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My Y Story

Sarah Taylor, mom of Nora, age two and a half, and Joey, age five months

Sarah's family has a family membership to the Y and Nora and Joey attend the Meriden Early Learning Center at 12 Johnson Avenue.

Sarah: My Y story begins when I was pregnant with our daughter Nora. I was looking for child care in Meriden where we live, and was introduced to Tina by a friend. (Editor's note: Tina Valentin is the Director of Child Care Operations for the Meriden-New Britain-Berlin YMCA.)

Tina took me on a tour of the Meriden Early Learning Center on Johnson Avenue and the South Meriden Infant and Toddler Center. We chose the Meriden Early Learning Center for Nora, and now Joey is there too.

As a fifth-grade teacher, I know the value of lesson plans in helping my students be successful. I was a bit surprised though when Tina showed me lesson plans for babies! She had everything mapped out with developmental milestones for each age and stage. Later, as I saw my daughter progress, I could clearly see the results of everything Tina had showed me.

My daughter is now two and half and is in the toddler room. When she is home she will say "Mommy, we need to have circle time now." She counts, knows her letters, and make shapes with her fingers to show me what she is learning at school. Seeing her grow and thrive is amazing! Thanks to the Meriden Early Learning Center, she has a love of art and music, and is a social butterfly, easily interacting with other kids and adults. Art and music start right away in the infant room, which I love! With nice weather, my kids love being able to be outside. The outside space at Johnson Avenue is so much fun – you can tell from the laughter and squeals of delight whenever they are outside playing! There is even a buggy for the babies to be able to go outside!

The kindness and patience of the staff is unmatched. Both of my kids have had amazing care from the infant teachers, and because of their experience with babies, they have shared tips and tricks with me that help at home, too! As a teacher, I always think of my students as "my kids." I feel the teachers at Johnson Avenue feel the same about their students and think of my children as "their kids." It is a comforting feeling to know how much the teachers care and how much they look out for my children.



MERIDEN-NEW BRITAIN-BERLIN YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, INC.

MERIDEN YMCA

110 West Main Street
Meriden CT 06451

P 203 235 6386 **F** 203 634 6517

www.meridenymca.org

facebook.com/YMCA.Meriden

NEW BRITAIN YMCA

50 High Street
New Britain CT 06051

P 860 229 3787 **F** 860 225 8063

www.nbbymca.org

facebook.com/NBBYMCA

BERLIN YMCA

362 Main Street
Berlin CT 06037

P 860 357 2717 **F** 860 828 7830

www.nbbymca.org

facebook.com/BerlinYMCA



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I also appreciate the special days they celebrate! From Halloween costumes to celebrating Dr. Seuss week, from exchanging valentines to summer splash days, there is always something fun and exciting to look forward to.

While COVID has certainly changed things and I miss going inside to see my kids in their environment, I am comforted knowing the measures being taken to keep my kids safe. I also like how the staff uses the Brightwheel app to reach out with photos and updates. It makes me smile to see what they are up to during the day!

Tina and Raquel are both very accessible and responsive. No matter how many questions I have they are always patient and understanding.

We're also looking forward to swimming at the Y this summer. When the Y offered family swim time last year it was such a nice break from going stir crazy at home. This summer, I'm hoping we'll also be able to get back to Mountain Mist for some outside fun and swimming!

I highly recommend the Meriden-New Britain-Berlin YMCA.

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