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YMCA CHILD CARE PHILOSOPHY

YMCA childcare programs are built on the concepts of **family, child, community** and **accessibility**.

Family. YMCA child care is family-centered care, which means parents must be included in the care process. The goal of YMCA child care is to support and assist the parent, to strengthen parent-child relationships, and to increase importance of the family unit.

Child. Many children spend a significant amount of their childhood in YMCA programs. Fortunately, these programs provide caring role models and age-appropriate experiences that nurture children's growth, encourage positive behavior, and help them develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Child care, more than any other program, offers great potential for the achievement of the YMCA mission and objectives in the lives of the children and families served by the YMCA.

Community. The YMCA assesses the needs of its community and responds with programs to meet the needs, helping to make the community a healthier, safer, and better place to live. Each YMCA designs and delivers its child care programs according to the specific needs of the families in the neighborhood it serves.

Accessibility. The YMCA believes safety and care are the birthrights of all children and it is the responsibility of parents to provide their children with full time care from birth through adolescence. Quality child care must be available to all who need it, not just those who can afford it.

GOALS

The YMCA is committed to providing quality childcare programs. Our preschool programs are guided by the National Association for the Education of Young Children standards. Some of our goals are:

- To help children develop to their fullest potential
- To support and strengthen the family unit
- To deliver child care in a caring, safe and positive environment

Enrollment

Each child is required to have a complete pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete up-to-date immunization record on file, this per out licensing regulations. If you have a chosen not to have your child immunized, please provide a notarized letter stating that your child will not receive immunizations and reasoning of why the child will not receive the immunizations. Please discuss this with the center director to determine whether you have the right to be enrolled and not have your child immunized. Parents are required to provide the documentation in replacement of the record.

All children are required to have a physical examination form filled out by a licensed medical professional, in order to attend the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool. The physical examination form must be completed by a licensed healthcare professional and returned to the center.

Enrollment at the Andrew and Walter Young YMCA Preschool is open to children from three months-four years of age. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to child's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy or disability.

Parents can apply for enrollment of their child in the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool by completing the Enrollment Application and paying the \$50.00 registration fee. **The registration fee is non-refundable.**

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the **complete** enrollment application, signed fee agreement, registration fee, immunization records and signed Parent Handbook receipt.

The Enrollment Application and Fee Agreement are **not** meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration.

The Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA reserve the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

Continued enrollment at the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool is contingent upon the parent's, emergency contact person's and the child's adherence to the policies and procedures of the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool as outlines in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Parents are required notify the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or anytime thereafter change. Failure to do so may result in the child (ren) being dis-enrolled from the program and forfeiture of any payments.

Court Orders Affecting Enrolled Children

In case where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool, must be provided with certified copy of the most recent order and all

amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) request a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool, can not, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent to have access to their child, the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool, suggests that the parent with the child keep them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. The Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed.

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, the Andrew and Walter Young Family Preschool is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in affect. Employees of the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool can not at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and / or a Restraining Order to be violated. The Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool will report any violation of these orders to the court.

Hours of Operation

The YMCA Preschool is open from **6:30 A.M.** until **6:30 P.M.**, Monday through Friday. If students are not picked up by 6:30 P.M. there is a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, to be paid before the student returns to the center. All **HEADSTART** and **PRE-K** students are to report to their assigned classrooms each day by **8:30 A.M.** If **HEADSTART** and **PRE-K** students arrive before **8:25 A.M.** they will be placed in before school care. (If they are not enrolled in our before and/or after care program parents will be charged \$20 per day if your child attends either or both.). **HEADSTART** and **PRE-K** students will be dismissed from class at **3:00 P.M.** If students are not picked up by **3:05 P.M.** they will be placed in after school care and parents will be charged at the daily rate.

Parking Lot

This policy concerns all those who use the Preschool building. **PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE FIRE LANES IN FRONT OF THE PRESCHOOL DOORS!** Please park only in designated parking spaces. Please do not leave children in vehicles or in the parking lots unattended. If you need assistance please notify the staff and they will be glad to assist you. We understand the difficulty of getting several young children in and out of cars and into the building. This policy is set with the safety of your child/ren in mind.

We appreciate your cooperation when dropping off your child/ren. The YMCA Preschool classes begin at 8:00 A.M., Head Start and Pre-K begins at 8:30 AM. Please allow time for parking and escorting your child/ren to their classrooms. In an effort to keep everything running smoothly, **PLEASE BE ON TIME.**

Tuition

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement prior to enrollment of their child in the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed. For a second copy of billing information and/ or correspondence, a \$2.00 per pare copying fee will be charged accordingly.

Registration and Fees

The registration fee is \$50.00 and is *non-refundable*. No child can be placed into a program or onto a waiting list without paid registration. Our fee schedule is as follows:

Infant (6 months – 12 months)	\$145/week
Toddler I (13 months – 2 ½ years)	\$135/week
Toddler II (31 months – 3 years)	\$120/week
Preschool (37 months – 4 years)	\$120/week
Before/After Care (HEADSTART/GEORGIA PRE-K)	\$75/week

We accept CAPS and other child care subsidies.

This fee covers the cost of SPANISH, DRAMA, SIGN LANGUAGE, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION for the year!

Fees are due and payable on **Friday** of each week for the next week. A late fee of \$5 per day will be charged for all payments received after 6:30 P.M. on Monday. Children will not be admitted if payment is not received. **NO CASH ~ Checks, Money Orders and/ or Credit Cards(VISA, MASTERCARD, DISCOVER) only! BE SURE TO GET A RECEIPT FOR ALL PAYMENTS!**

There is no adjustment of fees when a child is absent from school, including holidays or school cancellations, vacations, illnesses, inclement weather or acts of God.

We do not offer multiple child discounts.

There is a \$37 charge for each returned check. Two returned checks will result in your account being placed on a “certified check or money order” status.

Before & After Care

The YMCA preschool provides before and after care. Enrollment for your child is **\$75.00 per week**. If your HEADSTART and/or GEORGIA PRE-K child cannot be picked up by 3:00 P.M. every day, they should be enrolled in the after care program. If you are late picking your child up, at 3:05 P.M. your child will be placed in after care and you will be charged **\$20 for the day**. If you have prior knowledge that your child will be in after care please notify us.

Please make sure your child has eaten breakfast should they arrive after 8:30 A.M. and lunch if arriving after 11:30 A.M.

Fee Assistance

Limited tuition assistance is available for families in financial need. A confidential form is available upon request.

Sign In & Sign Out Procedures

For the protection of your child/ren, all children must be escorted into and out of the facility by the parent/s, a person authorized by parent/s, or preschool personnel. An authorized person must sign the child in when dropping them off in the morning and sign them out when picking them up in the afternoon. For safety's sake, children will not be released to any person other than the parent or authorized person/s. Please notify the preschool *in writing* if a person other than those authorized will be picking up your child. The alternate will be asked to show picture identification.

Divorced Parents

Divorced parents are required to provide a copy of custody papers to be kept in the child's file at the time of enrollment. Should divorce occur during enrollment, a copy of custody papers need to be filed immediately with the Preschool Director. If the former spouse is not authorized to pick up, or is otherwise restricted from having contact with the child/ren, you are required to provide the information in writing to the preschool director.

Separation

For many children going to preschool is a big step towards learning and many have never been in a group situation and followed a routine without their parents being present or involved. Saying good-bye at the Preschool door may be difficult for your child but may be even more difficult for you. If you are not ready for your child to separate from you your child will react to your feelings. If children feel they are being pushed away or that they will miss something at home they will cling to you more tightly. Preschool should be a fun and happy time. It should be a special time for your child for growing up, forming new friendships, and learning about themselves, others and their world. This is a big step for your child. Your child needs to know that you will always come back to get them. Children are all unique and react to new situations differently. Some may walk right in without a look back. Others may cling or cry. These are all normal responses. All of us (parent, teacher, child), will work together to help your child make a good adjustment to preschool.

Here are a few tips that may help if your child experiences separation anxiety. Choose only those that you think will help your child during separation or discuss these options with your child's teacher.

1. Say good-bye quickly and warmly. Do not overdo a good-bye.
2. Never sneak away.
3. Don't call your child back to you once you have separated.
4. Leave as quickly as possible, staying too long often works in reverse.
5. Make sure your child has had enough sleep.
6. Know that one child crying may cause your child to cry too.
7. Crying is contagious.
8. Realize that children react to their parent's moods and feelings.
9. Establish a good-bye routine.
10. Give them something special of yours to keep until you return.
11. Give them the option to walk to the end of the hall with a teacher and wave.
12. Use special good-bye phrases, rhymes and/or signs

13. Stay a few minutes until they have made contact with another child or begin playing.
14. Notify the teacher of any special problems or changes occurring in your family.

We will not separate your child from you. This can affect the bonds and trust your child is establishing with their teacher. If your child is experiencing a problem with separation we will gladly set up a conference and together find out what works best for your child.

Things to Bring

All children in disposable diapers must have **baby wipes** and a minimum of **six (6) disposable** diapers per day. For toddlers in pull-ups, 4 extra pair should be made available along with baby wipes. ***Parents will be charged \$1.00 per diaper/pull-up when provided by the YMCA Preschool.***

Each child should bring a small blanket or beach towel for rest time that will be returned to the parent each Friday evening to be washed and returned to school on Monday. Please do not send sleeping bags or other large bulky coverings. Two (2) changes of clothes, underwear and socks must be made available by each parent in case of an accident. All clothing and blankets **must** be labeled with the child's name.

Uniforms/Dress

The uniform guidelines offer a variety of choices in dress while still encouraging neatness and pride in appearance. All clothing should be clean, neat, in good condition and fit properly. The purchase of the uniform is mandatory. We recommend you purchase a minimum of two (2) sets. Children should be dressed in uniform every day. **Tennis shoes or rubber soled shoes** and socks **must** be worn at all times.

Grooming is a very important part of being uniformed. Please keep hair and nails neat and well groomed.

Children age three to five will need **swimsuits, towels**, and (swim caps for girls if desired) for the week. Preschool teachers as well as certified swimming instructors will be with your child at all times when in or near the pool.

ALL CLOTHING AND MATERIALS must be carefully and distinctly marked with the child's name. Lost items, if found and properly identified, will be returned to the owner. Items that are not properly identified will be placed in the LOST & FOUND. Items that are not claimed in a reasonable amount of time will be available for resale or donation. A tote bag or backpack with your child's name should be brought to school daily.

Two changes of clothes and underwear must be made available, in case of an accident. All clothing and blankets must be labeled with your child's name. The preschool is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for academic progress and achievement. Parents please set priorities which put education at the top of the list. Please try and avoid unnecessary absences and keep excused absences to a minimum.

Punctuality is also very important to the academic success of students. Students are expected to arrive at school on time. We understand that a student may arrive tardy on rare occasions, but frequent tardiness is disruptive and inconsiderate of those who are interrupted when a student arrives late. Please let us know in advance, if at all possible if your child is going to be late.

A child may be excused for dental, medical and personal appointments when such appointments cannot be scheduled during non-school hours. A student who is to be excused from school is asked to provide a written notice to the teacher.

Inclement Weather

The YMCA preschool will follow the City of Atlanta Public School District's **weather** cancellations. Please listen to **WSB-TV Storm Watch** for complete weather information during inclement weather. If bad weather develops during the day, please make arrangements to leave work early. Please do not call the center; we will be busy providing the best possible care for our children. We do not want children and staff stranded at the center. If we call you during the day to say that the center is closing early due to serious weather conditions, your child must be picked up at the designated time.

Holiday Closings

The center will be closed for the following holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Health

Please be considerate of other children. Contact the teacher or director if your child comes down with a communicable disease. The YMCA Preschool will then take the proper precautions. If your child shows signs of illness, please keep him/her home. Refer to the chart below for indicated length of time to keep your child home.

Chicken Pox: Until all scabs are crusted or at least 6 days from onset of rash

Conjunctivitis/Pink eye: 24 hours after treatment
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Measles: At least 4 days after onset of rash or symptoms

Mumps: At least nine days after swelling occurs
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Impetigo, Ringworm, Head/Body Lice, Scabies, Scarlet Fever, Strep Throat	Child will be re-admitted only with a certificate from a physician and at least 24 hours after treatment is started.
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In order to protect all children enrolled in the center, your child must be kept home if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

An oral temperature of over 100 degrees

Intestinal disturbances accompanied by diarrhea or vomiting

Any undiagnosed rash
Sore or discharging eyes or ears
Profuse nasal discharge

Parents of children enrolled shall be notified, in writing, of the occurrences of any of the illnesses on the communicable disease chart as provided by the department and posted on the parent board, within 24 hours after the center becomes aware of the illness.

Children who become sick or injured at school are taken to the office at which time the director will contact the parent. Parents of children who become seriously ill or injured while at school are notified as soon as possible so that proper arrangements may be made for prompt treatment.

Parents are required to provide a copy of the child's current health insurance coverage for treatment in an emergency.

We have an agreement with Dr. Melba Johnson to oversee minor illnesses/emergencies. For extreme emergencies your child will be taken to **SOUTH FULTON MEDICAL CENTER at 1170 Cleveland Avenue, East Point. (404) 305-3500**, or the nearest hospital.

If an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children or if a child's condition is suspected to be contagious and requires exclusion as identified by public health authorities, then the child is made comfortable in a location where he/she is supervised by a familiar caregiver. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until he/she can be picked up by the family, the child is located where new individuals will not be exposed.

We will immediately notify the parent when a child has any sign or symptom that requires exclusion from the program.

Communicable Diseases

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of notification by phone. If parent is reached, and does not pick their child up within 45 minutes, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call the listed emergency contact list once the parent is reached. If a parent can not be reached, the staff will begin to call the people on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of pediatrics. Children must present a doctors' note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. The center reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the center director or designees believes that child to be too ill to participate in the program.

Children excluded from the program due to a fever that may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours. If your child is sent home due to a fever, s/he is not permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least 101 degrees Fahrenheit or more as taken under the arm.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occurs 3 or more times in a 24 hours period of time. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the center director. This enables our facility to keep track of any illness, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a need to know basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center director, so that the parents of the children in the school maybe notified that communicable diseases are present. Once again communicable disease will be shared. The center will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.

Medication

We are not authorized to administer any medication without permission from the parent. Children who must take prescribed medicine are required to have a *medication form* filled out and signed at the time the medication and instructions are brought to the main office. Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication and instructions on how to administer and store it. In case of noticeable adverse reactions to the prescribed medication, the staff will promptly contact the parents and/or the health care provider. Authorization to dispense medication shall be limited to two weeks, unless otherwise prescribed. **Children are not to have any form of medication on their person or in their cubbies, book bags, diaper bags, etc.**

All over-the-counter medications require a medication form. Medication forms may be obtained from the front desk. All medication will be stored in a locked cabinet.

At least one staff member who has a certificate showing satisfactory completion of pediatric first aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children.

Visitation

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the YMCA Preschool at any time. Children should not be removed from the center without proper notification to the staff. However, we ask that you respect the teacher and students in class. Please do not disturb a class in session at anytime. You can sit quietly and visit a class and schedule time to speak with the teacher at a later time. All visitors must sign in at the front desk and get a VISITOR'S pass. They must sign out upon leaving and return the visitor's badge.

Parent's Right to Immediate Access

Parents of a child in out care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA Preschool, as provided by law.

Classroom Visitation

Classroom visitation can be arranged by making an appointment with the Director. It is required that you make your presence known by signing in at the front desk. Children should not be removed from the center without proper notification to the staff. To observe, a parent should find a quiet area to sit or stand. Our routine will not be altered and teachers will not be able to answer questions until after class time is over. Observations will be limited to ½ hour. Too many changes can be disruptive to the children. We recommend that you leave siblings at home. This should be a special time for you and your child. Younger children do not understand classroom rules or routines. There will be events during the year for the entire family.

Toys

Children should not bring toys, games, books or videos to school. The YMCA Preschool and its staff cannot be responsible for toys and other items brought from home. Children will be able to show and share their toys on specific days and special occasions.

The preschool is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Animals

Classroom pets or visiting animals must appear to be in good health. Pets or visiting animals have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Teachers will supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Program staff will make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal. Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk of salmonella infection.

Please notify your child's teacher before bringing your pet into the preschool building. Pets need to be up-to-date with shots and be well behaved or trained before interacting with the children. Some children are afraid of animals such as large dogs and some are allergic to certain types of animals. Children love to share their pets with friends at school, but remember to check with your child's teacher first so she can make arrangements and prepare the children.

Field Trips

Field trips will be planned throughout the year. Watch for permission slips in your child's book bag. Information will also be in the monthly newsletter. Any questions can be answered by the classroom teacher or the director.

Parties

Parties are a special time for the children and parent help is necessary. Our party days are Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas/Kwanzaa, Valentine, Easter and End of the Year Celebrations.

Parents will be asked to sign up to help at two parties during the school year. These parents will be responsible for the planning and implementation of the parties they sign up for. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate younger siblings on these days. In addition to helping with parties, all parents may be asked to contribute snacks or favors to make it a success. Party committees should meet with the teacher about three weeks before the scheduled event in order to make it a success.

Birthday parties are not permitted for children in the Head Start Program. Arrangements must be made **in advance** with your child's teacher in Pre-K and Traditional Classes. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers.

Conferences and Progress Reports

Please refer to the school calendar for the report card and conference schedule. Written progress reports will be sent to parents at mid year and at the end of the year for all students in all classes. Please notify the teacher about any changes or situations affecting your child. This can be done by note, phone or appointment. Newsletters and notes will be sent home periodically to keep you informed about preschool happenings.

Discipline

Discipline is guidance. Guiding children toward positive behavior and learning promotes a healthy attitude. Positive guidance encourages a child to think before acting. Discipline requires thought, planning and patience. Discipline is mainly about how to teach your children the rules of life. People often think of discipline as being punishment. It really isn't. Punishment is usually hitting, spanking, or any type of behavior control. **THE USE OF PUNISHMENT IS NEVER PERMITTED AT ANYTIME!**

Teaching staff assist children in resolving conflicts by helping them identify feelings, describe problems, and trying alternative solutions.

Open communication between parents and the preschool is always the best method of eliminating negative behavior in children.

Withdrawal

A one week notice of withdrawal is required. Anytime a child is withdrawn, his/her place may be filled by someone on the waiting list. In order to be re-enrolled, an opening will have to be available. A new application must be submitted accompanied by the required registration fee.

The YMCA Preschool has the right to withdraw any child for any of the following reasons: excessive tardiness in fee payments or failure to pay fees in excess of two weeks, voluntary dismissal of a child by a parent due to prolonged absences without notification to the preschool, problems of discipline that cannot be solved after repeated attempts, when behavior of a child becomes detrimental to himself and/or others, after two warnings, two parent conferences or one week's formal notice.

Naps

Every child is offered an afternoon rest/nap, this allows the child an opportunity to have a break from the day's activities, and it is a State requirement.

Fundraisers

Fundraising is essential to the YMCA Preschool. Money raised through fundraising will be used for special programs, activities and tuition assistance. Your voluntary participation will be greatly appreciated. Fundraisers will be planned throughout the year. Information will go out before each fundraiser. We need your help to be successful and maintain the level of excellence we enjoy at the YMCA Preschool.

Grievance Procedure

When parents have a concern or problem with someone or something in the YMCA Preschool, the best way to have the issue resolved is to talk to the preschool director. While it may be tempting to “go straight to the top” with a concern, the response from the top will usually be to return to the people who have the most knowledge about the situation. If an issue cannot be resolved with the preschool director, the person with a concern has the option to appeal to a higher authority.

Civil Rights Compliance

The YMCA Preschool does not discriminate in relation to admissions on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, gender or disability.

Smoking

Absolutely no smoking is allowed in the building or on the school grounds.

Parent Responsibilities

1. Possess a thorough knowledge of the YMCA’s Child Care Goals and Philosophy and support them.
2. Provide motivation for your child at home by establishing a quiet area for reading and set a schedule for homework and projects.
3. Participate as much as possible in YMCA Preschool activities involving your child.
4. Communicate directly with a teacher or the director if your child is having problems.
5. Set a time and stick to it to VOLUNTEER throughout the year.

READ! READ! READ!

To your child/ren twenty (20) minutes **every** day!

