

# YMCA RISE SCHOOL FAQs

## **What is the Rise School?**

The YMCA Rise School of Dallas provides the highest quality of early childhood education services to children with Down Syndrome and other developmental disabilities side by side with children without disabilities in an inclusive classroom setting with master's level educators and on-staff speech, occupational, physical, and music therapists. Since 1998, the Rise School of Dallas has continuously touched the lives of children who otherwise might not have received this type of specialized education. Originally established at the University of Alabama, there are several Rise Schools throughout the country including many in Texas including Houston, Austin, and Dallas. The curriculum adheres to the guidelines of the Association of Rise Schools.

## **Is the Rise School part of the YMCA?**

Yes, the Rise School of Dallas formally merged with the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas in August of 2016 and is now located in The Moody Family YMCA.

## **What happened to the Rise School staff as a result of the merger?**

The entire staff team became YMCA employees effective August 1, 2016.

## **Why did this merger happen?**

The Rise School previously was hosted in a church and did not have their own permanent space. Volunteers of the Rise School had considered a capital campaign to establish a permanent home. At the same time the leadership of the YMCA was in discussion with community leaders about the feasibility of creating a new YMCA in the Park Cities on their existing site. Because of a shared commitment and closely aligned goals, enthusiasm grew to consider merging these two community assets to better serve all kids and families.

## **How does the Rise School fit into the mission of the YMCA?**

For more than 160 years the YMCA's mission and values have not changed; to put Christian values into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all. The two last words of our mission statement ring so true with the Rise Preschool and echoes our commitment to serving our whole community. The YMCA provides early childhood education several locations and we also provide programs for kids with disabilities. The merger between the Y and the Rise School was a logical evolution of this commitment.

## **Who provides financial support for the Rise School?**

Tuition paid by the families account for about 25% of the cost of the program. Along with the Y, the TouchDown Club of Dallas a long- time supporter of the Rise School will continue to raise funds to directly benefit The YMCA Rise School of Dallas. The YMCA Rise School is also a beneficiary of the Stallings Award Banquet. The YMCA Rise School will also be supported through the Moody Family YMCA Annual Campaign. These funds are raised each year locally to support the children and families in the Park Cities community. The YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas believes in providing membership and program services to all who desire to participate. Our "Y For All" program uses all available resources to provide support to those who qualify for assistance.

**What is the Touchdown Club?**

The Touchdown Club is a 501 C 3 comprised of volunteers in the community who are passionate about raising funds to support the work of the YMCA Rise School. Through various fundraising events throughout the year their generous support allows the YMCA Rise School to maintain fees at an affordable level.

**What is the Stallings Award?**

The Stallings Award is named after legendary football coach Gene Stallings. The Stallings Award was created to honor college football head coaches who are also humanitarians and strive to promote healthy, vibrant communities through charitable and community service efforts. Proceeds from the Banquet support the YMCA Rise School. The Stallings Award Foundation is a 501 C 3.

**What are the goals of the Rise School?**

The goals of Rise are to (a) provide family-centered services designed to meet the individualized needs of all children and families; (b) provide a blend of educational and therapy services within the context of a developmentally appropriate curriculum; and (c) to prepare children for their next educational environment. The school adheres to the philosophy and recommended practices of both early childhood special education and general early childhood education.

**How are the classes structured?**

The Rise Preschool has six classrooms for 8-12 children, with 60 children attending daily. Rise enrolls about 70% students with Down syndrome and other developmental differences and 30% traditional-learners, a blend which allows special needs youngsters to "model" after typically-developing peers. Children are assigned to classrooms based on their chronological age (ages 6 months-6 years) and educational needs.

**How are the classrooms staffed?**

Each classroom employs a teacher who has a Master's degree, or is working towards one, and two instructional teacher assistants. The adult to child ratio is approximately one adult for every three-four children. A child who begins as an infant will receive 6,000 hours of instruction, intervention, and therapy at Rise by the time he or she "graduates" at age six, and will be ready to succeed in mainstream kindergarten and life. The traditional learners benefit greatly with enhanced academic skills and a deep understanding and compassion for people with differences.

**What is the admission process?**

Children with and without developmental disabilities are eligible for admission at age 6 months. Parents are encouraged to take a tour of the school and during this time an application packet is received. Once the application is returned with the application fee a child can be placed on the wait-list. Once a position is available, parents are notified and then must complete an application packet. All eligible children are admitted independent of race, color, and national or ethnic origin.