

# Center of Excellence Childcare and Academy

## Parent Handbook



**Center of Excellence Childcare and Academy**

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# Center of Excellence Childcare and Academy

## Parent Handbook

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### Acknowledgement of Receipt for Parent Handbook

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (parent/guardian) of the children listed below, am in receipt of Center of Excellence Parent Handbook revised 5/2021.

I understand it is imperative for me to review the contents of this Handbook to familiarize myself with its contents as it relates to the obligations of both myself and Center of Excellence Childcare and Academy.

Please list your children's names below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COE Staff signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **date:** \_\_\_\_\_

When more than one child is enrolled at the center, a photocopy of this receipt, signed by the parent, should be kept in each additional child's individual student enrollment file.

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Dear Prospective Family,

The information contained in this Handbook has been prepared to answer questions you may have now or anytime during your child's tenure with Center of Excellence Childcare and Academy. After you review this handbook, if you have further questions or concerns regarding the material within, please do not hesitate to speak to the *Business Manager or Center Director*.

Center of Excellence is a child care center, licensed by NC Division of Child Development & Early Education and is obligated to maintain the regulations applied to all licensed child care centers in North Carolina (speak to a member of our administration team to view a copy of state and local child care regulations). As a matter of policy, Center of Excellence operates to meet or exceed all state and local regulations.

Center of Excellence is your family's partner in your child's development. That is why we are constantly striving to give all children every opportunity to be the best that he or she can be. Our dedicated staff nurture and embrace each child as he or she transitions from infancy to kindergarten. **You want the best for your child and so do WE!**

### **Our Administrators**

Co-owner/Operator - Tasha (insert responsibilities/areas of expertise)

Co-owner/Curriculum Director - Cindi (insert responsibilities/areas of expertise)

Business Director - Vee (insert responsibilities/areas of expertise)

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### ***Our Educational Philosophy***

At Center of Excellence, we believe that every child should have access to the best education possible. Education is the gateway to a world where there are no limits.

We believe that it is important for all students to develop a sense of self-worth and to respect the differences of others. *We strongly believe it is our job to create an environment that incorporates and encourages diversity, learning, and creativity.*

### ***Our Educational Mission***

To offer developmentally appropriate activities and experiences which will enhance growth in the areas of cognitive, sensory-motor, social/emotional and physical development. We do this when we

- Promote, secure and loving attachments between children and staff.
- Provide learning centers and a variety of curricula that generate curiosity, initiative, creativity and independent thought.
- Exhibit appropriate use of language to develop communication skills.
- Provide gross motor and fine motor activities to develop physical and coordination skills.
- To develop a partnership between parents and COE's staff in order to best meet the needs of the child.
- Encourage open communication between parents and staff in order to share ideas, evaluate the progress of the child, and set goals and objectives to best promote the child's overall development.
- Conduct regular conferences to monitor the child's development
- Serve as an extended support system to the family unit.
- To promote a positive self-concept within the child, which gives the child the ability to
  - Develop respect for self and others.
  - Respect each child as a unique individual
  - Use concepts and teaching techniques that are relevant to the child's learning.
  - Help children develop self-control and the ability to make decisions.
  - Provide guidance by setting clear, consistent limits for appropriate behavior.
  - Encourage children to communicate feelings.
  - Foster growth in understanding and appreciation of the world around us.

### ***Our Hours of Operation***

Center of Excellence strives to provide supportive, convenient child care options for our families, by offering both part-time and full-time schedules. Our current hours of operation are **6:30am - 5:30pm**. Please discuss your enrollment needs with our administrative team.

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### ***Attendance Policy***

Once families have confirmed their enrollment needs and a space has been made for children, that schedule may not be changed without administrator approval.

Our teaching staff are hired and follow schedules that meet North Carolina Child care rules related to adult:child ratios and quality care. In order to maintain these strict rules, we require families to follow their agreed upon schedules or to provide at least 24 hours advance notice of any changes to their schedule. In order to make changes, administrators will need to review staffing schedules and possibly make changes to those schedules first.

We believe attendance is the foundation of creating the important routines that **young children rely on to build relationships with adults and their peers so that they can learn in an environment they know well**. Unless you have a specific enrollment schedule, please ensure that the children arrive at the center before the day starts (9:00 am in most classrooms).

### ***Scheduled COE Closures***

COE is closed **nine** days each year. No tuition credit is allowed for these days. We also reserve the right to close early on Christmas Eve.

New Year's Eve (December 31)	July 4th
New Year's Day (January 1)	Labor Day (1st Monday in September)
Good Friday (date varies)	Thanksgiving (and the day after)
Memorial Day (date varies)	Christmas Day (December 25th)

*If one of these holidays falls on a weekend we reserve the right to close on the preceding or following business day. Please see other closing and monthly activities in the appendix.*

### ***Unscheduled Closures***

COE may close due to conditions that are perceived as potentially dangerous. This includes unforeseen local or national events, utility outages, and severe weather. In those instances where it is absolutely necessary to close before the center opens, due to severe driving conditions, you can get information by calling the main line after 6:00 a. m. and listening to the recorded message for information and instructions.

If weather conditions worsen after the center has opened for the day and it becomes necessary to close due to extremely dangerous driving conditions, parents will be notified to pick up their child to maintain the safety and well-being of our staff and families.

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### II. CURRICULUM & EDUCATION

#### ***Center of Excellence Curriculum Approach***

At Center of Excellence, we understand that learning programs for young children should focus on developing children's curiosity, creativity, and encouraging them to be active learners. Through the use of [Creative Curriculum](#), our teaching staff are able to value each child as *strong, capable* and *resilient*; rich with wonder and knowledge. Teachers create lesson plans that utilize the environment as a means to support explorations that are derived from observing children's interests, knowledge, and skills (both current and expected). With week-to-week and sometimes monthly lesson plans, children have the opportunity to explore topics deeply and to find their own understanding of the world around them. This process is aligned with the NC Foundations of Early Learning and Development (NC Foundations) which highlights and outlines developmental expectations for young children, from infants to Kindergarten. **Our teaching staff have been trained in this curriculum approach and have opportunities to attend training sessions that give them a deeper, more practical understanding of how to use the curriculum every day in their classrooms.**

#### ***Child Guidance and Classroom Management***

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) describes the purpose of behavior guidance for young children as the need to teach coping skills and discourage inappropriate behavior. The early years are a time for children to develop confidence and self-control. When adults create environments that respect each individual child, they set forth a message that the world is a warm, friendly learning place. Positive discipline techniques that combine caring and direction are a part of this healthy environment.

COE's philosophy of classroom management is to focus on redirecting behaviors and allowing a child's self-esteem to remain intact. We implement careful guidance skills with positive reinforcement in our interactions with all children to help them build independence and confidence in their own abilities to master skills and interact with others.

Guidance techniques used by teachers are:

- Setting clear, consistent and fair limits for children's behavior.
- Redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity.
- Using behavior as a learning experience.

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- Using natural and logical consequences so children learn that their behaviors have repercussions.
- Children may be given an opportunity or time away from the group to calm down and cool off after a frustrating situation.

### ***Biting Policy:***

Biting can be a very common behavior in small children and is a developmentally appropriate means of communication. A child may bite if he or she is not having needs met or if he or she is coping with challenges or stress. At COE we strive to provide nurturing, caring relationships with the children in our care to prevent challenging behaviors such as biting. We also try to ensure that children have structured routines, and a supportive environment with adequate toys and schedules that meet their needs.

### **We recognize that biting occurs for a variety reasons which can include:**

- The developmental stage of the child
- Individual differences in children
- The environment
- The child lacks a skill
- Unmet emotional needs

### **We also know that children may bite if they:**

- Are not provided developmentally appropriate care and guidance
- Do not have a strong bond with a teacher
- Have too many transitions during the day
- Are in too large a group
- Are in open undefined spaces
- Lack language skills
- Are overwhelmed by light, sound or activity level
- Need more active playtime
- Need more choices or access to material
- Are over tired
- Are teething
- Have a need for oral stimulation

We try to recognize children's needs and to adjust the routines of the day to individualize their care. Teachers will do their best to anticipate behaviors that are likely to occur. Our goal is to redirect children patiently and guide them toward being able to control their own impulses and behaviors.

### **Handling biting in the classroom:**

Teachers and caregivers should be responsive and aware of the needs of the children in their care. Through awareness they may begin to anticipate when a child may bite and act immediately to prevent the biting. Teachers may observe and record behaviors and patterns of behavior to



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assist them in recognizing the signs and be able to better predict when biting may occur.

### **If a biting incident does occur, we will take the following steps:**

- Handle the situation without expressing frustration toward the biter.
- Address the child that bit in a firm, simple, clear manner letting them know that biting is unacceptable.
- Give the child who has been bitten attention, support and concern.
- Provide appropriate first aid to the child who has been bitten.
- Have further conversation with the biter about strategies they may use in the future instead of biting.
- Assist the children in moving on with their daily routine.
- Confidentially report to the parents of involved child/ren notification of the biting incident. Staff will always maintain the confidentiality of all the children involved.

### **If a child has recurring biting incidents then the following steps may be taken, alone or in any combination, as determined in the sole discretion of the director or assistant director:**

- Assess the situation to determine if the child's needs are being met.
- Review the environment to establish how that may be influencing the child.
- Evaluate the need for additional social-emotional support.
- Observe the child and document behaviors and context both before and after biting incidents occur.
- Use the information to identify patterns and develop solutions.
- Meet with the family to gather and share additional information about behavior in the home as well as collaborate to ensure continued working together to address the child's needs.
- Seek additional professional development for staff to support them in their work with the children and families.
- If necessary, a shadow may be assigned to the child to ensure the safety of all children.
- Request consultation from specialists and resources in our area.
- Provide parents with additional information about biting.

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### *Confidentiality & Communication with families*

All information pertaining to a child and his/her family is, all times, kept confidential. At times, a staff member, in the presence of the Director of the Center, may review the child's file for information pertinent to the child's needs. **All day-to-day communication with families will be in-person (at drop-off and pick-up) or using the ProCare daily system. Families should call the center if they have urgent questions or concerns.**

### *Exceptional Children/Children with Special Needs*

COE will accept children with special needs when it is determined that the child can be best served in the COE environment and that the quality of the experience of the other children will not be affected. In many instances having a child with special needs is enriching for **all children involved, exposing them to differences and seeing themselves in relation to others**. COE's staff members will work closely **with the families, the child's physician**, therapist, and other professionals, or make referrals to a more appropriate setting when necessary.

## **III. REGISTRATION & FEES**

### *The Application Process*

During the application process, we like for both the parent and the child to visit the center and meet the Director and the teachers. Once you have made the decision to enroll, the following steps are required:

1. Complete all necessary enrollment forms.
2. Submit a current physical examination and immunization record.
3. Pay the non-refundable registration fee.

### *Wait List*

Due to the high demand for quality child care, we maintain a waiting list based on the date of the application and the child's age. Payment of a registration fee is required in order to be on the waiting list. As openings occur in the center, parents are called in the order of their position on the waiting list. The state and COE require a completed application and immunization record. Any incomplete files may prevent your child from attending the center, (this includes record of immunization). **All files must be completed within five (5) working days from start date.** *Priority will be given to children currently enrolled in COE who are waiting to advance to the next group and their siblings who have not yet enrolled.*

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### TUITION & FEES

- **Tuition** may be paid monthly, semi-monthly or weekly.
  - Semi-monthly tuition is due on the 1st and the 15th of the month.
  - Monthly tuition is due on the first business day of each month
  - Weekly is due every week on Friday.
- **Late payment fees (what's the late fee?)** will be assessed **for any** late payment **and are due immediately.**
- **A returned check fee of \$30.00** will be assessed on the first instance of a returned check, and you may be required to make future payments in cash or money order with multiple returned check instances.
- *In the event your child does not attend due to illness or vacation (not regularly scheduled), tuition is still due in full according to your child's fee schedule. Extended absences will require a holding fee to save a child's space. **Holding fees are based on each child's age group and are as follows:***

<b>Infants and Toddlers</b>	<i>½ of the months tuition for each month absent</i>
<b>Preschool &amp; School Age</b>	<i>New registration fee required</i>

**Annual registration fees** of \$125 are charged in September and acknowledge your continued enrollment at COE. Other registration fees may be charged for School Age summer camps.

Families that permanently withdraw children from COE will not be eligible for tuition credit or refund. Returning to school would require a payment of a new registration fee.

#### **Late pick-up fees**

At the beginning of each child's enrollment COE's late fee policy is discussed. As of January 4, 2022 our new policy is as follows: if you are late picking your child up you will be charged a \$30.00 late pick-up fee with an additional \$1.00 for every minute after the contracted pick up. If you are late more than THREE times in a month there will be an additional \$20.00 charge included in the already late fee; these fees will be added to your account and **MUST** be paid with/before next month's tuition. If you are not aware of your drop off and pick up times please see management. Tuition policy update: Effective

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immediately, tuition is required to be paid on the 1st of every month. However, COE's grace period will now allow you until the 3rd of each month to pay tuition. If the payment is not made by 5:30 p.m on the 3rd your account will be charged a \$40.00 late fee. In any event that you are charged the late fee, the late fee along with tuition will need to be paid before the child can return to school. If you have any questions or concerns please see a member of management.

COE Management

*. Please be advised that COE does not pay its employees after their regular scheduled shifts, so the cash payment should be presented to the closing person. Get a receipt stating you paid.*

### **IV. DAILY ACTIVITIES & ROUTINES**

### **V. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

### **VI. HEALTH, SAFETY, NUTRITION**

#### ***Immunizations & Physicals***

In accordance with the State of North Carolina General Statutes (G.S. 130A-155), no child may attend COE unless a certificate of immunization indicating that the child has received the immunizations required by G.S. 130A-152, is presented to the school prior to attendance.

#### ***Illness/exclusion policy***

In addition to the physician's examination and immunization records required for enrollment, we also have a daily screening to observe each child's health. If your child develops symptoms of illness during the day, we will isolate him/her from the other children and call you to pick him/ her up. Please make every effort to get to the center immediately upon being called. There will be a \$7.50 for every fifteen minutes beyond one hour after you are called due to the one-on-one care required to keep your child isolated.

For the health and well-being of your child and others, please do not bring your child to school if he/she:

1. Has a fever or has had one during the previous 24 hours.
2. Is in the first 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
3. Has a heavy nasal discharge that is not clear. (Nasal discharge that is not clear may be caused by an allergy).
4. Has a constant cough.
5. Has a symptom of possible communicable disease such as sniffles, reddened eye, sore throat, painful ears, rash, headache, abdominal pain, or fever.
6. If your child has chickenpox please let us know so we can take the necessary precautions

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### Covid Policy

Effective Jan 14th, 2022

#### **ALL POSITIVE CASES MUST BE ISOLATED**

- If **UNABLE** to wear a mask children must isolate for 10 days
- If **ABLE** to wear a mask, children must isolate for 5 days and can return on day 6 if it has been at least 24 hours since they had a fever without using fever reducing medication and NO symptoms of Covid 19 . The child must continue to wear a mask for an additional 5 days.

**Anyone within close contact within a 48 hour window of a positive case within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes must complete quarantine.**

- If **UNABLE** to wear a mask they must be excluded for 10 days.
- If **ABLE** to wear a mask, close contact may return to childcare after five days of quarantine; if they are symptomatic they must wear a mask for 10 days.

The CDC recommends during this pandemic that if your child develops a fever greater than 100°, cough or difficulty breathing during the week of exposure, please contact your primary care physician immediately and inform them that your child was potentially exposed to a positive COVID-19 individual. Self isolated while waiting for further instructions on the next steps to take. During the quarantine period, you will still be responsible for your tuition payments. We know that this was an unexpected occurrence that could NOT be prevented but in order to continue to maintain the well-being of our facility and to adhere to Tuition and Handbook policies payments will still be required.

This policy may change with or without any notice. We adhere to all Health Department and the Division of Child Development policies and follow all recommendations made by the CDC . The center is professionally cleaned and hospital grade disinfectants are used daily to mitigate the spread of COVID 19. Additional measures are taken weekly to use an electric sprayer to ensure environments are disinfected.

We are all in this fight against COVID 19 together. Stay safe!

Sincerely,

COE Management

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### *CACFP, Child Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention*

As a participant in the Child, Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), COE offers a quality nutritional program in a clean and pleasant environment. Healthy eating habits are encouraged by introducing children to components of the basic food groups outlined in the USDA My Plate program. Individual differences and cultural patterns are also recognized to improve the health of children through sound nutrition.

It is widely recognized that teaching children the importance of good nutrition, in combination with regular physical activity and limited time spent using passive media (i.e. screen time), can positively impact the incidence of childhood obesity. COE supports these efforts through offering nutritious meals and snacks, regular opportunities for physical play, and placing limits around the content and length of passive media activities.

### **Food Allergies**

#### **Insert information**

### ***Breastfeeding Policy***

Research shows that breastfeeding is the superior form of infant nutrition, providing a multitude of health benefits to both the infant and the mother. Breastfeeding employees and working mothers need ongoing support from child care providers to provide milk for their babies. At the Center of Excellence,

- 1. Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided a place to breastfeed or express their milk.** Breastfeeding mothers, including employees shall be provided a private sanitary place to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area provides an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water.
- 2. A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed milk**

Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed human milk in the center's refrigerator (**where?**). Mothers will provide their own containers that are clearly marked with name and date. COE will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control in ensuring that human milk is properly handled to avoid waste. Safe handling guides will be posted where human milk is stored.

- 3. Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies.**

COE is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding families, including

- a. providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and evening and waiting to give a bottle to the baby until mom arrives (when possible).
- b. artificial baby milk (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless the family has requested.
- c. baby will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped.
- d. families and teachers will work together to establish an infant feeding plan

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that will be kept in the classroom.

#### **4. Staff will be trained in handling human milk**

All COE staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers.

#### **5. Breastfeeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression**

Employees who are currently lactating will be provided a flexible schedule for feeding or pumping to provide human milk to their child/ren. The time allowed will not exceed the normal time allowed for lunch and other breaks. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, sick or annual leave must be used or the adjustments to the employee's schedule will be made.

6. Breastfeeding promotion information will be displayed. COE will provide information on breastfeeding, including names of support groups and area organizations, consultants, and hotlines should the families have questions or if problems arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding is on display throughout the center (posters, books, toys).

#### ***Child Abuse/Safety***

COE teachers and staff are, by law, Mandated Reporters and are required to report any suspected/alleged abuse and/or neglect to Orange County Child Protective Services (CPS). Substantiating a case of child abuse is the role of child welfare experts, police investigators, and/or the court. Any allegations brought to a member of the administration team will be determined if it meets the criteria of child abuse/neglect and will, then be reported to CPS along with a statement from the reporter.

## **VII. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

### **A TYPICAL DAY AT COE**

Our days are filled with various age-appropriate, stimulating experiences. Different areas of interest in balanced time periods are made available for each child. Of course, regular trips to the bathroom, playground time, meals, snacks, and rest time are part of the day. A detailed schedule is posted in each room. The consistency of routine and knowing what to expect during the day helps children develop a sense of understanding of their environment.

From the moment your child arrives until he or she is picked up at the end of the day, your child's safety is our concern. No child shall ever be left unsupervised.

Procedure for arrivals and departures have been developed to ensure the safety and well-being

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of everyone at the center. Your cooperation in complying with the following procedure is appreciated:

- Parents are to use only the front door for entering and exiting.
- Children must be walked into the building and placed with their COE staff member before you leave. Never leave a child outside the building to walk in alone or allow him or her to be accompanied by another child.
- Parents must complete the electronic Sign-in and Sign-out process, as well as manual sign-in sheets, on a daily basis and any applicable forms (i.e., medication, Communication Forms). **All completed forms must be placed in the Lucite bins provided in the reception area.**
- We also have a daily screening to observe each child's health. acknowledges that your child is leaving the building and remembers to electronically or manually sign out. A manual sign in /out is a requirement of the state.
- Windows allow the parent the opportunity to view the child's activities without disturbing the integrity of the classroom environment.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

**In the case of an accident or injury we will make every attempt to reach you. If you are not available, the child's pediatrician and emergency contact person(s) will be called. Should your child require emergency medical care, an employee or the center will accompany your child in an ambulance to the closest hospital for examination and care to be rendered under general supervision and the advice of a physician or surgeon licensed to practice medicine in the state in which the hospital is located**