



DISCOVERY KIDS

**PARENT HANDBOOK
2025-2026**

Dear parents,

Welcome to the Brookville YMCA's Discovery Kids Learning Center. We are proud to have you as a part of our family. Over the years the YMCA has been privileged to care for thousands of children in our community. You have joined an organization that has a history of over 100 years of working towards building strong kids, strong families, and strong communities. We hope your relationship with the YMCA and Discovery Kids is a lasting and enriching experience from which your whole family will benefit.

When you enroll in Discovery Kids, you are becoming part of an international movement to put Judeo-Christian Principles into practice through programs that develop healthy bodies, minds and spirits. Our curriculum is planned with this mission in mind. Our goals are to:

- Build independence, self-esteem and confidence through creative expression.
- Teach the process of problem solving and decision-making.
- Provide an unbiased multi-cultural curriculum that allows children to respect themselves, their peers, adults, and others.
- Create a bond between children, parents and staff, which enables the nursery school to enrich the lives of all involved.
- Teach the skills needed for a positive kindergarten experience.

In order for us to accomplish these goals, there must be certain policies and procedures in place to assure that we provide an appropriate and responsible program. This handbook is provided as a tool for you to use to help understand those policies and procedures. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference.

We look forward to working with your family and being a part of your child's growing years. We are available to speak with you if you need any assistance. Please don't hesitate to call or visit us at YMCA if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Taylor Hopper
Center Director / Teacher
Discovery Kids Learning Center

Tina Householder
CEO
Brookville YMCA

Location and Hours

The Discovery Kids Learning Center is located on the first floor of the Brookville YMCA, 125 Main Street, Brookville. The Discovery Kids Learning Center is open from the beginning of September through the end of May, and observes the same holidays as the Brookville School District. Classes are held Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 11:30am.

Staff/child ratio are kept low to ensure a quality preschool education. The Discovery Kids preschool program is limited to eight children, with one supervisor/certified teacher present at all times.

Snow Days and Delayed Openings

The Discovery Kids Learning Center will be closed on any day that the Brookville School District is closed for inclement weather. Class will be cancelled if the school has a two-hour delay. Closings and delays will be announced on local radio stations and will be posted on the Brookville Area School District website. Parents of Discovery Kids students will be notified of a closing through Class Dojo.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the **Discovery Kids Learning Center** is based on the mission of our parent association, the **Brookville YMCA**. That mission is “**to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.**” Under the guidance of experienced, qualified teachers, each child will have the opportunity to develop **Spirit** through positive social interaction character development education and creative expression; to develop **Mind** through discovery learning centers, themed activities and skills reinforcement; and to develop **Body** through large motor activities, cooperative sports and games, and health and wellness education. Every child will be treated as an individual, learning through hands-on fun in an age appropriate environment.

Inclusion Policy

The Discovery Kids Learning Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in preschool. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

Children who participate in the program and who require special adaptation or accommodations (not required by typically developing children involved with the program) must have a Care Plan that addresses routines and emergencies specific to that child. The Care Plan is completed by the child's health care professionals and specialists, with the parents and the director/teacher of the Discovery Kids Learning Center, to determine the steps required to accommodate the child's needs. For children who are eligible for early intervention services from River Immediate Unit 6, the Care Plan can be the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP). The Care Plan must be reviewed and updated, as necessary, each time the child has a follow-up visit with a health care professional or specialist and no less than every six (6) months.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy

The Brookville YMCA and Discovery Kids Learning Center are open to all applicants regardless of race, sex, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, disability, age, or Limited English Proficiency (LEP). There is no discrimination in admission policy or the use of the facility. Anyone who believes he/she has been discriminated against may file a complaint with any of the following agencies:

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1210
PA Human Relations Commission
Pittsburgh Regional Office
301 Fifth Avenue
Suite 390, Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Western Regional Office
301 Fifth Avenue
Suite 410

U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
Office for Civil Right
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

Staffing

All staff members are required by the PA Department of Human Services to take a Mandated Reporter training and Health and Safety training upon initial employment. Staff must also take annual trainings in emergency management, water safety, and fire safety and have current certifications in pediatric first aid and CPR. All staff members are required to obtain Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check, a Child Abuse History Clearance, and FBI

Fingerprinting. Qualifications for the positions of Director/Teacher and Aide are verified by the Department of Human Services during annual inspections.

Student Records

The Discovery Kids Learning Center is licensed through the Department of Human Services and is a member of Pennsylvania's Keystone Stars Program. As such, we are required to meet strict licensing guidelines, including the maintenance of student files which are inspected annually.

The information contained in a student's record is privileged and confidential; and therefore, may not be released to another person or agency without your written consent. Parent/guardians have complete access to their child's records. A copy of the child's record shall be retained at the facility for at least one year after the termination of service, unless the entire record is transferred to the parent/guardian or to another agency at the request of the parent/guardian.

Student records shall contain:

- Completed Registration and Tuition Agreement
- Child Health Assessment Signed by a Physician
- Immunization Record
- If Applicable, Parent Letter Declining Influenza Vaccination
- Emergency Contact /Parental Consent Form
- Child Services Report
- Brigrance Screenings
- Release of Information Form
- YMCA Release and Waiver of Liability and Indemnity Agreement
- Parental Consent for Use of Swimming Pool
- Photo Release Form
- If Necessary, Record of accidents, injuries and illnesses sustained while enrolled at Discovery Kids Learning Center
- Receipt of Parent Handbook Signature Page

All documentation must be signed and dated by the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Health Assessment Immunization Policy

When enrolling your child in the Center, a Child Health Assessment form must be completed by your family physician. If the form is not returned within thirty (30) days from the start of school, your child will be removed from the program until the appropriate form is returned.

You will be required to provide the center with specific date of immunization for the following communicable diseases.:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP)
- Pneumococcal (PCV13)
- Polio (IPV)
- Rotavirus (RV)
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)
- Haemophilus influenza Type B (Hib)
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis A
- Varicella (Chicken Pox Vaccine)
- Influenza Vaccine (Yearly Flu Shot)

If you do not want your child to receive the yearly influenza vaccine, you must submit a signed and dated letter informing the Department of Human Services of your decision.

When children in the center have been exposed to one of the above illnesses, all parents will be notified via a phone call and the distribution of an information fact sheet on the illness. The fact sheet will include information on symptoms, course of disease, treatment, etc

Illness Policy

Your child's teacher should be informed about the nature of any illness. Children are not to remain at the facility if they display any of these signs or symptoms: a fever over 100 in the past 24 hours, diarrhea or vomiting in the last 24 hours, suspected or confirmed throat or sinus infections and has been on an antibiotic less than 24 hours, head lice, or open lesions in the mouth or on the body. Staff will determine which children with mild illnesses can remain in care and which need to be excluded.

Arrival and Departure

An adult should escort each child into the building from the parking lot. Do not arrive more than five minutes before the start of class. Please sign-in your child on the daily attendance sheet located inside the door to the left.

All parents or caregivers picking up children must wait outside in the lobby for dismissal, so as not to disrupt the class. We will be dismissed after both PAL classes are dismissed, which should be around 11:35am. Please sign-out your child on the daily attendance sheet. We understand that occasional delays happen due to emergencies, traffic, or other circumstances. If this is the case, please notify the school as soon as possible.

On your child's Emergency Contact Form, provide the names of anyone to whom we may release your child. Children will not be released to anyone whose name does not appear on the form, unless we receive written consent, which includes the name of the person, the date and your signature. During an emergency, phone calls will be accepted. You must tell the staff the nature of the emergency, the name and a visual description of the pick-up person, and expected arrival time.

We will not release your child to anyone who cannot produce the proper identification (if unknown to the staff) or anyone under the age of eighteen. If there are custody issues involving your child, you must provide the school with court papers in advance indicating who has permission to pick-up your child.

Backpacks

Your child is required to bring a backpack to school each day, labeled with his/her name. All personal items should be carried in the backpack. Items are less likely to be dropped and lost if secured in a backpack. Craft projects and important parent information will come home in your child's backpack, so please check them every day!

Clothing

Please dress your child in clothing that you do not mind being soiled or stained. This allows children to relax and enjoy without worrying about their clothes.

For safety and comfort, we strongly recommend that your child wear rubber-soled shoes, sneakers, or sandals with back straps.

Parents are asked to send a change of clothing that may be kept at the nursery school in case of an accident. Place a shirt, pair of pants, socks and underwear in a ziploc bag labeled with your child's name. If your child should have an accident, the soiled clothing will be returned to you sealed in the ziploc bag.

Potty Training/Diapers

All children must be potty-trained to participate in the nursery school program. No pull-ups will be accepted.

Parent/Staff Communication

We believe that parent involvement is essential to the success of your child's nursery school experience. Your understanding and cooperation with all policies is basic to the smooth operation of the school. Please feel free to discuss your child's experience with our teachers as soon as a question or problem arises. Any information pertinent to your child's health or happenings at home, which may affect his/her behavior at school, should be shared with the teacher.

It is important for you to read all of the materials that are sent home in your child's backpack. To keep you better informed, you will receive a monthly newsletter containing administrative information, descriptions of themes and activities, field trip and special event information, and ideas for supplementing classroom learning.

Curriculum

The Discovery Kids curriculum has been designed to reinforce the basic skills necessary for a positive experience in kindergarten. Children will be encouraged to participate in age appropriate activities, which facilitate the development of the child socially, intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

Our program will include lessons activities that incorporate the following curriculum components: character development, social competence and conflict resolution, approaches to learning, language and literacy development, discovery science, math concepts, health/wellness/fitness, small and gross motor skills, and arts and crafts.

Early Learning Standards

The curriculum of the Discovery Kids Learning Center is based on the Early Learning Standards developed as a joint project of the Departments of Education and Human Services. The Early Learning Standards are meant to guide the development of pre-kindergarten programs, and were developed by a Task Force consisting of early childhood practitioners and administrators, policy analysts and researchers, and university faculty. The PA Early Learning Standards can be found at <https://www.pakeys.org/pa-early-learning-initiatives/early-learning-standards/>.

Screenings

The *Keystone Stars Performance Standards* state that “a research-based screening tool is to be used within 45 days of enrollment to identify children who may need evaluation and/or

intervention strategies”. Our facility uses the *Brigance Screening*, which is performed at the beginning of the school year using the five-year-old screening. Subsequent screenings are performed in January and April to monitor the children’s progress.

Parent Conferences

The *Keystone Stars Performance Standards* state that “a minimum of one family conference is offered per year to discuss children’s progress and behavioral, social, and physical needs”.

A conference is offered to the family in September or October if their child is experiencing behavioral, social, or physical problems or difficulties or if the *Brigance Screening* shows a developmental delay or disorder. Parents are made aware of the community resources available to them.

A family conference is offered to all parents in January, after the second *Brigance Screening*, to discuss progress based on the screening, as well as, authentic assessment, curriculum-based assessment, and work sampling methods. At this time information is given to the parents regarding kindergarten registration and transitioning.

Referrals to Outside Services

If the *Brigance Screening* or any observation of the child results in a concern about the child’s development, the director will relay these concerns to the parents. With the parents’ permission, the child will be referred to the Riverview Intermediate Unit 6. Consultative services are provided by the IU to assist in determining if a child has special needs and, if needed, to design an appropriate early intervention plan.

Parents who have questions or concerns about their child’s development may also call the CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288. The CONNECT Helpline assists families in locating resources and providing information regarding child development for children ages birth to 5. In addition, CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288. More information can be found www.connectpa.net

The Riverview Immediate Unit 6 provides speech therapy at no cost to our families. Services are usually provided in our classroom before and after your child’s regular nursery school hours. Parents or caregivers either drop-off the child a half-hour early or pick up the child a half hour later than usual on their child’s speech therapy day.

Snack Policy

Parents will be asked to provide the classroom snack and drink on a rotating basis. A schedule will be included with the monthly newsletter. We request that the snacks be a “healthy choice” and that the drink milk or juice. Water will also be available at the school. Please provide plastic utensils if necessary. There will be a refrigerator available to keep snack and drinks cold. **DO NOT SEND ANY FOOD THAT CONTAINS NUTS OR PEANUT BUTTER!** Please notify the teacher if your child has any food allergies.

Show and Tell

Show and Tell encourages self-confidence and stimulates each child’s ability to express themselves. To make it a successful part of your child’s experience at school, please keep in mind the following:

- Each child may bring in a show and tell item only on his/her designated snack day.
- Please limit Show and Tell to one item
- If your child is shy, encourage him/her to practice describing the object with family before presenting at school.

Field Trips

Trips outside the classroom are planned to broaden the children’s awareness of their community and to enhance the curriculum of the classroom. You will receive information about field trips around a month in advance.

Birthdays

We will plan for your scheduled snack day to fall on/close to your child’s birthday. You may send in a special treat that day, but please keep it simple. (Cupcakes are easier to manage than a large cake that must be cut and served.) Take-home treats may be sent to school, but will not be passed out until it is home. Summer birthdays will be celebrated on your child’s helper/snack day in May.

Behavioral Management Plan

Discovery Kids is committed to providing an environment where children can feel safe and comfortable while having an enjoyable time. We use positive behavioral support and approach, which focuses on preventing behavior problems by supporting children in learning appropriate

social skills and emotional responses. Children are encouraged to respect other people and property, to be responsible for their actions, and to practice skills that will allow them to resolve conflicts and have their needs met without use of aggressive or destructive behaviors. Staff members ensure that children are provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior. Our goal is to prevent behavioral difficulties between children and lessen the need for disciplinary action on the part of staff.

Parents may request a copy of the Behavior Management Policy, in its entirety, from the center director.

Child Abuse Prevention

The Brookville YMCA has a “Child Abuse Prevention Policy” which outlines the procedures involved in the hiring, training and supervision of staff; appropriate conduct related to the supervision of children; reporting procedures of suspected abuse; responsibilities to parents and recommendations for good practices related to the above. (Parents/Guardians are welcome to view the policy in its entirety at any time.)

All YMCA staff members are required to have Mandated Reporter Training and must obtain a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance.

The Brookville YMCA prohibits its employees from babysitting the children who attend YMCA programs, unless (1) there was a relationship prior to meeting at the YMCA or (2) the staff person obtains a written waiver from the child’s parent or guardian. The YMCA also prohibits employees from transporting children enrolled in YMCA programs in non-YMCA owned or leased vehicles during and outside of program hours. Your cooperation with these policies is appreciated.

Emergency Management Plan

The Emergency Management Plan describes the procedures that will be used by the Discovery Kids Learning Center in the event of extraordinary circumstances that threaten lives and property. (Parents/Guardians are welcome to view the plan in its entirety at any time.) In the event that we must evacuate the facility, children and staff will relocate to Brookville First Baptist Church. If we must evacuate the area, we will relocate to. Emergency Contact information will be taken along, and parents will be notified from the shelter of the need to pick-up their children.

Staff members participate in an annual emergency management training and fire safety training. Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis, and fire extinguishers are inspected annually.

Medical Emergencies and Accidents

In case of a medical emergency or accident, the director will call 911 immediately, prior to any attempt to contact the parents. The director will then contact parents or, if necessary, another person listed as an emergency contact. If the parents are unavailable, and the emergency requires emergency transport, the child's teacher will accompany the child in the ambulance to the Brookville Hospital. The teacher will bring a copy of the child's *Emergency Contact Form* containing any known medical issues or allergies, as well as insurance information. Parents can meet emergency vehicles at the hospital, if they are unable to get to the center in time to accompany their child in an emergency vehicle.

Food and Environmental Allergies

Food Allergies are to be listed on the *Emergency Contact Form*. The name of each child with a food allergy will be posted in the classroom with a list of that child's food allergies. The daily snack is screened by the teacher each day to be sure it does not contain any ingredients that may be harmful to the child with a food allergy. Parents may choose to send in a separate snack for their child or keep a supply of snacks at the center.

Any child with an allergy is to have a Care Plan that gives instructions on what medications to give or procedures to follow if a child is exposed to an allergen. Emergency medications (e.g., EpiPen) that may be required by that child will be taken on all field trips or excursions away from the school. Due to the possibility of children in our program with peanut allergies and life threatening anaphylaxis reactions to peanuts and tree nuts (almond, brazil nut, cashew, filbert/hazel nut, hickory nut, pecan, pine nut, pistachio, macadamia and walnut), we will strive to maintain a nut free program.

Care Plans for Children with Special Needs

All children with special health care needs (asthma, diabetes, cerebral palsy, bleeding disorders, seizure disorders, sensory disorders, autism, severe allergies, or many other conditions) are to have a Care Plan completed by the parents and their primary care provider. The Care Plan provides guidance for the daily and emergency care of the child and for the education of staff members. The plan should be updated after every hospitalization or significant change in health status.

Tuition Policies

YMCA Membership: Enrollment in the Discovery Kids Learning Center entitles your child to a complimentary preschool membership to the Brookville YMCA. The membership is in effect for one year beginning September 1st of the year of enrollment.

Tuition Agreement: Parents must sign a tuition agreement when enrolling their child in the learning center. A ten dollar (\$10) non-refundable deposit is due with said agreement.

Payment Methods: Tuition is due the first program day of the month. Payments may be made by cash (obtain a receipt), money order, check, Visa or MasterCard. Please pay at the Membership Service Desk at the YMCA or mail your payment to 125 Main St., Brookville PA 15825. Submit the correct page from your monthly payment booklet with your remittance. Checks should be made out to "The Brookville YMCA". Please put your child's first and last name on the check if it is different from your own name.

Absences: You are responsible for paying every month to reserve a space for your child in the program. Tuition for nursery school is a flat monthly fee and will not be prorated for days not attended (i.e., sickness, vacation, and snow days.)

Receipts: It is the responsibility to keep all copies of receipts pertaining to the learning center. In the event of a missing payment or question regarding payments, the receipts may be required for proof of payment.

Insufficient Funds: Returned checks are automatically forwarded to the Brookville YMCA for restitution. A service fee of \$20 must be paid in addition to the amount of the returned check. Restitution for a returned check or draft (including service charges) must be made within five business days of notification or the child may not return to school until payment occurs.

Late Payment Fee: A late payment charge of \$10.00/weekly will be assessed for payments not received the first day of the month. After a two-week period, the tuition including the late payment charge must be paid prior to the child returning to the program.

Early Drop Off/Late Pick Up Policy: Please adhere to program hours. Do not drop your children off early, even if the teachers are in the classroom. Our staff needs time to prepare their day. The late pick-up fee is \$5.00 per child for the first 15 minutes past dismissal time and \$2.50 for every 5 minutes thereafter. This charge will be added to your bill and must be paid in full.

with your next tuition payment. Consistent lateness in picking up your child may result in dismissal from the program.

Withdrawal Policy: The Discovery Kids Learning Center requires a 30-day written notice when a child is withdrawn from the program. No refunds will be given.