



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEARN, GROW AND THRIVE

PRE-KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW



THE LEARNING CIRCLE YMCA
A branch of the Summit Area YMCA

When you entrust your child to the Y, we strive to fulfill our promise to make each day an opportunity for your child to **learn, grow and thrive**. We aim to make our facility a home-away-from-home, where your child feels confident and secure to learn new things and discover his/her potential.

The Learning Circle YMCA is the area's premier childcare provider serving over **200** children daily in our all-day programs.

Our **mission** is to develop and nurture the potential of every child, to provide opportunities that promote healthy living, and to encourage social responsibility through inventive programs.

The YMCA is the **largest non-profit provider of child care** in the country. We are attuned to the budgets and busy schedules of single parent and dual-career families. A variety of program options are offered so you may work secure in knowing that your child is being cared for and educated in a safe, constructive and stimulating environment.

Positive role models are critical to a child's development. That's why our full-time child care and school age child care programs are staffed with **experienced teachers** all of whom are required to complete 16 hours of **ongoing annual training** and are **certified in CPR and First Aid**. Our staff understands the cognitive, physical and social development of children to help them feel safe, supported and connected so they can thrive.

We weave our core values of **caring, honesty, respect and responsibility** into all that we do, because we believe that foundational values and skills learned early in life form the building blocks that lead to a happy, healthy and centered person.

Our child care programs are licensed by the State of New Jersey.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM ARE:

- THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
- WHAT CHILDREN LEARN
- HOW CHILDREN DEVELOP AND LEARN
- CARING AND TEACHING
- PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PRESCHOOL TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

- ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
- APPROACHES TO LEARNING
- MATHEMATICS
- SCIENCE
- SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS
- SOCIAL STUDIES/FAMILY AND LIFE SKILLS
- HEALTH/SAFETY/PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- TECHNOLOGY
- WORLD LANGUAGES

At The Learning Circle YMCA the Creative Curriculum is used in the Pre-Kindergarten program. This curriculum is aligned with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards which in turn is aligned with the Common Core Curriculum Standards. The curriculum gives teachers a framework for ensuring that the academic and emotional needs of all children are met.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN AGES 3–5 YEARS:

- STANDARD 1
- STANDARD 2
- STANDARD 3
- STANDARD 4
- STANDARD 5
- STANDARD 6

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:	
S1	Reading–Literature
S2	Informational Text
S3	Reading: Foundational Skills
S4	Writing
S5	Speaking and Listening
S6	Language
MATHEMATICS:	
S1	Children demonstrate an understanding of number and counting.
S2	Children demonstrate an initial understanding of numerical operations.
S3	Children begin to conceptualize measurable attributes of objects and how to measure them.
S4	Children develop spatial and geometric sense.
SCIENCE:	
S1	Children develop inquiry skills.
S2	Children observe and investigate matter and energy.
S3	Children observe and investigate living things.
S4	Children observe and investigate the earth.
S4	Children gain experience in using technology.
S5	Children gain experience in using technology.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:	
S1	Children demonstrate self-confidence.
S2	Children demonstrate self-direction.
S3	Children identify and express feelings.
S4	Children exhibit positive interactions with other children and adults.
S5	Children exhibit pro-social behaviors.
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS:	
S1	Children express themselves and develop an appreciation of creative movement and dance.
S2	Children express themselves and develop an appreciation of music.
S3	Children exhibit positive interactions with other children and adults.
S4	Children express themselves and develop an appreciation of visual arts (e.g. painting, sculpting, and drawing).



CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN AGES 3–5 YEARS:

STANDARD 1

STANDARD 2

STANDARD 3

STANDARD 4

STANDARD 5

HEALTH, SAFETY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

- | | |
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| S1 | Children develop self-help and personal hygiene skills. |
| S2 | Children begin to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices. |
| S3 | Children begin to develop an awareness of potential hazards in their environment. |
| S4 | Children develop competence and confidence in activities that require gross and fine motor skills. |

SOCIAL STUDIES, FAMILY AND LIFE SKILLS:

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|----|---|
| S1 | Children identify unique characteristics of themselves, their family and others. |
| S2 | Children become contributing members of classroom community. |
| S3 | Children demonstrate knowledge of neighborhood and community. |
| S4 | Children develop an awareness of cultures within their classroom and their community. |

APPROACHES TO LEARNING:

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| S1 | Children demonstrates initiative, engagement, and persistence. |
| S2 | Children show creativity and imagination. |
| S3 | Children identify and solve problems. |
| S4 | Children apply what they have learned to new situations. |

WORLD LANGUAGES:

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| S1 | Children know that others may use different languages (including sign) to communicate and will express simple greetings, words and phrases in a language other than their own. |
| S2 | Children will participate in cultural activities and celebrations to develop an awareness of diverse cultures. |

TECHNOLOGY:

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| S1 | Navigate simple on screen menus. |
| S2 | Use electronic devices independently. |
| S3 | Begin to use electronic devices to communicate. |
| S4 | Use common technology vocabulary. |
| S5 | Begin to use electronic devices to gain information. |
| S5 | Interactive whiteboard technology is used in our Pre-Kindergarten program. |



CURRICULUM STUDIES

The Creative Curriculum is divided into "Studies," and includes the "Beginning of the Year" guide, for the first weeks of school. The studies are project-based investigations that can be used in any order. Each study is divided into a series of investigative questions, and each investigation lasts approximately 3–5 days. At the end of each study, we conclude with our own unique study, and celebrate what we learned. We conclude each school year with the "Getting Ready for Kindergarten Guide".

BEGINNING OF YEAR

- What names do we need to know at school?
- What should we do if we get sad or scared at school?
- What are our rules?
- Who works at our school?
- What sounds do we hear at school? Where do they come from?

CLOTHES

- What are the features of clothes?
- How do we take care of our clothes?
- How do people make clothes?
- How is cloth made?
- Where do we get our clothes?
- What other special clothes do people wear?
- Our Investigation/Celebrating learning.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

- What do people throw away?
- Where does trash go? What do workers do there?
- How do trash and garbage affect our community?
- How can we reuse junk?
- How can we create less trash?
- Our Investigation/Celebrating learning.

PETS

- What kinds of animals are pets? What are some characteristics of pets?
- Where do pets live?
- What do pets eat?
- How do we care for pets?
- How do we care for pets?
- Our Investigation/Celebrating learning.

GETTING READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

- How is kindergarten like preschool? How is it different?
- How do we feel about going to kindergarten?
- How do we make and keep friends in kindergarten?
- Reflecting and Celebrating learning.

BALLS

- Do all balls bounce?
- Do all balls roll?
- What makes balls move?
- Who uses balls?
- What are balls made of?
- Our Investigation/Celebrating learning.

BUILDINGS

- What do buildings in our neighborhood in other places look like?
- Who build buildings? What tools do they use?
- What are buildings made of? What makes them strong?
- What is special about our building?
- What happens inside buildings?
- Our Investigation/Celebrating learning.

TREES

- What do we know about trees? What do we want to find out?
- What are the characteristics of the trees in our community?
- Who lives in trees?
- What food comes from trees?
- Who takes care of trees?
- How do trees change?
- What can we do with parts of trees?
- Our Investigation / Celebrating Learning

MAKING MUSIC

- What instruments can we play by hitting, tapping and shaking them?
- What other instruments are there and how do people play them?
- How can we make music with our voices?
- What different styles of music are there? How do they make us feel?
- Who works with music for their jobs? What tools do they use?
- Our Investigation/Celebrating learning.

DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE OF WRITING LETTERS

Upper case letters are easier to recognize and to write than lower case letters. The uppercase letters are generally made up of straight lines and curves, occupy the same space on the line and are the same size. Letters containing only horizontal and vertical lines are the easiest to write from a developmental perspective.

When writing upper case letters, all the letters start at the top. Almost all letters start at the upper left hand corner. There are some letters that young writers frequently reverse because they start in the right hand corner (C, S and G).

The sequence of teaching letters is based on developmental perspective. This sequence has been adapted from the Handwriting Without Tears developed by Jan Olsen.

Lower case letters are more difficult to recognize and write. They occupy different spaces on the lines and are different sizes. "Orientation 9" direction plays more of a role. A backwards capital B is simply backwards, but a backwards lower case b is a d.

THE ORDER OF TEACHING LETTER WRITING:	
SEPTEMBER	E, F, D
OCTOBER	B, M, N, P
NOVEMBER	R, H, L, K
DECEMBER	U, V, W, X
JANUARY	Y, Z, A, C
FEBRUARY	G, I, J, O
MARCH	Q, S, T, c, o, s, v
APRIL	w, x, z, a, d, g, o, q,
MAY	b, h, m, n, p, r, f, h, k, l, t
JUNE	e, i, j, u, y Review



PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM INFORMATION

RATIO:

The ratio in Pre-K classrooms is twelve children to one teacher.

ENRICHMENT:

The children go to the Summit YMCA branch for swim sessions. Schedules are determined by the Summit YMCA Aquatic Director and subject to change. The children go to the Summit YMCA branch for gym class. Schedules are determined also by the Summit YMCA Branch Program Director and subject to change.

NAP/REST:

The children continue to nap/rest in Pre-K. The state requires that all children under four years of age be given the opportunity to nap/rest. If a child does not nap after being on their mat for 30 minutes, they are given quiet activities to do. Teachers are not allowed to withhold naps/rest at a parent's request for any reason.

ADDITIONAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM INFORMATION

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES:

Parents are invited to participate in parent/teacher conferences twice per year in the months of December and May. At these conferences parents have the opportunity to track their child's development and view their child's developmental portfolio. Parents may contact their child's teacher at any time throughout the year to discuss their child or to arrange an additional conference. We encourage parents to attend these scheduled conferences.

DEVELOPMENTAL PORTFOLIOS:

A developmental portfolio is kept to record the child's development in different areas of learning.

USES OF THE PORTFOLIO:

- Show a child's growth over time.
- Plan instructions that will address the needs of the child.
- Identify areas of learning that may require additional support.
- Share with parents at conferences.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:

Birthday celebrations are very important to the children and to us. In an effort to keep all our children safe, food is not the focus of our birthday celebrations. We celebrate each child's birthday in a way that is special to them and safe for everyone. There are children in our classrooms with very severe allergies. The parents of these children know how important it is to control the foods they are served or exposed to. To make the day special for the children we will make crowns, cards or birthday books. The teachers will ensure that every child enjoys their special day. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

As parents, you are your child's first teachers. We hope to build a partnership of mutual respect and trust as we work together to care and educate your child.

WAYS PARENTS CAN BE INVOLVED:

- ➔ Attend Parent information nights and conferences.
- ➔ Volunteer at the Center.
- ➔ Share your ideas, interests and talents with us in the classroom or at special events and special programs.
- ➔ Teach us about your culture.
- ➔ Join the Parent Teacher Organization as a parent representative for your child's class.
- ➔ Support the Y's Annual Campaign to raise funds for financial assistance for families in need.
- ➔ Give us constructive feedback about how we can improve our center programs and offerings.

SAY FIT KIDS

As an organization dedicated to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, children enrolled at The Learning Circle YMCA participate in a variety of healthy activities and nutrition education to develop good habits as they grow. At the Y, we are dedicated to keeping our children active by engaging them in specific structured activities, exercise and teaching them about good nutrition. Children are not only taught to eat independently, but are also introduced to tasty and healthful foods that they help to prepare.

Children with a Summit Area YMCA Youth Membership are able to access a plethora of activities and programs that promote healthy living. Enjoy swimming, sports, enrichment and more!

Learn more about youth programs at www.thesay.org/youth



THE LEARNING CIRCLE YMCA ADVENTURERS PROGRAM JULY AND AUGUST

DISCOVER THE WORLD!

AGES 4 THROUGH 7 (7:00AM – 6:00PM)

The Adventurers will enjoy a summer filled with fun in a supportive environment with experienced staff. The Summer Curriculum is organized around Themes and Clubs with an outdoor approach.

Possible field trips to Monster Golf, Great Swamp, Museums, Liberty Science Center, Bowling and Trailside, Turtle Back Zoo

Swimming at the Summit YMCA Branch

All meals included in camp fees
(breakfast, lunch, snack)

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Welcome to Camp Picnic

Costume Ball

Luau

Mermaids and Pirates Adventure

Tournament of Science Event

End of Summer Carnival

Art Show



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



Individuals and families may apply for financial assistance for membership or programs such as childcare and day camp. We make Financial Assistance available to those in need, and it is based on a number of factors including total household income and number of dependents in a household.

The process is confidential and application forms are available at each of our three branches or online at www.theSAY.org.

Applicants must live within the Summit Area YMCA service area: Berkeley Heights, Gillette, Millburn, New Providence, Short Hills, Springfield, Stirling and Summit.

THE LEARNING CIRCLE YMCA

A branch of the Summit Area YMCA

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www.theSAY.org



The Summit Area YMCA is one of the area's leading charitable 501(c)3 organizations. Our programs and services are open to all through our financial assistance programs made possible through the generosity of our members, donors and partners.