

What will my child learn?

Play is fun! And it's also the cornerstone of healthy development and future academic success. Through play, the YMCA Playing to Learn curriculum helps children develop a lifelong joy for learning.



Math & Numeracy

Many of the classic toys found in playrooms—such as nesting toys, jigsaw puzzles, building blocks—are designed to develop basic math principles, such as numbers, measurement, time and patterns.

Science & Technology

Children are constantly exploring, questioning, taking things apart and putting them back together. These are scientific activities that are reinforced as they play with water and sand, mix paint colours, or stack blocks and watch them fall.

Literacy, Language & Reading

Children who are read to early in life find it easier to learn to read and write later on. Even simply handling books teaches babies how they "work." And imaginative activities, such as making signs for a pretend store or playing the role of a firefighter, helps children develop language and writing skills.

Music, Visual Art & Dramatic Play

Children use dramatic play to rework their experiences, which helps them understand people and their actions. Listening to music, looking at visual art, and creating drawings, playdough sculptures and noisy tunes boosts hand-eye coordination, creativity and self-confidence—all keys to later academic success.



**YMCAs across
Southwestern Ontario**

Locations:

Jerry McCaw Family Centre	519-336-9622 opt 0 ext 236
St. Anne Child Care	519-542-8846
St. Joseph Child Care	519-862-5071
YMCA Learning & Career Centre	519-336-9622 opt 0 ext 236
Our Lady of Fatima	519-480-0446
Our Little Place	519-351-1931

Questions? We want to hear from you.

www.ymcaswo.ca



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YMCA Playing to Learn™

Quality care and education of young children

What is Playing to Learn?

YMCA Playing to Learn is a research-based early childhood education curriculum for children from infancy through age six. It is a unique and forward-thinking approach to early learning that recognizes play as the primary way children learn and develop. Experienced early childhood educators guide little ones through their day in a stimulating, homelike play environment that inspires discovery and imagination. More than 35,000 children in YMCA centres across Canada are playing their way to healthy development and academic success.



Why play?

Children understand the joy of play and the happiness it generates in their lives. We know it is also a vehicle that propels their learning and healthy social, physical and intellectual development—an idea supported by academic research and YMCA's 15 years of experience working with this curriculum. Play makes discovery fun and prepares children for the more formal classroom experience of elementary school.

Play is...

- **Magical.** Play is a basic part of childhood that offers rich, enjoyable and memorable experiences. During play, children combine everyday situations and their environment with fantasy—so they learn while being absorbed in fun.
- **Active.** It increases physical fitness and helps children develop balance, co-ordination and strength. YMCA centres' indoor and outdoor environments allow children to explore a variety of physical activities.
- **Social.** Play promotes social and communication skills, empathy, friendships and emotional control. Kids learn to make positive choices and can better understand their own and others' feelings through play.
- **Solitary.** Many children, especially younger ones, prefer to play on their own. The YMCA child-care environment offers quiet corners for relaxation, thinking, reading and sharing books.



- **Therapeutic.** Play builds resilience and helps children manage stress. Through play, they develop confidence, learn from their mistakes, and discover how to identify, address and control their inner feelings.
- **Academic.** Kids may not know it, but play prepares them for school by promoting literacy, numeracy and writing. By playing imaginatively and investigating the world around them, children develop scientific, mathematical and other intellectual abilities.

Who will be teaching my child?

In YMCA centres, play is planned, respected, observed, supported and documented—all by early childhood educators who possess the training, values and skills required to care for children and their families. Throughout the program, they support your family by:

- Observing, documenting and communicating regularly about your child's progress
- Planning activities based on early childhood development concepts
- Adhering to the YMCA's high standards of child safety and care

The early childhood educator's most important role within the program is that of a play partner—observing children's actions, joining in activities when appropriate, and broadening the scope of the play by pointing out relevant facts or demonstrating something new. As a play partner, the early childhood

educator also engages other children when possible and uses a calm approach to help kids talk through conflicts.

Like play, young children's relationships have been found to fundamentally influence their brain development. YMCA early childhood educators help little ones form positive relationships by:

- Building dependable, positive and nurturing ties
- Fostering healthy social connections among children
- Responding to each child's individual developmental needs through observation and reaction to his or her cues

