



Message from Mac

We have opened our new Preschool Learning Center in Granada Hills! We had a wonderful grand opening on Oct. 7 with many enjoying the food, ribbon cutting and lots of door prizes.

As we renovated the new location many of our wonderful YMCA staff rolled up their sleeves and pitched in. Ana Duarte, center director of the infant preschool, was very involved in developing the new center and expressed interest in taking on this new project. After much thought and review of both centers needs, we decided this would be a great plan for both centers, especially with Ana's expertise with the High-Scope curriculum. She is now the new director of the Granada Hills Preschool which serves children ages two through five.

Claudia Carmona will take Ana's place at the Infant & Preschool Center (serving children six weeks to five years of age) in Mission Hills.

[Read more about the new leadership on page 4.](#)

NORTH VALLEY FAMILY YMCA

INFANT & PRESCHOOL LEARNING CENTERS

We Believe

- ▶ in treating each child as an individual with respect and understanding.
- ▶ in providing each child with a safe, nurturing environment in which to grow.
- ▶ the FAMILY is an important component in a child's learning and growth.
- ▶ children need opportunities to create, play, express themselves, make friends, learn and have fun!

Program Highlights

- ▶ Safe environment with qualified, caring teachers
- ▶ Age appropriate hands-on activities
- ▶ Kindergarten Readiness
- ▶ Science Exploration
- ▶ Multi-Cultural Exposure
- ▶ Dramatic Play
- ▶ Character Development
- ▶ Family Events

LEARN.

PLAY.

GROW.



NEW PRESCHOOL LEARNING CENTER in Granada Hills.

New Childcare Center with Proven Methods



Children two to five years old get to plan part of their day for themselves at North Valley's new, Preschool Learning Center in Granada Hills and then review to see how they did. It's part of the proven, HighScope curriculum that North Valley and other YMCA-run childcare centers have successfully used for years to help youngsters grow and develop.

Though the Granada Hills Preschool at 15950 Chatsworth St., which opens Oct. 19, is a new endeavor for North Valley, the YMCA staff brings years of expertise to the new center. North Valley currently runs before- and after-school childcare centers at 13 elementary school sites and the Infant & Preschool Child Development Center in Mission Hills.

Plus, Ana Duarte, Granada Hills center director, is certified as a HighScope curriculum trainer, having taken classes at the HighScope Educational Research Foundation in Michigan, enabling her to train other YMCA childcare instructors.

"A lot of people might see the classroom as chaos," she says of the HighScope method, "but it's active, hands-on learning. The kids know what they are doing, staff is observing and it gives the kids an opportunity to take the lead, make choices and express their creativity and feelings."

[Read more about the new preschool on page 4.](#)

Locations

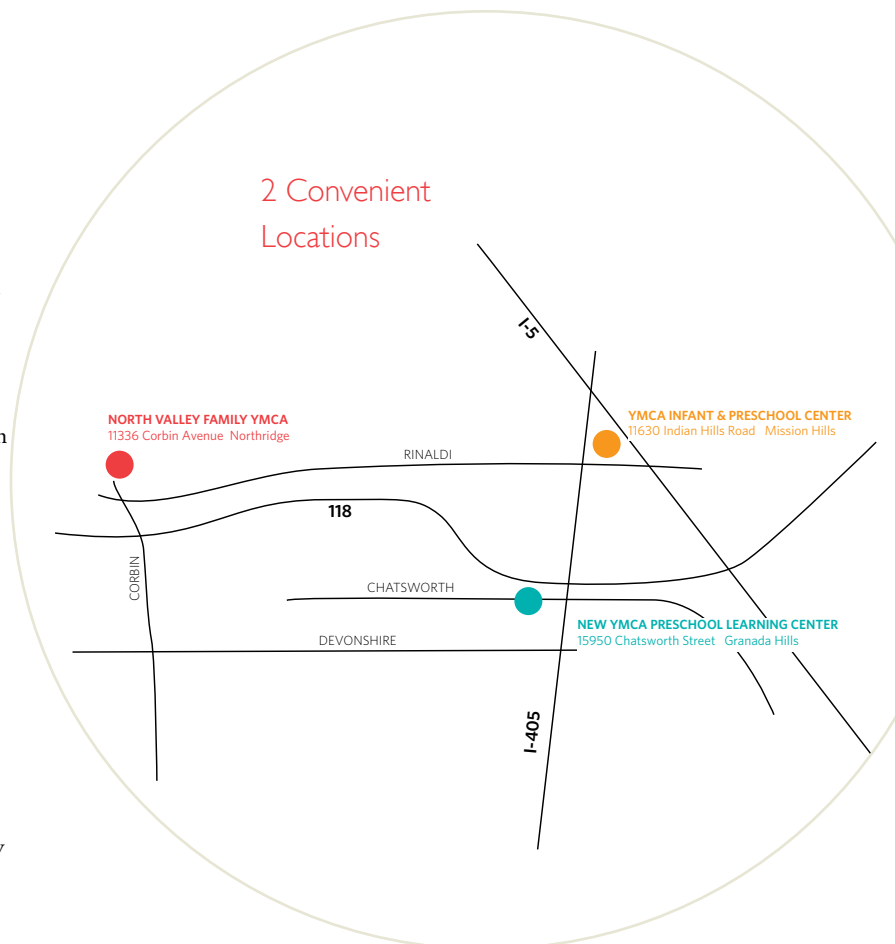
To better serve the community, we now offer two locations - conveniently near major freeways - our Infant & Preschool Center in Mission Hills and Preschool Center in Granada Hills.

The Granada Hills location serves two to five year-olds, while the Mission Hills Center provides care for children from six weeks to five years of age. Both offer the same commitment to excellence and licensed care for your children.

Hours of Operation

Mission Hills Infant & Preschool: 5:30am to 6:30pm

Granada Hills Preschool Learning Center: 6:30am to 6:30pm



LEARN, PLAY, GROW.

at the North Valley Family YMCA.



Childcare Strengthens New Family

Patty Elliott had some unique fears when she enrolled her 18-month old son, Dustin, at North Valley Family YMCA's Infant and Preschool Center in Mission Hills. That's because she'd been with him for all of just two months. Patty and husband, Jerry, adopted Dustin in Russia where the boy had lived in an orphanage for most of his first 16 months.

"My worry was the preschool would be more familiar to him because it was like the orphanage and that he would bond more with that," Elliott said.

"But it was great," she added. "He started in Pony Land (the rooms are named for animals) under Miss Tina. They make sure the kids know who their parents are and don't try to take the place of the parents."

Dustin is now four and a half years of age. He is learning Spanish at the preschool, loves to "read" (look at pictures in books) and arrives home each day shoes filled with sand from sandbox adventures.

Elliott now serves on the preschool's Parent Advisory Committee and helps raise money for families needing help with preschool fees. She participates in an employee Best Buy program that provides \$1000 in donations to the YMCA when she volunteers.

"I think it's important to do whatever I can to help other people have the same experience with childcare," Elliott said.

For Elliott, the YMCA childcare experience has meant stability of staff with low turnover, plus support for families and their needs, with values from home reinforced at preschool. Children are also taught respect for other children, she said. Another plus are healthy breakfasts and snacks and extended hours that make it easier to cope with her and her husband's long worksite commutes from Ventura County.

Dustin will soon start Kindergarten and leave preschool, but Elliott said she will try to continue with YMCA childcare by finding a school with an onsite YMCA childcare program.

What Makes Us Special: Our Curriculum

Aligned with the State of California Preschool Standards, our High/Scope curriculum focuses on the developmental stages of growth for the whole child and key developmental indicators (seriation, space classification, time, visual arts, dramatic art, music, movement, language & literacy and social relations).

Our nurturing staff act as facilitators and encourage children to make choices, carry out their ideas, and reflect on their activities with adults and peers. Our active role in the classroom allows us to focus on activities which will enhance your child's ability to problem solve, create and interact in different social situations.

Who Makes Us Special: Our Teachers & YOU

The YMCA is committed to choosing highly dedicated staff to meet the developmental and emotional needs of all children in our program. YMCA's policy exceeds state licensing in regards to CPR and First Aid, ratios and having two staff on duty at all times. Highly trained and supportive staff is our priority, which is why we invest in and provide our staff with the best of professional training, enabling them to support your child's development.

Staff members and parents regularly discuss children's needs through conversations, conferences, parent advisory councils (PACs), and meetings to assess the needs of families. The YMCA uses newsletters, calendars and bulletin boards to communicate with parents. Also, the YMCA works with the PAC by a system of PAC-sponsored activities, open houses, and back-to-school nights.

LEARN. PLAY. GROW.

NEW! PRESCHOOL LEARNING CENTER

(for children 2 to 5 years-old)

15950 Chatsworth St. Granada Hills, CA 91344

INFANT & PRESCHOOL CENTER

(for children 6 weeks to 5 years-old)

11630 Indian Hills Rd. Mission Hills, CA 91345

New Preschool Continued from page 2.

Duarte emphasizes that the HighScope curriculum follows the YMCA philosophy that children learn through play and hands-on activities. YMCA childcare thus includes ample time for that, as well as academic pursuits and physical activities.

North Valley expanded to Granada Hills to meet the childcare needs in the area. The preschool is located at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. The YMCA and St. Stephen's partnered together to upgrade the existing facility which the YMCA will operate. The center has been remodeled to become a warm and inviting learning facility for children. Learning centers include drama areas with a playhouse and puppets, arts and craft areas for painting and drawing and building blocks areas. Outdoors, a new playground structure was installed with a safe, rubberized padded surface.

Hours are 6:30am to 6:30pm. The center is licensed for 96 children. For information, call 818-368-3231.



Mac's Message Continued from page 1.

Claudia is currently one of the Program Directors in our child care department, has an AA in child development and many years experience in the preschool arena and is one of our leaders in our accreditation process. She is also the parent of two-year-old Aiden, who attends the infant preschool.

We feel really lucky to have both of these wonderful staff members on our team and to now have all-day childcare centers.

Mac Johnston is the North Valley Family YMCA Associate Executive Director, and Director of Child Care



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Come visit the Preschool today.

OFFICIAL OPEN: OCTOBER 19