



# **The Y in Central Maryland STAY & PLAY PARENT MANUAL**



# Table of Contents

## WELCOME

Y Mission	3
Y Vision	3
Y Core Values	3

## WHAT IS STAY & PLAY?

What is Stay & Play?	4
The Stay & Play Environment	4
Planned Activities	4
Hours of Operation	5
Holiday Closures	5

## GENERAL POLICIES

Stay & Play Family Forms	6
Toys and Other Personal Items	6
Screen Time Protocols	6
Proper Attire	6
Late Pick Up Policy	7
Cell Phone and Smoking Policy	7

## BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Behavior Expectations of Parents	8
Behavior Expectations of Children	8

## SAFETY PROCEDURES

Sign In Process	9
Sign Out Process	9
Ratios	9
Maximum Capacities	9
Wait List Procedures	9
Child Abuse Prevention	10
Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse	10
Babysitting/Outside Contact	10
Bathroom Breaks	10
Diaper Changing	10

## INJURIES, ILLNESS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Injuries and Accident Reports	11
Sick Children	11
Hand Washing and Cleaning Procedures	12
Medications	12
Fire and Emergency Drills	12
Snacks and Food	12

## STAFF REQUIREMENTS

Staff Qualifications and Training Requirements	13
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## PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

14
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# BETTER TOGETHER

## **Welcome!**

Welcome to the Y in Central Maryland. We've developed this Manual to provide you with information on the guidelines and procedures for the Stay & Play program area. Please read this Manual thoroughly as it contains many important policies that pertain to the care of your child.

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.

## **Y Mission**

The Y is a charitable organization in Central Maryland dedicated to developing the full potential of every individual through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

## **Y Vision**

The Y will build a more inclusive and connected Central Maryland community in which Y membership creates a sense of belonging, engagement, empathy, health, and well-being for all. This inclusion and connection will impact people and families more deeply across all of the Y's points of access. We will optimize our core strengths and assets, creating a workplace culture which values the well-being of our associates and motivates, appreciates and rewards their work. This will all be achieved in a manner which enables the sustainability of the organization well into the future.

## **Y Core Values**

We challenge our associates, members, participants, and volunteers to accept and demonstrate our four core values:

- Honesty
- Caring
- Respect
- Responsibility

## **What is Stay & Play?**

### **What is Stay & Play?**

Children ages 6 weeks - 10 years who are part of a Y membership can be dropped off at Stay & Play for supervised fun while parents exercise! Stay & Play is only open and available when a Y Stay & Play associate is on duty during the designated Stay & Play hours.

Stay & Play is available for family members only while parents are participating in activities within the Y family center. Parents may leave their child(ren) with Stay & Play Y associates for a maximum of 1.5 hours. If you use Stay & Play during peak hours, please plan your arrival time accordingly so you are not inconvenienced.

### **The Stay & Play Environment**

Typically the Stay & Play program area is 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 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 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
- 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

### **Planned Activities**

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 Stay & Play environment provides activities that support this philosophy. Stay & Play associates will initiate activities to engage children in a variety of experiences, including arts and crafts projects, 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 [ymaryland.org](http://ymaryland.org) for more details.

## Holiday Closures

The Stay & Play program area will be closed on the following holidays:

- Easter
- Christmas

Please note that the hours of operation will be adjusted on the following holidays. Check with your local facility for details:

- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- New Years Eve
- New Years Day



## General Policies

### Stay & Play Family Forms

To use our Stay & Play program area, you will be required to complete a Stay & Play Registration Form and sign our Parent Manual Acknowledgement page. These forms are available to you in advance or at the Stay & Play welcome desk. Please note that the forms will need to be completed either prior to or on the first day that you utilize Stay & Play.

The Stay & Play registration forms have multiple uses. The forms identify:

- the children in the family
- parents or other adult guardians
- each child's age
- any special needs or abilities that a child might have
- and medical information in which we should be aware (allergies, seizures, etc)

Please let us know if there is ever a change, so that you can update the form accordingly (ie if a child is diagnosed with a new allergy, court ordered custody requirements, etc).

Any families utilizing 'Try the Y', will need to complete the Stay & Play Registration Form and Stay & Play Parent Manual Acknowledgement page as well.

Parents with infants and toddlers, will complete the [Infant/Toddler Daily Report](#) each time they drop their child off.

### Toys and Other Personal Items

The Y recommends that toys, tablets, and electronic devices are NOT brought from home. However, if these items are brought in, then please abide by the following guidelines:

- The items should be clearly labeled with your child's name
- DO NOT bring in any items that pose a choking hazard to smaller children
- The Y is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items

Also, please note that if your child brings in a tablet or electronic device, he/she will not be permitted to watch any videos or log in to any websites that are not appropriate for small children. Our associates will monitor these devices to ensure that children are only watching 'G-rated' movies or child-friendly websites. If our associates discover that your child is logged on to or watching any inappropriate material, then he/she will not be permitted to bring the item back to the Stay & Play 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 program areas. However, at some centers we will promote the occasional use of Wii Fit games to encourage physical activity.

### Proper Attire

Child's play can be messy work. Your child may be painting and participating in other messy activities. As such, please don't send your child in their Sunday-best outfit. Water-based paint and markers still leave stains. 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.

## **Late Pick-Up Policy**

Children can utilize the Stay & Play program for up to 90 minutes at a time. If a child is not picked up within that 90 minute period, then the parent is considered late. In the event that your child is picked up late, then you will be reminded of the 90 minute allowance. Parents/guardians who repeatedly pick up their child after the 90 minute period has expired, risk losing their option to use the Stay & Play program.

## **Cell Phone and Smoking Policy**

Transitioning into and out of the Stay & Play area 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.

Smoking is not permitted on Y property.



# Behavior Expectations

## Behavior Expectations of Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians 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. Inappropriate behavior or failure to follow the expectations in this Manual may result in expulsion from Y programs.

## 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 Stay & Play area.

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.

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

1. Redirection: provide other choices for the child that will allow him the opportunity to succeed in another center or activity.
2. If redirection does not work, we will give the child some 'time away': allowing the child to sit at a table away from the activity for a short time until he regains control. Once the child calms down, we will sit and talk with him about the choice he made and provide examples of how he can make better choices next time.
3. If the child does not calm down in 'time away', we will offer him a puzzle or play-doh to work with while he is sitting. This may help de-escalate his emotions. Once he is calm, our associates will talk to him about making good choices.
4. If none of the above strategies work, and the negative behavior escalates, he 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.
5. If a child's behavior threatens the safety of himself or others or is consistently an issue in the Stay & Play area, then he may not be permitted to use the Stay and Play program.



# Safety

## Sign In and Sign Out Process

### Sign-In Process:

1. When entering Stay & Play please scan your membership card
2. Please sign your child in to the Stay & Play area on the Attendance Sheet
3. Indicate your arrival time, your intended location in the facility, and indicate if another parent will be picking your child up
4. You must remain in the building while your child is in Stay & Play

### Sign-Out Process:

1. When picking up your child, please inform our associates that you are doing so
2. Please sign your child out and indicate your departure time
3. An associate will validate your identification on our computer system
4. Our associates will only release the child to the same parent/guardian that signed them in unless noted otherwise (if another parent/guardian is picking up the child, it must be noted under 'special instructions' on the Attendance Sheet)

## Ratios

Stay & Play 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 3 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

Stay & Play 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.

## Waitlist

When our Stay & Play areas meet maximum capacity, associates will often take older children to an 'overflow area' - gym, studio, etc. - that's not in use. If we are still at maximum capacity after moving the older children, then our associates will let you know that we can no longer admit any more children at that particular time. A waitlist will be started. As space becomes available, an associate will locate the next family on the waitlist (in person or via the intercom system) and let them know that they can drop their child off.

## **Child Abuse Prevention**

In addition to extensive training requirements, our associates are required to take training on the Prevention and Identification of Child Abuse annually.

## **Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

Maryland law requires anyone working directly with children to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS). Our associates will look for the following signs of abuse:

- unexplained bruising or other physical markings;
- abrupt changes in behavior (i.e. – anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal, depression);
- fear of a certain person;
- discomfort with physical contact;
- a child who abuses other children

If abuse or neglect is suspected, associates must immediately contact CPS and allow CPS to conduct an investigation. Our associates will not be permitted to discuss the incident with anyone other than the local authorities and Y risk management personnel.

## **Babysitting/Outside Contact**

Associates are often asked to provide babysitting and other services on their own time to Y members and families. The Y in Central Maryland does **NOT** permit associates to provide babysitting or other services to families or children they meet in Y programs. In addition, our associates cannot 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. Parents are asked to report any violation of this policy to the Y Risk Management department at [riskmanagement@ymaryland.org](mailto:riskmanagement@ymaryland.org).

## **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.

## **Diaper Changing**

Associates are **NOT** permitted to change diapers for Stay & Play participants. If your child needs a diaper change, an associate will locate you and you will need to report to the Stay & Play area. The Y provides diaper changing areas in restrooms throughout the facility.

# **Injuries, Illness and Emergency Procedures**

## **Injuries and 'Accident 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 program area, Stay & Play associates will notify you at pick up and ask you to sign an 'Accident Report'. The 'Accident 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 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:

1. a physician has certified the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent (doctor's note may be required)
2. they are no longer a threat to the health of other children
3. symptoms have subsided

Children with a minor illness may attend Stay & Play at the provider's discretion. It is important to realize that if a child is unable to participate in their normal routine, then the child must stay home. Some illnesses/symptoms which would exclude a child from care include, but are not limited to:

- Fever - an axillary (under arm) 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 24 hours)
- Vomiting (child cannot return to care until he/she is symptom-free for 24 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)
- Impetigo
- Scarlet Fever
- Hepatitis A, B, or C

If your child shows any signs of illness while in our care, then 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.

## Hand-washing and Cleaning Procedures

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

## Medications

Only parents/guardians can administer medication to the children in our care. Stay & Play associates can **NOT** administer medications to our participants; and the medications cannot be stored in our Stay & Play program space.

## Fire and Emergency Drills

Associates will perform fire and emergency drills on a monthly basis to ensure they are adequately prepared for emergencies such as fires, tornadoes, earthquakes, bomb threats, armed intruders, missing children, and active shooters. The details of each drill will be recorded on our fire and emergency drill log.

In the event of an actual emergency, the Stay & Play supervisor will provide Y associates with specific instructions according to our emergency preparedness plans. DO NOT enter the Stay & Play area to retrieve your child. Instead, meet the associates at the designated evacuation area and sign your child out. Please check with your Stay & Play associates for the designated evacuation area.

## Snacks and Food

With the exception of formula/breast milk for infants, there are no snacks or beverages permitted in the Stay & Play program area. Parents/guardians should provide an ample supply of infant formula or breast milk fully prepared (pre-mixed, pre-heated) when dropping it off to Stay & Play associates. This will help assure that your child's bottle is prepared properly and in a safe manner. Pre-heated bottles can be stored in a thermal container to maintain their temperature. Please ensure that all containers, bottles, and bags are labeled with your child's full name.

Older children will be provided water as needed.



# Requirements for Stay & Play Associates

## Qualifications and Training Requirements

To the Y in Central Maryland, the protection and safety of children is our first concern. Our Y Stay & Play associates undergo criminal background checks and reference checks. In addition, all associates must agree to random drug and alcohol testing.

Because we are strongly committed to providing quality programs, the Y offers our associates the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally through ongoing 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.



## **Acknowledgement of Receipt of Stay & Play Parent Manual**

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Y in Central Maryland Stay & Play Parent Manual. I understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand and comply with the information contained in the Manual.

I further understand that:

- The content of the Manual may be changed/updated
- If changes to this Manual are made, the new provisions will supersede and replace any previously existing Manual(s).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Name of Child(ren):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please check the Y in Central Maryland Family Center Locations that You Utilize:

Hill (Carroll County)

Dancel (Howard County)

Catonsville (Baltimore County)

Orokawa (Baltimore County)

Parkville (Baltimore County)

Druid Hill (Baltimore City)

Weinberg (Baltimore City)

Ward (Harford County)

Pasadena (Anne Arundel County)

Greater Annapolis (Anne Arundel County)



