

PARENT HANDBOOK

Toddler & Preschool Program



“Where Quality Care & Learning are Fundamental”

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WHAT EVERY CHILD NEEDS

FUN	<i>Take time to laugh and play and share the wonders of life with me.</i>
AFFECTION	<i>Warm hugs will nurture me and make this world a much friendlier place.</i>
ACCEPTANCE	<i>Appreciate me for the individual I am, with all my unique gifts and special talents.</i>
RESPECT	<i>Treat me like an important and valuable person, and I'll learn to respect and honor others and myself.</i>
PRAISE	<i>Tell me all the things you appreciate about me so I'll know how wonderful I really am.</i>
SECURITY	<i>Give me boundaries that will allow me to grow safely, feel secure, and overcome my fears.</i>
HONESTY	<i>Share your real feelings and admit your mistakes to me, so I'll learn what it means to be a whole person.</i>
PATIENCE	<i>Be understanding when I make my own mistakes; and remember ~ even when it doesn't seem like it, I'm trying my best.</i>
FORGIVENESS	<i>Remind me that nobody's perfect, feels much better to forgive than to hold a grudge.</i>
ENCOURAGEMENT	<i>Support me and be positive as I try new things, and I'll have the courage to keep exploring.</i>
OPENNESS	<i>Listen to me, and be open to what you may be able to learn from me.</i>
LOVE	<i>If you care for me in all these ways, you will be giving me the best life has to offer.</i>

Welcome to Columbia Children’s Center! As you take time to review the information in this handbook, you will see our policies and procedures are designed to foster a partnership in quality care for young children. We are proud of our center, which provides a setting where caregivers, parents, and guardians can work together for the benefit of children.

PHILOSOPHY & GOALS

We believe that children have the right to a nurturing, safe environment where they can feel comfortable and secure. We believe that children have a right to develop to their maximum abilities and that teachers have the responsibility to provide opportunities for this development to occur.

We recognize that each child is an individual and that each child must be allowed to develop at his or her own pace. We accept and respect differences between children including developmental and physical differences and differences in racial and ethnic heritages. Every child regardless of sex, race, religion or ethnic origin must have the same opportunities and advantages as every other child.

We believe each child has the right to develop a positive self image- to feel good about who they are. We sincerely hope that in treating each child with love and respect, they in turn will learn to treat others with that same love and respect.

We believe that children learn best through active participation with their environment and that the teacher’s job is to provide a variety of opportunities and experiences to promote growth in all areas. We strive to thoughtfully plan activities that meet the developmental needs of differing children and which follow sound early childhood developmental principles.

Based on accreditation standards of the National Association of the Education of Young Children, our center provides an enriched environment, which fosters the development of the emotional, social, cognitive and physical growth of the young child. The philosophy of the program is to develop a positive self-concept and attitude toward learning, self-control and a sense of belonging. CCC provides your child exploration of music and movement, creative art, science and nature, objects and events, dramatic play, literature and language, health and nutrition. It is the goal of CCC to provide experiences for your child to know the community and social roles, and to understand and respect social and cultural diversity.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Young Toddlers Program: Our Young Toddler Program serves children from 18 months – 36 months. Our maximum care giver to child ratio is one 1:6. The maximum group size in this program is 12 children. We provide a nurturing environment that is structured enough to allow our students to learn and grow in a safe and confident way. Here at CCC your child can explore and learn through age appropriate activities and toys. Children are encouraged to use their words to express their wants and needs. In our Young Toddler classroom, we focus on activities developed on creating learning and social experiences through play.

Early Years Enrichment Program: Our Early Year’s Program serves children 24 months through 3 years. Children are grouped by developmental age as well as their potty training ability. These two groups share a spacious classroom and playground and are combined as a whole during some of the day and rotate separately between the inside and outside areas according to our daily schedule. Overall group size is a maximum of 30 children. Our teacher to child ratio is always within our state licensing standards of 1:12 however more often our ratio is 1:9 or less. Teachers work together with families to toilet train children if necessary.

Children attending our Early Years Enrichment Program have many opportunities to receive individual attention from their teachers in a positive and nurturing manner. Children enjoy daily activities that include sensory play, art, music, group for stories and songs, manipulative and many hours of outdoor fun including outside art activities, reading, sand play, music and movement.

Preschool Program: Our Preschool Program consists of our Red and Yellow Groups and serves children who are completely potty trained and between the ages of 3 and 4 years old. These two groups share a spacious classroom and playground and are combined as a whole during some of the day and rotate separately between the inside and outside areas according to our daily schedule. Our classroom has centers such as Science, Reading, Dramatic Play, Manipulative, and Art. These centers encourage your child's learning experience. The goals of the Preschool Program are to provide a fun, safe, positive environment; emphasizing confidence building and self-esteem. The Preschool Program concentrates on listening and basic cognitive skills such as colors, shapes and alphabet and number recognition. Overall group size is a maximum of 24. Our maximum teacher to child ratio is 1:12.

Kindergarten Readiness Program: Consists of our Green and Blue Groups and serves children 4 through 5. Our Kindergarten Readiness Program curriculum is designed to make sure your child is more than ready for kindergarten. Our curriculum includes Zoo Phonics, Spanish, Sign Language, Language Development, Math, Science & Nature, Art, Music & Movement, Social Studies, Outdoor Play including Sand, Water and Large Motor Skill activities. Our goal is to have your child be prepared and know what to expect in the first year of elementary school. We believe doing this gives them the confidence they need to have a successful learning experience. These two groups share a spacious classroom and playground and are combined as a whole during some of the day and rotate separately between the inside and outside areas according to our daily schedule. Overall group size is a maximum of 24 children. Our teacher to child ratio is always within our state licensing standards of 1:12.

Each classroom is set up according to the age group of the children and we provide the following activity areas to be explored: Our Art and Music areas develop creative and social skills, our Dramatic Play areas provide the children the opportunity to learn about social roles and their community, and our Science areas teach the children about the nature and their environment.

Weekly themes like Community Helpers, Family and Nutrition focus on key skills to encourage children to explore and understand the world around them. The daily lessons include Circle Time, which promotes social development, sharing, cooperation and participation as a group member. Math and Science activities reinforce practice counting, recognizing numbers, colors, sizes and shapes, as well as scissor practice. Story time and a language arts activity promote language development, the joy of reading, alphabet and name recognition, individual expression and creativity. Music and movement develop skills of expression, rhythm, listening, coordination, as well as large motor skills.

Our Staff

Columbia Children's Center has been under the direction of Cortney Dasmann since 2016 when our previous director, Corrine Pollard, retired after 24 years. Our Assistant Director is Katrina Velazquez. Our teaching staff has been carefully chosen based on their background, experience and joy for working with preschool aged children.

All staff meet or exceed the requirements of our state licensing agency, including back ground checks, finger printing and FBI clearances. All staff have proof of immunizations and are CPR Certified and First Aid trained.

HOURS OF OPERATION

We are open Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily. We encourage you to have your child arrive by 8:30 a.m. in order to receive the most benefits from our program.

Children that arrive after 10:00 a.m. **will not be permitted to stay** for that day, **unless** prior arrangements with the director/assistant director have been made.

If your Child is left beyond Center closing time, the supervising teacher will make every attempt to contact you and/or others authorized to pick up your Child. If no arrangements can be made by 6:15 p.m. we are required to call Child Protective Services. They would be assuming custody until you or another authorized person could be located.

Parent or guardian must pick up Child from CCC no later than 5:30 p.m. Children picked up after 5:30 p.m. will be charged a late pickup fee of \$15.00 per 15 minutes. For example: 5:31 to 5:45 = \$15.00, 5:46 to 6:00 = \$30.00. This late fee must be paid prior to your child's return to CCC.

CENTER HOLIDAYS

Our programs are open year round with the exception of the following holidays.

CCC is closed: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving. On December 24th the center will close at 2:00 p.m. and remain closed on Christmas Day (December 25th) and the day after Christmas (December 26th.) If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the center will be closed on Friday, if a holiday falls on a Sunday, the center will be closed the following Monday.

NAPS/QUIET TIME

Quiet time is from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily. Each child is provided with a resting mat and cot. Resting mats should be labeled with your child's name and taken home weekly for laundering and returned the following week. Please do not bring blankets from home unless those that are needed to help ease your child's transition from home.

Please make every attempt to pick up your child **before or after** nap/quiet time as this time is important to be uninterrupted for most children.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Columbia Children's Center admits children of any race, color and national or ethnic origin. After an interview with the parent and child, the director and caregiver will decide on placement depending upon availability.

Immunizations

California law requires all children entering our center to have the following immunization: Polio, DPT, MMR, HIB, HEP B and Varicella. A documented immunization record must be included in the enrollment packet. All additional forms, I.D. and Emergency Information, Physician's Report, Health History, Medical Release, Statement of Parent's Rights, must be completed and turned into our office along with signed Admission Agreement on or before first day of child's attendance at the center. Any additional immunizations required at a

later date are the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s). Please provide proof of immunizations for center records.

Child's Placement/Termination of Agreement

The first 6 weeks will be a probationary period to evaluate the child's adjustment. If the center in its sole and unfettered discretion determines that it is unable to meet the needs of the child, enrollment will be terminated.

This agreement may be terminated if the center in its sole and unfettered discretion determines that it is not the best interest of the center or other children enrolled at the center to have the child in attendance. This agreement may be terminated if parents or guardians fail to honor the obligations listed in this agreement or any rules or regulations stated in the Center Handbook. Failure of the parents or guardians to cooperate with the center is serious enough to

warrant termination. In exercising its discretion, the center may require the parents or guardians to attend conference(s) with center personnel regarding the matters that potentially warrant termination of the agreement. The center shall have no obligation to grant a request for conference in matters that warrant termination of the agreement. The Center's Director or staff shall have the sole right and responsibility to determine any disputed factual matters regarding termination of this agreement.

TRANSITION

We encourage parent and child to visit CCC prior to actual enrollment to provide an opportunity for the child to become comfortable with the environment.

For children entering school or childcare for the first time, it is usually advisable for a parent to remain on call for the first several days. Our caregivers are experienced in handling separation problems that might occur and we will contact you if we feel the emotional needs of the child warrants it. Please do not attempt to sell school before your child enters. Most fear is of the unknown, and this makes children apprehensive.

Give your child some extra time spent with you, hugs and kisses and extra loves during the first few days of school. During the first days at CCC, don't question your child about "what did you do today?" Allow the beginning days to be gentle, casual, and non-threatening by not constantly reminding your child of it at home but by responding to the child's questions or comments. A relaxed, unhurried, and unworried attitude on the part of the parent's or guardian(s) is essential for an easy adjustment.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE SIGN-IN/OUT

Please observe all city traffic regulations when entering and exiting the parking lot. **Do not park at the red curb, this presents a possibility of danger to children arriving and departing the center.** It is state law and center policy that all children be signed-in and signed-out by the responsible adult who shall indicate the time by using the computerized sign-in or by noting their signature on the sign in sheet provided in the file box on the counter. Do not leave until your child has been accepted by caregiver in charge.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Columbia Children's Center's policy for the care of ill children is based on ensuring that facilities and staff available can meet the needs of all **children** in the group. Children will be excluded if:

- The child's illness prevents the child from participation in routine activities.

- The illness requires more care than the staff is able to provide without compromising the needs of other children in the group.
- Keeping the child in care poses an increased risk to the child or other children or adults with whom the child comes into contact.

Do not bring your child to the center if he or she **is not well enough to participate in a normal days activities or is exposed** to a contagious disease, develops symptoms of a contagious disease or is **diagnosed** by a physician as having a contagious disease.

In the event of a serious illness or injury, at the discretion of the director or her designee, paramedics will be called and your child will be transported to an emergency medical facility.

For the protection of all children and staff, we ask that you notify the center within 24 hours after your child has developed a known or suspected communicable disease or if any member of the child’s immediate household has a communicable disease. When your child has a disease requiring exclusion, we ask that you inform the center director of the diagnosis.

If we become aware of a communicable disease affecting children in the center, a health alert will be posted. We will attempt to indicate the earliest symptoms so that additional exposures can be avoided.

Guidelines for Excluding Children with Illness

Symptom/Diagnosis	When Child will be sent home/excluded if any of the following is present	When Child may return
Breathing Difficulty	When difficulty is noticed or present if not already addressed with health care provider	When child is able to breathe without difficulty
Chickenpox	When lesions are noticed or present	When all lesions are dried and crusted. Typically takes 6+ days
Cold Symptoms (Runny or stuffy nose, scratchy throat, sneezing, watery eyes)	If accompanied by Fever (see fever criteria)	When exclusion criteria is resolved or with a doctor’s note stating the child is not contagious
Cough	If accompanied by Fever (see fever criteria)	When exclusion criteria is resolved or with a doctor’s note stating the child is not contagious
Diarrhea	After 2 occurrences within a 24 hour period	When diarrhea subsides for 24 hours
Diaper Rash	If sores are oozing and leak body fluid outside the diaper	When exclusion criteria is resolved

Fever	When oral fever is 100.8 or greater or under arm fever is 99.8 or greater and child has behavior change	When fever is below 100.8 oral or below 99.8 under arm for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medication or with a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious
Hand, Foot & Mouth Syndrome	When lesions are noticed or present	When exclusion criteria is resolved or with a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious
Head Lice	When nits/eggs are noticed or present	When exclusion criteria is resolved
Irritability	If irritability cannot be redirected and/or prevents child from being able to participate	When child is able to be redirected
Itching	If itching is suspected to be caused by any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scabies • Impetigo • Ringworm 	When exclusion criteria is resolved or with a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious
Lethargy	If lethargy prevents participation	When exclusion criteria is resolved
Mouth Sores	When sores cause drooling	When exclusion criteria is resolved or with a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious
Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When discharge is noticed • Pinkish/red swollen or irritated eyes 	When exclusion criteria is resolved or with a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious, unless, at least 5 days has passed and no visible sign of infection
Rash	When unidentified rash is noticed and is accompanied by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior change • Fever • Has oozing/open wound • Child is unable to participate 	When exclusion criteria is resolved or with a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious
Strep Throat	If child has a positive strep culture	After at least 24 hours of antibiotic medicine
Vomiting	After 2 occurrences within a 24 hour period	When vomiting subsides for 24 hours

A Few Words about Visiting Your Physician

Please do not tell your physician that your child may not return to child care unless they are armed with antibiotics. We are not physicians and cannot determine what health care resources your child needs. We can provide observations regarding symptoms that may help your physician to determine the best course of action but that is the extent of our expertise in these matters.

Before concluding a visit to your physician to determine if your child should return to Columbia Children's Center, please request a note stating when your child may return and if there are any special circumstances we should be aware of.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT ANTIBIOTICS AND COLDS:

Antibiotics are only effective against bacterial infections, not viral illnesses. Colds can begin as 2-3 days of fever, cough and runny nose. Nasal discharge may be yellow or green for a few days before starting to clear and the cough may last 2-3 weeks.

The child does not need to be seen by a physician for the first few days of a cold unless symptoms persist past 5 days to a week or get worse. Antibiotics are NOT NECESSARY UNLESS symptoms are persistent or other complications are present such as ear infection, upper respiratory infection, sinus infection, bronchitis, etc. These factors must be determined by the child's physician and appropriate treatment implemented.

Children who have been prescribed antibiotics are required to take them for 24 hours before they can return to the center.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT FEVER:

Your child may return or attend the center when their oral temperature is below 100.8 for 24 hours **without** the use of fever reducing medication or with a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY

Parents must present a record of their child's immunizations before they may attend the center. It must include the date (at least month and year) each immunization was received. Each parent is responsible for producing proof of additional immunizations each time an immunization is given. Present your updated immunization record to the director. The updates will be included in your file and your record may be picked up at the end of the day. Columbia Children's Center is audited by the Santa Barbara County Health Department annually. If your records are not up to date, expulsion until proof of immunization is produced, could result.

Child's Age

24 months – 4 years

Vaccine Doses Required By this Age

3 Polio

4 DTP or DtaP

3 Hep B

1 MMR, on or after the first birthday

At least 1 Hib given on or after the first birthday, regardless of any doses given before the first birthday *

Varicella (Chicken Pox) or date child had the disease.

Medication

It is extremely helpful when you can administer medication before or after center hours. There may be times, however, when your child needs medication during the day. CCC staff will make every attempt to administer medication prescribed by your physician which is dated, labeled, and in its original container, **if** you have completed a Consent to Administer Medication Form. **CCC is not liable for any missed doses.** Medication will be administered between 11:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon.

Permission to give medication forms must be filled out and given to the teacher or director. Medications to be given at the center must be stored in the refrigerator or in the director's office. If you plan on leaving medication for your child for the day, please consider the time it will take to fill out the proper paperwork and adjust your schedules accordingly. If you feel your child is in need of over the counter medication, then he/she is probably too ill to attend. Please allow your child to recuperate before returning to the center.

Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, we will contact you immediately. If it is determined that your child requires medical attention and no one can be contacted, the center will notify the nearest hospital facility to prepare for your child's arrival.

Permission to Re-enter School after Illness

After an absence of two weeks or more due to illness of any kind, a physician's permission must be obtained before your child returns to the center. After an absence of two months or more because of illness, a new physician's readmission form must be filed.

FIRST AID

CCC will maintain first aid supplies sufficient to care for minor injuries. The first aid supplies shall include only those items to be used for minor cuts and bruises. Parents will be notified when a child has been given first aid.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Children look forward with anticipation to seasonal and/or religious holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Kwanza, Hanukkah, New Years, Valentine's Day, May Day, Fourth of July, Halloween, Cinco de Mayo, etc. All ethnic and cultural events are recognized with age-appropriate activities, songs and crafts. If you do not wish your child to participate in a specific observance, you may arrange other care for that day.

TOYS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Except for toys that are needed to help ease your child's transition from home, we ask that toys be left at home until Share Time. Check with your child's caregiver for the specific day. Any item brought from home should be clearly labeled with your child's name. CCC is not responsible for lost items. Swords, guns, and super heroes are not considered appropriate tools for learning and should not be brought to the center.

VISITATIONS

We welcome all visitors. Please check in with the director or a teacher. Parents are encouraged to visit their children unannounced to check on progress or just give a hug as long as this does not cause an emotional disturbance to your child.

VACATION

A credit, up to a maximum of one week's tuition, shall be given for time away from the center. This credit is limited to one week per calendar year and requires two weeks prior written notification.

NUTRITION

Proper nourishment enhances functioning of the individual, mentally, emotionally and physically. We serve nutritious foods for snacks to further facilitate optimal functioning of your child. These include whole grain products, fresh vegetables and fresh fruits. We also provide fruit juices or milk with our mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks.

LUNCH

Parents provide lunch. Please leave lunch bags or boxes on the gray cart in your child's classroom or classroom designated area. Lunches can not be placed in the refrigerator because of limited space. An ice pack or frozen juice box can be used if your child's lunch needs to be kept cold. Make certain that the container is marked with the child's name. This is especially important with lunch boxes, thermos bottles and lids. Gum and candy is not permitted. We suggest that lunches are kept small unless your child has a large appetite - a whole sandwich is usually too much. Keep sweets to a minimum. Children who have sweets or chips in their lunch want to eat them first, and then don't have an appetite for the rest of their food. We suggest eggs, chicken, cottage cheese, fruit, vegetables, carbohydrates, and soups.

Certain foods are not safe to eat if left without refrigeration. For this reason, we suggest foods with mayonnaise or creams are kept in a thermos or cold container.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Please speak to us regarding any concerns or questions you have. The parent bulletin board will be used to inform you of community events, special CCC events, resources for various parental concerns, helpful tips for parents and notices from the Care Givers as to their program of planned activities so that you may follow up at home.

POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

No smoking is allowed in or near the CCC building. Children will not be released to a parent or guardian who is under the influence of alcohol.

DRESS CODE

Children should wear clothes that are easy to move in and easy to take off so toileting is not troublesome. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather. Formal clothing should be avoided because paints and glues and other materials are used every day at school and can soil and stain your child's clothing. Children are preferred to wear

closed-toe shoes that are appropriate for running, jumping, climbing and riding tricycles. Cowboy boots, party shoes and flip flops are unsafe for outdoor playground activities. All shoes must have a back strap. Parents need to provide at least one extra pair of underpants and clothing to be kept at school. **Please mark all removable clothing brought to school with your child's name.**

GUIDANCE IN WORKING TOWARD POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Guidance toward positive behavior allows children to develop their opportunities for growth. Setting limits with children gives them the security of knowing their strong emotions will not lead them to do things they will later regret.

Our approach to guidance is to set clear, predictable limits in a sensitive manner. We are committed to developing a positive sense of self-esteem. At no time will your child be struck, handled roughly, or verbally abused as a disciplinary measure. We request that parents do not spank their children in the center. Our philosophy of limit setting arises from two important areas of concern; not hurting oneself and others and respecting one's own and other people's physical environment

Please note that we set up the environment in a way that minimizes limits. If a child's behavior is inappropriate, our first action is to redirect the child, use positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior, and use natural or logical consequences. When children are ready, we believe they should be included in determining the natural or logical consequences of inappropriate behavior. Children's involvement helps them become responsible for their actions toward others as well as towards property. For example a child might be included in repairing a book they just tore up. After this is done the teacher and the child would talk about the feelings behind the behavior and ways to deal with his or her anger. Time-outs (Resting Body) are used as a means of giving the child an opportunity to calm down and re-establish inner control. When the child and teacher are ready, they will talk about the inappropriate behavior and about feelings and solving the problem. Children are always responsible for cleaning up after completing their projects or play activities.

BIRTHDAYS

Each child is special and needs a time to feel very important, so we celebrate birthdays. Parents may make arrangements with the child's caregiver to bring muffins or snack. Party favors and gifts should be saved for parties at home.

CLASSROOM LIBRARIES

In an effort to build good classroom libraries, every child is invited to present a book to the classroom library to commemorate the child's birthday.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is important that you notify CCC immediately of any changes in home address, telephone numbers or place of employment and home so that we will be able to reach you in an emergency.