



COA FAMILY GUIDE

Welcome to Children of America

Thank you for choosing Children of America (COA) as your early childhood learning program for your child. We appreciate the confidence you place in us to provide a caring, dynamic environment in which your child will grow and develop skills for a lifetime of learning.

Our commitment to you is to provide your child with challenging and inspiring academic experiences every day. Our staff is dedicated to ensuring your child receives opportunities to explore, investigate and discover new and exciting concepts about the world. We provide developmentally appropriate activities through our proprietary curriculum for each stage of learning. The curriculum focuses on activities that will build your child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth and developmental abilities.

This guide will acquaint you with pertinent information, school policies and specific ways we will partner with you during the important early childhood years.

We know that attending a new school can a big change for your child — and for you. Adjustment will vary depending on the age of your child and prior experiences in a classroom setting. Our professional teaching staff and school administrators are very experienced in welcoming new families and will work with you to make the process as seamless as possible.

The following are some suggestions that may ease the transition:

- Visit the center with your child before his or her start day. On one of those visits, let your child explore his or her new classroom while you step out for a few minutes. This time allows your child to associate your departure with a return, and also allows you to observe your child at play with other children.
- Establish a daily routine. Routine tells your child that you feel the classroom is a good and safe place to be.
- Say goodbye to your child, rather than just slip out. Your child will recognize that although you are leaving, you will be back.

We look forward to partnering with you and your family and to inspiring a love of learning in your child.

Thank you,



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Programming Standards

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Educational Philosophy

At COA, we are committed to continuously developing new and innovative programming so every child has access to the most current and relevant curriculum available. Our primary mission is to add healthy doses of love and understanding as we prepare the young children in our care for higher learning.

COA Mind & Body Matters

Powered by COA

As part of our ongoing commitment to nurturing young minds, we offer innovative educational and developmental strategies to the children and families we serve. We call our program Mind & Body Matters. It combines four powerful programs designed to educate young minds, encourage parent-child reading time and teach the benefits of nutrition and fitness. This platform supports the fundamental belief that parents and educators play a crucial role in helping children develop a passion for education and the written word, along with nutritional eating habits and a healthy respect for physical fitness and interactive play that encourages constructive decision making, planning and self-management.



Active Learning — The Central Element

Our STAR curriculum emphasizes “active learning.” This means children engage in hands-on experiences with people, objects, events and ideas. They make choices according to their interests, and teachers support these choices. While the STAR curriculum is structured, its flexible framework allows children to develop confidence and a sense of security, while experimenting with new ideas.

Through exploration and discovery, each child receives ample opportunity to develop his or her natural curiosity and creativity. With the guidance of caring professionals, these “learning” moments help cultivate lasting understanding and are key to transforming discoveries into a lifelong love of learning and academic success.

Knowledge is constructed through interactions with the world and the people around them. At COA, children take the first step on their knowledge path by making choices and then following through on their plans and decisions.

Using the Plan, Do, Review approach, our teachers offer social, emotional and academic support in an active environment. They use open-ended questions to expand thinking and create an atmosphere that is both exciting and secure. The process focuses on creative problem solving and strong verbal communication.

The power of this approach becomes clear as children learn to problem solve through experiences, using higher-level thought processing and critical thinking skills.

COA believes that a high-quality early childhood program encompasses an appreciation for childhood as a unique and valuable stage of development. To this commitment, we also support a close partnership with parents in the context of families, culture and society. We believe in respecting the dignity and worth of every individual within each family and value every child as unique.



Program Goals



Our first program goal is to recognize that children's ways of learning are categorized by distinctive learning styles. Many children are visual learners. They perceive a sense of the objective by seeing the teacher demonstrate a lesson or showing objects to be used in a game. Some children are auditory learners. The concept or information presented is channeled through hearing the information, then acting on it. Still, other children's learning takes place through kinesthetic or tactile (hands-on) learning. These children learn through hands-on manipulation of objects or learning materials and only after sensory stimulation of the lesson or game does the objective become apparent. Our learning plans target these different approaches. Please review your child's learning plan found on the family board outside each classroom.



We also address the foundational areas of growth as children develop:



Social-Emotional Growth: We support children in this area by nurturing their sense of trust and belonging. We provide opportunities to build self-confidence as they build their self-concept. Children engage in social experiences through play, group activities and partnering with other children as they pretend, discover and investigate their learning environment.

Intellectual Growth: We foster children's abilities to ask questions and describe their feelings and thoughts. The curriculum offers experiences that encourage problem solving, decision making and challenges through activities that promote emerging literacy.

Physical Growth: We promote strengthening and refining of the body through eye/hand coordination, eye tracking, coordination of movements, spatial relationships and crossing the midline, which leads to emerging reading and writing skills.

Classroom Design

COA classrooms are uniquely designed to respond to the age level, needs and abilities of every child, ensuring books, learning materials, accessories and games are accessible to all.

As children transition to each classroom, the learning areas increase. Interest areas in the preschool classrooms include art, blocks, logic, house, sensory science, computer, library, and literacy and math readiness. Each of these areas promotes concept and skill building as children choose activities that interest them.



Communication, Classroom Assignments and Transitions

At the time of enrollment your child is assigned to a classroom based on chronological age in relation to eligibility to begin public school. As your child progresses in abilities and age, we transition him or her to the next learning environment based on teacher and administration recommendation. You are kept informed of your child's progress through daily email reports. As your child gets older, you are notified of potential classroom transitions with a letter from administration. We follow a transition schedule to acquaint your child with a new classroom and achieve a level of comfort.

Although our academic day begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m., many children arrive at different times during the morning, so there may be occasions when we combine children in a transition room until all children and staff have arrived and our academic day begins. We also may combine in the evening according to parent pickup times and staff schedules.



Behavior Expectations

Conflict Resolution

At COA, we promote self-esteem building by helping your child develop self-control and responsibility for actions. Expected behavior is based on your child's developmental level. Appropriate guidance techniques used by our teachers include redirection, diversion and substitution. We never advocate the use of punishment, neither verbal nor physical, as a means of correcting inappropriate behaviors. We turn incidents into learning situations, according to the ability of the children involved, to help them understand the consequences of their actions. Children of preschool age are encouraged to use words to resolve conflicts. We look for acceptable behavior rather than dwell on negative behavior. By providing a positive role model for children, we manage the classroom using positive words, encouraging actions and focusing on each child's ability to make the right decisions. Severe behavior issues require parental intervention depending on the social, emotional and developmental needs of each child.

Bitting

We strive to minimize biting incidents. Toddlers, especially, often use biting as a form of communication. If another child bites your child, we comfort him or her and care for his or her needs immediately. If your child bites another child, we develop a plan with you to try to correct the behavior. If biting continues, to protect the other children, you may be asked to remove your child temporarily or services may be interrupted.



The Protective Hug

COA uses conflict resolution when handling disputes between children. This calming method allows a teacher to step between the children, get down to their level, and ask both sides to describe what has occurred. The teacher then helps guide the children to a resolution they can all agree upon. A COA employee is trained to always use developmentally appropriate approaches while guiding young children. A soothing voice, a calm demeanor and often a protective hug can diffuse an escalating situation. Therefore, no punitive form of punishment is acceptable or allowed.





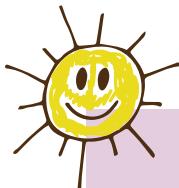
Outdoor Experiences

Our outdoor playgrounds are designed to stimulate physical fitness and social interactions. Our teachers participate with the children by providing games and activities that increase their physical abilities. Balls, beanbags, hoops and other materials are available to build coordination, strength and agility. Your child should come to school in clothes that allow him or her to move freely. Sneakers or other closed-toe shoes are the best choice for safety when playing outdoors. Our outside play areas use a rubberized surface or soft synthetic turf instead of wood chips, sand or gravel. All perimeter and playground gates are locked and monitored so children can enjoy outdoor play safely. Children remain indoors during inclement weather, and activities are supplemented through music and movement experiences and visiting COA City Place.



Nap Time

Nap times are provided in accordance with your child's age. The infants in our program sleep whenever they wish. Individually labeled cribs for infants under 12 months are assigned so that an infant may rest at any time during the day. Infants are placed in a crib on their backs as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children, over 12 months of age, rest on an assigned cot. Scheduled nap times are noted daily on the family board outside each classroom. The length of quiet time is in accordance with the state childcare rules and regulations. Check with your administrator for needed napping materials. Children 2 years of age and under cannot rest with pillows.



Items From Home

Toys and other personal belongings should not be brought from home as each classroom provides sufficient learning materials for your child's day. During specific sharing days, your child's teacher may ask your child to bring something in for "Show and Tell." In that instance, the item must be labeled with your child's first and last name and taken home the same day.

Choices for a "Show and Tell" day may not include guns or other war toys. COA is not responsible for lost items.



Nutrition

Our nutritional program is guided by the following goals:

- Menu meets the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutritional standards and state licensing rules and regulations.
- Food choices provide wholesome food selections.
- Mealtime is pleasant with conversation and food group discussions.
- Mealtime encourages family-style dining.

Children of America participates in the CACFP Program and supplies all foods including Infant Formula to all participants. If you provide the Infant Formula or Breast Milk, the bottle must be labeled and covered with a labeled bottle cap. We do not accept opened jars or boxes of baby food. Labels, including the infant's first and last name as well as the date, must be on food containers. We cannot accept bottles that have cereal or other foods mixed in. Nursing mothers may visit the center to feed or provide breast milk ready to serve (also labeled). Daily communication forms provide an area to insert the infant's last feeding and diaper change so we can stick to the schedule. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that refrigerated formula does not have to be warmed prior to feeding. We warm refrigerated bottles by holding them under tap water for several seconds and use bottle warmers for heating at most centers. Families are required to provide the center with an emergency supply of ready-to-feed formula, frozen breast milk, extra bottles and nipples.

Children who eat table food are served snacks and lunches that follow the recommended daily dietary allowances. Please review our menu to ensure your child is not allergic to any foods being served. If you discover a day when the menu contains foods your child is allergic to, please discuss this with the center Director. We will make the accommodations to the menu with a Medical Statement from a licensed physician with the alternative foods he suggests.

We do not serve foods that may cause choking. If you are asked to provide a special snack food, do not include grapes with skin, popcorn, raw vegetables or candy. We are a peanut-free school; therefore, no nuts, peanut butter or other foods containing peanuts are served or can be brought into the school.

Family-style dining is advocated at our centers. Family-style dining is when teachers are encouraged to sit with the children and food is served in containers so children may serve themselves.

Bringing in food for breakfast is permitted in the first hour of operation only. Children may be fed in the center lounge or in a room designated by the center director; however, the children must be accompanied by their parent or guardian and may not bring breakfast into their classroom.



Special Occasions



Speak with your administrator about your child's birthday or other special occasions when you wish to provide a special snack and/or beverage. We encourage healthy treats, keeping in mind local health regulations governing what foods may be brought into our school. To protect the children in your child's classroom who have food allergies, you must coordinate your celebration with your administrator. COA requires that food brought into a school must be store-bought **NOT homemade**. Check with your administrator for details.



Special Events

Our school offers several events during the year to encourage families, children and others to come together and join in the fun. These events may include open houses, special evening get-togethers, fall harvest fun as well as holiday celebrations. We encourage you to participate and connect with other parents whose children attend our school.



Precautions



The health of everyone at COA is very important to us. We adhere to the concept of universal precautions. This means our staff helps to teach your child the personal skills necessary to keep him or her healthy and help to stop the spread of illness and disease. Children are taught to wash their hands after toileting, before and after meals, when coming in from outside and as needed. We also provide a consent form for your signature in the event you wish to have sunscreen, insect repellent or ointment applied to your child.

Special booties are worn over shoes in the infant room to help contain the spread of bacteria that might be brought in from the outside. Our facilities are professionally cleaned and carpeted areas are cleaned frequently.



Clothing

For the safety and comfort of your child, washable clothing, closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes are required at COA. All children should bring at least one change of seasonally appropriate clothing, including socks in a labeled zip-locked bag. We ask that everything be labeled with your child's first and last name, including hats, jackets, mittens, swimsuits and towels. We are not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.



Illness and Contagious Diseases

Parents are informed of any instance where their child may have been exposed to a contagious disease that affects children while at school. We contact the local health authorities if there is an outbreak or a reportable illness. A child who is suspected of having a contagious disease is isolated from other children until a family member can pick him or her up. Children who are absent because of a contagious disease may not return to school until the transmission period is over. In some instances, a doctor's note may be required. If your child has been exposed to a contagious disease, you must notify COA within 24 hours.



Diapers

Parents must provide labeled disposable diapers and wipes if their child is not fully toilet-trained. We will support your efforts to help your child become toilet-trained. We ask that you supply us with at least two complete changes of clothes and a supply of disposable diapers and training pants each day. Diapers, clothing and training pants must be labeled with your child's first and last name. Soiled clothing is sealed in a disposable bag and given to you at the end of the day. We will make every effort to follow your directions to ensure consistency between home and school.



Allergies

The staff at COA America takes every precaution to make sure that children who have any kind of allergies are protected. Please inform the school administrator of any allergies your child may have on your enrollment forms. **Allergy accommodations must be accompanied by a state-specific physician's statement. We will accommodate any food that is brought in with a Special Dietary Request Form. We are a tree-nut-free school; therefore, no nuts, peanut butter or other foods containing tree peanuts are served or can be brought into the school.**



Smoke-Free

To maintain a safe and comfortable working environment, COA prohibits smoking throughout the school or in the immediate vicinity.

Medication



To ensure proper dispensing of medications to your child, please give all medications to administrative staff members. They will see that it is stored and dispensed properly. As-needed medications will be administered only when documented signs and symptoms are present. Our administrative staff will provide you with a medication authorization form that must be completed and on file. Nonprescription medications administered by COA staff are sunscreen, diaper ointment and insect repellent. Authorization forms for these are available during registration and any time at the front desk. Oral gel may be administered only when there is a medication authorization form completed by the family on file. Label dosages are followed. All medications must be in their original packaging and labeled with:

1. Child's first and last name
2. Medication name
3. Dosage
4. Frequency
5. Duration (e.g., number of days to be given)
6. Expiration date

Prescription medication is only administered if the frequency required is more than two times a day. Medication labeled "as needed" is administered only when accompanied by explicit instructions informing staff when medication is to be administered. Signs and symptoms to look for must be clear. A doctor's authorization is required for as-needed and long-term medications. Our staff properly disposes of any medications left at the facility past the time allotment listed on the medical authorization.

COA follows all state-specific licensing rules and regulations regarding the administration of medications.

Sunscreen and insect repellent are applied at the teacher's discretion before children participate in outside activities. Diaper ointment is also applied at the teacher's discretion during diaper change. All of these are only applied if a family has filled out an authorization form, noting adverse reactions. The only variance to this is if the family requests something different. Children ages 9 years and up may administer their own sunscreen with supervision. Products must be in their original containers labeled with the child's first and last name. Manufacturer's instructions are followed.



Medical Records and Vaccinations

To protect the health of all children and to satisfy childcare regulations, current medical information for each child is required prior to enrollment. The information required varies from state to state. Center management will provide you with the specific information required. Our staff will keep you informed when immunizations need to be updated. For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at CDC.gov. Families requesting immunizations be waived for religious or philosophic reasons must submit their request for a waiver in writing using the appropriate state forms where applicable. If you choose not to have your child immunized, he or she may be sent home when there is any instance of contagious disease. Your child also may be excluded from some activities that could put him or her at risk.



Illness Policy Guidelines

Children are excluded from activities if their symptoms or illness prevent them from participating in routine activities or pose an increased risk to the child or other children or adults with whom the child comes into contact. Please keep your child at home if he or she is not well enough to participate in normal activities. A child may not come to school for 24 hours or will be sent home if he or she has a fever of 100° F or above and will not be allowed to return for 24 hours and/or if he or she has one of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea (more than one loose stool or increased number of stools)
- Severe coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing (especially in infants under 6 months)
- Yellowish skin or eyes (may be signs of hepatitis)
- Tears, redness of eyelids, watery or stringy discharge (conjunctivitis/pink eye)
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Headache and stiff neck
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Vomiting
- Infected skin patches
- Severe itching of body or scalp
- Tea-colored urine
- Loss of appetite
- Unusually cranky, less active or lethargic behavior

If your child is suspected of developing a contagious disease, he or she will be isolated from the rest of the class until you arrive. You will be informed by telephone, email or by written report of any such occurrence. Our illness policy guidelines are not all inclusive of all childcare-related illnesses. COA reserves the right to ask for a physician's statement if we suspect an illness could negatively affect other children and families.

Health and Safety Practices



COA maintains stringent health and safety practices. Our health and safety policies and practices are based on the National Health and Safety Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education; and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

Staff members undergo a thorough screening and hiring process, including a COA background check and state-required background check. Staff members who are certified in first aid, CPR, are present in the center at all times. Comprehensive health and safety checklists are completed and routine fire and emergency drills are conducted on a regular basis. In addition, each center has an individual emergency response plan in place. If an emergency requires the center to evacuate and leave the premises, families can call an emergency hotline number to receive information about the safety and location of their children.

Families of enrolled children are welcome to visit at any time during the day; however, this “open door” policy may not be used to supplement a custody or visitation schedule. In addition to security measures promoting indoor and outdoor safety on the facility grounds, COA provides its own security keypad system and secured access at most centers, ensuring that access is available only to parents/guardians and authorized personnel. To make certain that the center is kept as secure as possible, we ask that you not allow others to “piggyback” on your entrance or enter the center upon your departure. School management will review your center’s security program with you upon enrollment.



Child Illness Policy

Our Child Illness Policy is based upon the standards developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. COA understands that it is difficult for parents/guardian to leave or miss work; therefore, it is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children must remain at home or be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from the center is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness or because the center is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child. Mild illnesses are common among children and infections are often spread before the onset of any symptoms. In these cases, we try to keep the children comfortable throughout the day, but will find it necessary to exclude them from the childcare setting for the following reasons:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Illness that poses a risk of spreading harmful disease to others.
- Fever 100° axillary (armpit); 101° orally (mouth); 102° aural (ear)* and behavior change or other signs and symptoms such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, irritability, constant crying or difficulty breathing.
- Diarrhea — more watery stools or decreased form of stool that is not associated with change of diet.

Exclusion is required for all diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper, and toilet-trained children if the diarrhea is causing “accidents.” Diapered children with diarrhea will be excluded if the stool frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal for that child.

- Blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet. Special circumstances that require specific exclusion criteria include the following:

- Toxin-producing E. coli or Shigella infection, until the diarrhea resolves and the test results of two stool cultures are negative for these organisms.
- Salmonella serotype Typhi infection, until diarrhea resolves. In children younger than 5 years with Salmonella sero type Typhi, three negative stool cultures are required.

- Vomiting more than two times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Mouth sores with drooling unless the child's medical provider or local health department authority states that the child is noninfectious.
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration or other signs of illness.
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes, until a medical provider has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge) until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Strep throat (or other streptococcal infection) until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Head lice until after treatment and all nits are removed.
- Rubella, until six days after the rash appears.
- Scabies until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Chicken pox, until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually six days after onset of rash).
- Pertussis (whooping cough), until five days of appropriate antibiotics.
- Mumps, until five days after onset of parotid gland swelling
- Measles, until four days after onset of rash.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after onset of illness or jaundice or as directed by the Health Department, if the child's symptoms are mild.
- Tuberculosis, until the child's medical provider or local Health Department states the child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
- Any child determined by the local Health Department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

Child Illness Policy

We ask that for your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, he or she be picked up within 1.5 hours of notification. Until then, your child will be kept comfortable and will continue to be observed for symptoms.

Children need to remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to the program. This means that the child needs to remain out of the center for the remainder of the day he or she is sent home and the following day, unless the center receives a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is not contagious and may return to the center. If a child is sent home on Friday, he or she may return on Monday. In the case of a (suspected) contagious disease, rash or continuing symptoms, a note from the child's medical provider may be required before returning.

*Infants less than 4 months of age will be excluded if they have a fever of 100° axillary (armpit) or 100.4° aural (ear) and should receive medical attention as soon as possible.

*Any child with a fever of 104° will be excluded and should receive medical attention as soon as possible. Any infant younger than 2 months with a fever should get urgent medical attention.

Children who have been excluded may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for a full 24 hours.
- Readmission after diarrhea can occur when diapered children have their stool contained by the diaper (even if stools remain loose) and when toilet-trained children do not have toileting “accidents.”
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's medical provider signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious.
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

If a child is excluded because of a reportable communicable disease, a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return is required.

The final decision whether to exclude a child from the program due to illness will be made by the childcare center.

Note: Notes allowing for a child's return to the center after an exclusion due to illness must originate from the child's medical provider. Unfortunately, COA cannot accept a signed doctor's note from a physician parent/guardian.



Head Injuries

Trained staff members assess all head injuries and look for symptoms of concussion, open wounds, etc. If warranted, they call 911.

Injury

You will be informed by telephone, email, Internal App system or by written report upon pickup if your child is injured. In the event of a minor injury, trained staff will perform proper first aid care. You may want to consult with your family physician to determine whether the nature of the injury requires medical attention, vaccination or any other care. In the event that a serious injury has occurred, we call 911 and notify you immediately.

We use the emergency medical treatment form we have on file that authorizes us to act on your behalf if you cannot be reached, ensuring there is no delay in your child receiving treatment.



Confidentiality

We respect the right of each family to privacy and confidentiality regarding all health, behavioral and developmental records and information.

Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

COA employees are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.



Parents receive daily communication reports via email. General information as well as site-specific information is available on our website, childrenofamerica.com. Families also receive news on the family board outside their child's classroom.

It is important to note that Children Of America also maintains various social media sites which include childrenofamerica.com, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and periodically communicates important messages to families through these mediums. For more information on Children of America's Social Media strategy and policies please speak with your schools director.

Assessments/Observations



Early screening is key to providing an effective literacy program. Each aspect of our curriculum, combined with the assessment initiatives set by diverse state/national parties, guides us when selecting screening tools.

In the states of Virginia and Maryland, we use the following assessment programs: Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), BRIGANCE® Early Childhood Screens and Early Math Diagnostic Assessment (EMDA). These tools measure your child's knowledge of important emergent literacy fundamentals, such as name writing, alphabet knowledge, print and word awareness, literacy concepts, developing language and quantitative mathematics concepts. We conduct bi-annual assessments to evaluate our preschoolers' progress.

If at any time our staff or management completes observations that may need further professional evaluation, we may request that your family seek a referral to the appropriate behavioral, educational, mental health, wellness or medical services. We have resources available for referral to appropriate agencies. We are always willing to participate in any screening, conferences or evaluations that may need to be completed up to and including IEP/IFSP meetings.

All COA schools provide the COR Advantage Assessment tool, which is designed to measure development from Infancy through Kindergarten. The essential eight content areas of early childhood education are covered: Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development and Health; Language, Literacy and Communication; Mathematics; Creative Arts; Science and Technology; and Social Studies. Children who are English Language Learners are also assessed in a ninth area.

This assessment will be shared with your family formally three times each school year; We offer parent/teacher conferences twice a year (November and May) and in February we offer parents an opportunity to review. The Key Developmental Indicators in conjunction with the Cor Advantage/“How I Shine” Portfolios, are indicators observed within the classroom, yet just as easily observed while out in the community and in your own home. Our hope is that these items are utilized as part of our family-school connection and will continue your child's developmental progress.

School Digital Periodicals

Each school has its own digital area on the COA website. Schools post upcoming events, curriculum specifics, teacher moments and several insider communications — all to keep our families involved and in touch.

Open Communication

COA encourages open communication to address concerns about your child's experiences. Your administrator and assistant administrator are available to set a time to discuss issues or situations that may arise. By keeping an open dialogue, we are able to discuss and resolve your specific concerns.

Concerns that are brought to the attention of our home office will be documented. Our customer care team will work with your school to be addressed as described above.



Refer a Friend



We encourage you to tell your friends about our school. If a family enrolls a child as a result of your referral you will receive One Week of **FREE** tuition for your oldest child. Tuition is reimbursed after the child's fourth week with us. Your friends need to notify us at the time of their child's enrollment that you have referred them. This offer is void if referral notification is made after the child's enrollment.

Always Close By



Our schools are equipped with video surveillance monitors in classrooms, outdoors and in the lobby. This is part of our security system as well as a service families can elect to purchase to view their child in the classroom through their computer or mobile device. All video is a live feed and not recorded. To protect the safety and security of all children and staff, families are prohibited from recording or disseminating these live feeds. Always Close By is a third party provider. Please refer to their terms and conditions for information on their services.

Enrollment



COA is an equal opportunity provider of childcare services. Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, religion, gender or national origin. We accept children with disabilities and special needs based on our ability to meet their needs and will make "reasonable accommodations" based on the recommendations of the child's healthcare provider and family.

Upon enrollment, we introduce your child to the assigned classroom and teachers. You should review this Family Guide so that any questions you might have may be answered prior to your child attending. We require that all enrollment forms be completed and turned in on or before your child's first day. Your child's health assessment, including immunization and medical records and proof of birth, must accompany the enrollment forms. The nonrefundable registration fee and first week's tuition are due on or before your child's first day of attendance.

Individualized Education Plan

A photograph of a young child with dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, sitting at a table and holding up wooden blocks that spell out "learn".

When a family tours the school and states that their child has an IEP or when a currently enrolled family states that their child has an IEP, our Education Department will review the IEP. The Education Department will determine whether our program can support the findings, requirements and recommendations of the IEP. It is our mission to accommodate all children. However, we realize there may be circumstances where accommodations cannot be made. The needs of all children play a role in determining our decision.



Inclusion



Children of all abilities are accepted into our program. Families interested in enrolling their child/children will be given equal opportunity for admission. Early childhood professionals employed by COA use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children during the planning process. Our staff will make every attempt to make modifications or adaptations whenever necessary to meet the needs of every child. Daily routines are flexible and ECE (Educational Credential Evaluators) will work with therapists, special educators and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into the classroom environment. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals supporting the child. The full Inclusion Policy 12-17 is available to all families for review.

Transition to New Classroom

As your child continues to grow, the time will come for him or her to transition up into the next classroom. You will be notified and plans to transition your child will begin by allowing him or her time in the next classroom to become comfortable with the teacher, children and routine.



Sign In/Out

For the safety and security of every child, all children must be signed in and out by a parent or an individual who has been specifically authorized by you. (There's a place for this on our enrollment form.) Everyone must have an access code to enter, so be sure you do not allow unauthorized persons to enter the building behind you. All children should be escorted through the parking lot and to and from their classrooms every day. This gives you a chance to check your child's cubby and the family board for upcoming events as well as speak with the teacher for any additional information. Those who are authorized to pick up your child must present picture identification before the child is released to them. Older children (anyone under 18 years of age) may not sign themselves or their siblings in or out. If custody is an issue, please provide a copy of the notarized court order so we can follow the correct legal course of action.



Open Door

We welcome and encourage visits by families at any time. Custodial parents and guardians have unlimited access to the school during business hours. Please stop in at the front desk and let us know of your arrival so we can assist you. If our administrator is not available, our assistant administrator will help you. We also designate an administrative assistant or teacher to be accessible if the administrator and assistant administrator are unavailable or out of the office.



Tuition and Fees

The tuition agreement (Schedule of Fees) given to you with the enrollment packet outlines the times and days of the week your child attends and the tuition charged. Tuition is due the first day of each week and a \$20 late fee is charged if payment is not made by close of business on Tuesday. Tuition for monthly payers is due by the first business day of the month. A \$20 late fee is charged if not paid by the close of the second business day of the month. In addition to late fees, services may be interrupted until payment in full is made. Families receiving state or federal funding are responsible for applicable charges as per agencies contract. If such charges are disallowed per their agency contract, these charges will not be applicable to the family.

Extended Hours of Care

The Schedule of Fees indicates your tuition covers up to 10 hours of care for full-time daily enrollment and up to four hours of care for part-time daily enrollment. Should your family require longer daily hours an additional weekly fee will be charged.

Tuition must remain current so your child may continue to attend. Tuition will not be refunded or pro-rated. Enrolled children must have their full tuition paid whether absence is due to illness, holidays or inclement weather.

As your child transitions to a new classroom or there are changes to a schedule of attendance at the school, a revised tuition agreement must be completed.

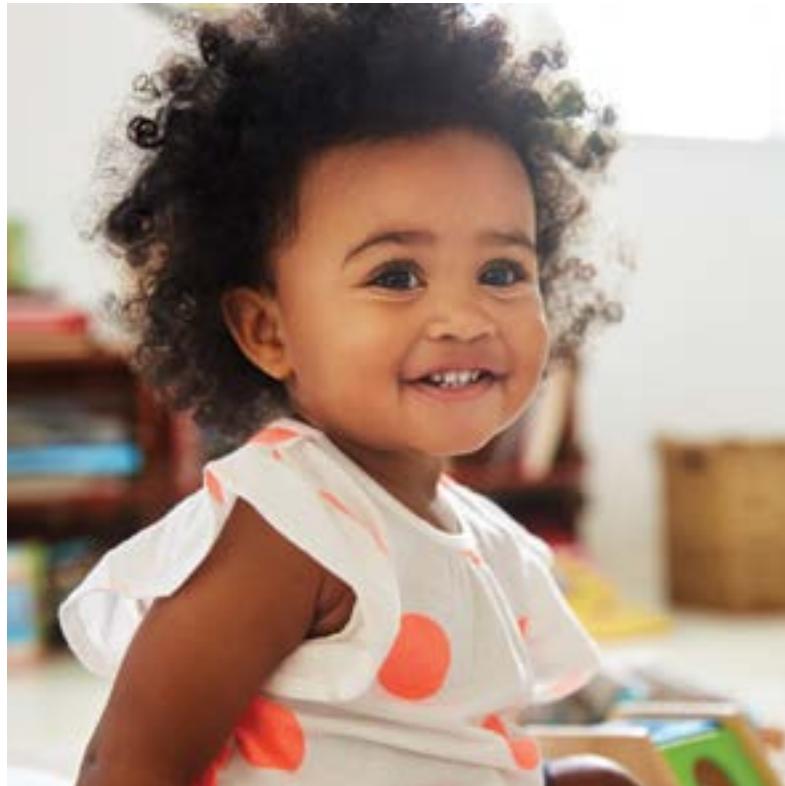
Annual registration is assessed to all families during the month of September. New families that enroll between June 1 and September (the date annual registration is assessed) and paid the initial registration fees will be exempt from paying the annual registration during the first year of uninterrupted enrollment. For families receiving state or federal funding, if such charges are disallowed per their agency contract, these charges will not be applicable to the family.

All families are subject to annual tuition increases January 1 of each year. New families that enroll between November 1 and December 31 will be exempt from any changes in tuition during the first year of uninterrupted enrollment.

See tuition agreement for additional information regarding tuition and fees.

Drop-In and Backup Care

COA offers drop-in care to existing families with siblings or previously enrolled families and back-up care to our strategic partners. These families are subject to all COA family policies and must have minimum state-required paperwork on file.



Late Pickup Charges

When children are picked up outside of operating hours, a fee of \$15 per family for each quarter hour will be charged to your account. Please inform the school if you will be late; late pickups should be considered an unusual occurrence. Please allow enough time to arrive at the school to pick up your child and leave the school before closing time. For families receiving state or federal funding, provider can charge a late fee after all authorized hours have been exhausted if such mandates are stated in their agency contract.

If you are late, our staff and administrators are not permitted to remove your child from the school or transport him or her to another location. Children left in our care after hours will be supervised as long as possible. We will contact all emergency contacts listed in your child's file. Child Protective Services (CPS) will be called if we are unable to reach you or an emergency contact after two hours.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call Child Protective Services (CPS) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

Payment Methods

Tuition and fees are paid using COA Fast Pay (reoccurring payment system) with either ACH or debit/credit cards (MC/VA/DISC/AMEX). Cash or checks are not accepted. When using a credit card, a 2 percent fee will be added to your total payment. Any NSF will result in a \$50 service charge and must be replaced immediately. Tuition payment methods will be restricted for repeat non-sufficient funds. Tuition is due the first day of the week, as COA Fast Pay is generated and processed on Monday morning of each week and/or the first business day of each month.

It is the responsibility of all families, both private pay and subsidy, to keep ACH, debit/credit cards and DSS swipe cards current at all times.

Discounts and Promotions

Check with the school administrator to see if you qualify for a standard discount or current advertised promotion at time of enrollment. All discounts and coupons must be presented at time of enrollment to qualify. Such discounts or promotions remain with the child through continuous, uninterrupted enrollment in the child's current class only. When a child transitions to the next class, the rate will change to the standard rate of the next class. A change in schedule, withdrawal and return for any length of time are subject to the current rate and offers at the time of return.

Tax Information

COA provides end-of-year tax information for families that indicates how much was billed and how much was paid during the year. Please contact the school your child attends for this information.



Scheduling



All families are required to commit to a schedule that is consistent and respectful of our academic day. All children should be in their classrooms and ready to learn by 9 a.m. We understand that sometimes this is impossible; therefore, we ask that you let the school administrator know by 9:30 a.m. if your child will be in attendance or late. Families that do not let their school administrator know by 9:30 a.m. and arrive after 10 a.m. may be denied services.

All COA schools are state-licensed childcare facilities and therefore must follow regulations set forth by each state. One of the most important universal regulations is teacher-to-child ratios. COA requires that all families commit to a consistent schedule. Consistent pickup and drop-off times are essential for proper staffing. In the event that we do not have the appropriate staff available to cover state-required teacher-to-child ratios, you may be asked to wait with your child until staff arrives or services can be denied until minimum teacher-to-child ratios can be met.

Vacation

Children are also eligible for a vacation credit (five consecutive days) on the enrollment anniversary for each continuous year of attendance. This credit is to encourage families to spend time together. While using the vacation credit, your child may not attend the school. Vacations do not need to be Monday through Friday; however, they must be five consecutive days, i.e., Thursday – Wednesday.





Holiday and Professional Development Closings

Schools may close early on the day before a holiday. Families are informed by email and notices posted near the check-in computer. COA's standard policy is to observe Friday as a holiday when a holiday falls on Saturday, and Monday when the holiday falls on Sunday. Exceptions may occur and will be announced in advance. COA also understands that the professional development of our staff is extremely important to the quality of care we provide and the families we serve.

Holiday closures include:

- ***New Year's Day***
- ***Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day***
- ***Memorial Day***
- ***Independence Day***
- ***Labor Day***
- ***Thanksgiving Day***
- ***Day After Thanksgiving Day***
- ***Christmas Day***

Early closures include:

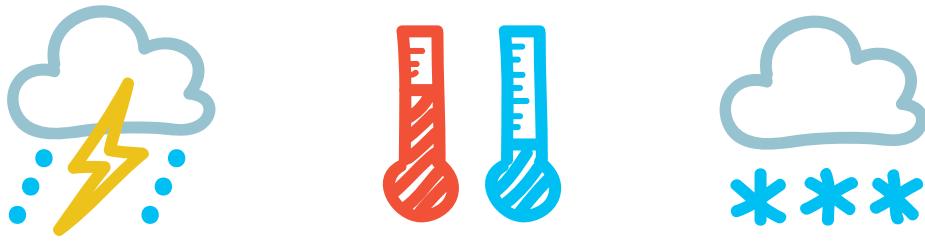
- ***New Year's Eve (two hours early)***
- ***Halloween (two hours early)***
- ***Thanksgiving Eve (two hours early)***
- ***Christmas Eve (1 p.m. closure)***

Professional development closures include:

- ***President's Day***
- ***Columbus Day***

Tuition is not refunded during such closings.





Inclement Weather and Emergency Closures

Decisions to close a school are made by following the state and local restrictions in your area as well as in response to any other emergency that prohibits the safe operation of the school. In the event the school is closed or closing early, an emergency message will be sent to the family and the COA website will be updated. Based on the communication, please make arrangements to pick up your child. Children are safely cared for by staff members until every child is picked up. Tuition is not refunded during such closings. Following a closure, please check the website for subsequent updates.

Emergency Evacuation

Should an emergency occur that requires evacuation of the school, you will be notified as soon as possible and asked to pick up your child. To prepare your child for such an event, evacuation drills are held regularly. If such a drill or emergency occurs while you are at the school, we request that you follow our procedures and evacuate the building immediately with the children. This helps reinforce proper responses for the children. The school administrator will give you specific information related to the evacuation, natural disaster and lockdown emergency procedures.

Withdrawal

Should you need to withdraw your child, we require two weeks written notice prior to your child's last day of attendance. Verbal notices are not acceptable – please use the two-week notice submission form located in your family portal under account services (<https://api.coa.co/login>) to inform us of your departure. Your account will continue to be billed the weekly tuition until a two-week written notice is provided. For a **TWO WEEKS' NOTICE TO BE VALID**, it must be submitted ten business days in advance of your last day to ensure no additional charges are added to your account. Notice given that is less than ten business days is subject to the pro rata of your current tuition charges plus any other balances according to your rate agreement and ledger. Failure to pay your balance in full when withdrawing may result in the account being sent to collections.

Scan the QR code to fill out the withdrawal form:



Outside Employment of Staff

COA discourages its employees from making independent childcare arrangements with school families. If, in the event you enter into an arrangement with an employee, it must be done off school grounds and with the full knowledge and understanding that the employee enters into the agreement as a private citizen and not as an employee of COA. COA is not responsible for its employees away from the school and outside of their working hours and is not liable for their actions or omissions. You may be required to sign an acknowledgment and waiver to this effect.



Interruption of Service

Should one of the following situations arise, COA may suspend your child with or without a two-week notice:

- Failure to pay your child's tuition in full and on time.
- Verbal/physical abuse by you towards management/staff or your child to other children or staff.
- Your child bites another child.
- A child is unable to adjust to the program after a reasonable amount of time that includes a family conference with management and staff.
- Any family, parent or guardian who fails to follow campus policies or licensing requirements as imposed by the state's governing bodies.
- A parent/guardian who demands special treatment or services that are not provided to other families and cannot be reasonably provided by COA.
- Any action on the part of a parent/guardian or child that requires law enforcement intervention to maintain a safe environment, such as physical or verbal abuse, or any potential dangerous behavior.
- Noncompliance with immunization and exclusion due to illness.

In instances where COA decides it is in the best interest of the child to terminate enrollment, the child and the family's needs shall be considered along with referrals to other agencies or facilities when appropriate.



Transportation



COA offers transportation to and from a child's elementary school and field trips only with written parental permission. Drivers are trained in CPR/First Aid and all procedures for transporting children. Vehicles used for transportation meet the safety standards set by DMV and are kept in good condition. State statutes about safety belts and child restraints are followed. Children are required to adhere to safety control standards such as buckled seatbelts and remaining seated at all times. We reserve the right to deny transportation service to children behaving in an unsafe manner during transport. When transporting, the safety of all children is our primary concern. COA reserves the right to interrupt bus transportation to and from other schools during the school year and alter transportation routes as needed.



Family Code of Conduct

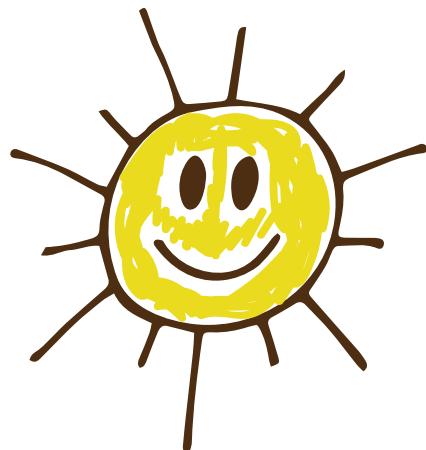
COA expects families to adhere to the following standards of behavior at our schools:

- Turn off your cell phones. Bringing your child to and from school is a time to be child-focused, not distracted.
- Watch your language. Use appropriate language while on school property. Foul language will not be tolerated and may lead to dismissal of your child.
- Be mindful of your behavior. Remember children are impressionable, and they are watching. If you have a concern, please conduct yourself properly and seek administrative assistance.
- Be security-minded. After entering your code to open our doors, please do not allow unregistered guests to gain access. Our staff is responsible — and happy — to attend to visitors.
- Extend courtesy to others. Your child is eager and happy to see you. Take a moment and ask your child about his or her day. For younger children, read the daily communication sheets prepared for you about your child.
- Support our policy to discourage divulging COA information through social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter.
- Parents or visitors may not film, record or post footage of any of our children with video, cameras or phone equipment. This protects the safety and security of all our children and staff.

Thank you for your support.

Great parent tips for the morning routine:

- **With your child, choose and set his or her clothes out the night before.**
Pack your child's bags for childcare at night; extra change of clothes, diapers, blanket, etc.
- **Never sneak out without saying good-bye. Develop a consistent daily routine for saying good-bye and leaving each day.**





Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: : <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) Standard mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442;
- (3) Email: Program.Intake@USDA.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



childrenofamerica.com

Find us on  

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