

Volunteers

Volunteers are a valuable asset to AYS, Inc. Volunteers at AYS program sites allow for smaller group activities, exposure to new expertise and interest, and valuable adult mentoring for children and youth. These volunteers are required to have an application and criminal history check on file with AYS and to provide proof of a TB test and drug screen. Volunteer opportunities are also available at AYS events throughout the year, such as the Mardi Gras Mambo parade and the Diva Fashion Extravaganza.

AYS Website and eNews

AYS eNews is an electronic newsletter that was created to inform parents and the community of AYS news and upcoming events. Content may include break sites, registration information, recent awards, community involvement, health tips, and people making a difference at AYS. The AYS eNews Special Edition is published periodically to inform you of specific special events and announcements. Email addresses provided on program registration forms are added to our eNews mailing list. If you do not wish to receive our eNewsletter, please submit a letter of request to our main office or webmaster @ayskids.org, or follow the instructions in the footer of any AYS eNews.

Our Privacy Policy

AYS respects your privacy. We will never sell, rent or give your information to any company. An opt-out link is always provided at the bottom of our eNewsletter.

Welcome

The AYS early childhood program provides creative, recreational and physical activities for young children in a safe, enriching environment. Some programs also run a summer camp option.

The administration and staff of AYS have prepared this handbook to help you become familiar with AYS programs, policies and procedures. The program offers planned activities and learning centers to help meet the physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs of young children.

Thank you for choosing AYS. We hope all children and their families will derive the greatest possible benefit from participation in our program.

**AYS early childhood programs
adhere to the guidelines of
the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
Programs are accredited through NAEYC or NECPA. Licensed
programs are recognized in Indiana's Paths to Quality.**

*Throughout this handbook, AYS uses the term parent to indicate parents or legal guardians.

Revised 07/2009

History

AYS, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation formed to operate school-age (K-8), early childhood and training programs.

AYS started its first program in 1980 at IPS School 70 with a grant from The Indianapolis Foundation. The first AYS early childhood program began in 1985 at First-Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church. The training program began in 1995. Currently, many programs are in operation in Marion, Hamilton, Hendricks, Montgomery and Johnson counties.

In 2004, AYS was approved as a member of the United Way of Central Indiana. As a member agency, AYS upholds the agency certification standards set forth by the United Way.

Philosophy

Young children are developing socially, physically, creatively, intellectually, and emotionally. These areas are all related and dependent upon one another. These early years are a time of rapid growth. A child's intellectual development is influenced by his or her social, physical, creative, and emotional growth.

The AYS early childhood program provides experiences that invite children's interest, stimulate creativity, and satisfy the desire to explore and discover. Children of different ages and different cultures interact with one another. Respect and understanding of each other is a vital part of the AYS program. Children are taught to recognize that their actions have consequences.

Parents and Families

The parent is the child's first teacher. Parents play the central role in the lives of their children. AYS respects the dignity and worth of the family and encourages parents to visit and participate in the program as their schedule permits.

Parents are also encouraged to participate in the self-evaluation process which each program conducts twice a year.

The Family Advisory Group provides a support system for the AYS program. Contact your Program Director for meeting dates and times.

directed to a quiet area. The child will be permitted to rejoin the group when he/she feels in control. If however, a child presents a danger to himself/herself or to the safety of others, and the above behavior management techniques prove ineffective, AYS reserves the right to temporarily or permanently dismiss the child from the program.

Consequences of Consistent Behavior Problems

The following behavior management policy will be enforced when working through a situation with a child whose behavior has become unsafe to himself/herself or to others, or whose behavior has become so disruptive as to detract from the overall quality of the program.

1. The staff will discuss the behavior problem with the parents and complete a report.
2. In the chance that the behavior problem continues, the program director will schedule a meeting with the parents to discuss strategies for improving the behavior.
3. Following the parent meeting, both the AYS staff and the parents will continue to monitor the child's behavior. The AYS staff will communicate as often as needed with the parents.
4. In the chance that the behavior problem continues, the parents will be notified by the AYS director of a one to three day suspension or permanent removal from the program.

AYS reserves the right to dismiss a child immediately from a program should the safety of the child or others be in question.

Behavior Management Policy

AYS encourages a cooperative relationship among children, staff and parents. Should circumstances dictate, we encourage parents to listen to concerns about their child's behavior and work through an agreeable solution with the AYS staff.

Each child shall be treated with respect. The AYS staff will listen to children's concerns and take their feelings seriously. The staff will encourage children to listen to each other and work out their differences among themselves. We model respect and positive behavior. It is the cooperative responsibility of the AYS staff, parents and teachers to help the children learn to respect the rights of each individual in the program and at home.

Inappropriate behavior shall be handled by letting the natural consequences of the misbehavior occur, redirecting the child to another activity, guiding the children through conflict resolution or giving the child time by himself/herself. To preserve the child's integrity and positive self esteem, behavior management shall be accomplished in a non-judgmental and positive manner. However, if a child presents a danger to himself/herself or to the safety of others, and the above behavior management techniques proves ineffective, AYS reserves the right to temporarily or permanently dismiss the child from the program. While every attempt will be made to include a child with challenging behaviors, the behavior management policy will be followed for all children, even those with special needs.

Method of Behavior Management

- Positive behavior will be reinforced by descriptive statements. For example: "I like the way you are putting away the checkers."
- Limits will be set by focusing on the action. For example: "These chairs are for sitting."
- Limits will be set by using positive statements which focus on the child (ren)'s behavior.
- Use of equipment will be defined positively. For example: "Go up the ladder and down the slide."
- Children will be encouraged, but not forced, to participate in activities.
- When a conflict occurs between two or more children, verbal exchanges will be encouraged and supported in an effort to let the children resolve their own problems.
- A child who is out of control will be removed from the situation and

Curriculum

AYS has adopted *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, a research-based curriculum grounded in theory and research on learning styles, brain development, and resiliency. A developmental assessment system for ages 3 to 5 is used by AYS staff to assess each child's progress and to guide the curriculum planning.

This curriculum connects well with the *Indiana Foundations for Young Children* which emphasizes that all children have learning experiences that are:

- *Appropriate and based upon current knowledge and research of child development and learning.
- *Focused on the strengths, needs, and interests of each individual child.
- *Respect the social and cultural context in which each child lives.

(IN Foundations, p. 3)

Outdoor play and healthy meals and snacks are essential components of the daily schedule in all early childhood programs.

Staff

AYS staff have associates degrees or higher or are working toward a CDA (child development associate). All have experience in child care settings, have gone through pre-employment screening, and take an annual TB test. Staff complete yearly training requirements. A CPR/first aid certified staff person is always present.

Eligibility

- Any child who is 4 years old (3 year olds are accepted at Hilltop Learning Center and First-Meridian Heights)
- Children should be a resident of the program's township.
- Children must be toilet trained.

Confidentiality

The privacy of the children and parents whom we serve is important to AYS, Inc. All information given to AYS, Inc. is considered private and will be held in confidence unless authorized by the parent for disclosure or a court order is issued requiring the release of stipulated information.

Payment Policies and Procedures

- Registration fee is not refundable.
- First week or month's fee is required upon registration.
- Fees are due regardless of attendance, holidays, or program closings.
- Regular fees are charged during weeks in which the following holidays occur: Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, Christmas Eve and Day, New Year's Eve and Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day (for summer program).

Payment Schedule

AYS encourages parents to use the credit card option. Contact the home office or the program director for details.

- Fees may be paid by the semester, month (preferable), or week.
- **Semester** fees are due on the first day of attendance for each semester.
- **Monthly** fees are due on or before the **first** of the month or on schedule provided.
- **Weekly** fees are due on **Friday for the following week.**
- Late pick-up fee: After 6 p.m., a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, according to the AYS clock, is assessed. The fee is paid directly to the staff on site. If you have an emergency, call the AYS director.
- Withdrawal: Two weeks' written notice in advance is required for withdrawal from the program. A period of 6 to 8 weeks is allowed for a child to settle into the program routine. Should the Director determine that your child is not ready for or not benefiting from the program, the parent will be asked to withdraw the child with two weeks' notice.

Payment Plans (Not all plans are available in all school corporations. Please check with your program director.) Payment is expected for all options, regardless of attendance.

*Semester and Monthly Plans

Option A: Semester (two equal payments, including winter and spring breaks)

Option B: Regular monthly schedule (nine equal payments without winter and spring breaks) August and June are paid weekly.

*Weekly Plans

Option C: Regular weekly fee without winter and spring breaks.

Option D: Part-time Plans: Limited space and pre-approval is required.

*Impetigo or rashes

*Lice—A child must be nit free before returning

*Diarrhea during the last 24 hours.

*Cold symptoms causing discomfort to your child and/or risk of contagion to others.

Holidays & Vacation Sessions

The following days are school and AYS holidays during which AYS programs will be closed: Thanksgiving vacation, Christmas Eve and Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day.

Any other non-program days will be announced well in advance. Regular weekly fees are charged during weeks in which holidays occur.

AYS offers programs throughout the school year and summer, as schedules permit per school. The few exceptions:

- Holidays listed above.
- Winter break school schedules that may necessitate closings.
- Staff development week in August
- One or two days at the end of the school year

Summer

A family may register for any number of weeks of AYS summer camp. AYS does reserve the right to combine programs, however, depending upon enrollment. It helps AYS in its planning to know well in advance the numbers of children who need the program during the summer months.

Parent Conferences

Parents may request a conference with the program staff or administration. Staff will schedule a conference each semester to discuss your child's progress in the program.

Children with Special Needs

To assure that each child's needs are addressed, AYS asks that the parents meet with the AYS Director and other Administrative staff before enrolling a child with special needs in an AYS program. It may require that the parent observe the AYS program to determine appropriateness for the child. AYS may limit use of the program (i.e. early dismissal days, whole days, and vacation days) should the program not be able to reasonably accommodate the child's needs. It is required that the Plan of Care form pertaining to special needs be completed at registration in order for your child to attend the program.

Health

An immunization record, emergency medical information, record of allergies, and medication forms, either **prescription** and/or **non-prescription**, must be on file with your child's program director. It is the policy of AYS that only medication prescribed by a doctor be administered at the program.

In the event that parents or their designated substitutes cannot be reached in an emergency, staff members will contact the medical facility closest to the program site. Parents are responsible for medical expenses incurred in the treatment of their child.

Illness

Please keep your child home when these symptoms are observed:

- *Fever or chills—Children should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication.
- *Eye infection
- *Sore Throat
- *Earache
- *Nausea or vomiting within the last 24 hours

Change of Plan

After September 1, a \$15 fee will be charged for each attendance plan change at time of request. A two-week notice is required for program withdrawal and reduction in days attending. An increase in days attending can be made immediately, space permitting, as approved by the program director.

Delinquent Payments

- If payment is not received by the appropriate due date, the child may not return to the program until fees are paid or a payment plan is signed.
- AYS reserves the right to fill a slot vacated due to non-payment.
- If your family has an emergency that may affect the prompt payment of fees, please speak with the program director or call the AYS finance office. Often we can work something out until the emergency subsides.

Financial Assistance

- Financial assistance may be available, based on a sliding fee scale. Contact the AYS office (317) 283-3817 for an appointment.
- Regular fees are due until approval of the financial application.
- Families receiving voucher assistance are required to swipe in and out on a daily basis. AYS reserves the right to refuse service to any family for non-compliance of the voucher requirements.

General

- Families with more than one child registered in an AYS program may be eligible for a family discount. The full fee is charged for the child receiving the most care during the week. A discount will be applied to each additional registered child's fee. A registration fee is required for each child.
- Sharing payments by custodial parents is to be arranged by the parents. A single payment record is maintained by AYS.
- Payment must be by check, money order, or credit card. **Cash is not accepted at the program.** Make check payable to AYS-(name of program). *Example:* "AYS-Stony Creek" A canceled check is your receipt. To make payments by credit card, please contact the AYS main office.
- Accounts are to be cleared by the end of December and May, and by the end of the summer program to be eligible for participation the next session.
- A **\$25.00** fee is charged for each returned check.
- Payment records are periodically audited throughout the year.
- **Tax statements are not automatically distributed.**

Field Trips

Field trips or special parties may require an extra fee. *Please pay this fee separately.*

Registration

The following forms must be completed and returned to the program director prior to your child's enrollment in the program:

- Registration form with registration/materials fee and first week's fee.
- Health form with standard immunization records completed and signed by a physician
- Parent Orientation Checklist
- Special needs intake form, as needed
- Copy of birth certificate
- Physical (in licensed programs)

Priority is given to full-time registrations. A waiting list is kept throughout the year.

A parent & child visit to the classroom is encouraged prior to enrollment. Please contact the program director to set an appointment.

Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedures

- **Parents must escort their child to the program** and sign the child in. AYS cannot allow children to be "dropped off".
- Only those persons authorized on the registration form may sign children out of the program.
- **A signature or initials must be used** when a child is signed in and out of the program. **Example: E. Jones or ERJ. Not: "Mom" or "Dad".**
- Identification may be requested at any time when signing children out of the program.
- No phone-in authorizations for pick up are accepted except in an emergency. If that emergency occurs, follow these procedures: Call the program; notify the director of the change in person allowed to pick up child; write a note of verification, if possible; notify the **newly-appointed pick-up person** that he/she will be asked to sign a release form at the time of pick up.

Children's Responsibilities

- Respect the staff and each other.
- Respect the rights and property of others.
- Respect program and school rules and guidelines.
- Return materials and equipment to the appropriate place.
- Use appropriate language.
- Keep all valuables and toys at home. **AYS is not responsible for loss or destruction of personal items.**

Parents' Responsibilities

- Respect and adhere to policies and procedures established by AYS and the school.
- Follow all sign-in/sign-out procedures to assure the child's safety.
- Make all payments according to your parent agreement.
- Inform staff of absences or schedule changes concerning your child.
- Allow time occasionally to visit with your child during the program hours.
- Keep changes in personal information about family and child current. Communicate often with the program staff.
- Custodial situations can cause confusion for the staff and the children). AYS asks that the custodial parent communicate in detail with the staff about circumstances that relate directly to the care of the child in our program.
- Please provide a small blanket and an extra set of seasonal clothing for each child. Sweat suits work well. Include socks and underwear packed in a sack labeled with your child's name. Accidents do happen, and we want to insure your child's comfort.
- Our Sun-Smart policy (available upon request) has been developed to ensure that all children are protected from skin damage caused by UVB and UVA rays of sun. This policy will be implemented throughout the year, but with particular emphasis March through October.
 1. Provide a suitable hat and light weight long sleeved shirt for your child's use while outdoor at the program.
 2. On water play days, provide an extra shirt for your child to wear over swimsuit.
 3. Encourage your child to wear sunglasses that block 100% UVA and UVB rays whenever they are outside.
 4. Provide broad spectrum SPF 15 or higher sunscreen with your child's name on it to AYS staff for use 30 minutes before going outside.