

A graphic of a sunburst or spark with yellow and orange rays emanating from a central point, with several small white stars scattered around it.

Preschool

GREATER STARTS WITH A SPARK



2026 - 2027

FAMILY HANDBOOK

MORRISON FAMILY YMCA

YMCACharlotte.org

**GREATER
HAPPENS**

AT



YMCA OF
GREATER
CHARLOTTE

Welcome to Ballantyne Preschool Academy!

We are honored that you have chosen us to be part of your child's early learning journey. Our mission is to create a nurturing environment that supports your child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth. We believe that open communication and strong teamwork between families and staff are key to your child's success.

To help you get started, this handbook contains important information and guidelines for a smooth and successful school year. Please take some time to review it before your child's first day, and feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

We look forward to partnering with you and your child during the 2026–2027 school year and making this a wonderful experience for your family!

Warmly,

Asena Konuralp

Preschool Manager

Program Information

Our Purpose / Mission / Vision

- The YMCA Purpose: To love, serve, and transform lives.
- The YMCA Vision: Thriving, inclusive, and connected communities.
- The YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Our Core Values

Caring · Honesty · Respect · Responsibility · Faith

Our Program Philosophy / Goal

At the foundation of the Ballantyne Preschool Academy is the belief that children learn best through hands-on, immersive, and sensory-rich experiences and environments that are specifically designed to integrate literacy, visual and performing arts, outdoor education, foreign language, creative mindfulness and STEAM. We place high importance on movement in education and believe that children thrive when they are physically active throughout the day. We strive to provide a safe and engaging environment where children are encouraged to develop and balance their academic and creative skills through our unique curriculum and talented staff.

About our Program

YMCA Preschools provide developmentally appropriate early-learning environments, rich in social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth and learning opportunities. The Ballantyne Preschool Academy is an arts-integrated preschool program that provides a visual, exploratory, engaging environment where your child will learn through visual and performing arts and thematic concepts.

We place high importance on movement in education and believe that allowing our children to be physically active throughout the day, even during their academic activities, helps them to better process new concepts and retain information easier. It also helps with behavior management and to instill lifelong health and well-being. Our preschoolers have a unique opportunity to work with early educators, arts professionals and to learn in an environment that focuses on being active as a way of life.

Curriculum

At Ballantyne Preschool Academy, we use the Bright-wheel Curriculum enriched with arts integration. Through guided, hands-on experiences, children build important skills in language, problem-solving, and motor development. Our play-based approach makes learning fun and meaningful while encouraging curiosity, creativity, and discovery. We provide a variety of age-appropriate materials that allow children to explore, create, and learn through active play.

Our program offers a developmentally appropriate curriculum that includes the following:

- Monthly Themes
- Circle Time / Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Literacy and Math Learning Labs
- STEAM activities
- Theatre
- Music and Movement
- Visual Arts
- Outdoor Education at our Pavilion
- Sensory Exploration & Self-Directed Discovery Centers

A daily class schedule will be given to you at the beginning of the year by your child's teacher. This schedule will include times of activities.

Operating Procedures

School Hours

The preschool program will operate from August 31st, 2026, through May 21st, 2027. Program hours are Monday to Friday from 9:00am - 1:00pm.

Important Dates

Ballantyne Preschool Academy follows the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) calendar. Our program will be closed on all CMS holidays and teacher workdays. (listed below)

- September 7,21
- October 2
- November 2,3,11,25,26,27
- December 21-25 & 28-31
- January 1,18,22
- February 15
- March 25-31
- April 1,2

School Closings

The Y typically follows the decisions of our local school districts (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) related to school closures. We will notify families of any program closures or changes through email and through our communication app. Although we try to make and communicate decisions as quickly as possible, there may be times when a decision cannot be made until the day of.

Absences

If your child will be absent due to illness, vacation, or an emergency, we kindly ask that you let your child's teacher know in advance. While it's not required, our teachers do worry when a child is out - especially for several days. You can easily report an absence through the Bright-wheel app.

Main Building Car Line Information

- Car line is only for our Threes, Fours and Transitional Kindergarten Classes.
- Please note, we are not able to accommodate walk-in or walk-up drop-off or pick-ups for our Threes, Fours and TK Classes during regular car line hours.
- Please enter through our entrance off Community House Road and proceed to our Main Building Car Line at the playground.
- Place your Car Line Tag on your dashboard and have it ready for daily pick up and drop off.
- If you are a YMCA Greater Charlotte member, please have your YCLT+ App Parent Barcode or your YMCA Parent membership card ready for faster check-in and check-out process.
- Please make sure that anyone who may be picking your child up is on the official YMCA Authorized Pick-Up list. Please refer to our Emergency Contacts/Authorized Pick policy in our YMCA Programs Resource Hub.
- Please refrain from using your cell phone during car line times as we have many students and staff members moving around the parking lot and safety is a top priority!

Drop Off

1. Morning Car Line is open and operates from 09:00am - 9:15am.
2. Carline will close promptly at 09:15 am. For safety reasons, we cannot check children in at carline who arrive after carline closes.
3. If you arrive after 9:15 am, please follow the late drop-off policies.
4. A staff member will greet you and check your child in our preschool portal.
5. Please do not let your child get out of the car until a staff member opens the door. The staff member will direct your child to his/her classroom at the picnic tables.
6. We ask that CAREGIVERS PLEASE STAY IN THE CAR so that we can keep the carpool line moving and avoid backing traffic up onto the main road.

Pick Up

1. Afternoon Car Line is open and operates from 12:45 pm- 1:00 pm.
2. A staff member will check your ID (unless your picture is already saved in our childcare portal) and check out your student.
3. Anyone picking up your student must be listed in our system and must provide an ID (unless your picture is already saved in our childcare portal).
4. Please stay in your vehicle. A team member will greet you and walk your student to your car.
5. Children must be picked up at the latest by 1:00 PM. Late pickups will result in a fee.
6. We ask that CAREGIVERS PLEASE STAY IN THE CAR so that we can keep the carpool line moving and avoid backing traffic up onto the main road. PLEASE PULL FORWARD TO A PARKING SPACE OR FIRE LANE TO BUCKLE YOUR CHILD. Y staff cannot strap your child in the car seat
7. North Carolina law requires a child's safety seat or booster seat for children under 8 years old. Staff will not dismiss a child into a car if a proper car seat is not evident.

Walk -In Drop Off and Pick-Up Information

Our Toddler Classes are walk-in only—we do not use car line for our Toddlers.

Drop Off

1. The drop off takes place between 09:00am - 9:15am.
2. Children will not be allowed into the classrooms prior to 9:00 am. The teachers use this time before school starts to prepare for their day.
3. Park in a designated parking space near the Dee Dee Harris Program Center. Please do not park in the fire lane along the curb.
4. Proceed inside to be checked into the building by our Membership staff.
5. Then proceed straight down the hallway, past Y Kids, and take a left towards the preschool hallway.
6. You may walk your child into their classroom to drop them off directly with their teachers.
7. We recommend keeping goodbyes short and sweet at the classroom door. Some children may cry-others may walk right in without a glance back! Both are completely normal. Do not worry, we'll reach out if we need you.

Pick Up

1. Pick up takes place between 12:45pm – 01:00pm.
2. Children must be picked up by 1:00 PM. Late pickups will result in a fee.
3. Park in a designated parking space near the Dee Dee Harris Program Center. Please do not park in the fire lane along the curb.
4. Please enter through the Dee Dee Harris Program entrance (PAC desk) and scan in with the front staff.
5. Then proceed straight down the hallway, past Y Kids, and take a left towards the preschool hallway.
6. To pick up your child, please check in with their teacher in the classroom for check out. A staff member will verify the parent/guardian's identity and hand your child over to you.

Sibling Pick Up/Drop Off Procedures

To ensure a smooth and efficient drop-off and pick-up experience for all families, please follow the steps below when you have siblings in different age groups:

- Please drop off your older child in carline first. Then proceed to the PAC desk and walk your younger child to their classroom.
- For pick up, please make sure to pick up your younger child first inside the building and then proceed to carline.

Pavilion (Outdoor Classroom Day) Carline Procedures

Please follow the provided map to the Bojangles' Pavilion for both drop off and pick up as drop off and pick up will take place at the pavilion. Your student's teacher will check students in and out. In the event of bad weather, please check our communication app for updates from your teacher regarding any changes to Pavilion drop off/pick up procedures.

Late Arrival & Early Pick Up

1. Park in a designated parking space near the Dee Dee Harris program center entrance. Please do not park in the fire lane along the curb.
2. Walk into the Dee Dee Harris Program Center lobby and wait for a team member to assist you with check-in or check-out.

Please note:

- We are unable to accept any students between 9:15 and 9:30 AM, as this is a transition time from the car line to the classrooms. We will be strictly following this policy and appreciate your understanding.
- If you arrive between 9:15 and 9:30 am, please wait in the PAC Lobby. A team member will check your child in at 9:30 am and escort them to their classroom.
- All early pick-ups must be completed before 12:30 pm to ensure a smooth transition into our car line dismissal process.

Inclement Weather Car Line Procedure

There are times when our car line may be unable to operate due to reasons such as rain or extreme temperatures. When our car line is closed, parents/guardians will be notified via our communication app. In the event our car line is unable to operate, please follow the following procedures:

1. Park in a designated parking space near the Dee Dee Harris program center entrance. Please do not park in the fire lane along the curb.
2. Walk into the Dee Dee Harris Program Center lobby and wait for a team member to assist you with check-in or check-out.

What to Wear

Please dress your child in comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing that is easy for them to manage. Many preschool activities, such as painting, outdoor play, and eating, can be messy, so expect their clothes to get dirty. For safety during active play, we recommend secure and comfortable shoes, with closed-toe options being the preferred choice. All children who are walking need to have shoes on to participate in the programs and are required to keep them on during the entire duration of the program, except during special activities such as pool time, water play, gymnastics, creative mindfulness, etc.

What to Bring

- A backpack big enough to carry a lunch box, water bottle, extra clothes and diapers/wipes.
- Extra change of clothes - Send an extra change of clothes in your child's backpack so we have something to change into if your child's clothing gets soiled. You will need to provide new clothes whenever they are used and as the outdoor temperature changes.
- Water bottle - Send a water bottle daily labeled with your child's name.
- Lunch & snack - It is the family's responsibility to pack a separate nutritious snack and a well-balanced, healthy lunch each day for their child.

What Not to Bring

Since toys from home can be lost or cause friction among children, please do not let your child bring them. We will let you know in advance if a class is doing a Show and Tell, where your child can share a special toy. We do not allow any technology (iPads, phones, DS devices, etc.) from home at school.

Mealtime

It is the family's responsibility to pack a separate nutritious snack and a well-balanced, healthy lunch each day for their child. **We strive to teach healthy eating habits and appreciate your help from home.** We ask that your child's lunch contains the four basic food groups. Teachers will sit with the children during lunchtime to provide a positive role model. Teachers will monitor the children during lunch each day to ensure safety and to assist with any help your child may need. However, they will NOT be responsible for the order or amount your child chooses to eat.

Here are some important lunch reminders:

- Do not send candy! Chewy and hard candy are choking hazards.
- Please do not send soft drinks.
- Please pack items that your child will be able to open on their own.
- Please note we cannot refrigerate or heat your child's lunch. You are encouraged to use insulated containers to keep your child's lunch appropriately hot or cold.
- Please do not send any products containing nuts in your child's lunch or snack.
- If your child is in the Toddlers class, please cut grapes, carrots or any food that is a potential choking hazard.
- Students are asked to finish all healthy food before eating any treats.

Labeling

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of labeling **ALL** your child's personal belongings. This includes everything they bring to school and everything they wear to school: clothes, shoes, coats/jackets, hats, gloves, lunch boxes, cups, food containers, ice packs, etc._We make every effort to return lost items while your child is in preschool. If you discover that something is missing, please contact your child's teacher or check the lost and found.

Toilet Training

Our teachers in the two-year-old classes will work closely with parents/guardians on potty training. If you are potty training your two-year-old, please make your child's teachers aware and let them know what techniques you are using at home. We will try to provide as much consistency as possible between school and home, but please note there may be some routines that we cannot replicate in a school setting. Potty training is a huge developmental milestone, and we want to help make it as smooth of a process as possible.

We expect that most of our three-year-olds are potty trained but also understand that children develop at different rates. Please let us know if your child is still potty training before the first day of school so that we can work with you to develop a plan for supporting this milestone at school.

We understand that children who are potty trained still occasionally have accidents. Our teachers will assist your child in changing into clean clothes if there is an accident. Please be sure to send a change of clothes in case this happens. If accidents are a regular occurrence, we will work with you to develop a support plan.

Family Participation

Our hope is that Ballantyne Preschool Academy is a wonderful experience for both you and your child. Over the course of the year, we hope that you feel welcomed and valued by our staff. We feel honored to have your trust in the care and development of your child. Please feel free to share your questions, comments, or concerns with the Preschool admin team or your child's teachers. We ask that you follow the policies and procedures outlines in this handbook and maintain open communication with BPA teachers and staff.

Feedback

We strongly value feedback and suggestions about how to make our programs better. Please do not hesitate to email, call, or set up a meeting with us to discuss any feedback you'd like to provide. We will also periodically conduct surveys or reach out in other ways to seek your feedback and/or ideas to enhance and improve what we are doing.

Progress Updates

Teachers will provide families with an update on how children are progressing with the skills we are teaching during preschool. Parent-teacher conferences will be held twice a year: once during the first semester in October or November, and again during the second semester in January or February, to discuss your child's progress and development. Please contact the preschool admin team if you would like to request a conference at any other time during the school year.

Communication

Your child's backpack will be used to transport papers, newsletters, messages, crafts, lunch boxes and clothes. Please check your child's backpack **after school each day** to ensure that you don't miss any important news.

Open communication between families and teachers is strongly encouraged and happens through a variety of methods. Children's actions can sometimes reflect challenges or changes they are experiencing outside of the program (pet's death, divorce, conflict at school, new siblings, etc.) Please keep informed of anything happening at home that might affect your child, we are prepared to best support your child and family.

Bright-Wheel App

The primary communication tool between families and the teaching team is the Bright-wheel app. Each class will use the app to share updates about ongoing classroom activities, our new monthly theme, and upcoming events. Teachers will also post important information, pictures, and more.

You can message your child's teachers through the Bright-wheel app. Please remember that teachers do not have Bright-wheel on their personal phones and cannot reply outside of their scheduled work hours. While they are actively teaching from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, they may not be able to check messages. They'll do their best to respond either before class (between 8:30–9:00 AM) or after class (between 1:00–1:30 PM). For any urgent matters, please reach out to the admin team directly. Please note that the admin team also does not use Bright-wheel on personal phones and may not be reachable outside regular working hours.

If your child is no longer in the program, their Bright-wheel account will be deleted. This will also remove any connected documents, photos, or videos. Be sure to download anything you'd like to keep before the account is removed.

Social media

Please "like" the Morrison Family YMCA Facebook page. You can also follow us on Instagram @morrisonfamilyymca where we post fun pictures either telling our daily story of what goes on or showing preparations for big events, along with branch information.

Preschool NPS Survey

Families will be invited to complete a brief Preschool NPS Survey 3 times during the school year: at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The survey provides an opportunity to share feedback about your child's Preschool/Pre-K experience and helps us recognize program strengths and identify areas for improvement. Each survey should take no more than 3 minutes to complete. Your honest feedback is greatly appreciated and helps us continue improving our program.

Volunteer Opportunities

Please email MorrisonPreschool@ymcacharlotte.org if you are interested in volunteering at Ballantyne Preschool Academy. All volunteers must complete a background check screening to become a registered YMCA volunteer. Teachers will reach out to parents when they need assistance with special events in the classroom. We also have opportunities throughout the year for parents to help us prepare curriculum materials. (You are not required to complete the volunteer process for curriculum help.)

Room Parents

Room parents are an invaluable part of the class and preschool. Room parents are responsible for building a strong relationship with the classroom teachers and other families in the class. Duties include coordinating class parties in conjunction with the teachers, assisting in planning preschool-wide events, soliciting supplies and volunteers for events, and coordinating celebrations for teacher birthdays, holidays and teacher appreciation events.

Birthday Celebrations

You may celebrate your child's birthday in class by making advance arrangements with your child's teachers. We believe that children deserve to celebrate their birthdays. Teachers will provide options

to celebrate your child's special day at school. Parents are welcome to bring **in a non-edible novelty** for students in the class, for example, stickers or bouncy balls.

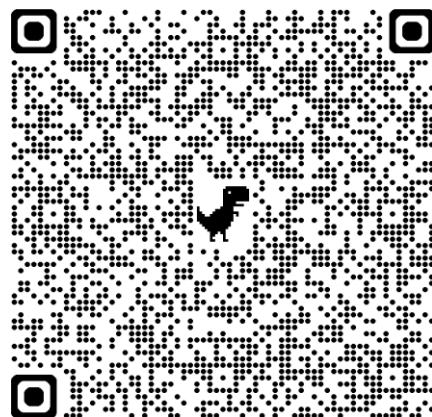
Class Parties

The classes will celebrate various holidays and special events throughout the year. The room parents will contact families when food or supplies are necessary. When purchasing party treats, please remember that we are nut free and teach healthy eating habits at preschool.

Program Policies (YMCA Programs Resource Hub)

To access all up-to-date policies, guidelines and procedures listed below, you can also scan the QR code to visit our YMCA Programs Resource Hub:

- Emergency Contacts / Authorized Pick-Ups
- Financial Policies / Procedures
- Health and Wellness Guidelines
- Medical Information and Medication
- Childcare Limit
- Behavior Guidelines
- Inclement Weather
- Child Safety
- Family Involvement
- Technology
- Our Staff
- Food Allergies
- Code of Conduct & Parent Conduct Expectations



Customer Support and Account Inquiries

For questions related to billing, program information, cancellations, childcare statements, registration issues, or waitlist status, families must submit a case through their YMCA Community Account. (instructions are below)

Submitting a case through the Community Account is the preferred method, as it allows families to submit requests directly and track the status of their inquiry. This system ensures requests are directed to the appropriate department and responded to as efficiently as possible.

Cancellations /Refunds

Please click on the [Contact Us](#) button on the YMCA homepage and fill out the form on our Cases Portal to request a program change or cancellation. You will need to log in to your YMCA online account to complete the form. All deposits and fees (registration, activity, and field trip) are non-refundable and non-transferable. We do not issue refunds for program closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or scheduled closings. We also do not issue refunds for days missed due

to individual illness, vacations, or program suspensions and dismissals resulting from violations to our behavior guidelines.

Preschool program cancellations received between the 1st and 15th of the month will be enrolled through the end of the current month. Cancellations received between the 16th and the end of the month will be enrolled through the 15th of the following month.

Contacts Directory

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the Ballantyne Preschool Academy or other YMCA programs, you can reach the following staff/departments:

- Preschool e-mail: morrisonpreschool@ymcacharlotte.org
- Morrison YMCA Front Desk: 704 716 4600
- Mailing Address: 9405 Bryant Farms Rd, Charlotte, NC 28277
- Website: <https://www.ymcacharlotte.org/locations/morrison-family-ymca>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MorrisonYMCA/>

- Asena Konuralp :Preschool Manager
asena.konuralp@ymcacharlotte.org , 704-716-4667

- Allison Hart : Preschool Lead Associate
allison.hart-nguyen@ymcacharlotte.org , 704-716-4623

- Caitlin Simers : Preschool Lead Associate
caitlin.simers@ymcacharlotte.org, 704-716-4622