



# Parent Handbook

## ***WELCOME***

We are confident that our program will provide a most rewarding and enriching experience for your child. We appreciate the confidence you have demonstrated in choosing our program.

It is the goal of the Cornerstone Children's Center to provide appropriate and affordable early childhood and early care programs. It gives children the opportunity to be with friends, relax and socialize, try new activities and pursue individual interests in a friendly atmosphere supported by a trained educational staff.

## ***THE PROGRAM***

Parents may be working, have a volunteer job, attend school or need dependable, enriched child care. Children range in age from 6 weeks to Grade 2. The program admits children of any race, religion, color, national and ethnic origin.

The program operates from 7:00 am to 6:30 pm daily. Cornerstone Children's Center provides a carefully planned program that addresses the needs of the whole child. This includes the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of each child. The curriculum, which is based on the knowledge of early childhood development, is flexible and recognizes the importance of each child as an individual developing at his or her own pace. Routine is an important part of a young child's experience. Our program includes a sequence of daily activities and a clear order in the arrangement of furnishings, equipment and materials to help a child gain self-confidence and independence. Meals and snacks are provided daily.

### ***ESCORT-DROP OFF***

Our morning drop off time is between 7:00am and 9:00am. Please allow enough time to escort your child into the Center. You are expected to take your child to his/her cubby and then greet the teacher in charge. CCC cannot assume responsibility for any child not accompanied inside the Center by an adult. Upon arrival, you will be asked to sign your child in. Please write your complete name and the time you arrived at CCC. Our After School children (grades K-2) arrive via bus between 2:30pm and 3:45pm.

### ***TRANSITIONS***

Children differ in their adjustment to new situations. Attending Cornerstone Children's Center may be your child's first major separation from the family. Reactions to this vary. Some children will cry. This is an appropriate response. The child is letting us know that s/he is feeling sad, angry or maybe fearful. Other children may have a reaction to separation several days or weeks later. Separation may be difficult for a parent, too. The staff is aware of these feelings, and understands that it takes time to become accustomed to new people, places and routines.

Sometimes a child is comforted by bringing a "transitional object" – a favorite stuffed animal or blanket from home. In order to facilitate your child's adjustment, CCC has developed a policy that eases the transition to the center. The child's first day at CCC is

from 9:00am – 11:00am only. On the second day, the child comes from 9:00am until after lunch. After an evaluation of the adjustment with the parent, the child may begin full time on the third day.

It is important that you try to allow enough time in the morning so that you are not rushed. Explaining to your child that you will be back later in the afternoon is important, but remember that young children have a very limited concept of time and may simply feel "stranded" until they become accustomed to your picking them up regularly. Be clear about when you are leaving and do not try to tiptoe out. When you decide to leave, say goodbye and leave the classroom. Your child's teacher may have additional specific suggestions for helping you both during this often difficult time.

Another factor involved with your child's day is that s/he may not want to leave at the end of the day and this may be another difficult transition time. In addition to the teacher's support, a relaxed, unhurried approach will often help.

There is also a transition process as your child moves from one classroom up to another. Before your child moves from one class to another, s/he visits the new classroom several times to interact with the children and to become familiar with the new environment. This gives the child the opportunity to gradually become used to the new classroom, children and teachers.

Each spring we will conduct a workshop for parents on preparing for kindergarten. Staff from the local public schools will come to speak with families about what to expect.

### ***OUR STAFF***

The staff consists of the Director and a qualified teaching staff. The program is licensed by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS). The required staff/student ratios are maintained at all times.

Volunteers and interns are utilized to add to the overall program enrichment. We seek and welcome community volunteers.

**Daily Schedules**

<u>Young Infants</u>	<u>Mobile Infants</u>	<u>Toddlers</u>
Note: While the following opportunities are presented as part of a daily schedule, clearly a young infant’s day should be individualized. It cannot and should not be scheduled.	<u>7:00am – 9:00am</u> Arrival – Greetings Diapering Breakfast Play – Private or Peer (Rest as needed) Outdoor Time	<u>7:00am – 9:00am</u> Arrival – Greetings Diapering/Toileting Breakfast Play – Private or Peer
Arrival – Greetings	<u>9:00am – 10:00am</u> Music, stories, interactive games as desired Large motor activities Clean-up/Transition	<u>9:00am – 10:00am</u> Table Top Activities Group Time – music and movement Clean up/Transition Outdoor Time
Play (solo, watching others)	<u>10:00am – 12:00pm</u> Activity time: blocks, books, push/pull toys Indoor or Outdoor activities (Feeding, diapering, toileting as needed)	<u>10:00am – 11:30am</u> Outdoor Time Center/Activity time: art, dramatic play, blocks, story corner, music (Toileting as needed)
Lap times (singing, looking at books, etc.)		<u>11:30am – 12:00pm</u> Transition to Lunch: Lunch, toileting, hand washing
Diapering	<u>12:00pm – 2:00pm</u> Naptime Quiet Activities	<u>12:00pm – 2:00pm</u> Naptime Quiet Activities
Meals	<u>2:00pm – 3:00pm</u> Wake-up – Greetings Diapering/Toileting Snack Play – Private or Peer Outdoor Time	<u>2:00pm – 3:00pm</u> Wake up – Greetings Diapering/Toileting Snack Play – Private or Peer
Snacks	<u>3:00pm – 4:00pm</u> Activity Time	<u>3:00pm – 4:00pm</u> Outdoor Time
Bottles	<u>4:00pm – 6:30pm</u> Music, stories, interactive games Clean up/Transition (Diapering/Toileting as needed) Departure	<u>4:00pm – 6:30pm</u> Table Top Activities Group time – music and movement Clean up/Transition Diapering/Toileting Departure
Transition to rest/sleep		
Wake-up Times		
Outdoor Time		
Departure		

## Preschool/Kindergarten On Deck/After School Programs

7:00am – 9:00am	<b><u>Arrival and Free Play</u></b> Children arrive and are greeted. They choose an area in which to play, i.e., blocks, art, writing, manipulative, dramatic play, water/sand play, etc.
8:50am – 9:00am	<b><u>Clean Up &amp; Wash Hands</u></b>
9:10am – 9:30am	<b><u>Breakfast</u></b>
9:30am – 10:00am	<b><u>Circle/Group Time</u></b> Books, stories, music, finger plays, etc. Older children make choices for work/play time.
10:20am – 11:40am	<b><u>Work and Play Time</u></b> This period involves child-child and teacher-to-child interactions in a variety of activities, in small groups or one-to-one. Children may explore and manipulate materials in the classroom environment. They may engage in dramatic/imaginative play, constructions, creative arts, games, puzzles, water/sand play, science exploration, sensory activities, cooking, etc.  <b><u>Outdoor/Large Motor Activities</u></b> (Preschool) Children use indoor/outdoor play spaces, go for walks.
11:40am – 12:00pm	<b><u>Clean Up &amp; Wash Hands and Story</u></b>
12:00pm – 12:20pm	<b><u>Lunch</u></b>
12:20pm – 12:35pm	<b><u>Toileting, Preparation for Rest Time</u></b>
12:30pm – 2:00pm	<b><u>Outdoor Time</u></b> (Kindergarten on Deck)
12:40pm – 2:30pm	<b><u>Rest &amp; Quiet Activity Time</u></b>
2:30pm – 3:15pm	<b><u>Outdoor/Large Motor Activities</u></b> (Three's)
4:45pm – 4:30pm	<b><u>Outdoor/Large Motor Activities</u></b> (Four's & Up)
3:15pm – 6:30pm	<b><u>Afternoon Snack/Choice Time, Outdoor/Large Motor Activities</u></b> Includes dramatic and imaginative play, constructions, creative arts, games, puzzles, water/sand play, science exploration, sensory activities, cooking, literacy activities, etc.  <b><u>Clean Up</u></b>

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information pertaining to your child will remain confidential. This includes the application, financial information and assessments. This information is for the use of the parents, staff and consultants who work directly with your child. No information will be released from a child's record without the written consent of the parent or guardian. All information pertaining to your family such as financial, health, or other personal matters, are considered confidential

### **ADMINISTRATION**

All inquiries concerning registration, scheduling, absences and billing should be directed to the Director.

### **ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Enrollment is granted on a first-come, first-serve basis throughout the year. However, preference is given to children needing care 5 days a week. There is a one-time registration fee. Each family must provide a deposit equivalent to one month's tuition. Your deposit will be refunded when your child leaves the program. Deposits will be refunded only if a six week notice is given to the Business Manager.

For enrollment to the program parents *must* complete and sign the following: Application for Registration, Parent Consent Form, Policy Statement, and Medical Forms. Children are required to have an annual medical examination signed by your child's doctor.

To ensure the health and safety of our children and families, we provide our children with a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack each day. Menus will be available weekly. It is our policy that no food from home is brought to the center (exception infants). This policy minimizes exposure to possible food allergens for children with food allergies and for other food restrictions. Children who require a special diet must bring written instructions, signed by a physician, indicating all restrictions and special treatment.

Cornerstone Children's Center reserves the right to refuse an application or dismiss a child at any time, e.g., if a child is unable to adjust to the program after a reasonable amount of time or otherwise requires a disproportionate share of staff attention. Then, contractual fees are refunded on a prorated basis.

### **CLOTHING & BEDDING**

Your child must have a complete change of labeled clothing to be left in his or her cubby. Clothes should be comfortable and suitable for play and easily laundered. Remember, children use paint, markers and other "messy" materials at Cornerstone Children's Center, and they go outdoors daily. Please do not send your children to school with clothing that cannot get dirty. All clothing, including boots, hats, mittens, etc., must be marked clearly with the child's name. We cannot keep track clothing unless it is marked. Please remember that unless it is raining or extremely cold, children will spend part of each day outdoors. Be sure your child comes to school prepared for the weather.

Please make sure to bring bedding for your child's crib or cot. It is VERY important for families to bring children's bedding home each Friday for washing and **remember to bring the bedding back to the center each Monday.**

### **TOYS FROM HOME**

Please remember to refrain from allowing your child to bring toys from home to school. Teachers will request that parents take such items home with them. Home toys can be lost, and can cause friction between children in the classroom.

### **ABSENCE AND ILLNESS**

Keep us informed of absences -- for illness, changes to your child's schedule or for any

reason. Our answering machine operates 24 hours a day. Please call in the morning if your child will be absent.

Report all illnesses on the first day it appears. Include a diagnosis of any communicable disease, e.g., head lice, strep throat, scarlet fever, chicken pox, etc. Parents, staff and volunteers are notified if there has been an exposure to a contagious disease.

Your child is too sick to attend if s/he:

- Has temperature of 100 F or more in the morning.
- Vomits or has diarrhea.
- Breaks out in a rash.
- Complains of a stomachache or fatigue, accompanied by other symptoms, e.g., fever, vomiting, headache.
- Has a headache that persists/recurs 1 - 2 days.
- Has a persistent cough.

*Your child must be without fever 24 hours before returning to Cornerstone Children's Center.*

***Medication can be administered to a child only with the proper Medication Consent form completed by your child's pediatrician. The center staff may apply topical ointments only with written parental consent.*** The Director/Business Office must be notified in writing of any special health concerns, allergies and dietary restrictions.

If a child is injured while at Cornerstone Children's Center, that child's parent will be notified immediately. If necessary, the child will be taken by Ambulance or the Scarsdale Police Department to Lawrence Hospital. A staff person will accompany the child.

Cornerstone Children's Center has an emergency file with each child's home phone number and the parent or guardian's work and/or cell phone number. Parents are expected to notify the Center, in writing, of any change of phone numbers.

### ***PICKING UP YOUR CHILDREN***

When picking up your child, you must come into the Center. Please allow enough time for your child to clean up and prepare to go home. You will be asked to sign your child out each day. Only parents or authorized persons that are specified on the registration and emergency contact forms may pick up children from the Cornerstone Children's Center. No exceptions. Changes and or additions to your emergency contact/authorization may be made at any time in writing to the Director/Business Manager. Please remember that CCC closes at 6:30pm.

### ***EMERGENCIES***

In weather emergencies, the program will be closed. For information, listen to WFAS (1230 AM), cable channel 12 News or check the Cornerstone website for school closing information. Additionally, we will send an email notification and change the outgoing message on our telephones.

If an emergency develops, we will remain open until either you or your emergency back up names are reached. In any emergency, parents must respond immediately in picking up their child. In a dire emergency only may a safe house may be invoked.

## ***BILLING & PAYMENT***

The monthly INVOICE, also known as a "PRE-BILL" itemizes the cost of your schedule for the *upcoming* month, and any other charges.

### **PROGRAM FEES ARE PAID IN ADVANCE!**

Payments DUE (Before Care)	The 10 <sup>th</sup>
Payments LATE/\$20 charged	The 20 <sup>th</sup>
Schedule CHANGE/last day	The 20 <sup>th</sup>

- Bounced checks are very costly, to you and to us. Please take extreme care to avoid this.
- No refund or credit is given, if a child is absent for whatever reason, including snow days.
- If parents have a past due or unpaid balance, they may not attend or continue to attend.
- Parents who do not pay their pre-bills by the 20<sup>th</sup> are assumed not to need the program and wish to have their schedules dropped from our lists automatically. A \$20 late charge is billed, and any balances are collected.
- Fees & Discounts: See Current Brochure  
Late Payment Per month, \$20

#### Late Pickup

FIRST time late:	\$10 each ½ hour
SECOND time late:	\$15 each ½ hour
THIRD time late:	\$20.00 each ½ hour

After the third time late, the child will be dismissed from the program.

Bank Fees (NSF) Each time \$20

### ***OTHER CONCERNS***

About child abuse and neglect: Each staff member and volunteer has been fingerprinted and screened to verify that s/he has not been the subject of child abuse or criminal complaints.

As educators, each staff member is mandated to report suspected child abuse, endangerment or neglect to the appropriate state/local authorities.

### ***COMMUNICATIONS & VISITS***

A bi-monthly Newsletter & monthly Calendar of events will be emailed. Notices and flyers will be distributed through email

Parents are welcome at Cornerstone Children's Center any time. If an appointment is made, the Director/Assistant Director will be available for specific questions or concerns.

Parent-Teacher conferences will be conducted twice yearly. We encourage parents to request a conference at any time for any concerns.