lottery. Lottery forms, available online and at the Front Desk, will be accepted from May 3, 2021 until May 28, 2021 at 12 noon. **No late submissions; no exceptions.**

On June 7, 2021, all parents who submitted lottery forms will be notified that they are being offered a spot or that their child has been placed on a wait list.

Revision of Enrollment Days

Request for Additional Days

If you would like your child to attend the program on a day that he/she is not normally registered, it must be arranged with the Director beforehand. If space is available on the day, your child may attend at an additional fee of \$40.00 per day.

Reduction of Days/Withdrawal

Reduction of Days: A written notice of reduction in a participant's number of days must be submitted to the Director at least one week before the upcoming draft date.

Withdrawal from Program: A written notice must be received by the Director at least one week before the upcoming draft date. If a one week notice is not received, no refund will be processed.

At any time, if the staff feels that a child's enrollment is detrimental to the health/safety or progress of himself/herself or other children, and withdrawal is deemed necessary, a pro-rated refund of the remaining tuition will be returned to the parent if applicable.

III. Membership

A current YMCA Youth or Family membership is required. YMCA membership must remain active throughout the program year. Membership fees will be processed automatically when due. Please contact the YMCA Front Desk for membership fees.

IV. Medical and General Information

All children must always have a copy of his/her current school physical examination on file at the YMCA. Completed and up-to-date required paperwork must also be on file for each child to be admitted to the program. All necessary forms will be submitted electronically through ePACT Network. The invitation to complete the fillable electronic forms will be emailed to you through ePACT. Therefore, it is important that your email address is on record and updated with the YMCA Front Desk and with the KU Director.

It is the parent's responsibility to be sure phone numbers of emergency contacts, authorized pick-up persons and physicians are kept up to date. This is of the utmost importance in case of an emergency.

All children attending this program must be toilet trained.

No medications are administered at Kids Unlimited except in the case of emergency needs. See the Director regarding special situations or if you have any questions.

V. Tuition and Billing

ALL PARTICIPANTS

5 days/week - \$636.00/month

4 days/week - \$561.00/month

3 days/week - \$443.00/month

Billing and Payment Policy

Tuition is due and will be automatically drafted via credit card (Aug-May) 15 days prior to the month of attendance.

Monthly charges will include tuition fees and may also include any of the following fees as incurred:

- Additional Attendance Days/Hours Fee (p. 2, 3)
- Late Pick-Up Fee (p. 4)
- "Finder's Fee" for absent child (p. 4)
- YMCA membership fees will be processed automatically when due (p. 2)

Monthly billing concerns should be addressed to the Kids Unlimited Director at least one week prior to the monthly payment deadline.

If full payment is still not received by the first Monday of the following month, the child may not be allowed to attend until full payment is made.

Note: Tuition is required, regardless of absence, due to illness or personal vacation. Public school vacation days have been factored out of the annual tuition payment.

Tuition assistance may be available. Applications are available at the YMCA Front Desk or you may contact Diana Riolo at the YMCA for further information: 203-920-1653.

VI. Hours of Operation & General Procedures

Hours of Care

The Kids Unlimited program follows the New Canaan Public School calendar. The program operates every school day from school dismissal until 6:00 PM. In New Canaan, children are picked up from their school (public schools and St. Aloysius) by the bus company contracted by the New Canaan Public School and brought to the YMCA.

Absence Procedure

The Kids Unlimited program has a Voice Mail System for absence notification; it can be reached 24 hours a day at: 203-920-1649. NO EMAILS PLEASE. Please call before 11:00 AM when absence is anticipated on a child's scheduled day.

When calling the Voice Mail, be sure to speak slowly and:

1. Indicate you are calling for Kids Unlimited.
2. State: The date / your full name / your child's full name.
3. Record your message.
4. Leave a phone number where you may be easily reached on that day.

The YMCA Front Desk does not take absence messages.

"Finder's Fee"

In cases when a child does not arrive at the New Canaan YMCA on their scheduled day, and the Kids Unlimited staff has not been informed of their absence, the child is classified as a "missing child" per state licensing guidelines.

Verifying the safety and location of "missing children" takes a considerable amount of time. The safety of each child is of utmost importance to us, and the absence procedures must be followed. Parents will be charged a "Finder's Fee" of \$20.00 on any occasion that the Kids Unlimited staff have not been notified of a child's absence on their scheduled day.

Pick-Up Procedure

The Kids Unlimited day ends at 6:00 PM. All children must be picked up by that time, and signed out on the appropriate forms, printing your name and time of departure. Only authorized persons, as stated on your "Pick-Up/Emergency Contacts" form may sign out and pick-up your child. If at any time you intend for an individual who is on your "Pick-Up/Emergency Contact" form, to pick up your child, a written note or phone call must be made directly to the Kids Unlimited staff for us to release your child. Authorized persons will be asked to show photo identification before a child is released to him/her.

Late Pick-Up Policy

A late pick-up fee will be charged to any parent/guardian arriving after the end of the program day. The late fee will be \$35.00 per child after 6:05pm. After the first charge of \$35.00, \$1.00 will be charged per 1-minute interval or any part thereof. If possible, as a courtesy, please call and let the teachers know if you anticipate being late on any given day. Parents/guardians who are consistently late may be requested to find another program which better meets their schedule needs.

Early Dismissal from School

On days when the public schools have early dismissal, the program will be in operation to those who normally attend on that day at no additional fee. Children who do not normally attend the program on that day may come for an additional fee of \$40.00 and prior approval from the Director.

NOTE: Private school (including St. Aloysius) early dismissal days do not always coincide with the New Canaan Public School calendar and bussing may not be available. Children who normally attend the program on those days can be dropped off at 2:30pm.

Vacation Days

During most of the public school vacation weeks, as well as on most single-day holidays, the YMCA offers a "Vacation Camp" program. The program is available from 8:00am-6:00pm during these times to accommodate working parents.

The "Vacation Camp" program is not part of the Kids Unlimited After-school Program. The Kids Unlimited annual tuition does not include payment for public school vacation weeks or single-day holidays when both the public schools and KU are closed.

Kids Unlimited participants receive information about the "Vacation Camp" program prior to the community and may attend the extended day programs from 8:00-9:00am and/or 5:00-6:00pm at no additional charge.

There will be no programs, Kids Unlimited or "Vacation Camp", on the following days*:

Labor Day, Thanksgiving break, Christmas vacation, New Year's Day, February 18, April 8, Good Friday, and Memorial Day.

* Schedule subject to change due to school schedule, weather conditions, etc.

School Closings

If the New Canaan Public Schools are closed, due to weather, the Kids Unlimited program will be cancelled. On these days, a camp program may be offered. Parents will be notified by 7:00am on the morning of the school closure if a camp is being offered.

If the New Canaan Public Schools and St. Aloysius dismiss the students from school early, due to weather, the children scheduled to attend Kids Unlimited on that day will be transported to the YMCA as usual. Parents will be contacted to come and pick up their child(ren) by a designated time.

If the scheduled children have already arrived at the New Canaan YMCA from their respective schools, and early shut down of the facility is deemed necessary, parents will be contacted to come and pick up the child by a designated time.

Refunds are not granted for the above conditions or any acts of God beyond the YMCA's control.

VII. About the Program

Snack

Snack served daily include water, 2 food groups and either a fruit or vegetable. The monthly snack menu is posted on site. If your child does not care for a snack food on a day, you may send him/her with a snack from home (healthy food and beverage, please). It is recommended that parents pack a piece of fruit daily for their child's late afternoon needs.

Participation in Y Classes

The Kids Unlimited staff will be happy to drop off and pick up your child(ren) from any YMCA extracurricular classes that you have signed them up for during Kids Unlimited operating hours.

YMCA classes are not part of the Kids Unlimited Afterschool Program. The Kids Unlimited annual tuition does not include the program fees for participation in any classes or programs except as specifically stated in this handbook. Children will be taken and picked up from classes by Kids Unlimited staff but are not supervised by Kids Unlimited staff during the class.

Weekly Free Swim and Bouncing Bears

All Kids Unlimited participants can enjoy 45 minutes of free swim weekly on Friday afternoon. Kindergarten and 1st grade will enjoy 45 minutes of Bouncing Bears one afternoon a week. 2nd to 6th graders will have 45 minutes of an organized sports class one afternoon a week. Please provide your child(ren) with a bathing suit and towel (goggles if desired).

Homework Assistance

Monday through Thursday, a quiet time is set aside for all children to do homework. We encourage all children to do their homework, and we provide staff assistance and guidance when needed. We also suggest that your child pack a book each day for quiet reading during Homework Time if there is no homework assigned their by teachers.

Parent Involvement

The Kids Unlimited and YMCA staff welcomes and encourages parental involvement. Please feel free to visit the program at any time, as well as to bring any special skills, talents, family traditions or heritage you have, which might enrich our program. Please contact the Director if you wish to do so.

Communications

Monthly newsletter, reminders, invitations, etc. will inform parents of up-coming events and dates. All Kids Unlimited communications will be done via email.

Birthdays

The parent should check with the YMCA Director if any special plans are desired. Parents are welcome to come and participate with their child on this special day.

Special Events

Throughout the year, various special events are planned for the children. Many coincide with holidays, seasons, or just plain fun!

Parents are welcome to participate in any of our special events and holiday celebrations. We encourage parents to provide any additional information we may need to be sensitive to the cultural needs of each family.

Family Nights

Throughout the year, evenings of dinner and family fun are planned for Kids Unlimited participants. It proves to be a wonderful opportunity for parents to meet, interact with one another, and the staff. We hope you will join us!

Field Trips

Occasionally field trips will be scheduled away from the YMCA building. Parents will be informed about any field trip in advance. In some instances, nominal fees are charged. Trip permission is automatically granted via the Kids Unlimited "Permission Agreement" Items "C & D", located in the required paperwork packet.

VIII. SPECIAL PLANS & PROCEDURES

PLAN FOR THE SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

INDOOR TIME

There will always be adequate numbers of staff on hand, to maintain the required state ratio of one to ten and to supervise the children safely and responsibly.

During scheduled activities, and less structured times during the day, the children will be divided into small group (10 or less) with the appropriate number of staff, to reinforce a more relaxed and low key environment.

Routines will be adhered to whenever possible, however teachers will be flexible in changing activities to maintain small group sizes (10 or less) when children lose interest in one activity and move on to another.

Special activities will be planned, and room arrangements will be reflected in the schedule to avoid confusion on part of children or staff dealing with them.

At no time shall group size exceed 20 children. Children will be assigned and circulate between activity areas to maintain small group sizes (10 or less). Because classrooms are self-contained, teachers are always in sight of all children.

OUTDOOR TIME

Children will go outdoors once daily when the weather allows. Children will be taken outdoors if the temperature is over 35 degrees and there is no precipitation.

Staff will spend outdoor time interacting with the children as they play. Staff members will supervise, standing close to equipment. The other staff members will supervise the overall fenced in play-ground areas.

In the playing fields, the state required ratio of one to ten children-to-staff will be maintained. Staff will plan a variety of activities to be available to the children. They will interact with the children as they choose activities and play games. One staff member will be directly involved in the activities. One other staff member will supervise the overall field area.

Group size will not exceed 20 children in either area at any time.

CARING FOR A SICK CHILD

ILLNESS

The YMCA reserves the right to deny any child admittance to the program on any given day, for reasons of obvious illness, or to request early departure, should symptoms become obvious during the day. If a child has not attended school on a given day due to illness, they may not attend Kids Unlimited.

If your child is kept home from school for any reason other than sickness, he/she can be admitted into the program. As a courtesy to the staff, please call before bringing the child to the program, to let the staff know he/she will be attending.

The child will be sent home from the program if he/she shows evidence of any of the following:

- Is unable to participate in usual daily activities
- Excessive crankiness or irritability
- Auxiliary temperature (under arm) of 100° or more
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea, defined as an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern with increased stool water and/or decreased form.
- Persistent cough
- Open sores that cannot be covered
- Any contagious disease or infection including; a rash, drainage from the eye or head lice .

The child may return to the program when:

- Temperature has been normal (child has been fever-free for 72 hours, three full days)
- Diarrhea has stopped for 72 hours, **three full days**
- Vomiting has stopped for free for 72 hours, **three full days**
- Persistent cough has been checked by a pediatrician
- Questionable rash has been checked by a pediatrician
- **48 hours after** medication for strep, conjunctivitis & any other infectious disease
- After treatment with a head lice medication and staff has determined that the child is lice and nit free
- Children with chicken pox may return after their pox have scabbed over and are no longer open sores.
- Upon request, Physician's note submitted to Director

PROCEDURES FOR CARING FOR A SICK CHILD

When a child becomes ill or develops signs of a communicable condition while at Kids Unlimited, he/she will be moved to an isolation area. The child's parent will be contacted to come to the New Canaan YMCA to take the child home. A staff person will be with the child until he/she is picked up by the authorized person.

When the child's parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact names will be used to contact someone to come and pick up the child. These names have been provided by the parents on the "Pick-Up/Emergency Contact Form" on file with the Kids Unlimited Afterschool Program. The emergency contact person will be asked for photo identification before the child is released to him/her.

It is the parent's responsibility to be sure phone numbers of emergency contacts, authorized pick-up persons and physicians are kept up to date. This is of the utmost importance in case of an emergency.

PLAN FOR A "LEFT" CHILD

The daily closing time for Kids Unlimited is 6:00 PM and all the Children must be picked up by that time.

If a child remains at the center past the 6:00 PM closing time, every effort will be made to contact one of the child's parents to come and pick him/her up. Two YMCA staff will remain at the center with the child.

If the parents cannot be reached, one of the three emergency contact persons will be called to come and collect the child. These are names provided by the child's parent and indicated on the child's "Pick-Up/Emergency Contact" form. Photo identification will be required prior to release of the child.

Families will know that their child has been released to one of the three contacts, if they arrive and find the center closed. If it is past the closing hour and the child has not been retrieved, the late teacher will continue to call the parents or emergency contacts until someone has been reached.

If the teacher has not been able to contact anyone to come and collect the child, and the child remains at the center until 8:00 PM, the child will then be considered an abandoned child, and the police will be called. If this happens, serious withdrawal consideration will be given to the family involved.

If an emergency contact picks up a child, or if police involvement is necessitated after 8:00 PM, a note to the parents will be left on the YMCA entrance and classroom doors indicating the location of the child.