



The KidZone is an area for children to play while their parents work out.



Four-year-old Carter (left) and his 2-year-old brother Spencer enjoy playtime in the KidZone.

MIRROR PHOTOS BY NANCY GAGNET

Kids Enjoy Playtime While Parents Work Out At YMCA

BY NANCY GAGNET
MIRROR REPORTER

Two year-old Maisie loves to draw big circles with a bright red marker on a dry erase board, something she doesn't have at home.

"She loves to color on the white board," said her mother, Rebecca Conrad, who was preparing to take a morning step aerobics class.

Maisie enjoys her mother's workout routine at the Anthony Wayne Community YMCA because it gives her the opportunity to play in the new KidZone.

"She loves it," Conrad said of her daughter's time in the new play area. "While her big brother is at preschool, she feels like she is doing something special."

The KidZone, which opened in August, provides free babysitting for children ages 6 weeks to 10 years while parents work out on the stationary machines or take a fitness class.

Colors of red, yellow and blue fill the room, and a soft foam floor supports active play as children busy themselves with toys,

games, puzzles and coloring activities.

"As word gets out that it's here, we hope more people will use it," said Melanie Grohowski, executive director.

Since the KidZone opened, there has been a spike in class participation.

"It's made a big difference. More people have signed up for classes," Grohowski said.

YMCA staff member Mindy Price works in the KidZone several days a week.

"I love kids," she said

while she helped a youngster push a toy truck.

Because the community facility is much smaller than other YMCA facilities, the KidZone has a manageable number of children, which pleases parents.

"It's more personal and the staff is great. There is also a lot of things for the kids to do," Conrad said.

KidZone hours are Friday 9:00 a.m. to noon, Monday through Thursday 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., and Saturday 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

A membership campaign is now under way at the YMCA. Through the month of January, new members may join without paying an initiation fee and receive \$50.00 off the first month for family max members and \$25.00 off the first month for individual max members.

"It's the deepest discount ever at the Y," Grohowski said.

She emphasized the fact that max members may use any YMCA and encouraged Anthony Wayne-area residents to join the local facility, even if they use other branches, to help build a strong community.

"It's really important for people in Anthony Wayne to know that we really need the members' money to stay local. It supports the local YMCA," she said.

Preschool basketball registration begins in January and league play begins in February at Waterville Primary School.

New classes for preschoolers at the Anthony Wayne Community YMCA include ballet, music and movement, art exploration and "Alpha Buddies."

New classes for older children include jump rope, creative dance and "Girl Power."

Ongoing adult and teen fitness classes include step aerobics, body shaping, kickboxing, yoga and ballroom dancing.

For a complete list, call (419) 441-0013 or visit the Web site ymcatoledo.org.



Two-year-old Spencer plays in the KidZone at the AW Community YMCA.



Two-year-old Maisie loves to draw on the dry erase board at the YMCA KidZone.

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