



Family Handbook

WELCOME

Dear Family,

We are so happy to have you join our school. We are excited to partner with you and your child on their new learning adventure. Cornerstone Learning Center is a place where children and families can learn to love the world around them and all that has been and is created in their world. To facilitate every child's growth in all areas of development: social, cognitive, emotional, and physical. To teach Christian values that lay a solid foundation for each child to become all that God created them to be. To nurture and cherish every child's curiosity and creativity, which fosters a love for learning.

Thank you for choosing Cornerstone Learning Center. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Cornerstone Learning Center

cornerstoneoffice@gmail.com

610-356-1923 (office)

<http://cornerstoneandlearning.org>

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ABOUT US

Philosophy

Cornerstone Learning Center strives to be child-designed and teacher-facilitated. We believe in interactional learning, which results from the dynamic interaction between a child's emerging cognitive and affective systems and their environment. To this end, our teachers create environments that offer diverse opportunities to explore using a variety of materials. As your child engages with the environment and expresses their interests, the teacher encourages them with open-ended questions and opportunities to deepen their learning. Our school values play and creates spaces that are rich in opportunities for learning through play. The children in our classrooms are encouraged at all times to explore and create through art, language, meeting times, and guided lesson time. Children gain self-confidence and independence by experiencing successes. Through teacher observations and interactions with children, we design learning opportunities tailored to each child's learning style, special needs, and individual pace. Interwoven into all we do and teach is our commitment to providing and instilling a strong foundation of Christian values and practices.

Mission

To provide exceptional care and education that every child deserves and to respect every child as God's creation.

Vision

The Cornerstone Learning Center is a place where children and families can learn to appreciate the world around them and all that has been created within it.

We do this by:

- Facilitating every child's growth in all areas of development: social, cognitive, emotional, and physical.
- Teaching Christian values that lay a solid foundation for each child to become all that God created them to be.
- Nurturing and cherishing every child's curiosity and creativity, which fosters a love for learning.

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided from 8 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.

Holidays

- We are closed for these holidays:
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Week
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day

- Veterans Day
- Easter Week

Definition of Family

In this handbook, we refer to the family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor, or any other individual who provides for the child's well-being, best interests, and responsibilities in our care.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and the enrollment fee must be paid before your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment payment of one week of tuition is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 weeks through age 5. Our facility does not accept children who are eligible for kindergarten enrollment. For fall enrollment, the child's fifth birthday must occur after September 1 of that year.

Our process for introducing children to our program is

During the tour of our facility, we would hear about your child, your family, and what you are looking for in your child's learning experience. We encourage you to bring your child to the tour.

Children are admitted regardless of race, culture, gender, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate based on special needs, provided a safe and supportive environment can be provided.

Inclusion Policy

Cornerstone Learning Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage the full and active participation of all children in our program, tailored to their capabilities and needs.

Inclusion Policy Statement

Cornerstone Learning Center (CLC) welcomes all children and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning experiences that support full access and participation for every child. We believe that each child is unique, and we work in partnership with families and other professionals involved in the child's care to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential.

Procedures:

Admissions/waiting list

Children of all abilities are welcome at CLC, and families interested in enrolling their child in the program will be given an equal opportunity for admission. A waiting list may be maintained, and children will be accepted from the list on a first-come, first-served basis.

Inclusive Environment

Early childhood educators at CLC use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children when planning. Staff will make every effort to make any necessary adaptations or modifications to meet the children's needs. Schedules, routines, and activities are flexible, and early childhood educators will work with therapists, special educators, and

other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications, and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with the child's family and other professionals supporting the child.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies to all verbal and written information about potential, enrolled, and previously enrolled children and their families. All staff will be briefed on the importance of confidentiality and are expected to fulfill their obligation to protect privacy. Written records will be stored in a secure location with access limited to the director and the child's teacher. No information about a child and their parent or legal guardian will be released during enrollment or during the transition to another receiving program or school without the written permission of the parent or guardian. This excludes the responsibility held by early childhood educators as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Professional Development and Support for Staff

Training and support are provided to ensure that all staff are comfortable, confident, and competent to meet the developmental and educational needs of all children. All staff receive an orientation to inclusion policies and, whenever possible, attend training on effective inclusion and/or other disability-related topics. The director provides additional support and resources as appropriate.

Collaboration with Other Professionals

Many children with disabilities or other special needs are supported by developmental and educational professionals such as therapists, teachers, and others. CLC welcomes those professionals and works with them to ensure the child's success. The service provider is encouraged to provide services to the child in the early childhood classroom. The child's teacher and the service provider collaborate to determine the most effective strategies to support the child in the group setting. CLC supports the teacher's participation in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

Non-Discrimination

At **Cornerstone Learning Center**, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in our children's growth and development. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program by visiting children's classrooms, participating in events, and providing feedback. We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in helping us establish and achieve our program goals.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, we will not release information regarding your child, except as required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children in our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers are hired in compliance with state requirements and qualifications, which serve as the minimum standard. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

| Position Title | Education/Certification | AND | Experience |
|-----------------------|--|------------|-------------------|
| Teacher | Bachelor’s degree in any field, or Associate Degree in any field, or Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, or Child Development Associate Certification (CDA) Child Development Associate Certification | | 2 years |
| Assistant Teacher | High School Diploma | | 0 years |

Caregivers participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e., babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected to or sanctioned by **Cornerstone Learning Center**.

Child-to-Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks to reduce fatigue and maintain alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child-to-staff ratios:

| Age | Child to Staff | Maximum Group Size |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 0-12 months | <u>4-1</u> | <u>7</u> |
| 13-24 months | <u>5-1</u> | <u>5</u> |
| 25-35 months | <u>6-1</u> | <u>10</u> |
| 3-year-olds | <u>10-1</u> | <u>14</u> |
| 4–6-year-olds | <u>10-1</u> | <u>16</u> |

Communication & Family Partnership

Bright Wheel App:

Our center has partnered with Brightwheel, the leading early education app, to provide an enriching childcare experience for your family.

What you can expect from Bright Wheel

- Greater visibility into your child’s day with photos, videos, and progress updates
- An easier way to stay connected to your child’s learning and development
- Convenient online tuition payments and easy access to your statements

Be on the lookout for an invitation to join our center on Bright Wheel!

Daily Communications. Daily notes from the center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences.

Newsletters. Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are emailed to you at the beginning of each month.

Email. We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters, and general updates.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, join us on a field trip, or share a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children.

Child Service Reports. Child Service Reports (CSR) are sent home twice a year. In the CSR, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes, dislikes, and learning styles. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request a conference regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to share any concerns you may have.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the program at any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents and guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

The Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety of the children, external doors will be locked at all times.

Our team will always do its best to speak with parents or guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a more in-depth discussion, please arrange an appointment.

Publicity

Unless the family indicates they wish their child to participate, we will not use children's names or photos for publicity.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to what is different from us and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Cornerstone Learning Center uses a **research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum** for infants through preschoolers. Learning is **hands-on and play-based**, organized

around monthly themes that encourage exploration, creativity, and growth across social-emotional, physical, language and literacy, early math, and science skills. Teachers regularly observe and assess each child to **tailor instruction to their individual needs**, and families receive progress updates and learning experiences throughout the year via our digital communication and tracking system.

Ages and Stages Assessment

Families are the best source of information about their children. Within 45 days of enrollment, we ask that families complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. ASQ is a series of questionnaires designed to screen for and assess children's developmental performance in communication, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem-solving, and personal-social skills. These assessments ask detailed questions about your child's growth, development, interests, strengths, and areas of challenge. This information helps teachers better understand each child. The age-appropriate questionnaire will be included in the enrollment paperwork provided to parents for all new children enrolling at Cornerstone Learning Center. If you would like to discuss the Ages and Stages Questionnaire further with your child's teacher, we can schedule a meeting or phone conference. After reviewing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, referrals will be offered as needed.

Why are Ages and Stages important?

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is a developmental and social-emotional screening tool for children from birth through age 6. The purpose of the screening is to identify or detect developmental delays in collaboration with families and early educators.

Outings & Field Trips

Weather permitting, we conduct supervised walking trips around the neighborhood. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the emergency contact form.

From time to time, we will offer supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child. *The parent or guardian must sign the Permission Slips for each trip.*

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are inappropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be prioritized in all childcare program activities. Proper restraint systems (seatbelts) and their proper use are critically important during travel to and from the child care program and during field trips.

Transition

Your child's transition into childcare should be a positive and exciting learning experience. We will work with you and your child to ensure a smooth transition, as new routines and people are introduced.

The transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child to the new program.

Transition Policy

This policy applies to all children transitioning between classes within the daycare facility.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate a smooth transition for children moving from one class to another within our daycare program. We believe a well-structured transition helps children feel secure and confident as they progress in their learning journey.

Transition Procedure

1. Notification:

- Parents will be notified at least one month in advance of their child's transition to the next class.
- An email will be sent to parents to discuss the upcoming transition, expectations, and any concerns.

2. Preparation:

- Staff will prepare children for the transition by introducing them to the new classroom environment, teachers, and peers.
- Activities will be organized to familiarize children with the new class, such as visiting the new classroom, participating in joint playdates, or attending circle time sessions.

3. Individual Assessment:

- Each child will be assessed to ensure they are ready for the transition based on developmental milestones, social-emotional readiness, and individual needs.
- Teachers will provide parents with feedback on their child's readiness and any specific areas requiring focus during the transition period.

4. Transition Activities:

A series of transition activities will be scheduled, including:

- Classroom visits
- Storytime sessions featuring the new class's curriculum
- Introducing new routines and expectations

5. Feedback Loop:

- After the transition, parents and staff will have a follow-up email to discuss how the child is adjusting to the new class.
- Continuous feedback will be encouraged to ensure that any challenges are addressed promptly.

7. Review and Evaluation:

- The transition policy will be reviewed every six months to incorporate feedback from the parents, staff, and children, making adjustments as necessary to improve the process.

Conclusion:

We are committed to supporting children and families during the transition process, ensuring that it is a positive experience that encourages growth and development.

Transition to elementary school

We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to discuss attending elementary school with your child.

Electronic Media

Electronic Media are limited to 30 minutes or less per day per child. Internet sites and software are pre-screened to ensure they contain non-violent, high-quality educational content.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment in which we live. We use books, music, games, and a wide range of activities to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life in it.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their schedule and are placed on their backs for sleep.

After lunch, all children participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

Toilet Training

The most crucial factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a partnership between family and teacher that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot learn to use the toilet successfully until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating their bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to ensure that toilet training is conducted in a manner consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Cornerstone Learning Center is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their full potential and to build a personal, meaningful bond with members of the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead help prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem-solving helps them develop self-discipline. We encourage children to be fair, respectful of others and property, and to understand that their actions have consequences.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at [school] has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to teach them to solve problems through appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is

clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance for bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report them to the Director.

Suspension/Expulsion Policy

Purpose

To provide a safe and nurturing environment for all children, staff, and families while ensuring that disciplinary actions are handled fairly and consistently.

Scope

This policy applies to all children enrolled in Cornerstone Learning Center.

Grounds for Suspension/Expulsion

1. *Behavioral Issues:*

- Repeated aggression toward other children or staff.
- Continuous disruptive behavior that affects the learning environment.
- Vandalism or destruction of property.

2. *Non-Compliance:*

- Failure to adhere to daycare rules and regulations after multiple warnings.
- Non-compliance with health and safety guidelines.

3. *Safety Concerns:*

- Actions that pose a serious threat to their safety or the safety of others.

4. *Serious Incidents:*

- Any behavior that violates local laws or regulations.

Procedures or steps taken before a suspension/expulsion:

1. *Documentation:*

- All incidents must be documented, including dates, descriptions, and actions taken.

2. *Communication:*

- Parents/guardians will be notified of any incidents and may be requested to meet with staff to discuss the behavior.

3. *Intervention:*

- Before suspension or expulsion, the daycare will implement interventions, which may include:
 - Behavior modification plans.
- Parent meetings to discuss strategies.
- Collaborating with external professionals if needed.

4. *Suspension:*

- A temporary suspension may be imposed for serious infractions.

- The length of suspension will be determined based on the severity of the behavior, typically lasting no more than one week.

5. **Expulsion: **

- Expulsion may occur after all interventions have been exhausted, and if the behavior continues.

- Parents will receive written notice of the expulsion, including the reasons, and any potential options for re-enrollment in the future.

This policy aims to balance the need for discipline with an understanding of young children's developmental stages.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and we may restrain a child by gently holding them only for as long as is necessary to control the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior or circumstances are of concern, communication will begin with the parents to understand the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant a move to a more suitable care setting. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child, as determined by medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations to achieve success and participate.

TUITION AND FEES

Payment

Payment is always due in advance, with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures resulting from inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control.

Payment is due as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

Vacation & Extended Absence Tuition Policy

Tuition is required during all vacations and absences to maintain a child's enrollment and classroom placement.

For families traveling out of the country for an extended period of **six (6) consecutive weeks or more**, the center may offer a **two-week tuition discount** as a courtesy. This exception applies only to absences meeting the six-week minimum and must be communicated in advance.

Absences of fewer than six weeks do not qualify for tuition discounts. Any courtesy discounts offered outside this policy are at the center's sole discretion and do not set a precedent for future absences.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a standard program option and will be considered only in rare cases. Late fees of \$1 per minute will be assessed starting at 5:30 PM and are due upon arrival.

Special Activity Fees

From time to time, additional fees may be incurred for special activities or field trips. These fees are due before the event, activity, or trip.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore, we have established procedures to reduce their impact.

If payment is not received by the due date, a \$10 late fee will be charged for each day it is late. If your account has not been paid in full within five business days, your child may be discharged from the program.

If payment is more than 10 business days past due, we may attempt to recover the amount in small claims court and/or refer your account to a third-party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions, including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks, rejected ACH (automatic debit), or credit card transactions will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

Additional Fees Credits

- **Withdrawals** - If a child is withdrawn from the program without providing a 2-week written notice of withdrawal, a 2-week tuition fee may be applied. Families who withdraw and later re-enroll will be charged a re-enrollment fee.

Credits & No Credits

- **Credit will not be given for Sick Days** – there are no credits awarded for absences due to illness. Sick days are counted in determining tuition and are non-refundable.
- **Credit will not be given for inclement weather. If we do not open due to inclement weather on a day** your child is scheduled to attend, your account will not be credited for that day.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child will be absent or arrive after 9:00 AM, please email your child's classroom teacher and keep a copy at cornerstonelcoffice@gmail.com. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Withdrawals

The center requires a written notice 2 weeks in advance for any child withdrawal. Failure to notify will result in additional fees.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to a new program setting or classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, you must submit a written request with instructions on where to send the records.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, or loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced through our auto call feature from ONE CALL NOW. We will follow the Marple Newtown school district's closing procedures.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 8 AM. Please do not drop off your child before the scheduled opening time. A parent or guardian is expected to accompany their child or children and sign them in.

We close at 5:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time. Your punctuality is appreciated.

Cell Phone Usage

The time you spend at the center dropping off and picking up your child is our primary window to communicate with you about your child. To make the most of these opportunities and remain attentive to your child and other children, we kindly request that you refrain from using your cell phone at any time while on the center premises.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want someone who is not designated as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick up your child, you must notify us in advance in writing. Your child will not be

released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child must present a valid photo ID for verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, we will attempt to contact you and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made to ensure someone stays with your child for as long as possible. However, if, after 2 hours, we are unable to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will contact the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick up the child, or we may call the police to prevent potential harm. Recurring situations may result in your child's dismissal from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring.

- Paperwork (Enrollment Form, Emergency Contact Form, Child Health Assessment, Non-Discrimination Form, Emergency Operations Plan, Handbook Receipt)
- Schedule for infants under 1 year.
- Formula and bottles
- Drinks-sippee cups
- Lunch and two snacks
- Crib sheet (for nap cots) and a small blanket for all nappers ages 1-6
- Diapers
- Change of clothes and sneakers for the current season/playground
- Backpack

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment, each child will be assigned a designated area, referred to as a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's backpack daily for items that need to be taken home.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home: We are a nut-free facility. Please refrain from packing peanut butter sandwiches.

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Baked goods may be made at home if they are fully cooked, do not require refrigeration, and were made with freshly purchased ingredients. A list of ingredients is needed, and there must be enough food for all children.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food item.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, please notify us in writing so that we can make the necessary substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life-threatening, and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

Children have lunch in their classroom. They enjoy this time together, and the Teachers also join them at the table.

A caregiver trained in choking first aid is present at all meals.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Bottle-fed infants are fed while being held or sitting up.
- Infants are fed "on demand" to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly).
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. Fresh breast milk must be used within 48 hours. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name and

the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and stored in the freezer for up to 3 months.

- Formula must be brought to the premises in a factory-sealed container in a ready-to-feed strength, powder, or concentrate. The formula will be diluted at the childcare site in accordance with instructions from the manufacturer or the child's health provider, using water from a source approved by the local health department. Formula brought from home must be labeled with the child's name.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.

Toddler Feedings

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter, and hard candy. ***Please cut the grapes and hard-boiled eggs***

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required in accordance with the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service and the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org). Every January, we check with the Public Health Department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates to the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations on the attendance of children who are not immunized for religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics' current recommendations (www.aap.org). A copy of your child's physical should be received before, but must be received no later than 6 weeks after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for ensuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the child's health assessment results is provided to the program.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children, you are not permitted to bring a sick child to the center. The center reserves the right to refuse admission to a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if they exhibit any of the symptoms below. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will do our best to keep your child comfortable, but they will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- An illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than we can provide.
- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth, above 102°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or two or more times during the previous 24 hours.

- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They can participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and
 - A bandage can cover the involved areas without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding their children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies must provide a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the lunch areas. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific administration instructions. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child for independent administration. Our staff will ensure the medication is recorded with the directions and dispense it as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The medication label meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in their original containers (you may request that pharmacies fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and administration time(s) for each medication.
You are also required to sign the medication log each day it applies.
- **Non-prescription medications** require a note signed by the family. Non-prescription medication will not be administered for more than 3 days unless a written order from the physician is received.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or the Department of Public Health. We will notify families of exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenzae (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspected)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenita and Non-congenita (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will participate in a variety of activities, including painting, outdoor play, sand and water, and other sensory activities. Our playground serves as an extension of the center, and daily programs are held outdoors when the weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment, which could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not suitable for center play and can make it difficult for your child to participate in certain activities.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is above 99°F or below 37°F. Additionally, outdoor play will be canceled if the air quality rating is 50 or below.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Children supervised by adults may engage in water play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread communicable diseases.

Injuries

Safety is a top priority in childcare, so daily inspections are conducted inside and outside the center to prevent injuries. A trained caregiver will administer first aid if your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and

the actions taken. If the injury results in any swelling or requires medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first-aid kit that meets state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be transported to the hospital by ambulance immediately, and we will attempt to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal developmental stage common among infants, toddlers, and sometimes preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting occurs, we will care for the child who was bitten and help the biter learn more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishing biting, but on promoting effective behaviors that address its underlying causes.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work with each family to keep them informed and develop strategies for behavioral change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to request that you modify your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants' and young children's developing bodies; therefore, the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is not permitted.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which, by how it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases involving a gun or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be notified, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents or guardians have equal custody rights. We are legally required to respect the wishes of the parent or guardian with legal custody, as documented in a

certified copy of the most recent court order, an active restraining order, or a court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept responsibility for determining which parent or guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective services agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the agency's role to determine whether the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with alarms, an evacuation crib, and emergency lights.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with children and staff every 2 months.

Emergency Transportation

If your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency and no other authorized person can be contacted, and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called. A trained escort will accompany the child and remain with them until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

CENTER POLICIES

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed quarterly and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center administrator.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgment, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center before enrollment.

This handbook may be updated periodically, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the Cornerstone Learning Center Family Handbook and reviewed it with a member of the Cornerstone Learning Center staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification on any policy, procedure, or information I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date