



Lions and Cubs I Information Letter

Welcome to the GymKats Lions and Cubs I Program - we are excited to have you and your child in our program!



#1: How will the class be structured?

The class will consist of musical circle activities, highlight stations of the week and free exploration.

The gym circuits change every 2 weeks, although the exact format of the class may fluctuate from week to week, depending on the group's attention. Coaches will introduce a new skill every one to two weeks (to increase repetition and familiarity for the parent/caregiver and child). Coaches will show each parent/caregiver how different areas of the gym can be used to develop the skill of the week.

Please note that this is not a formal follow the leader class, however we do teach stations to educate parents and caregivers about introductory gymnastics skills and how to safely navigate the gym. Please remain with your child and engage in the stations or equipment that they are exploring.

#2: What is my role in the class?

Your child's success depends on your involvement!

Learning at this age is child-directed and children typically follow their parents' instruction more easily than their instructors. For the success and safety of your child, it is integral that you participate in the class by learning the different "spotting movements" and verbal cues that will aid your child.

Please use only the props and equipment that have been brought out onto the circuits. We limit props and equipment to ensure that children are able to view novel stimuli every two weeks, and do not get overwhelmed by the options within the gym. When in doubt, please ask the coach about what is available during the class.

#3: What do I do if my child isn't participating in the activity being led by the coaches?

At this age, children typically aren't ready to "follow the leader". If your child wanders off during the highlight skill portion of the class, try to look for the teachable moment that will allow your child to experience success. Allow your child to explore their own activity, and once they "do their own thing", you can redirect them back to the group. The focus and independence your child will fluctuate week to week, the most important thing at GymKats is to make the most of every moment that you are able to spend with your child being active and learning new skills. We encourage lots of high fives, hugs, and praise!

#4: What types of skills will my child learn at GymKats?

Lions and Cubs programs focus on physical, cognitive, and social skill development.

At this age, coaches focus on introducing basic gymnastics shapes and elements, as well as fundamental movement patterns, cognitive and social skills. We typically teach the same lesson for two weeks, with minor changes, as it helps the children (and parents) remember the skills. We typically begin classes with the same songs to cue children as to the start of class, so that adults and children can learn the words and actions of the songs.

Sample List of Non-Gymnastics Skills Taught in a Lions and Cubs Class:

- 1. Physical Skills:** Gross motor skills, fine motor skills, coordination, agility, balance, and strength
- 2. Cognitive Skills:** Directionality, laterality, patterning, spatial awareness, communication, and problem solving
- 3. Social Skills:** Cooperation, communication, self-confidence, group social skills, and following instruction

There will be plenty of sensory objects available to children for exploration. Some weeks, children may focus more on these objects than they do their gymnastics movements. This is not time wasted – it's a great time to encourage discussion (identification of the object), and to integrate it into the physical space. For instance, if a child is particularly interested in a ball, you can talk about the colour and shape of the ball, and then roll the ball down the incline mat – and ask your child to roll like the ball.

#5: What should I wear to the class?

Please wear comfortable clothing that allows you to bend and stretch with your child. Due to cleanliness and “little feet”, please wear socks or go barefoot in the gym area.

#6: What should my child wear to the class?

Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing and must go barefoot in the gym. Please note, baggy clothing, long pants (pants that are longer than ankle bone), and dresses should be avoided, as they can be present dangerous tripping and catching hazards. Please remove your child's loose jewelry, and tie hair out of their face. Tights or socks can cause children to slip while climbing.

#7: What do I do if my child is sick?

If you or your child is ill, please stay home and rest to minimize the spread of illness and improve recovery. Please contact Coach Ashley in advance, and we will do our best to schedule a make-up class. Please note – we do not guarantee the ability to schedule a make-up class, as we have strict class ratios. That being said, we typically try to offer one make-up session for illness per session.

#8: Am I allowed to use the equipment too?

We would love to have adult gym – however, many pieces of the GymKats equipment are designed to hold children 70 lbs or less. Additionally, we are only insured to have children on equipment. For your safety, and to maintain the integrity of the equipment, no adults are permitted on the beams, bars, rings, or trampoline unless specified by our coaches.

#9: Is a nanny, grandparent or friend allowed to bring my child instead of myself?

Absolutely – we love to meet the special people in your child's life! Please inform Coach Ashley prior to the class date if someone else will be bringing your child, as every adult who goes onto the floor of the gym with a child must provide their full name, and contact information for liability purposes.

#10: I have an infant, can I bring them to the class with me?

Yes, absolutely! We allow infants in the gym as long as they remain in their car seats. This way, we can ensure their safety and the safety of the other children and parents in the gym. Please note that we need to have a registration and waiver form completed for every child (participating or non-participating) who goes onto the GymKats floor.

We are very excited to see you on the first day of class – there will be plenty of rolls, songs, and laughs!

If you have any questions or require clarification in the meantime,

please contact Coach Ashley at (647) 227-5231, or at gymkatsinc@gmail.com.