

Family Handbook

2025-2026 School Year

Y-Koda Nature School (YKNS)

Maywood Environmental Park

3615 Mueller Road

Sheboygan, WI 53081

<https://sheboygancountymmca.org/camp-y-koda/maywood-nature-school-4k.html>

Welcome Families!

Schedule

Monday- Thursday

No School on Fridays

Morning Session: 8:00-11:05am

Afternoon Session: 12:00-3:05pm

Philosophy Statement

We believe that the best learning experiences in early childhood education are two-fold.

One- That all children should have a high-quality early childhood experience that's developmentally appropriate, preparing children for kindergarten.

Two- That all children should have opportunities to connect with nature. Academic experiences should be designed around the natural world to stimulate a love of learning and build a life-long connection with the natural world and to develop environmental attitudes and behaviors.

The ethos of nature-based preschools allows learners the time and space to develop their interests, skills, and understanding through practical, hands-on experiences. Y-Koda Nature School provides freedom to explore, play, build, create, imagine, and use senses to experience the outdoor environment and engage with others.

We recognize every child is an individual who has their own learning style, interests, ethnic background and culture.

Y-Koda Nature School uses the Reggio Emilia approach to develop student interest in projects that educate and empower young learners. Teachers facilitate cooperation and collaboration skills, creating an environment where students are comfortable leading, working, and socializing with others.

While Y-Koda Nature School assures that our students have mastered the academic skills needed to transition to kindergarten, we further value that our students have developed higher order thinking skills through valued hours of outdoor play that will serve them throughout their lifetime.

Y-Koda Nature School has small student to teacher ratios. Teachers and naturalists with thorough understandings of both nature and child development assure the highest standards of quality nature based early childhood education.

Y-Koda Nature School is designed to promote a strong start in physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and language development that will serve students long after they leave.

Skills that will be emphasized through nature based learning

Language and Literacy

- Label uppercase alphabet letters
- Show awareness of initial letter sounds
- Identify rhyming words
- Use vocabulary to express ideas
- Use shapes, lines, and figures to convey ideas

Math

- Label 8 colors
- Label 6 shapes
- Label numerals 0-10
- Count orally to 20 and object count to 20
- Make number sets using objects
- Identify spatial relationships

Fine Motor

- Demonstrate appropriate grasp pattern and stabilize the paper with opposing hand
- Draw a vertical line, horizontal line, circle, cross, diagonal line, square, and letters in name
- Emerging skills of drawing a person
- Independently place scissors on hand to cut lines and basic shapes

Social Skills

- Engage in appropriate social interactions with others
- Demonstrate an understanding of rules and social expectations
- Recognize the emotions of self and others
- Express wants and needs
- Social-Emotional and Behavioral Support

Attendance

If your child is going to be absent from school please email our school at the following address: yknsattendance@gmail.com.

We need to know the date of the absence as well as the reason for the absence.

YKNS Phone

920 267-7979- non-emergency number

If it is an emergency please call 920 467-6882. This is the office at Camp Y-Koda. They will make sure to get a message to the YKNS staff in a timely manner.

Drop off

There will be a designated area for drop off/pick up. We ask that you refrain from entering the classroom during drop off each day. Drop off begins at 7:50am for the morning session and 11:50am for the afternoon session. Please drop off your child promptly or they will be marked tardy beginning at 8:01 for the morning session and 12:01 for the afternoon session. Late drop offs disrupt the flow of the program and hinder learning.

Pick up

Please pick up your child from the drop off/pick up area daily. Please refrain from entering the classroom without an appointment. Our childcare uses this space immediately after school and during lunch. Staff will be outdoors for 5 minutes after school hours for parent communication. If more time for discussion is desired, please schedule an appointment with staff. This is their lunch break and prep time, so please be respectful of their time.

Update Your Information

For your child's safety and well-being, please remember to inform office staff, Sarah Dezwarte, via email at sdezwarde@sheboygancountymca.org of any changes to your contact information, including address and phone numbers. This includes your emergency contacts, work phone numbers, and child care phone numbers. In addition, it is helpful if you inform the classroom teacher of any changes in your marital status and/or living situation.

Label Personal Items

To prevent loss of personal items, please label all backpacks, as well as boots, mittens, caps, shoes, and other small personal items.

Home Items

Please refrain from sending any extra items that are not listed on our supply list with your child. With limited, shared space, we are unable to keep items beyond an extra set of clothing at school. Unless your child uses a stuffed animal for rest time, please keep home toys at home.

Safety Drills

Your child's safety while attending school is very important to our staff. Throughout the school year we will practice various drills including fire, tornado and intruder drills. As children may not understand what an intruder is, the children will be told to go to the class's "safe place".

Student Dress

School District policy states that students must be dressed neatly in a manner that does not distract from the educational process or impede their health or safety. It also states that they must be dressed appropriately for school.

Parents are reminded not to send their child(ren) with flip-flops or shoes with heels for footwear. With the indoor and outdoor play areas, children are encouraged to wear appropriate footwear for their safety (hiking boots, rain boots, or snow boots). Remember to have children dressed appropriately for the weather each day, making sure children will be prepared for unexpected changes that may occur as the day continues.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of our educational program. Parents will be provided with information and a permission slip regarding each upcoming trip that requires bus transportation. Written parent permission is needed before a child can go on each such trip, your child will be left at school in another classroom if the permission slip is not returned. Any parent who does not want their child to participate in a trip should contact the child's teacher a minimum of one school day in advance so other plans for the child can be made. If you would like to join your child's class on a field trip you MUST fill out and return the "Fieldtrip Chaperone/Volunteer Form" for each trip.

School Snack

Please send a snack with your child each day. Extra snacks will be provided if a child forgets, but parents will be reminded if a child continually needs extra snacks. As an environmentally-based school, we *strongly* encourage limiting waste when choosing snack ideas. We understand that convenience matters, but where possible, please consider reusable baggies and/or foods such as apples or bananas that do not require packaging.

Below is a list of a few healthy snack ideas

- String cheese
- Sausage bites
- Trail/cereal mixes
- Pretzels
- 100% fruit snacks
- Apples
- Bananas
- Grapes
- Celery sticks with peanut butter or cream cheese
- Baby carrots with dip
- Teddy Grahams

- Graham crackers

Medicine

We understand that children may sometimes need to take medication during the school day. To ensure the safety of all of our children, the district has written policies to guide giving children medication.

These policies require:

ANY medication must be in the original container. Pharmacists in the Sheboygan area have indicated a willingness to provide two containers — one for home and one for school.

Parents are responsible for bringing medication to school and picking up unused medication within 10 days after the medication is discontinued. Students are not allowed to transport their medication to or from school.

The label must always state the student's name, name of drug, dosage name and telephone number of the pharmacy and name of the doctor.

Before any medication can be administered to a child by a district employee, a medication form must be completed. Non-prescription medications require parental consent for administration. Prescription medications require parental and physician consent. Medication Authorization Forms are available from the school office or from downloading the form from the Sheboygan Area School District website (www.sheboygan.k12.wi.us). Reference: SASD Policy 5141.2 (a) (SASD Rights and Responsibilities of Students Handbook))

Allergies

The Sheboygan Area School District requests that an Allergy Information Form be completed in the event your child has a food or insect allergy. This is a precaution to protect your child's health and safety. Please email Sarah Dezwarte to obtain the medication form.

Special Health Concerns

Your child's health and safety are very important to us. We appreciate knowing special health concerns about your child. Specialized health forms are available for you to provide additional information.

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME

Please screen your child daily for signs of illness. Students should not be sent to school if they have symptoms.

Unfortunately, children are occasionally kept home from school for reasons other than illness. Unnecessary absences have a negative effect on a student's attitude, schoolwork and progress. Use your own judgment and remember that sick children should be home; well children should be at school.

Many childhood illnesses are most contagious in the early stages of illness, before symptoms develop. A child who comes to school sick puts the health of classmates and teachers at risk.

The following are guidelines to assist parents in making an informed decision whether to send a child to school or keep them at home. The information below is NOT intended as medical advice – it is designed to provide guidelines to be followed until your doctor can be reached for medical advice. Your doctor should be consulted regarding any childhood illnesses.

Fever: A fever is a warning sign that there is an infection in the body. The best way to check for a fever is with a thermometer. A child with an oral temperature above 100.4 should stay home. Children should stay home until they have been without a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Stomachache: Call your doctor if your child has a stomachache that is continuous, of sudden onset, limits his/her activity, or is accompanied by a fever.

Vomiting: If vomiting occurs, keep your child home until he/she can keep food and liquids down for 24 hours without any more vomiting. Call your doctor if your child does not improve or if symptoms get worse.

Pink Eye: If your child's eye is pink or bloodshot with white or yellow discharge and/or eyelid tenderness, keep your child home and call the doctor. Your child may attend school if the eye is pink or bloodshot with clear watery drainage and no tenderness.

Colds: Common colds are an everyday part of life for children. However, children with a hacking cough or heavy nasal congestion should be kept home, even if there is no fever. If your child complains of a sore throat and has no other symptoms, he/she may go to school. If white spots can be seen in the back of the throat, if a fever is present with a sore throat, or if the sore throat lasts longer than two days, keep your child home and call your doctor.

Headache: A headache alone is generally not a reason to keep a child home from school. If the headache is severe, causing vomiting, or is following a fall or other head injury, call your doctor immediately.

Rash: A rash may be the first sign of an illness such as chickenpox. A rash or spots may cover your child's entire body or may appear in only one area. Do not send a child with a rash to school until your doctor has said it is safe to do so. School personnel are not allowed to diagnose a rash. Also, make sure your child's immunizations are up to date.

Wisconsin Division of Health Administrative Rule H49.01 (school attendance) states:

➤ All teachers, school authorities, health authorities and health officers having jurisdiction shall not permit the attendance in any private, parochial or public school of any pupil afflicted with a severe cold, itch, scabies, lice or other vermin, ringworm of the scalp, ringworm of the exposed portions of the body, impetigo, epidemic jaundice, infective conjunctivitis (pink eye) or any contagious skin disease or who is filthy in body or clothing or who has a communicable disease so designated by the State Division of Health unless specifically exempted in the rules. The teachers in all schools shall, without delay, send home any pupil who is sick, even if the ailment is unknown, and said teacher shall inform parents or

guardian of said pupil and also the local health officer as speedily as possible and said health officer shall examine into the case and take such action as is reasonable and necessary for the benefit of the pupil and to prevent the spread of infection.

➤ Parents, guardians or other persons having control of any child who is sick in any way or who is afflicted with any disease covered by this rule shall not permit said child to attend any public, private or parochial school or to be presenting any public place.

School Closings

We will follow SASD school closings. It will be announced via their website and the YMCA Camp Y-Koda and Maywood Environmental Park Facebook pages.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHT AND PRIVACY ACT

Parents/legal guardians of minor students, are hereby notified that pursuant to the Family Education Rights and Privacy act of 1974, you are entitled to review those records, files, documents and other materials containing information directly related to your child which are maintained by the Sheboygan Area School District. You shall have an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of pupil records (exception is academic grades) to ensure records are not inaccurate or misleading. The following information may be made available to the public unless you restrict its release by written notice to the principal. Release restrictions are effective for the academic year.

Restriction notice must be filed each year.

A. When appropriate, directory data may be made public through printed programs, news releases of awards, etc.

B. Directory information which may be released includes: student's name, date and place of birth, picture, awards received, extra-curricular activities students have participated in, and the current school in which the child is enrolled.

C. Directory data also includes the addresses of graduating seniors after the list is approved by the Board of Education. Directory data also includes the addresses of graduating seniors after the list is approved by the Board of Education.

References and further details:

Policy 5125 Pupil Progress/Records, Revised June, 1995

Family Educational Right and Privacy Act and State Statute 118.125 (b) and (2)(J)
(SASD Rights and Responsibilities of Students Handbook)

SHEBOYGAN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

830 Virginia Avenue Sheboygan, WI 53081

The Sheboygan Area School District does not discriminate on the basis of age, handicap, marital or parental status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

Staff

Director of Education, Camp Y-Koda Outdoor Skills and Education, YKNS Director

Sarah Dezwarte
sdezwarde@sheboygancountyymca.org
(920) 467-6882

4k Teachers

Anna Buechler
Abuechler@sheboygancountyymca.org

YKNS Naturalist

Mary Gross
mgross@sheboygancountyymca.org
(920) 267-7979

Environmental Education Staff

YMCA Camp Y-Koda has a full staff of Environmental Educators. They often assist with environmental programming in YKNS and sub as needed for regular staff if they have a teaching license or license to sub.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an important aspect of our program. You may see strange faces but rest assured all volunteers have been trained in our philosophy and have been Department of Children and Families background checked. Volunteers may include parents from our present or past YKNS families, community members, students from childcare programs or high school students.

NBDC Staff

NBDC Director
Sarah Dezwarte
Sdezwarde@sheboygancountyymca.org
(920) 467-6882

Teachers

Lydia Kuznicki- Lead Teacher and Play practitioner
lkuznicki@sheboygancountyymca.org
(920) 226-9149
Sara DesArmo- Afternoon Lead Teacher
(920) 226-9149

Fundraisers

YKNS depends on fundraisers to help with supplies, field trips and big items to meet learning goals, student engagement in nature. Our two largest fundraisers are the annual Scarecrow Festival at Christopher Farm and Garden in October. The other is our annual fundraising banquet in December. You can assist with cash donations, product/in-kind donations or by volunteering your time. Watch for more information to come home as the events approach.

Specials and Exploratory Classes:

- Students will be participating in art, music, physical education instruction and exploratory courses on a regular basis.
- Outdoor spaces will be utilized as much as possible.
- Naturalist programs will offered daily in Maywood's beautiful outdoor study areas such as the pond, prairie, and forest.
- We have multiple outdoor learning areas designed specifically for outdoor play and learning.

Thank you for choosing YKNS! We look forward to the upcoming school year with you and your child.