



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

STAY & PLAY/ YOUTH ZONE PARENT MANUAL



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WELCOME

Welcome to the Tampa YMCA. We've developed this manual to provide you with information on the guidelines and procedures for the Stay & Play and Youth Zone program areas. Please read this manual thoroughly as it contains many important policies that pertain to the care of your child.

Y MISSION

To put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Y VISION

At the Y, it's deeper here. We challenge our associates, members, participants, and volunteers to accept and demonstrate our four core values:

- Honesty
- Caring
- Respect
- Responsibility

WHAT IS STAY & PLAY/YOUTH ZONE?

The Stay & Play and Youth Zone programs are drop-in child watch programs serving children ages 6 weeks to 5 or 7 years old depending upon the location*. Family centers with Youth Zones are able to serve children up to 12 years old; those centers without Youth Zones serve children up to age 10. It is a benefit to those with a Tampa Y family membership and can be used for up to 2 hours per visit. This service adds value to the family membership and provides parents with the peace of mind knowing their child is in a safe, quality environment while they achieve their health and wellness goals - all in one convenient location.

For many of you, this may be your child's first experience with the Y. Our goal is to provide your child with a safe, caring environment designed to stimulate intellectual, emotional, and physical growth.

AGES

This has been determined by the size of the space and activities available at each center.

	OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
STAY & PLAY	6 weeks-5 years	6 weeks-7 years	6 weeks-10 years
YOUTH ZONE	6-12 years	8-12 years	N/A

Option A: New Tampa, North Brandon, Plant City, South Tampa

Option B: Campo, Bob Sierra

Option C: Central City, East Pasco, Northwest, Spurlino

*Dade City and West Park Village are not currently operating

STAY & PLAY/YOUTH ZONE ENVIRONMENTS

Typically, the Stay & Play and Youth Zone program areas are designed to separate the youngest participants from the older ones. An infant/toddler area for children ages 6 weeks to 18 months is sectioned off from the remainder of the program area. The remainder of the room is designed for a mixed age group, including children over 18 months, preschool and in some spaces school-aged children.

Children of all ages love to play and it gives them opportunities to develop physical competence, understand and make sense of their world, interact with others, express and control emotions, develop problem-solving abilities, and practice emerging skills.

Research shows that an effectively designed program space has the potential for positively influencing all areas of children’s development: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. Our Stay & Play and Youth Zone program areas will:

- Be aesthetically pleasing
- Provide opportunities for both group play and independent play
- Contain a variety of age-appropriate equipment and materials
- Provide meaningful activities
- Have designated centers or play spaces

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

- Provide a quiet center (area in the room where a child can sit and read)
- Be safe, warm, and inviting
- Provide organization and consistency
- Provide pleasant sounds/music
- Provide opportunities for light, moderate, and vigorous physical activity

Like most philosophies on childhood development, the Y philosophy stresses the importance of play, hands-on learning, and the development of the whole child – spirit, mind, and body. Our environment provides curriculum and activities that support this philosophy. Associates will initiate activities to engage children in a variety of experiences, including arts and crafts projects, music and movement activities, and projects focused on building with the use of blocks and manipulatives.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Hours of operation vary depending on the facility. Please check with your nearest Family Center Y or go to tampaymca.org for more details.

HOLIDAY HOURS

On the days that we have adjusted facility holiday hours, Stay & Play and Youth Zone will be open from 9-11am if it is a day in which the space is typically open..

- New Year’s Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Christmas Eve
- New Year’s Eve

GENERAL POLICIES

TOYS AND OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS

We do not permit personal toys or the use of personal electronics while in the supervised Stay & Play or Youth Zone program areas.

There are no snacks, beverages or bottles for infants permitted in the Stay & Play program area. Older children will be provided water as needed.

PROPER ATTIRE

Child's play can be messy work. Your child may be painting and participating in other messy activities. Water-based paint and markers still leave stains. As such, we recommend your child wear clothing that you wouldn't mind getting soiled. For safety reasons, we recommend sturdy shoes that cover the entire foot. Flip flops and sandals aren't safe for dancing and rigorous physical activity, or outdoor play. Sturdy shoes that cover the entire foot are required for outdoor play. For family centers with slides and indoor play structures, children are required to remove shoes and socks for play.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Parents are asked to remember that this is a child-centered program. Our children are easily influenced by our language and actions. The Y challenges associates and participants to accept and demonstrate our four core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. If a dispute arises, we ask that you move the discussion into a private area. At no time should any disputes be carried out in front of the children or other parents. We have a zero-tolerance policy regarding threats of any type or rude, aggressive behaviors. You must remain in the building while your child is in our care at all times. Inappropriate behavior or failure to follow the expectations of our member code of conduct may result in expulsion from Y programs or up to termination of membership.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS OF CHILDREN

We encourage children to share our materials and to care for them accordingly. We do expect the children to clean up after themselves, and we ask that you encourage them to do so before they leave the areas.

We encourage the children to model our Y core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility; and to refrain from fighting, bullying, wrestling, or gunplay.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Only members with a family membership can utilize the Stay & Play and Youth Zone program for up to 120 minutes per visit. If child/children are not picked up within that 120 minute, then the parent is considered late. In the event that your child is picked up late, then you will be reminded of the 120-minute allowance with one warning. Parents who repeatedly pick up their child after the 120-minute period has expired, risk losing their ability to use this membership benefit.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

For many people, discipline has only negative connotations. Some may regard it as punishment. If we look at the source of the word 'discipline', however, we find it has a very positive meaning. To discipline means "to teach." Through discipline, we teach self-control and responsibility which in turn minimizes disruptive behavior.

If a child is having difficulty following the rules, we will follow the steps below:

Redirection: provide other choices for the child that will allow them the opportunity to succeed in another center or activity.

If redirection does not work, we will give the child a break: allowing the child to sit at a table away from the activity for a short time until they regain control. Once the child calms down, we will sit and talk with them about the choice they made and provide examples of how they can make better choices next time.

If the child does not calm down, we will offer them a puzzle or play-doh to work with while they are sitting. This may help de-escalate emotions. Once they are calm, our associates will talk to them about making better choices.

If none of the above strategies work, and the behavior escalates, the child may need to be removed from the area - in which case, an associate will get the parent and document the behavior on a Behavior Report. The behavior will be discussed with the parent and the parent will be asked to sign a Behavior Report.

If a child's behavior threatens the safety of them self or others or is consistently an issue in the areas, then the child may not be permitted to use the Stay and Play or Youth Zone programs.

If a child is having difficulty following the rules, please follow the steps below:

1. **Redirection:** provide other choices for the child that will allow them the opportunity to succeed in another center or activity. Low energy activities (ie: reading a story, circle time or small group) may be best to deescalate the behavior and keep the others engaged appropriately.
2. If redirection does not work, allow the child to sit at a table away with an individualized activity (puzzle, book, coloring) from the group activity for a short time until they regain control. Once the child calms down, be sure to sit and talk with them about the choice they made and provide examples of how they can make better choices next time. We never use the term 'time out'. Suggested wording for this time would be: "Thinking Space" for younger children or "Brain Break" for older children.
3. If time away from the larger group does not modify the behavior, offer them a different individualized activity blocks or play-doh to work with while they are sitting. This may help de-escalate their emotions. Once they are calm, you can talk to them about making good choices.
4. If none of the above strategies work, and the behavior escalates, the child may need to be removed from the area.

SCREEN TIME PROTOCOLS

Engaging with children is important in their development and in ensuring great service. As such, we will not make use of videos in our Stay & Play or Youth Zone program areas. However, we may promote the occasional use of movement video games to encourage physical activity.

CELL PHONES

Transitioning into and out of the Stay & Play and Youth Zone areas can be both overwhelming and exciting for your child. As such, we ask that you put your cell phone aside and provide your child with your full attention. The associates may have information to discuss with you and will need to know that you're available to talk without the distraction of a cell phone. Furthermore, for the safety and the privacy of the other children in the program, please refrain from using your cell phone to take photos.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

SIGN IN & SIGN OUT PROCESS

SIGN-IN PROCESS

- When entering Stay & Play or Youth Zone, please scan your card.
- Please sign your child in to the Stay & Play or Youth Zone area no later than 15 minutes from closing time.
- Indicate your arrival time and your intended location in the facility.
- You must remain in the building while your child is in our care at all times.

SIGN-OUT PROCESS

- When picking up your child, please inform our associates that you are doing so.
- Please sign your child out and indicate your departure time.
- An associate will validate your identification on our computer system.
- Our associates will only release the child to the same parent that signed them in.

RATIOS

Ratios are set to ensure the utmost safety of our program participants. For the purposes of our programs, infants are defined as those children ages 6 weeks to 18 months. Whenever possible, infants will be separated from mobile toddlers and preschoolers to ensure their safety.

The ratio for infants is 1 staff person to 4 infants. The ratio for preschool children is 1 staff person to 10 children, unless the majority of the children are toddlers and two year olds (in which case the ratio will decrease per the supervisor's discretion). The ratio for school-aged children is 1 staff person to 15 students.

MAXIMUM CAPACITIES

Our areas should be bright, clean, safe, well-equipped and spacious enough for associates to adequately care for the maximum number of children allowed in the room. Maximum occupancies are set based on space and local codes and our associates will ensure that this number is adhered to on a consistent basis to ensure the safety of our participants.

WAIT LIST SPACES PROCEDURES

When we meet maximum capacity, our associates will let you know that we can no longer admit any more children at that particular time. However, a wait list will be started. As space becomes available, an associate will locate the next family on the wait list (in person or via the intercom system) and let them know that they can drop their child/children off.

BABYSITTING/OUTSIDE CONTACT

Employees are often asked to provide babysitting and other services on their own time to Y members and families. The Tampa Y does NOT permit employees to provide babysitting or other services to families or children they meet in Y programs. In addition, our associates can NEVER provide transportation in a personal vehicle or be in contact with children outside of Y programs. This includes non-program related email, texting, phone calls, letters, and contact over the internet.

Such policies are designed to protect children and associates from child abuse and/or false allegations.

BATHROOM BREAKS

Y associates are not permitted to accompany a child one-on-one for a bathroom break. This policy is to protect both children and associates alike from child abuse and/or false allegations. If the bathroom is located outside of the program space, associates will plan on taking three children at a time to the restroom. They will open the bathroom door to double check that no adults are inside prior to letting children in. This applies to both single use and multi-stall bathrooms.

DIAPER CHANGING

Our associates are NOT permitted to change diapers for participants. If your child needs a diaper change, an associate will locate you and you will need to report to the Stay & Play area.

INJURIES, ILLNESS & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

INJURIES AND 'BOO BOO REPORTS'

Unfortunately, even with the best safety guidelines in place, accidents do happen. In the event that your child is injured while in our Stay & Play or Youth Zone program areas, associates will notify you at pick up and ask you to sign a 'Boo Boo Report'. The 'Boo Boo Report' will provide you with a short description of the incident and provides details on the time, date, description of the injury, and first aid administered.

In the event of a medical emergency, you will be immediately notified and will be responsible for all medical treatment necessary for the well-being of your child.

SICK CHILDREN

Our Stay & Play centers and Youth Zones are not equipped to handle sick children. We cannot permit children to remain in our care if they show symptoms of a communicable disease. Children who are ill should be excluded from care until:

- a physician has certified the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent (doctor's note may be required)
- they are no longer a threat to the health of other children
- symptoms have subsided
- they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Some illnesses/symptoms which would exclude a child from care include, but are not limited to:
 - Fever - a forehead temperature of 100 degrees or higher
 - Respiratory symptoms - difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing
 - Diarrhea (child cannot return to care until he/she is symptom-free for 48 hours)
 - Vomiting (child cannot return to care until he/she is symptom-free for 48 hours)
 - Eye/nose drainage - thick mucus or pus draining from the eyes or nose
 - Sore throat
 - Rashes or infected sores (ringworm, chicken pox, etc.)
 - Persistent itching or scratching of body or scalp (scabies and lice)
 - Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
 - Hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD)

If your child shows any signs of illness while in our care, you will be asked to remove your child from the area immediately. In some cases, if your child needs to be seen by a doctor, then you will be required to submit a signed release from your doctor before your child can return. This is to ensure that a child does not return when he or she may be in danger of exposing others to an illness. It is also our expectation that if a child is quarantined from school/daycare they will refrain from coming to the YMCA as well.

HAND-WASHING AND CLEANING PROCEDURES

In order to reduce the spread of illness, we adhere to strict daily guidelines when cleaning the Stay & Play and Youth Zone program areas. In addition, our associates are required to follow stringent hand-washing procedures for themselves and the children in their care.

MEDICATIONS

Only parents can administer medication to the children in our care. Our associates can NOT administer medications to our participants; and the medications cannot be stored in our program spaces.



REQUIREMENTS FOR STAY & PLAY/ YOUTH ZONE ASSOCIATES

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

To the Tampa Y, the protection and safety of children is our first concern. Our Y Stay & Play and Youth Zone associates undergo Level 2 fingerprinting background checks and reference checks.

Staff development is a central focus of the Y program enabling associates to provide comprehensive services for children and families. Because we are strongly committed to providing quality programs, the Y offers our associates the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally through ongoing staff development and training. Y associates have the opportunity to participate in ongoing training each year on topics, which focus on working with children. In addition, our associates are certified in CPR and First Aid, and are required to attend training on practicing universal precautions/contact with body fluids and the prevention of child abuse.



STRONGER beCAUSE OF YOU

The Tampa YMCA is dedicated to serving our communities. As a 4-Star charity, we are dedicated to ensure all members of the communities we serve are able to take advantage of all of the programs we offer. This is made possible by the generosity of our community members. Donation to the Tampa YMCA directly impact families in your neighborhood ensuring we continue to be able to provide a space where children grow and blossom, seniors discover new energy, families become closer and those with disabilities find new abilities and new hope. Learn more about the Tampa Y's mission and consider donating today at tampaymca.org/give.

Learn more about the
Tampa Y impact and how
you can get more involved:

